Examining the Stages of Decision-Making in the Omnichannel Shopping Journey for Young High Involvement Female Fashion Consumers

A thesis submitted to The University of Manchester for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Science and Engineering

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Table of Contents

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List of Tables

List of Figures

Abstract

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The concept of omnichannel represents a recent shift in the retailing paradigm (Verhoef, Kannan and Inman, 2015; Huré et al., 2016). Omnichannel is specifically concerned with delivering an integrated customer experience which combines the advantages of several different channels, all within a single customer journey (Bernon et al., 2016; Brynjolfsson et al., 2013; Piotrowicz and Cuthbertson, 2014; Rigby, 2011; Verhoef et al., 2015; Elliott et al., 2012; Frazer and Stiehler, 2014). This is important since omnichannel consumers are channel-agnostic and the consumer's relationship is now with the overall brand rather than a specific channel. Consequently, fashion retailers now need to understand at a holistic level how shoppers engage in a journey that encompasses a variety of channels (Piotrowicz and Cuthbertson, 2014; Wolny and Charoensuksai, 2014) in order to influence customer experiences (Norton and Pine II, 2013).

Discussion on the omnichannel concept has implied a focus on channel distribution and logistics (Christopher, 2016; Hübner et al., 2016). Consequently, literature on the subject of omnichannel emphasises an operational, rather than customer perspective. In order to take a customer view, it is argued that the context of omnichannel is underpinned by consumer decision-making because it is the decision-making process which triggers a shopping journey for fashion. Moreover, fashion is a particularly high-risk product category (Park and Stoel, 2005). This therefore highlights the complexity associated with fashion purchase decisions.

UK fashion retailers are choosing to invest in an omnichannel strategy (Euromonitor GMID, 2012). Yet, fashion brands who have adopted such an approach are struggling to achieve best practice across all consumer touchpoints (Kurt Salmon, 2012). The fact that fashion brands are still disjointed across the communications channels, means that brands are not presenting nor reassuring the customer with a clear and coherent view of the brand. In decision-making, brands serve as a heuristic and simplify the decision process. The success of a fashion purchase decision is concerned with the ability of the consumer to choose the right brand (O'Cass, 2004). By understanding how consumers engage with different channels along the decision journey, fashion retailers will be better equipped to ensure they deliver and optimum brand experience and reduce risk associated with decision-making for fashion.

The framework of the consumer decision process has been significant to understand the decision-making of consumers when shopping specifically for fashion (Cho and Workman, 2011). Yet, theories on customer decision-making in the consumer behaviour of the pre-internet decision process have remained virtually unchanged and largely unquestioned (Wolny and Charoensuksai, 2014). In particular, the consumer decision process model by Blackwell et al., (2006), as a core consumer decision-making theory, has yet to be revisited and examined in-depth despite technological advancements in retailing.

The interplay between omnichannel and fashion retailing is an emergent topic for research and there is scope to contribute to knowledge by understanding consumers omnichannel customer decision-making journeys for fashion. By examining the consumer decision journey and also the risk associated with decision-making for fashion the current study will contribute an understanding of how the omnichannel environment affects high involvement consumers perceptions of risk. The methodological contribution of the study is through the work being positioned as an in-depth examination of the decision-making and by employing an inductive and exploratory approach. The

study was narrow because of the need to get to the level of depth necessary in order to understand consumer decision-making effectively to enable rich insights. The primary research took place over four distinct phases using multiple qualitative methods. Focus groups were held to discuss shopping journey experiences and to understand the concept of omnichannel. In-depth interviews took place and employed photo-elicitation to enable consumers to map the stages of decision-making when shopping for fashion. Participants then conducted shopper diaries which were recorded using an online blog. Finally, follow-up interviews took place to probe more deeply into recent shopping encounters. The results of the study included a framework to outline the stages of the omnichannel customer decision-making journey for young high involvement female fashion consumers to develop knowledge on retail and marketing. The findings specifically contribute to knowledge on fashion consumer decision-making behaviour and omnichannel retailing.

Declaration

No portion of the work referred to in the dissertation has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or institute of learning.

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I read somewhere that the characteristics that infer success of a PhD student hinge on three distinct qualities: perseverance, tenacity and cogency. It was not until I finished this thesis that I truly understood what those words meant, and now I do. There is also one quality that is missing from the aforementioned three, enthusiasm. As Confucius said, "choose a job you love, and you

will never have to work a day in your life". I have wholeheartedly enjoyed the process of doing a PhD in Fashion, and I think it a privilege to do one in the first place. I have learned so much about consumer decision-making and the methodologies necessary to understand it. The pursuit of academic achievement has tested me more than I could ever imagine and while it has not been the easiest path to reach this point, the satisfaction far outweighs the effort. Reaching this stage, I know that I have given this PhD everything to see its completion and I therefore present this thesis for submission for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Aut viam inveniam aut faciam

For Jessie & Jack.

Publications

McCormick, H., Cartwright, J., Perry, P., Barnes, L., Lynch, S., & Ball, G. (2014) "Fashion Retailing - Past, Present and Future." Textile Progress, 46(3), 227-321.

Conference Proceedings

Lynch, S. and Barnes, E. (2017) "Examining the Role of Branding in the Omnichannel Environment." Proceedings of the Academy of Marketing Conference, Hull, 3-6th July 2017.

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Lynch, S. and Barnes, E. (2014) "Examining the Role of Social Media in the Omnichannel Customer Journey of High Involvement Young Female Fashion Consumers." Proceedings of the Oxford Retail Futures Conference, University of Oxford, 9-10th December 2014.

Degrees Conferred

The University of Manchester (2011) MSc. International Fashion Retailing (Distinction).

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1   Chapter One Introduction

1.1   Chapter Introduction

Retailing business models have evolved during the past decade to reflect the increase in the breadth of channels and the changes in shopper behaviour (Verhoef, Kannan and Inman, 2015; Brynjolfsson, Hu and Rahman, 2013). Today's consumers are now more agnostic towards channels, and consequently are no longer concerned with which channel to use in order to obtain a product (Aubrey and Judge, 2012). Essentially, the consumer's relationship is now with the overall brand rather than a specific channel. As an outcome of this evolution, UK fashion retailers are now seeking to become more sophisticated in their approach and are choosing to invest in an omnichannel strategy (Euromonitor GMID, 2012). The concept of omnichannel is defined as a customer journey that requires retailers to provide multiple channels which operate in a seamless and synergistic way (Kent et al., 2016; Levy, Weitz and Grewal, 2013; Bhalla, 2014; Verhoef, Kannan and Inman, 2015). Furthermore, the concept demands a customer experience that blurs the lines between the physical and digital retail environment (Brynjolfsson, Hu and Rahman, 2013; Piotrowicz and Cuthbertson, 2014).

From a theoretical standpoint, omnichannel is an emerging literature theme within retail marketing (Savastano, Barnabei and Ricotta, 2015; Piotrowicz and Cuthbertson, 2014; Lazaris and Vrechopoulos, 2014). An analysis of Google Scholar results reveals that the number of scholarly studies for omnichannel have just under doubled year-on-year, with annual scholarly publication reaching 52, 2012; 174, 2013; 432, 2014; 794, 2015; 1010, 2016 respectively (as at December 2016). Thus far, the omnichannel concept has implied a focus on distribution and logistics Christopher, 2016; Hübner *et al.,* 2016). Thus, research has taken an operational rather than customer perspective.

However, when taking a customer view, the concept and context of omnichannel is essentially about, and underpinned by, consumer decision-making. Today, high involvement consumers are traversing different channels at different stages of the journey as part of an overall decision-making process for fashion. Though there has been a surge in in omnichannel literature there is still a paucity of research literature that takes a holistic view of omnichannel shopping journey to understand how the context of different types of channels interplay across the decision journey. While there has been a shift in consumer behaviour and a progression in retailing to an omnichannel approach, consumer decision-making literature has yet to evolve. Theories on decision-making in the consumer behaviour of the pre-internet decision process have remained virtually unchanged and largely unquestioned (Wolny and Charoensuksai, 2014). Consequently, there is a lack of a theoretical framework for decision-making journeys for fashion in this new omnichannel environment. Moreover, there is a need to examine the appropriateness of consumer decision-making models (Parsons & Descatoires, 2016). While authors have proposed new customer journey models, for example, Wolny and Charoensuksai's (2014) who used Molenaar's (2012) ORCA model. The consumer decision process model by Blackwell, *et al.,* (2006) as a core consumer decision-making theory has yet to be revisited and examined in-depth.

This prefatory chapter details the rationale for this study, which examines the stages of consumer decision-making in the omnichannel journey for young high involvement female fashion consumers. The research discussion commences with the research context and is subsequently accompanied by the research problem. The literature outlines the scope of the study and draws upon research from the fields of omnichannel and multichannel retailing, fashion consumer behaviour - with specific attention to decision-making and the customer journey. The chapter then leads to a presentation of the research aim and objectives, which is then followed by an overview of the research methodology. A précis of the thesis structure is presented along with the research outcomes.

1.2   Research Context

Fashion apparel in the UK is one of Europe's most highly developed markets, with clothing and accessories, currently worth £54.8bn, representing 3.9% of total UK consumer spending, and this is set to rise to £57bn by 2021 (Mintel, 2014a; Mintel, 2016a). As a result of the breadth of channels, it is the behaviour of the consumer that has seen the greatest shift. Today, shoppers are routinely engaging with multiple retail channels and using a variety of devices, thus making a single shopping journey more complex (Mintel, 2014a; Retail Systems Research, 2013; Mintel , 2015). Increased participation shopping via smartphones and tablets has also bolstered sales within the UK fashion market (Mintel, 2014c).

The importance of multichannel and integrated marketing communications has been discussed extensively, yet retailers have continued to operate using use decentralised or semi-integrated structures (Zhang et al., 2010), this means that marketing activities have continued to operate in silos with a lack of cross-communication. This resultantly has presented implications for fashion brands whereby communication is still disjointed across the different channels. As a result, fashion retailers not presenting nor reassuring the customer with a clear view of the brand across channels. The research domain has reflected this since multichannel literature studies have continued to focus on channels in isolation of one another (Nicholson, Clarke and Blakemore, 2002; Hsieh et al., 2012). More recently, the literature has progressed and has subsequently given rise to discussions on cross-channel (Cao, 2014; Cao and Li, 2015) and omnichannel (Lazaris et al., 2014; Piotrowicz and Cuthbertson, 2014). Omnichannel takes a more customer-centric approach to reflect the expectations of omnichannel customers and recognises that integration is a minimum requirement to be a successful retailer and to sustain a positive brand relationship with the consumer.

The motivation to study omnichannel is compelling. For retailers who follow an omnichannel strategy, they can expect even greater returns, with omnichannel customers typically exhibiting greater loyalty and spending some 20% more than their multichannel counterparts (IDC Retail Insights , 2010; Bodhani, 2012). This suggests that an omnichannel strategy is fundamental to creating a strong retail brand. Currently, retailers are missing out on lucrative revenue, since omnichannel consumers only make up 18% of shoppers, but as a segment, they are highly valuable accounting for 70% of consumer spending (Deloitte, 2014).

1.3   Research Problem

The omnichannel concept has yet to mature, and this is despite its importance within the retail industry (Verhoef, Kannan and Inman, 2015; Bernon, Cullen and Gorst, 2016). Within the existing research, marketers have begun to discuss the development of omnichannel and fashion by exploring the integration of omnichannel into the physical retail environment (Alexander and Alvarado, 2014). However, many research gaps still exist, including the need for the development of a theoretical framework which holistically examines the channels and devices which fashion consumers use during an omnichannel decision-making journey. As knowledge on omnichannel shopping develops, there will be a greater need to conduct holistic research which encompasses multiple channels and devices to gain a complete view and one which reflects the customers own experience with the brand. As retailers invest in an omnichannel approach, this current study will help marketers to understand how different channels and devices are perceived by consumers at different stages and the effect of this on the brand experience. Alongside the study of omnichannel, mapping customer journeys is an emergent theme, with only limited literature. Therefore, there is a need to examine the literature on customer journey and link this to omnichannel concept, and also the specific context of fashion, which is a hedonic product category.

1.4   Research Literature

The literature basis for this research is founded upon three subject streams namely, omnichannel retailing, fashion consumer behaviour in terms of decision making and the customer journey. The study responds to calls for further research about understanding consumer behaviour across channels (Verhoef, Kannan and Inman, 2015; Merrilees, 2016; Bhalla, 2014). Research on the

omnichannel customer decision-making journey is both relevant and timely. By understanding how consumers engage with different channels along their journey, retailers will be better equipped to ensure they deliver an optimum brand experience and reduce the risk associated with decision-making for fashion.

Omnichannel retail experiences are geared towards serving customers when and how they want (Accenture, 2016). The experience of a variety of channels must also be seamless and synergistic (Levy *et al.*, 2013; Verhoef *et al.*, 2015; Piotrowicz and Cuthbertson, 2014; Blázquez, 2014). Therefore, omnichannel denotes a holistic (overall) approach. For the retailer, implementing an omnichannel strategy should produce a single view of the customer by tracking all interactions regardless of the channels used (Kurt Salmon, 2014; Information Age, 2014; Bhalla, 2014). For consumers, omnichannel is an integrated experience which fuses the advantages of both physical and digital channels, so that they become blurred (Piotrowicz and Cuthbertson, 2014; Rigby, 2011).

The challenges of omnichannel are so fast and defected that they are no longer related to the more siloed perspective of multichannel theory (Huré, Picot-Coupey and Piveteau, 2016). Under multichannel strategy, channels operate in parallel to one another with only limited levels of integration (Schramm-Klein *et al.*, 2011; Retail Systems Research, 2013). An omnichannel strategy is fast becoming an essential mandate for retailers who want to succeed (Business of Fashion, 2014). In light of retail growth slowing, fashion retailers could miss out on optimising their retail revenue if they fail to understand and adopt an omnichannel strategy. Moreover, retailers who do not adopt such an approach are at risk of being left behind.

At present, fashion brands do not have the 'glue' they need to link all the channels together, and the result is a negative experience for the customer and lost sales (Kurt Salmon, 2014). Accordingly, there is a need to understand decision-making as an underpinning for the omnichannel shopping journey to enable an understanding of how the stages of the journey connect with one another. The cognitive dimension of consumer behaviour recognises purchase decision-making as a problem-solving process with multiple steps (Schröder & Zaharia, 2008). The current study will examine the consumer decision process of Blackwell *et al.*, (2006). Within the examination of decision-making specific attention is focused upon risk. A fundamental part of decision-making is the recognition of perceived risk. Clothing is a high risk product category (Park and Stoel, 2005) and the implications of getting such a purchase wrong could present a negative psychological effect on an individual. By examining the consumer decision process and the risk associated with decision-making for fashion the study will contribute an understanding of how the omnichannel environment effects high involvement consumers perceptions of risk.

Research avenues within recent omnichannel literature have been centred upon defining the concept of omnichannel. Additionally, only limited literature exists with regards to understanding consumers expectations and experiences of omnichannel (Brynjolfsson *et al.,* 2013). Limited studies are also the case when examining omnichannel specifically for fashion retailing. Recent omnichannel discussions specifically related to fashion have centred upon the impact of technologies on the store environment (Alexander & Alvarado, 2014; Kent *et al.,* 2016). Hence, there is an abundant scope for further research which synthesises the subjects of omnichannel and fashion. The fashion category adds a unique dimension to omnichannel study and the customer decision-making journey due to the nature of fashion as a hedonic product and once which is closely linked to an individual's self-concept. Fashion therefore requires a unique, heightened level of physical and mental effort by the purchaser (Quintal et al., 2005). Within fashion decision-making consumers choices of brands are important and shoppers will seek to choose brands whose image correlates with oneself. The success of a fashion purchase decision is concerned with the ability of the consumer to choose the right brand (O'Cass, 2004). In decision-making fashion brands serve as a heuristic and simplify the decision process. Therefore, the study will also seek examine the role of brand in omnichannel decision making journey. The importance of this stems from brand management literature which discusses the need for brands to going beyond the transaction and instead focus building relationships with the customer both before and after purchase.

The task of shopping has now become a journey, which is exemplified by preferences for channels at different stages of the buying process and one which reflects the emotional, cognitive and behavioural drives (Wolny and Charoensuksai, 2014). By comprehensively exploring the array of channels and touchpoints this research will reflect the consumer reality, whereby channels are not used in isolation of one another but, instead, used together and in specific situational and temporal contexts.

1.5   Research Aim and Objectives

In pursuit of a new contribution to knowledge the study seeks to answer the following aim and objectives:

Aim
To examine the stages of decision-making in the omnichannel shopping journey for young high involvement female fashion consumers.

Objectives
1. To review the theoretical foundation of consumer decision-making in the omnichannel context based upon literature from omnichannel retailing, fashion consumer behaviour and customer journey, in order to develop a research framework.
2. To employ a range of qualitative techniques, namely: focus groups, interviews and shopper diaries in order to examine consumer decision-making at an in-depth level in the context of the omnichannel journey for fashion.
3. To analyse themes from the data collection to develop a theoretical framework that refines, evaluates and reflects the decision-making journey for fashion consumers in the omnichannel environment.
4. To examine how the shopping behaviour of young high involvement female fashion consumers has changed and the impact this has on decision-making, specifically in terms of perceived risk in the context of an omnichannel shopping journey.
5. To examine the distinct role that brands play in consumer decision-making in an omnichannel fashion retail context.

1.6   Research Methodology

The methodological contribution of the study is through it being positioned as an in-depth examination of decision-making and by employing an inductive and exploratory approach. The work draws from the consumer decision process by Blackwell *et al.* (2006). The primary research took place over four distinct phases using multiple qualitative methods. Focus groups were conducted to explore consumers shopping journeys and to understand the consumer perspective of the omnichannel concept. Five focus groups were held each featuring between five and seven participants. Meanwhile, eleven in-depth interviews sought to probe the omnichannel customer decision-making journey for fashion, in order to map these more deeply. During the interview phase, photo-elicitation was employed to aid consumers in recounting the channels and devices used during each shopping journey. Shopper diaries provided further clues as to consumers real-life omnichannel experiences as they happened through posting to a live blog. The fourth and final phase consisted of shorter follow-up interviews for the research to explore any further questions, which occurred as a result of reflecting on prior stages. Through the phases the research study itself was a journey because at each phase sought to progressively delve deeper and deeper into consumer decision-making in order to make the findings of the study robust.

The techniques of purposive and snowball sampling were used, and female consumers aged between 18 and 24 were recruited. The study was narrow because the study needed to get to the depth necessary in order to understand decision-making. Participants from the first stage of the research participated in subsequent stages to provide depth of insight. Over the phases a rapport was established between the participants and the researcher which aided the research process because both the researcher and participants became more and more involved in the study as it progressed, and this again enabled richer and deeper insights. Data collected from each

phase was analysed using a grounded theory approach to allow the findings to develop from the data. Excerpts of text from the data collection transcripts were assigned codes which were subsequently refined and condensed. Codes were then hierarchized across three levels using open, axial and selective coding to reflect participants omnichannel decision-making journeys for fashion.

1.7   Structure of the Research

In pursuit of the research aim and objectives the thesis is organised into eight chapters.

Table 1 Thesis Structure

Chapter	Title
Chapter One	Introduction
Chapter Two	Omnichannel Retailing
Chapter Three	Fashion & Consumer Behaviour
Chapter Four	Customer Journey
Chapter Five	Theoretical Framework
Chapter Six	Methodology
Chapter Seven	Results & Discussion
Chapter Eight	Conclusion

1.8   Research Outcomes

The research outcomes for this study are indicated as follows:

1. To understand the research literature for omnichannel fashion shopping and more specifically omnichannel retailing, fashion consumer behaviour and the customer decision-making journey.
2. To identify a new theoretical framework for exploring omnichannel fashion shopping journeys.
3. To test a qualitative multi-method approach to holistically explore shopping journeys for fashion and reveal the benefits and limitations of such.
4. To understand the situational and consumer moderators which influence an omnichannel decision journey.
5. To understand fashion consumers expectations of an omnichannel shopping journey.
6. To identify the stages of the customer decision-making journey for fashion and an explanation of their purpose, including the identification of new stages.
7. To identify of the devices and channels used at each stage of the omnichannel shopping journey.
8. To understand the positive and negative emotions experienced when engaging in an omnichannel fashion shopping journey.
9. To identify the academic and practitioner implications and also the limitations which have resulted from the research findings.
10. To propose future avenues for research.

The results gathered relate to these outcomes and contributed towards an in-depth exploration of the aforementioned research aim and accompanying objectives.

1.9   Chapter Summary

This thesis aims to examine the stages of consumer decision-making in the omnichannel journey for young high involvement female fashion consumers. The output of the study seeks to provide retail marketers with a framework of how these shoppers conduct their omnichannel decision-making journey for fashion. An in-depth, multi-phase qualitative methodology is applied, featuring focus groups, interviews, shopper blog diaries and follow-up interviews. The female consumer data collection is intended to provide insight on an area of academic research that is currently under-developed. The following chapter examines what is currently known about omnichannel retailing.

2   Chapter Two Omnichannel Retailing

2.1   Chapter Introduction

This chapter contributes to research objective one by reviewing literature on omnichannel retailing. For context, the chapter will examine the current state of the UK fashion retail market concerning its size, value and composition. The chapter will then delve into defining the omnichannel concept along with 'e-retailing', 'channels' and 'devices' which are all terms related to the research aim. The principle goal of the chapter will be to examine the evolution of retailing from single to omnichannel and the drivers associated with this progression.

2.2   UK Economy

Following the UK Brexit vote to leave the European Union the UK economy has experienced increased volatility, as evidenced by depreciation of the British Pound. In the immediate response to the decision, growth has sustained at 2%, although slower growth rates of 1.2% anticipated for 2017 (PWC, 2016). This is in comparison to global growth rates of 3-3.5% (Goldman Sachs Research, 2016). The Bank of England cut interest rates in a move of fiscal easing following the fall-out from the EU vote. The base rate is currently set at 0.25%, and this will need to be balanced between slowing growth and rising inflation (Financial Times, 2016b). Retail sales benefitted from the cut in interest rates and current retail sales volumes are at 5.9% (Financial Times, 2016b). At a wider level, future free trade deal agreements outside of the EU member states and proactive UK business exporting, could also help strengthen the overall economic position (PWC, 2016). While the economic performance for 2016 has been strong, given the relative volatility, the outlook for the immediate term in 2017 could prove more challenging. For example, retail pricing is forecast to rise by 5-8% in 2017 (KPMG IPSOS Retail Think Tank, 2016).

2.2.1   UK Fashion Retail Market

The market for fashion retailing is a significant contributor to the UK economy, with consumer clothing spending reaching £54.8bn in 2016 (Mintel, 2016a). Womenswear continues to dominate this spend, accounting for 49% overall (Mintel, 2016a). Despite this figure, the future climate for fashion retail will see a tougher market as a result of the successful vote for the UK to exit the European Union so retailers will need to adapt (Mintel, 2016a). Key implications for the market will include depreciation of the GBP triggering increased manufacturing costs and a hike in retail prices for the consumer (Fashion United, 2016). To add to the challenge, spending for fashion is down, as consumers are now opting to devote spend on leisure experiences instead (Financial Times, 2016a; Mintel, 2016a). This presents a significant consequence for UK fashion retailers who must now maximise the spend of each customer in order to protect revenue. Yet despite this, fashion retail is a substantial contributor to the UK economy and the appetite for fashion shopping across channels continues to remain strong.

UK consumers lead the European market for online shopping sales which have now reached a total of £118.5bn (IMRG , 2016). The UK possesses a highly developed fashion retailing market, particularly in comparison to Europe with British consumers spending on average €900 on fashion per annum, compared to a European average of €700 per annum (Fashion United, 2013). The appetite for online clothing and footwear in the UK is robust, with figures set to reach £19bn by 2019 (Mintel, 2014b). Therefore, in light of the challenges, the success of retailers will be dependent upon continuing their digital momentum, as well as adapting to the new trading conditions as they are set out by the Government. Worth noting, however, is that this new trading will put pressure on fashion brands with an extensive portfolio of physical stores as consumers opt to purchase fashion online.

2.2.2   Omnichannel Fashion Retail Strategy

Several of the UK's leading fashion retailers whether single or multi-brand, have implemented, or are currently implementing a future-proof omnichannel strategy. Department store retailer, John Lewis was one of the earliest retailers to publicly discuss their omnichannel ambitions in early 2012 at the British Retail Consortium Symposium. John Lewis' omnichannel strategy approach included a click and collect offering across the partnership's outlets and significant capital

expenditure on Magna Park, a consolidated online-offline single distribution centre (Mintel , 2015). John Lewis has seen positive results thus far by outperforming other department store rivals for customer satisfaction (Mintel , 2015). Following John Lewis, House of Fraser has implemented a buy and collect service, invested in mobile app development and installed mannequins transmitting product information to customers as part of their omnichannel development strategy (Insider Trends, 2015).

In an omnichannel fashion survey of UK retailers fast-fashion brand Topshop has taken the top spot with its engaging digital content for customers, clean and functional mobile site and a well-integrated social media function (Kurt Salmon, 2014). Likewise, womenswear retailer Oasis' omnichannel strategy has consisted of implementing online and instore stock management and equipping store staff with iPads to provide real-time stock and product information to customers to enhance productivity (Mintel, 2015). Online pureplay retailer ASOS has yet to establish a permanent physical retail store however the brand's omnichannel strategy has included emphasis on social media to develop the brand's social community, and offering enhanced delivery options through Collect+ (Harvard Business School, 2015).

The reaches of omnichannel have also infiltrated the luxury sector which was previously slower to engage with the digital environment. Brands including Harrods and Liberty are now implementing QR codes on window displays, employing ibeacons to communicate with shoppers and have developed new website strategy to better bridge the physical and digital shopping environments in response to heightened shopper expectations (The Drum, 2014; Insider Trends , 2015). Selfridges have recently launched a shoppable content app where users can shop the luxury retailers Instagram feed and customise the app homepage with personalised brand content (Luxury Daily, 2016). Meanwhile, Matchesfashion.com integrated their online platform and physical store to offer a more seamless experience and have reflected this in their brand name by adding '.com' (Business of Fashion, 2014).

2.3   Definition of Channels

To discuss the development of multichannel and omnichannel, it is necessary to examine channels. The development of new channels has been a prevalent source of growth for retailers (McGoldrick, 2002). It is now common practice amongst organisations to provide an array of channels to a consumer audience (Binder et al., 2012; Peterson and Balasubramanian, 2002). A channel is characterised as a pathway from the producer to the customer (Koistinen and Järvinen, 2009). These channel pathways are also said to be specifically transactional (Poloian, 2009).

Yet, as new offerings have been developed, such as social media, they have also been regarded as a key retailing channels (Olbrich and Holsing, 2011; Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010) despite some platforms such as social media not offering transactional capabilities. To support this point on emerging channels, Kumar and Venkatesan (2005) suggest that the retail channel enables the consumer to not only the purchase and return of product, but also allows the consumer to seek out information. A new term to the literature is 'touchpoints' which was specifically introduced to reflect non-transactional interactions. Touchpoints are defined as points of interaction which constitute an interface between an enterprise and its customers (Dhebar, 2013). Industry commentary has highlighted that that touchpoints include new media interfaces such as, social networking, blogs and advertisements (Cisco, 2010). Social media for example has been classed as both a channel and a touchpoint. Therefore, for this study, channels and touchpoints are classed as the same thing, channels in this case are regarded as points of interaction regardless of whether or not they are transactional as various channels still facilitate brand engagement rather than a transaction. This stance is supported by channels being viewed as customer contact points whereby channels facilitate two-way interaction between the consumer and retailer (Kent et al., 2016; Neslin et al., 2006).

Channels have been broadly classed as either offline or online and catalogue (Verhoef, Kannan and Inman, 2015; Schröder and Zaharia, 2008; Keen et al., 2004; Pookulangara, Hawley and Xiao ,

2011). There is a still a need for a comprehensive and recent list of retail channels based upon empirical literature. Therefore Table 2 seeks to summarise a list of current retail channels.

Table 2 Retail Channels

Channel Type	References
Catalogues	(Kim, 2005; Keen et al., 2004; Pookulangara, Hawley and Xiao , 2011; Burt , Sparks and Teller , 2010; Lazaris and Vrechopoulos , 2014; Savastano, Barnabei and Ricotta, 2015; Kumar and Venkatesan, 2005; Picot-Coupey, Huré and Piveteau, 2016; Kim and Lee, 2008; Nicholson, Clarke and Blakemore, 2002)
Contact Centres	(Goersch, 2002; Lazaris and Vrechopoulos , 2014; van Birgelen, de Jong and de Ruyter, 2006; Elliott, Twynam and Connell, 2012; McGoldrick and Collins, 2007; Kumar and Venkatesan, 2005)
In-Store Kiosks	(Goersch, 2002; McGoldrick and Collins, 2007; Dabholkar and Bagozzi, 2002; McCormick et al., 2014; Ganesh, 2004)
Mobile - Optimised Site & Native App	(Magrath and McCormick, 2013; Picot-Coupey, Huré and Piveteau, 2016; Lazaris and Vrechopoulos , 2014; Savastano, Barnabei and Ricotta, 2015; Ganesh, 2004; Wong, 2012)
Online Website	(Gulati and Garino, 2000; Verhoef, Kannan and Inman, 2015; Pookulangara, Hawley and Xiao, 2011; Picot-Coupey, Huré and Piveteau, 2016; Marciniak and Bruce , 2004; Kim and Lee, 2008; Nicholson, Clarke and Blakemore, 2002; Savastano, Barnabei and Ricotta, 2015; Ganesh, 2004)
Social Media	(Picot-Coupey, Huré and Piveteau, 2016; Lazaris and Vrechopoulos , 2014; Wallace, Buil and de Chernatony , 2014; McCormick et al., 2014; Verhoef, Kannan and Inman, 2015; Piotrowicz and Cuthbertson, 2014; Hansen and Sia, 2015; Peltola , Vainio and Nieminen, 2015)
Store	(Gulati and Garino, 2000; Verhoef, Kannan and Inman, 2015; Keen et al., 2004; Pookulangara, Hawley and Xiao, 2011; Picot-Coupey, Huré and Piveteau, 2016; Lazaris and Vrechopoulos , 2014; Kim and Lee, 2008; Nicholson, Clarke and Blakemore, 2002)
Television	(Stone, Hobbs and Khaleeli, 2002; Kim and Lee, 2008; McGoldrick and Collins, 2007; Ganesh, 2004; Pookulangara, Hawley and Xiao , 2011; Park and Stoel, 2005)

There is a need for retailers to now view channels holistically and to gain an understanding of consumers fashion experiences across different channels (Blázquez, 2014). Consumers now expect a retailer to offer many points of contact (Binder et al., 2012). With this expectation, it is important for retail managers to consider the impact that one channel has upon another as the consequences of cross-channel experiences are still worryingly unknown (Kollmann *et al.,* 2012; Piercy, 2012). Omnichannel, therefore, provides a specific mandate to explore the cross-channel carry-over effects of customer experiences. The proliferation of emergent technology channels means that retailers must grasp a thorough understanding of the channels and be clear on the uses, benefits and distinctions of each as well as where and how they fit into the wider customer decision-making journey. The following section provides a thorough understanding of the major retailing channels.

2.3.1   Redefining the Store Channel

The rise of omnichannel retailing and new technology has caused brands to rethink the in-store offering. Retailers are now redefining, innovating and integrating the store as a key facet of an omnichannel retail proposition (Aubrey and Judge, 2012; Chatterjee, 2010). Stores now provide a logistical link to digital channels through integrating services such as click and collect, in-store kiosks, iPad equipped sales staff, providing Wi-Fi access and implementing the use of ibeacons.

The power of the store is of particular importance to the fashion product category. Consumers desire haptic (touch) interaction (Peck and Childers, 2003) and so stores help to reduce perceived risk associated with a product (Wolny and Charoensuksai, 2014; Kushwaha and Shankar, 2013). So, in a customer decision-making journey context, stores are particularly useful.

Stores help consumers to commit to a buying decision (Stone *et al.,* 2002) and are concerned with creating experiences for the consumer (Cho and Workman, 2011; Deloitte, 2014). Although experiences and attachment are trying to be instilled into digital channels (Ashman and Vazquez, 2012), the store is still an important shopping channel for fashion consumers to try on product and as an immersive brand environment.

Within previous multichannel discussions the future store channel was brought into question and was viewed as less relevant. Yet, omnichannel attempts to break away from this notion. As stores have begun to rethink their purpose, the omnichannel concept of 'showrooming' has redefined stores in the omnichannel context. Showrooming stores showcase products which can then be purchased digitally and shipped directly to the shoppers' home (Business of Fashion, 2014; Wolny & Charoensuksai, 2014). Now, it is about continuing to define the role of the store and where it fits in this more holistic picture of customer experience across channels because the store has become part of a more complex retailer-consumer relationship (Deloitte, 2012).

2.3.2   Online Website

Alongside the store channel the online website is another predominant retailing medium (Piercy, 2012). Originally the development of the online channel was viewed as an appendage to the offline channel rather than as an extension of it (Neslin et al., 2006; McGoldrick and Collins, 2007). For example, the online channel would compete with the store thus cannibalistic competition would take place between both channel sources (Deleersnyder et al., 2002; Huuhka, Laaksonen and Laaksonen, 2014). As familiarity with online has grown, consumers sought to maximize the benefits of combining the store and online channel for efficient search and added convenience (Montoya-Weiss, Voss and Grewal, 2003).

Evaluations of the online channel were an important part of contributing to users' adoption of it (Herhausen et al., 2015; Montoya-Weiss *et al.,* 2003) and major concerns of the online channel were related to risk, quality, security and trust (Shin and Shin, 2011). Originally the online channel served functional benefits such as engaging in product search and price comparison (Bell, Gallino and Moreno, 2013; Brynjolfsson *et al.,* 2013). However, the development of web 2.0 saw an environment for fashion brands which was more immersive and innovative (Bjørn-Andersen and Hansen, 2011; Okonkwo, 2009). Recently, the online medium has exhibited greater dimensionality. New applications have become available such as blogs, tagging, social bookmarking and sharing (Anderson , 2007). For example, fashion retailer sites are simulating attachment through moving rather than static images of products to enhance shopping experiences for fashion. (Ashman and Vazquez, 2012). Latterly, web 3.0 technologies have emerged, to enable personalization of information and easier cross-marketing to customers (Garrigos *et al.,* 2011; Garrigos-Simon *et al.,* 2012).

2.3.3   Social Media

Social media has a growing role within omnichannel, and as such, the medium is creating new opportunities for retailers (Piotrowicz and Cuthbertson, 2014). An array of social media exists, including wikis, web blogs, social blogs, microblogs, social bookmarking, ratings and reviews (Kim and Ko, 2012; Richter and Koch, 2007). Popular social media channels include Twitter and Facebook (Keenan and Shiri, 2009). Others include, Instagram and Pinterest. Such exchanges act as methods of engagement along the customer journey (Yadav et al., 2013).

For brands, social media now plays a critical role in mainstream marketing and promotional activities (Constantinides *et al.,* 2009; Rapp et al., 2013). This is due to social media offering a way to stimulate interactions and relationships between consumers and brands (Kim and Ko, 2012; Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010; Donnell *et al.,* 2012). Social media also facilitates the creation and exchange of user-generated content thus promoting interaction and content among users themselves (Kim and Ko, 2012; Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). Brands are also developing their own social media communities to facilitate this interaction such as, fashion retailer ASOS who launched the ASOS Fashion Finder are sources where customers can interact with one another and to show their purchases. Some 25 percent of customers are likely to follow a brand or retailer on

Facebook, 22 percent are influenced by social media to visit a retail website, and 36 percent of Twitter users have tweeted about a retailer or brand (Planet Retail, 2013). Social media is now a dominant channel for young consumers with two-fifths of 16-24 year olds have liked a clothing brand on Facebook (Mintel, 2013). The popularity of social media is because it has democratised fashion, which allows users to gain the same level and quickness of insight as that of an industry professional (Barnes, 2014).

A presence on relevant social channels is now an expectation for fashion brands, with all of the major brands appearing to engage (Barnes, 2014). This further supports the idea of the omnichannel is a retailing strategy which supports consumers heightened expectations of interacting with multiple channels. Social media also benefits organisations as it is highly measurable channel which is capable of producing significant insight and data about consumers, who they are, their lifestyle and their fashion shopping habits which can then be mined by brand marketing teams to create personalised campaigns. Social media is viewed as a more trustworthy form of marketing information both for consumer and retailer alike (Kim and Ko, 2012; Yadav *et al.,* 2013). Secondly, social media augments the shopping experience since users can share their experiences across many platforms. In 2016, social media referrals were worth almost £10bn to the fashion business (Salesforce.com, 2016). Therefore, it will be useful to investigate in the current study how social media is used when shopping for fashion but more specifically identify which stage(s) in the journey that this occurs.

2.3.4   Mobile Channel

Mobile commerce is growing at three times the rate of online retail (IMRG, 2014) with sales are expected to reach £32bn by 2019 (Barclays, 2015). Forty-four percent of 17-26 year olds shop for fashion using mobile and thirty-nine percent of 27-36 year olds (older millennials) (Mintel, 2016b). For the product category of fashion, mobile is acutely accepted among young female fashion consumers aged between 18-35 (Lea-Greenwood, 2013). There are three main ways in which mobile fashion retail activity may be conducted: a native app, a mobile optimised website and a non-optimised online website (Magrath and McCormick, 2013; Wong, 2012). Mobile commerce related behaviour includes order tracking, payment, searching for product availability, sharing styles to a friend's mobile (Kim *et al.,* 2009). Consumers who shop at retailers including H&M, Topshop, and River Island are most likely to have used mobile devices (Mintel, 2014b). Mobile is also key to engagement with a retail brand because a consumer can seek constant updates from a brand through using this medium (Lea-Greenwood, 2013). Millennials both older and younger are most engaged in using a mobile device when shopping for fashion (Mintel, 2016a). This is due to the fact that the mobile channel presents significant benefits for highly involved consumers because information-seeking activity is important for this audience and the mobile channel provides convenient access whenever and wherever the consumer is, to fulfil not only utilitarian needs but, also, hedonic needs.

2.4   Development of Retailing

Major retail formats have formed part of retail marketing strategy and the boundaries between each format are becoming increasingly blurred (McGoldrick, 2002). The development of retailing to an omnichannel approach has involved several phases and Figure 1 depicts the development of retailing formats to reach this point.

Figure 1 Development of Retailing Formats

Bricks and Mortar & Pureplay	• Single channel e.g. bricks and mortar store, catalogue (Ashworth, 2006). • Pureplayers denote single channel retailers post-internet revolution who are online only (Ashman and Vazquez, 2012)
Dualism	• Multi-channel pre-internet revolution e.g. Next store and directory (Wolny and Charoensuksai, 2014)
Bricks & Clicks	• Dualism post-internet revolution.. Bricks represent physical store and clicks represent website (may or may not be transactional) (Gulati and Garino, 2002)
Hybrid Retailing	• Represents a bricks and clicks offering where resources are shared (Goersch, 2000)
Multichannel	• A range of channels which would operate in parallel to one another (Hart et al, 2000)
Integrated Multichannel	• Recognises synergies between channels, co-ordination of channels but from an organisational, not customer perspective (Goersch, 2002)
Omnichannel	• Customer-centric perspective. Fusion of online and offline channels to create a consistentand semaless interaction which highlights the social and service experience elements of retailing (Rigby, 2011; Xu and Quaddus, 2013; Piotrowicz and Cuthbertson, 2014; Elliott, Twynam and Connell, 2012)

2.4.1 'Bricks and Mortar' & Pureplay

The original retailing format of bricks and mortar denoted a single channel retail format, in the form of the store. A benefit of traditional bricks and mortar retailing was that it enabled consumers to gain both information and also assistance from retail sales assistants (Laroche *et al.,* 2005); thus, the format offers interactivity and the format offers convenience because consumers can immediately receive their goods. An example of a bricks and mortar fashion retailer is Primark, which operates solely through the store channel. Following the internet revolution fashion retailing saw the development of pure-play fashion retailers. A pureplay retailer denotes 'a retail organisation which uses electronic data transmission as a sole means to sell directly to a consumer' (Perry and Schneider, 2000). Pureplay retailing is therefore digital equivalent of bricks and mortar. The pureplay retailer only exists online, and there is no physical shopfront (Ashworth *et al.,* 2006).

Revenue growth among pureplay brands has been positive with leading online fashion retailers such as, ASOS and Net-a-Porter both growing their sales in excess of 25% (Mintel, 2016c). Today pureplay retailers represent 25% of all online clothing sales and that growth is expected to continue (Mintel, 2014a). The reason for potential future growth could be attributed to pure-play retailers developing their offering to customers for example, through improved delivery services. Of crucial importance for pureplay retailers has been establishing trust and developing a strong brand. For those that manage to achieve this, they are proving be strongly positioned to shift into other channels compared to their bricks and mortar counterparts (McCormick *et al.,* 2014).

2.4.2 'Bricks and Clicks'

Dualism previously existed to describe retailers who operated in more than one channel, as an early form of pre-internet multichannel retailing (Wolny and Charoensuksai, 2014). For example, fashion and home retailer Next, had stores at the beginning of the 1980s, but then introduced the Next Directory catalogue to supplement the physical outlets. However, following the dot com boom and subsequent crash, companies in the new economy recognised that success would only

be achieved by organisations who are able to bridge the physical and digital worlds (Gulati and Garino, 2000).

The term 'bricks and clicks' retailers defined businesses combining an early online and offline presence (Chaffey, 2009; Turban and King, 2003; Bernstein *et al.,* 2008). The emergence of bricks and clicks principally consisted of retailing through a store and then online, rather than in reverse. At this point such channels were regarded as rivals to one another, both competing for share of the consumer wallet. Consequently, this triggered questions around the future of physical store retailing because of the growing influence of technology (Hart *et al.,* 2000). Yet, bricks and clicks was a way for store-based retailers to retaliate against pureplayers (McGoldrick and Collins, 2007). For many companies, this was a strategic necessity in order to survive rather than a proactive choice. The foray into the digital world by physical retailers meant that these brands were able to uphold their brand value and also achieve higher margins compared to their pureplay competitors (Dennis *et al.,* 2010). These brands therefore already had the trust of shoppers on the high street making it a far easier transition and a perceivably less risky way to shop in the new online domain. This provides an early indicator of the importance and credibility of the brand when consumers engage in a digital shopping decision-making.

2.4.3   Multichannel Retailing

Multichannel retailing is a business distribution strategy where retailers sell goods through a range of channels (Levy and Weitz, 2011; Stone *et al.,* 2002). From a retail distribution perspective, multichannel retailing is where multiple channels operate in parallel to one another (Schramm-Klein et al., 2011). At this stage of the multichannel evolution website channels were still regarded as solo channels and not as any form of physical progression or extension of the store experience (Kim and Park, 2005). Thus, multichannel was initially about the co-existence of multiple channels rather than them working in a co-ordinated way. However, in differentiation to bricks and clicks, multichannel describes a more balanced strategy, where the channels were equal rather than being competing offerings.

The format of multichannel then progressed to being co-ordinated and was labelled integrated multichannel. Poloian (2009) describes channel integration as being concerned with reaching customers on a global scale. This provides further support for multichannel as being a retail distribution strategy. Indeed, multichannel was concerned with furthering the needs of a business and taking a business management rather than customer-based perspective. Furthermore, multichannel customer management has been expressed a method by which to manage customers across all the channels (Stone *et al.,* 2002). This again reinforces the motivation for multichannel being concerned with business management rather than being for the benefit of the consumer.

Despite the ambitions of retailers to fully integrate multiple channels, the reality has proved to be challenging. With fashion retailers viewing integration as an ideal state, and the reality being that multichannel experiences were still disconnected (Drapers, 2016). This is also supported by academic research which argues that the level of integration exhibited is still low despite multichannel retailing championing the proliferation of channels (McCormick *et al.,* 2014; Oh *et al.,* 2012). The implementation of integrated multichannel operations was hindered by challenging and complex infrastructure issues (Carvalho and Campomar, 2014). Channels and their associated distribution systems and staff continued to operate in organisational silos. Outwardly, multichannel retailers were failing to live up to expectations. Therefore, omnichannel can be regarded as a more customer-centric strategy and one which is borne out of the failure of multichannel strategies not achieving complete and optimal integration.

2.4.4   Multichannel Customer Management Framework

Figure 2 depicts the multichannel customer management framework by Neslin *et al.* (2006). The framework recognises the key challenges associated with an integrated multichannel approach such as: data integration; understanding consumer behaviour; channel evaluation; allocation of resources across channels and the coordination of channel strategies, in line with the discussions in

the previous section. When considering the aim of the current investigation the model provides a structured approach to understanding the role of multiple channels and recognises that customers will use multiple channels at various stages of the purchase process. The framework by Neslin *et al.* (2006) provides an earlier foundation for subsequent omnichannel frameworks since it proposes the need for organisations to gain a single view of the customer and recognises the importance of channel synergies.

Figure 2 Framework for Multichannel Customer Management

A Framework for Multichannel Customer Management
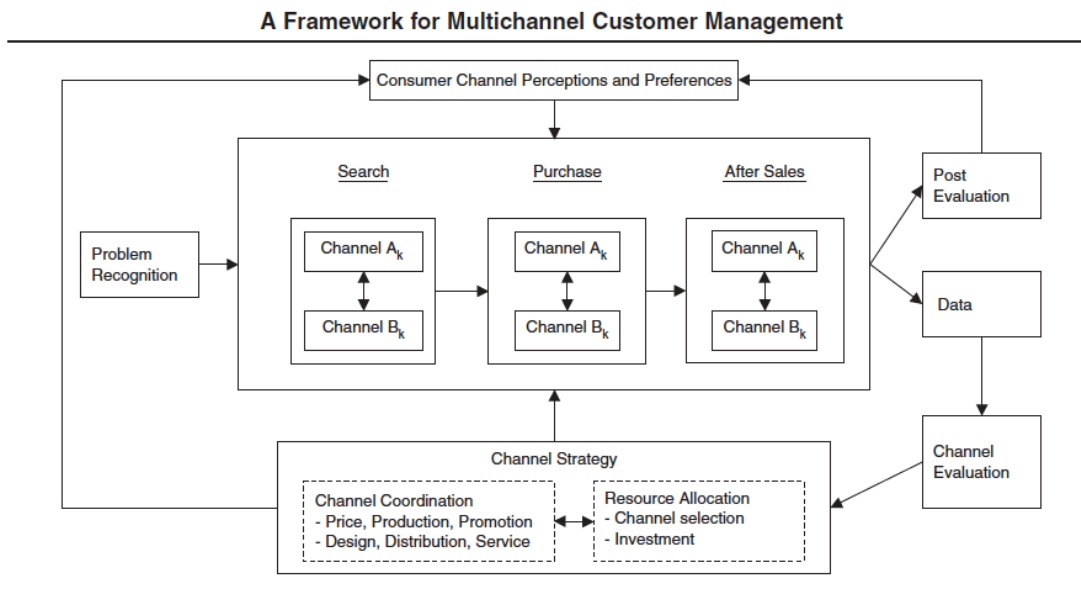
Source: (Neslin et al., 2006) adapted version, based upon the original framework in (Blattberg, Kim and Neslin, 2006)

There are some challenges associated with the multichannel model which would need to be addressed for omnichannel study. For example, the framework could be advanced further with consideration as to the devices that consumers use at each decision-making stage, since mobile apps and mobile retailing received growing attention within the omnichannel domain. A fundamental assumption within the framework is that customers progress through the stages of need recognition, search purchase and aftersales. However, such simplified stages contrast the comprehensive stages of the empirical consumer decision process by Blackwell *et al.* (2006). Therefore, when studying omnichannel there is a need to identify and define the stages of the omnichannel customer decision-making journey more clearly. Furthermore, consumers use different channels across the various stages of decision-making in the shopper journey (Rangaswamy and van Bruggen, 2005). So, there is a need for an applied model which maps out which channels are used at each stage. The current investigation will also aim to understand if there are any new stages as a result of new technology i.e. channels and devices and as a result of the greater complexity of omnichannel such as increase in product returns. Additionally, the model for multichannel customer management offered by Neslin *et al.* (2006) is generic and not specific to any particular product category. Hence a fashion perspective would enable researchers to more richly understand what drives channel choice for fashion and what moderators influence this.

2.4.5   Nuanced Themes of Pre-Omnichannel

Before the realisation of omnichannel as a concept, transitional themes emerged from the literature. Two iterations were early characterisations of the omnichannel concept namely, channel convergence and cross-channel behaviour. At a broad level, cross-channel behaviour describes purchasing across several retail mediums and how retailers are at risk of cross-retaliation by consumers (Piercy, 2012). Such retaliation occurs when a consumer who has experience in one channel projects their positive, negative or trust perceptions onto another channel (Piercy, 2012).

Cross-channel is a theme which is aligned more closely to omnichannel, due to it suggesting a relationship between the consumers different engagements across multiple channels. Channel convergence depicts the increasing convergence between the variety of different retail channels (Deloitte, 2012). Channel convergence is similarly linked to omnichannel because the theme considers the management of the retail brand across channels, so, not just simply integrating channels but considering a more summative view of the consumer's overall interaction with the brand. This is supported by earlier research which states that managing a retailer brand through the convergence of channels is of paramount importance (Carlson and O'Cass, 2011; Verhoef et al., 2009). Channel convergence links to omnichannel since omnichannel consumers are seeking a brand experience, which does not form part of the multichannel definition.

As a consequence of these themes it can be deduced, that there has been a transition taking place within the multichannel literature. The concept of multichannel has been stretched so far from its original basis as a distribution strategy that there was a need to recognise a new retailing philosophy, one which was from the customer perspective and that takes a holistic view of customer experiences across an array of channels.

2.5   Omnichannel Definition

Omnichannel is considered to be one of the most significant innovations in the fashion industry (Drapers, 2014a). A key debate was upon providing a definition for omnichannel and clarifying the concepts distinctions when compared with multichannel. At the commencement of this study one of the key research challenges was identifying a definition for omnichannel. From Latin, ''Omni'' means 'all', 'of all things' (Oxford Dictionaries, 2015). Thus, in a retailing context, omnichannel is concerned with taking a holistic, in effect an all-encompassing view of channels. This approach digresses away from multichannel retailing research which focuses on viewing channels in isolation of one another (Nicholson *et al.,* 2002; Hsieh *et al.,* 2012). The written word omnichannel has also changed as knowledge on the concept became evident. For example, early scholarly literature opted to use a hyphenated word 'omni-channel' e.g. (Elliott *et al.,* 2012) with literature moving to 'omnichannel' in more recent publications to more accurately reflect the holistic meaning of the concept.

Early studies on omnichannel were focused upon defining and clarifying the concept. It is important to note that at the commencement of the research study there was a lack of understanding as to the meaning of the omnichannel concept and how it differed from multichannel. As the body of literature has since developed several researchers have contributed to providing a definition. Table 3 provides a summary of the key dimensions of omnichannel definition. Since the commencement of this research investigation omnichannel has been somewhat of a moveable feast which has been emerging and developing over the last five years.

Table 3 Dimensions of Omnichannel

Omnichannel Dimension	References
Seamless customer experience (blurred and integrated)	(Frazer and Stiehler, 2014; Hsieh et al., 2012; Brynjolfsson, Hu and Rahman, 2013; Parsons and Descatoires, 2016; Alexander and Alvarado, 2014; Lazaris and Vrechopoulos, 2014; Huré, Picot-Coupey and Piveteau, 2016; Verhoef, Kannan and Inman, 2015; Bernon, Cullen and Gorst, 2016; Piotrowicz and Cuthbertson, 2014)
Customer-centric, single view of the customer	(Kitchen and Schultz, 2009; Deloitte, 2012; Breidbach, Brodie and Hollebeek, 2014; Kim, Ahn and Forney , 2014; Picot-Coupey, Huré and Piveteau, 2016) (Shaw and Towers , 2015; Cummins, Peltier and Dixon, 2016; Rigby, 2011; Savastano, Barnabei and Ricotta, 2015; Peltola , Vainio and Nieminen, 2015; Mirsch, Lehrer and Reinhard, 2016; Bernon, Cullen and Gorst, 2016; Kim, Ahn and Forney , 2014; Hoogveld and Koster , 2016; Piercy, 2012)
Brand experience & engagement	(Hansen and Sia, 2015; Cummins, Peltier and Dixon, 2016; Picot-Coupey, Huré and Piveteau, 2016; Rangaswamy and van Bruggen, 2005; Savastano, Barnabei and Ricotta, 2015)
Simultaneous channel usage	(Lazaris, Vrechopoulos and Doukidis , 2015; Mirsch, Lehrer and Reinhard, 2016; Huré, Picot-Coupey and Piveteau, 2016; Verhoef, Kannan and Inman, 2015)
Channel agnostic	(McCormick et al., 2014; Aubrey and Judge, 2012; Bhalla, 2014)
Consistency	(Lazaris and Vrechopoulos, 2014; Huré, Picot-Coupey and Piveteau, 2016; Mirsch, Lehrer and Reinhard, 2016; McCormick et al., 2014; Melero, Sese and Verhoef, 2016)
Holistic	(Kim, Ahn and Forney , 2014; Cummins, Peltier and Dixon, 2016; Alexander and Alvarado, 2014; Breidbach, Brodie and Hollebeek, 2014; Savastano, Barnabei and Ricotta, 2015; Bernon, Cullen and Gorst, 2016; Blázquez, 2014)
Customer journey	(McCormick et al., 2014; Savastano, Barnabei and Ricotta, 2015; Aubrey and Judge, 2012; Blakeney, 2016; Melero, Sese and Verhoef, 2016; Kim, Ahn and Forney, 2014; Barnes, 2016; Lazaris and Vrechopoulos , 2014; Parsons and Descatoires, 2016; Alexander and Alvarado, 2014)

Principally the omnichannel concept is a customer journey that requires retailers to operate in a seamless and synergistic way across all retail formats (Kent *et al.,* 2016; Levy and Weitz, 2009; Bhalla, 2014; Verhoef *et al.,* 2015). Omnichannel also denotes simultaneous channel usage where consumers may engage with multiple channels at the same time (Bhalla, 2014; McCormick *et al.,* 2014). This is a distinguishing point between omnichannel and multichannel since there is no mandate or scope within multichannel to account for simultaneous channel usage. Studies also suggest that omnichannel is about delivering an integrated customer experience which combines the advantages of several different channels all within a single customer journey (Bernon *et al.,* 2016; Brynjolfsson *et al.,* 2013; Piotrowicz and Cuthbertson, 2014; Rigby, 2011; Verhoef *et al.,* 2015; Elliott *et al.,* 2012; Frazer and Stiehler, 2014). The blurring of lines means the natural borders of physical and digital retail environment have dispersed, whereby consumers can combine channels to create the most optimum of mix of hedonic experiences and utilitarian activities.

Today, consumers are comfortable interacting with several channels across one journey (Breidbach *et al.,* 2014; Dahlström and Edelman, 2013). The extent and depth of this new norm means that consumers have become channel agnostic, seeking experiences with brands rather

than specifically with the channels themselves (Aubrey and Judge, 2012; PWC/Kantar Retail, 2012; Blakeney, 2016; Hansen and Sia, 2015; Piotrowicz and Cuthbertson, 2014; Rigby *et al.,* 2014; Bhalla, 2014). These brand experiences should also be consistent regardless of the channel used (Schoenbachler and Gordon, 2002; Goersch, 2002; Picot-Coupey *et al.*, 2016; Savastano *et al.,* 2015). This point further reinforces that omnichannel is a retail strategy borne out of the heightened expectations of shoppers who are now accustomed to this modus operandi.

The definition of omnichannel also has consequences for operational retail strategy. Optimised omnichannel environments dictate that operations are integrated and feature purpose-built systems architecture rather than 'bolt-on' systems (Accenture, 2015; Fujitsu, 2013). This is in contrast to multichannel where operations were silo-like and not purposely structured for cross-channel operations. Customer-centric omnichannel retail operations are more flexible, where businesses are concerned with aligning themselves to customer expectations and understanding the customers viewpoint unlike a multichannel strategy which takes the viewpoint of the organisation (Dhebar, 2013; Peltola *et al.,* 2015; van Vliet, 2014). Omnichannel systems integration promotes a single-view of the customer.

The aforementioned definitions of omnichannel provide an enhanced understanding of the concept. The current study will to contribute to this knowledge base by seeking to understand how the concept of omnichannel actually manifests for example, by identifying what constitutes a brand experience across channels and identify which elements need to be consistent for the customer, among others.

2.5.1 Omnichannel Literature Perspectives

Through exploring existing literature on omnichannel and multichannel, it is evident that there are several different perspectives from which the concept of omnichannel can be viewed, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4 Omnichannel Literature Perspectives

Perspective of Study	Authors
Human Computer Interaction	(Peltola , Vainio and Nieminen, 2015) (Lazaris and Vrechopoulos , 2014)
Service	(Piotrowicz and Cuthbertson, 2014) (Savastano, Barnabei and Ricotta, 2015) (Lazaris, Vrechopoulos and Doukidis , 2015) (Patrício, Fisk and Cunha, 2008) (Verhoef, Kannan and Inman, 2015) (Peltola , Vainio and Nieminen, 2015)
Customer Management	(Neslin et al., 2006) (Neslin and Shankar, 2009) (Verhoef, Neslin and Vroomen, 2007) (Savastano, Barnabei and Ricotta, 2015) (Stone, Hobbs and Khaleeli, 2002)
Customer Experience	(Peltola , Vainio and Nieminen, 2015) (Frazer and Stiehler, 2014) (Piotrowicz and Cuthbertson, 2014) (Mirsch, Lehrer and Reinhard, 2016) (Aubrey and Judge, 2012) (Blázquez, 2014) (Verhoef et al., 2009) (Rose et al., 2012) (Stone, Hobbs and Khaleeli, 2002) (Payne and Frow, 2004) (Grewal, Levy and Kumar , 2009)
Customer Journey	(Peltola , Vainio and Nieminen, 2015) (Wolny and Charoensuksai, 2014) (Patrício et al., 2011) (Alexander and Alvarado, 2014)
Retail (Marketing & Strategy)	(Lazaris and Vrechopoulos, 2014) (Huré, Picot-Coupey and Piveteau, 2016) (Savastano, Barnabei and Ricotta, 2015) (Verhoef, Kannan and Inman, 2015) (Berman and Thelen, 2004) (McGoldrick and Collins, 2007) (Pookulangara, Hawley and Xiao , 2011) (Dholakia , Zhao and Dholakia, 2005) (Schramm-Klein et al., 2011) (Neslin and Shankar, 2009) (Chatterjee, 2010)
Retail (Supply Chain, Logistics & Operations)	(Bernon, Cullen and Gorst, 2016) (Carvalho and Campomar, 2014) (Hübner , Wollenburg and Holzapfel, 2016)
Consumer Behaviour (including fashion - specific studies)	(Blázquez, 2014) (Aubrey and Judge, 2012) (Wolny and Charoensuksai, 2014) (Lazaris and Vrechopoulos, 2014) (Alexander and Alvarado, 2014) (McCormick et al., 2014) (Kent et al., 2016) (Alexander and Alvarado, 2014)
Branding & Brand Experience	(Schoenbachler and Gordon, 2002) (Aubrey and Judge, 2012) (Piotrowicz and Cuthbertson, 2014) (Savastano, Barnabei and Ricotta, 2015) (Mirsch, Lehrer and Reinhard, 2016) (Hansen and Sia, 2015) (Jones and Runyan, 2013) (Nicholson, Clarke and Blakemore, 2002) (Kwon and Lennon, 2009) (Verhoef, Kannan and Inman, 2015)

2.6   Omnichannel Drivers

As part of developing a theoretical context, the wider trends currently affecting UK fashion retail have triggered the transition towards an omnichannel reality. This helps to gain a reflexive consumer and retailer perspective as to why omnichannel is being regarded as the new standard for fashion retail operations. These triggers are discussed as follows:

2.6.1   Retailer Investment & Operations

Firms need no longer focus on managing channels in isolation of one another (Hsieh *et al.,* 2012). Consumers have a single perception of a business organisation and consequently, do not view firms' divisions as separate operating units (Piercy, 2012). Thus, retailer operations now need to be organised in a way that reflects the consumer single view of a brand. Accordingly, this presents

a new and heightened level of complexity for retailers, whereby they must fully co-ordinate channels and technologies (Savastano *et al.,* 2015).

Retailers are set to invest £5bn in omnichannel in the next five years (LCP Consulting, 2013). As a consequence, operational investment decisions are being made by UK fashion brands in order to fulfil this now expected customer experience. For example, at John Lewis, that includes a plan to spend 37% of resources on IT by 2019 to support their omnichannel ambitions (Drapers, 2014b). There are also other areas where investment is required and attention such as, analytics, delivery systems, fulfilment and front-end operations (Deloitte, 2014). Financial and also human investment is required and there is a need to structure management in a cross-channel way. Increasingly, senior management appointments are beginning to reflect these ideals as roles incorporate a much wider remit and range of responsibilities to enable the complete customer journey to be managed (Elliott *et al.,* 2012). Strategists are also being appointed to specifically oversee and manage the transition to omnichannel (Retail Week, 2013). The literature finding demonstrates that there is a trend towards cross-channel management which somewhat responds to Kim *et al.* (2005), who stated that firms were lacking in co-ordinated management of cross-channel services.

Omnichannel has been developing as a new retail strategy since late 2011. For those fashion retailers who have begun to implement an omnichannel approach, there is a need for a detailed understanding of how the concept of omnichannel manifests from the perspective of the consumer. The need for this is driven by the fact that fashion retail industry research states that, whilst a number of high-performing UK fashion retailers have adopted an omnichannel approach, not one of the retailers examined were able to demonstrate best practice across all consumer touchpoints (Kurt Salmon, 2012).

2.6.2   Evolution of E-Retailing

The historical development of omnichannel has occurred as a result of the evolution and fusion of retail marketing and e-commerce. Retail marketing was the marketing profession's early response to controlling and manipulating the shopping environment in which a purchase decision is made (Sullivan and Adcock, 2002). As a result of the development of e-commerce, retail marketing then transcended into the place and format of the digital retail environment. Indeed, e-retailing has been at the core of retailing during the transition from pureplay through to multichannel and latterly, omnichannel (McCormick *et al.,* 2014).

E-retailing is concerned with the final stage of the distribution process i.e. the point at which the transfer of value (a sale) occurs between the retailer and the consumer using the internet or other digital channels (Harris and Dennis , 2007). Therefore e-retailing was traditionally centred around a transaction between a company and a consumer. Alongside this, literature has stated that marketing activity that did not result in a transaction (including branding activity), has historically has fallen outwith the scope of e-retail (Dennis *et al.,* 2004). This has presented another trigger for omnichannel as today, customers will touch a brand, on average some 56 times between first interaction and eventual purchase transaction (Cisco, 2010).

Customer engagement behaviours now stretch beyond transactions. Customers are now seeking to engage with brands (Verhoef and Lemon, 2013; van Doorn *et al.,* 2010). Likewise, the goal of omnichannel is to achieve a strong brand experience across the variety of channels (McCormick *et al.,* 2014). From a fashion perspective retailing studies are beginning to emerge which examine fashion retailing and taking a holistic view of channels. For example, studies have drawn attention to the role of the store as part of holistic shopping encounter and that technology is giving new relevance to the fashion retail store channel and consequently, there is a need for greater usage of technology in the physical environment (Alexander and Alvarado, 2014; Blázquez, 2014, Kent *et al.,* 2016). Other studies have begun to discuss the reality of omnichannel and have concluded that delivering a seamless customer experience across channels is challenging (Hansen and Sia, 2015). Research has also recognised the need for the store as an inventory display channel (showrooming) to assist consumers who require tactile interaction with products in order to evaluate them during decision-making (Bell *et al.,* 2014).

2.6.3   Technology Development

For retailers, the technological capability to engage with customers has rapidly developed (Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick, 2012). Advancements in technology to meet customer needs include social media, in-store technology and mobile commerce. The development of the Internet of Things has aided retailers in delivering location-based technologies such as ibeacons and RFID (radio frequency identification), so that consumers can be tempted back to store and also check stock in real time. From an operational perspective, technology is benefitting organisations themselves and not just the consumer. The trend of big data considers how companies can synergistically use large complex sets of data that come from multiple sources (or channels) to obtain a more detailed view of consumer behaviour that drive more accurate predictions (PWC/Kantar Retail, 2012) and have enabled retailers to personalise and price optimise their retail offerings for their audiences (Piotrowicz and Cuthbertson, 2014). Hence, there is a need for a framework to document the shopper decision journey to enable retailers to focus and prioritise what information is most relevant for decision-making from the overwhelming array of data that is now being collected.

2.6.3.1   Devices

Building upon technological developments, consumers have transformed in how they interact with retail brands. Today's omnichannel shoppers use an array of platforms, digital tools and networks, whether at home, at work, ubiquitously when commuting, out in public, or in the store using whatever device is most convenient (Thoughtworks, 2011; Frazer and Stiehler, 2014; ComScore, 2013). These are consumers who are highly tech-enabled (PWC/Kantar Retail, 2012) and in an omnichannel experience consumer behaviour is reflecting this change as a result of the variety of technology that is now available (PWC, 2011). Technology has also impacted clothing and footwear which is now the most purchased product category across digital devices in the UK market (Mintel, 2014b).

While Piotrowicz and Cuthbertson (2014) do not explicitly provide a definition for devices, they do, however, suggest that that consumers should be able to select the channel and the method of interacting with the retailer. According to Banerjee and Dholakia (2013) devices are technologies which facilitate electronic consumer transactions. For example, mobiles provide access to the internet (Yang, 2012). However, a device is not only an electronic method of *transacting* but also a method of *interacting* with a retailer.

It is important that devices are discussed separately to channels, as they help to uncover the context in which the consumer was accessing a particular channel for example, a consumer accessing an online website through a mobile smartphone device, whilst commuting, could seek potentially different benefits and have different demands compared to using a device to access a channel at home. Table 5 summarises a list of the main devices consumer use:

Table 5 Devices for Consumer Interactions

Devices	References
Desktop Computer	(Euromonitor GMID, 2012; Mintel, 2014b; Verhoef, Kannan and Inman, 2015; Holmes, Byrne and Rowley, 2014; Chaffey , 2009; Verhoef, Kannan and Inman, 2015).
Smartphone	(Euromonitor GMID, 2012; Mintel, 2014b; Verhoef, Kannan and Inman, 2015; Holmes, Byrne and Rowley, 2014; Chaffey , 2009; Verhoef, Kannan and Inman, 2015).
Tablet	(Euromonitor GMID, 2012; Mintel, 2014b; Holmes, Byrne and Rowley, 2014; McCormick et al., 2014; Verhoef, Kannan and Inman, 2015).
Laptop Computer	(Euromonitor GMID, 2012; Mintel, 2014b; Verhoef, Kannan and Inman, 2015; Holmes, Byrne and Rowley, 2014; Chaffey , 2009; Verhoef, Kannan and Inman, 2015).

2.6.4 Advantages of Omnichannel Retailing

There are a number of distinct advantages for retailers and consumers who choose to engage in an omnichannel approach. Research indicates that omnichannel consumers will spend twenty percent more than their multichannel counterparts (IDC Retail Insights , 2010; Bodhani, 2012). An increased spend could be attributed to several factors. For instance, omnichannel provides a seamless customer experience that induces loyalty (Thoughtworks, 2011; Retail Systems Research, 2012). Omnichannel also offers greater productivity to brands. For instance, by providing cross-channel information on customers and the ability to better manage inventory means that stock can be tracked and transferred across channels, and retail staff can utilise such technology to serve customers better.

For the consumer, omnichannel retailing provides added flexibility to interact according to their personal preferences during the decision process for example, by being able to shop in one channel then deal with post-purchase activities in another (Berman and Thelen, 2004; Aubrey and Judge, 2012; Rigby, 2011). This once again reinforces the point that consumers hold heightened expectations and now demand flexibility in their experience. The omnichannel method of operating is particularly advantageous for bricks and mortar retailers who execute the strategy effectively as consumers can combine the benefits of store with online, such as through click and collect or performing returns. The difference between omnichannel and multichannel is that the experience is designed around consumers use of multiple channels which generates a single view of the customer.

Already, some pureplay fashion retailers are venturing into the physical environment in order to remain competitive. Women's fashion brand Missguided launched a flagship in London and Bohoo.com launched a series of pop-up shops in order to fuel growth. For fashion consumers, their need for product touch and experiential interactions can be met by using a combination of channels (Rigby, 2011). So, with omnichannel retailing consumers expectations are more likely to be filled as a result of combining the advantages of multiple channels in one shopping experience. Omnichannel importantly facilitates brand awareness and brand relationships. It offers the customer multiple points of interaction, but also allows the reach of the brand to stretch globally. Indeed, international luxury retailers who initially have been slow to respond the digital retail environment are prioritising an omnichannel strategy to reflect how their customer base is now

shopping, while still offering a heightened level of service (Luxury Daily , 2015; Internet Retailing, 2016).

2.7   Chapter Summary

This chapter sought to respond to research objective one. Fashion retailers have been investing in an omnichannel strategy this has led to the proliferation of the subject within the academic literature. In particular, the current chapter has explored the definition and the evolution that has occurred within retailing to reach this new modus operandi. Omnichannel has evolved as a response to changing and heightened expectations from empowered consumers who have an array of channels and devices at their disposal. Omnichannel interactions are not purely transactional but instead encompass the full sum of interactions between a retail brand and consumer. There is a rich scope for further empirical research on omnichannel. There is a need to understand how the dimensions of the omnichannel definition manifest – i.e. what represents a seamless experience from the customers point of view. This research will examine how consumers transition between channels and explore the reasoning behind using many channels and the distinct purposes associated with these channels across the decision-making journey. This study provides a response to calls for further research to examine cross-channel perceptions which are still worryingly unknown (Piercy, 2012). There are a variety of perspectives from which to view omnichannel can draw upon. The context of fashion and consumer behaviour will be explored in the preceding chapter to understand the unique characteristics of the product category and decision-making towards fashion to understand the consumer behaviour that underpins a shopping decision journey in the context of omnichannel retailing.

3 Chapter Three Fashion & Consumer Behaviour

3.1 Chapter Introduction

Consumer behaviour plays an important role within the retail agenda and it is by understanding shoppers in greater depth that retailers can achieve enhanced customer satisfaction and performance (Puccinelli et al., 2009). For practitioners, understanding the nature of consumer behaviour is critical to understanding what consumers value and expect. Today, this is even more important as individuals are seeking positive experiences whenever they interact with a retailer (Norton and Pine, 2013). This chapter further responds to research objective one by exploring the perspectives of fashion and consumer behaviour. The chapter commences with a broader discussion on the origins of fashion and defines consumer behaviour. A discussion on fashion motivations explores factors that affect consumers attitudes towards fashion as a product category, consumer characteristics are also discussed. Fashion and consumer behaviour are discussed from the perspectives decision-making, brand, risk and omnichannel.

3.2 The Concept of Fashion

Fashion is referred to as instances of cyclical popularity and can be applied to product categories such as clothing, or applied to individuals who are regarded as 'fashionable' (Cambridge Dictionary, 2014; O'Cass, 2004; Barnes, 2014). The fashion market hierarchy features five levels: haute couture; high-end; middle market; mass market and value (Posner, 2011; Otieno *et al.,* 2005). The importance of this focus is because pricing and market levels of fashion can affect shopper patronage (Dodds *et al.,* 1991). The thesis concentrates on the level of mass-market fashion and refers to high street fashion multiples and chains (Posner, 2011; Lea-Greenwood, 2013). The UK fashion market is typically characterised by a high concentration of these fashion multiples (Hines, 2001). 'Fast fashion' also falls within the domain of mass-market fashion (Bruce and Daly , 2006). Furthermore, 'fast-fashion' is characteristic amongst young female consumers (Barnes, 2014) and these emerging adults exert a dominant force in shaping consumer demand (Workman and Studak, 2006), which this research will focus upon. This aligns with the over-arching discussion on young consumers who seek variety, desire uniqueness and are particularly susceptible to boredom (Workman and Studak, 2006).

3.3 Fashion Consumer Behaviour Definition

Consumer behaviour derives from the fields of psychology, sociology, social anthropology and economics (Cheung *et al.,* 2005; Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982; Kassarjian, 1971). As a result, theoretical approaches have emerged including: utility theory, psychodynamic, behavioural, cognitive and humanistic perspectives (Bray, 2008). Consumer behaviour later emerged from marketing as a distinct field and is defined as, "all consumer activities associated with the purchase, use and disposal of goods and services, including the consumer's emotional, mental and behavioural responses that precede, determine, or follow these activities" (Kardes *et al.,* 2015:8). From the fashion, perspective consumer behaviour provides a domain in which fashion involvement and self-expression may also be explored (Cardoso *et al.,* 2010). Expectancy theory explains that fashion consumer behaviour is motivated by the expectation of achieving desirable and positive outcomes (Solomon and Rabolt, 2009: 121) for example, feeling good about oneself by wearing a new item of clothing. Hence, when purchasing fashion is a strong motivation on the consumer to achieve a desirable outcome.

3.3.1 Self-Concept & Clothing

Fashion presents a significant effect on an individual (Dubois, 2000). The "self-concept" refers to an individual's ideal self, perceived self and actual self (Otieno *et al.,* 2005). The motivations of an individual to protect or enhance their self-concept can trigger or at least have a positive influence on a consumer's interest towards fashion. This is due to clothing's primary function as social identity creation (Noesjirwan and Crawford, 1982). Fashion clothing also communicates status and attractiveness (Barnard, 2002; O'Cass and Choy, 2008) and social identity (Hogg *et al.,* 2000; Barnes, 2014). Apparel reinforces symbolic and social values (Hameide, 2011) and is a means for consumers to express themselves and seek social acceptance (Park and Cho, 2012). Clothing is also specifically the case for demonstrating status to others, as is particularly the case among

female university students (Loulakis and Hill, 2010). Therefore, fashion is closely related to an individual's self-esteem. Self-esteem is also a context in which consumer decisions are made (Banister and Hogg, 2004). Thus, fashion is able to influence a consumer's self-identity and likewise a consumer's decision toward the purchase of a fashion item.

3.3.2   Need for Touch

Need for touch is the preference for handling products before purchase and particularly affects consumer behaviour towards clothing products (Peck and Childers, 2003; Chiang and Dholakia, 2003; Jones and Kim, 2010). The need for touch can be motivated from two perspectives. The autotelic perspective considers the psychological, subjective, pleasurable emotions occurring as a result of touch (Cho and Workman, 2011). While the functional perspective, also known as the instrumental and goal-directed need, is focused upon the tangible properties of a product (Cho and Workman, 2011). Classically, fashion followers will be functionally motivated whereas fashion change agents (e.g. opinion leaders) will be non-functionally motivated (Workman & Cho, 2013). Females in particular possess a greater need for touch (Goldsmith & Flynn, 2005; Cho & Workman, 2011).

3.4   Consumer Characteristics Influencing Behaviour

Characteristics of consumers can influence shopping consumer behaviour. The current study will focus on young, high involvement female fashion consumers. Accordingly, the literature review examines the characteristics of: age, gender and involvement which derives from the fashion literature. Resources are added from the consumer decision process to highlight moderators which inhibit or enhance behaviour in the Blackwell *et al.,* (2006) consumer decision process model. Past experience is likewise added as an influencing characteristic as it influences the consumer decision process through consumer knowledge and memory and also connects to branding. The shopping motivations are identified in both consumer behaviour, fashion and multichannel literature and these are summarised in Table 6.

Table 6 Consumer Characteristics

Characteristics	References
Demographics: Age, Gender	(Parry and McCarthy, 2017; Prensky, 2001; O'Cass, 2004; Seock and Bailey, 2008; Neslin et al., 2006; Bakewell and Mitchell, 2003; Cho and Workman, 2011)
Attitudes: Involvement	(Jones and Kim, 2010; O'Cass, 2004; Verhoef et al., 2009; Neslin et al., 2006; Hourigan and Bougoure, 2011; Vieira, 2009)
Past Experience	(Senecal , Kalczynski and Nantel, 2005; Rose et al., 2012; Shim et al., 2001; Blackwell, Miniard and Engel, 2006; Bray, 2008; Kim and Park, 2005; Brodie et al., 2011; Neslin et al., 2006; Jacobs and de Klerk, 2010)
Resources: Financial	(Blackwell, Miniard and Engel, 2006)
Motivations: Hedonic & Utilitarian, Goal Directed & Experiential	(Nicholson, Clarke and Blakemore, 2002; Neslin et al., 2006; Childers et al., 2001; Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982; Babin, Darden and Griffin, 1994; Verhoef et al., 2009)

3.4.1 Demographics

Demographics is a method by which to segment consumers based upon easily identifiable characteristics e.g. gender segments and due to the fact that such segments are large enough to be profitable (Darley and Smith, 1995). The differences between shoppers are of great interest to an industry that is actively seeking methods by which it can better target consumers (Coley and Burgess, 2003).

3.4.1.1 Gender

As discussed in section 2.2.1 womenswear accounts for just under half of the UK fashion market, and therefore gender cannot be dismissed as a characteristic to understand shopper behaviour. Indeed, gender is critical to predicting shopper behaviour (Bakewell and Mitchell, 2003; Faidga, *et al.,* 2005). Empirical research indicates that fashion shopping behaviour differs between males and females (Kim and Hong, 2011). Women are particularly predisposed to spending considerable time and mental energy in developing their involvement and interest towards specific brands compared to their male counterparts (Bakewell and Mitchell, 2003; Browne and Kaldenberg, 1997). Likewise, many studies on shopper behaviour have used all-female samples (Bakewell and Mitchell, 2003).

For females, shopping is discussed as more than a goal or transaction-orientated activity but one which provides social and leisure experience benefits (Bakewell and Mitchell, 2003). Studies on multichannel consumer behaviour have used gender as a basis for research studies for example (Cho and Workman, 2011; Goldsmith and Flynn, 2005). However, gender had no significant effects on patterns of multichannel use in the study of Cho and Workman (2011). Yet, positive cross-channel behaviour is common in female consumers who are highly involved and highly loyal or experienced with a retailer brand (Piercy, 2012). Furthermore, there is still a paucity of research on female customers within the omnichannel retail setting. Hence, this study will explore females in the omnichannel environment to provide a contribution to knowledge.

3.4.1.2 Age

The current study seeks to examine specifically young consumers therefore it is necessary to review literature concerning age in relation to consumer behaviour and the product category of fashion. At a broad level, the UK population grew to 64.6 million people in 2014, the highest value ever recorded and is the third largest population within the European Union (Office for National Statistics, 2016). The UK's population median age is 40 years and the population is continuing to age (Office for National Statistics, 2016). Fifty-six percent of females aged 16-24 have purchased clothes within the last three months (Mintel, 2016a). The UK consumer population is classified by generations, as indicated in Table 7.

Table 7 UK Consumer Population Classification

Generation	Birth Years
Generation Z (Millennials)	1990s - 2000s
Generation Y (Millennials)	1980s - early 2000s
Generation X	1961-1981
Baby Boomers (Post-World War II)	1943 -1960s

Source: adapted from (Parry and McCarthy, 2017)

The current study will focus on millennial generations Y & Z. Birth year boundaries do vary for this generation however, the current studies follow the dates demarcated by Parry and McCarthy, (2017). Millennials benefitted from far greater resources unlike previous generations (Parry and McCarthy, 2017). Millennials were nurtured to have high self-esteem, optimism, higher expectations, a strong work ethic and high levels of educational attainment (Parry and McCarthy, 2017; Experian, 2016). Millennials have a strong sense of financial nous seeking to be debt-free and out-saving older generations (Experian, 2016). As the digital native generation, millennials

have grown with technology they are technologically adept (PWC, 2013). Millennials are used to receiving information fast, they are visual and thrive on instant gratification and frequent rewards (Prensky, 2001). As a consequence, omnichannel retailing has led to hyper-connectivity among consumers, particularly millennials, which has resulted in many fashion retailers being accessible and offering customer service via social media, 24 hours a day (Diamond *et al.*, 2015).

From a product category view, age influences consumers relationship with fashion. Young consumers place great emphasis on the importance of fashion clothing (Seock and Bailey, 2008). Young consumers are especially concerned with their self-appearance and therefore have a deep interest and desire to purchase fashion (O'Cass, 2004; Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton, 1981). The relationship with fashion is therefore not only functional but also symbolic (Leung *et al.*, 2000; Goldsmith *et al.*, 2012b). This suggests that due to the value placed upon fashion for its symbolism, fashion brands are therefore important to this consumer group.

The young are an influential group from which to analyse fashion consumption (Cardoso *et al.*, 2010). Young customers are traditionally being more fashion orientated than older consumers and holding status in social networks (Evans, 1989). Moreover, fashion opinion leaders are likely to be found in young consumers (Evans, 1989) and it is specifically young women themselves who are likely to be fashion opinion leaders (Newman and Patel, 2004). Individuals who are highly innovative tend to be younger in age and this positively influences their willingness to adopt new channels for fashion shopping (Ha and Stoel, 2004). The rise of channels reflects on millennials as digital natives. For example, young consumers are more than twice as likely compared with the average to browse or buy clothing online with their smartphones or tablet devices and to use social media when surfing the web for clothing (Mintel, 2012). Furthermore, it is supported by young consumers relentless drive to acquire new knowledge regarding fashion (Bailey and Seock, 2010). Young consumers are also more accustomed to engaging in cross-channel activity (Elliott *et al.*, 2013). So, for omnichannel, this highlights that young consumers are competent enough to discuss and provide insights as to using multiple channels and as opinion leaders. Moreover, young consumers are able to provide insights which may be useful to understanding the need of mass majority consumers.

3.4.2 Shopping Motivation

Shopping motivations are classed as internal drivers that trigger consumers to take action and serve as a means by which to explain behaviour (Solomon and Rabolt, 2009). Within the consumer decision process model motivations are depicted alongside involvement as consumer characteristics (Blackwell *et al.*, 2006). These characteristics affect how the evaluation of choices is influenced along with an initial need recognition (Blackwell *et al.*, 2006). Motivation can be classified in two ways. Firstly, there are both hedonic and utilitarian shopping motivations which must be considered (Childers *et al.*, 2001; Mink Rath *et al.*, 2015). Secondly, shopping is more than just a task-based activity; instead some consumers see it as a mood changer, in effect 'retail therapy' (Nicholson *et al.*, 2002). Within the multichannel literature shopping motivations are either goal-directed or task-orientated (Neslin et al., 2006; Nicholson *et al.*, 2002; Verhoef *et al.*, 2009). While Neslin *et al.* (2006) and Nicholson et al. (2002) discuss shopping task orientation as an external (situational) factor, Verhoef *et al.* (2009) indicate task-orientation as a consumer moderator. The current study agrees with Verhoef *et al.* (2009) because of Blackwell *et al.'s* (2006) decision process also concurs that shopping motivations are a consumer-based moderator. Furthermore, motivations are viewed by this study as an internal and personal to the consumer unlike situational characteristics.

3.4.2.1 Hedonic & Utilitarian Motivations

Shopping behaviour is driven by the utilitarian and hedonic values which a consumer wishes to satisfy (Babin *et al.*, 1994; Childers *et al.*, 2001). In a fashion context, consumers who purchase based upon hedonic motivations purchase more frequently and spend more compared with utilitarian instances (Scarpi, 2006). Hedonic consumption refers to multisensory images, fantasies and emotional arousal, such as positive feelings or enjoyment in using and experiencing products (Ko *et al.*, 2009; Li *et al.*, 2012; Mink Rath *et al.*, 2015; Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982).

Browsing is primarily concerned with hedonic values (McCormick *et al.,* 2014). Yet, traditionally, shopping was primarily viewed as a rational or utilitarian process (Kang and Park-Poaps, 2010). Utilitarian motivations are more relevant in enabling efficiency of the shopping task (Pookulangara, Hawley and Xiao, 2011; Childers *et al.,* 2001). In such instances consumers are motivated to be efficient in their purchasing of products, which emphasises the task-related and rational elements of shopping (Babin *et al.,* 1994; Childers *et al.,* 2001; Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982; Bellenger and Korgaonkar, 1980).

Hedonic and utilitarian reasons can also motivate channel migration (Schoenbachler and Gordon, 2002; Pookulangara *et al.,* 2011). The online channel can serve both cognitive (utilitarian) and aesthetically rich (hedonic) shopping motivations, such as functional product and price information versus entertainment and engagement (Childers *et al.,* 2001). The store channel also has a relevant part to play because it facilitates consumers' need for touch (Pookulangara *et al.,* 2011). Subsequently, multichannel retailing provides both utilitarian and hedonic engagement (Hsaio *et al.,* 2012; Kwon and Jain, 2009). The extent to which a consumer will experience more of the hedonic and utilitarian depends upon the extent of their cross-channel shopping (Hsiao *et al.,* 2012). Indeed, multichannel shoppers are the most valuable segment for hedonic product categories (Kushwaha and Shankar, 2013; Melero *et al.,* 2016).

3.4.2.2 Task Orientation - Goal Orientated & Experiential

Task orientation considers whether a consumer is seeking a goal-orientated shopping trip versus one which is experiential in nature (Verhoef *et al.,* 2009). These motivations therefore link to the prior discussion on hedonic and utilitarian motivations since hedonic motivations are experiential. Similarly, Neslin *et al,* (2006) describe that certain channels are suited for more goal-directed tasks or experiential tasks; as is the case with hedonic or utilitarian motivations. This is further supported by Verhoef *et al.* (2009) who discusses hedonic versus task orientated motivations. A goal-directed task orientation is cognitive for example, evaluating product related information. (Babin, Darden, & Griffin, 1994; Childers *et al.,* 2001). Therefore, task orientation depicts more functional and utilitarian shopping motivations. Task definition is also another term used to describe task orientation (Neslin *et al.,* 2006; Belk, 1974).

What can be deduced from the discussions on shopping motivations is that task orientation versus hedonic and utilitarian motivations blend together. Though, there is still scope to provide a further contribution to knowledge. While multichannel motivations can be hedonic or utilitarian it will be useful to explore consumers motivations towards omnichannel shopping journeys to uncover any additional insights or distinctions as to motivations compared with multichannel shopping and specifically identify shopping motivations that relate to high involvement fashion consumers.

3.4.3 Resources

Resources refer to factors that can impact a consumers' ability to make a decision such as: financial, cognitive and time resources. Financial resources consider what the target market can afford and the extent of their willingness to sacrifice some desires in line with their budget (Blackwell *et al.,* 2006). It is important for marketers to be aware of the target audiences' affordability and in doing so, ensure the product and eventual price of the product is in reach of the consumer (Blackwell *et al.,* 2006). In the consumer decision process resources are highlighted as a consumer-related difference, whereas in the theory of buyer behaviour such resources are highlighted as exogenous variables and are therefore situational. For the current study, time as a resource is indicated as a situational moderator. Blackwell *et al.* (2006) suggest that the urgency of the situation dictates the amount of time and the extent an individual will engage in a search for a product. Therefore, the current study will explore how omnichannel decision-making journeys help or hinder consumers in relation to the resources an individual has available.

3.4.4 Involvement

Involvement is an important area of research to explain consumer behaviour (Hourigan and Bougoure, 2011). Involvement is the extent to which consumers view the focal activity as a

meaningful and engaging activity in their life (O'Cass, 2004). Literature suggests that involvement can take many forms such as involvement with advertisements, with products categories or purchase decisions (Zaichkowsky, 1984; Vieira, 2009). Product category involvement is characterised as feelings, interest, arousal, enthusiasm and motivation (Rothschild, 1984; Engel, *et al.,* 2005; Solomon et al., 2014; Goldsmith *et al.,* 2012a; Jones and Kim, 2010; Mitchell, 1979). From a retailer viewpoint, fashion clothing involvement is a significant arbiter on the extent of store loyalty and for a consumer, involvement impacts the time spend on deciding and committing to a fashion purchase (Vieira, 2009). Involvement heightens marketing and advertising and marketing interest (Vieira, 2009; Laurent and Kapferer, 1985).

3.4.4.1 Fashion Clothing Involvement

Fashion is classed as a specifically high involvement product (Cho *et al.,* 2003; Jones & Kim, 2010; O'Cass, 2004). Fashion clothing involvement is concerned with an individual's perceived importance of fashion clothing (O'Cass, 2001; Cardoso *et al.,* 2010). Unlike other product categories, fashion is acutely subjective and complex (Bloch, 1986). Gender is a specific driver of fashion clothing involvement and is primarily experienced by females, since women exhibit higher fashion involvement than males (Tigert *et al.,* 1976; O'Cass, 2000; O'Cass, 2004; Hourigan & Bougoure, 2011). Female university students are an example of individuals who possess high involvement in apparel shopping (Park & Cho, 2012). Consequently, it will be beneficial to explore female student consumers in the omnichannel environment because of their high involvement tendency and also because high involvement consumers regularly seek information.

Involvement may range from low or high (Engel *et al.,* 2005; Zaichowsky, 1985), as illustrated in Table 8. Fashion involvement is a continuum from total absorption to complete detachment and the more fashion occupies a key role within the shoppers lives; the greater the involvement in fashion clothing will be (O'Cass, 2004). Consumers of fashion can experience high involvement by virtue of the fact that fashion is connected to important goals (Kinnley *et al.,* 2010; Vieira, 2009; Ahuvia, 2005). High involvement consumers of fashion have historically been important to fashion researchers and practitioners because they are catalysts for the fashion adoption process (O'Cass, 2004; Tigert *et al.,* 1976; Goldsmith *et al.,* 1999). This study will seek to understand more about high involvement behaviour in omnichannel decision-making.

Table 8 Fashion Involvement Continuum

Consumer Classification	Involvement Level	Characteristics	References
Apathetic	Uninvolved	• Do not shop for innovativeness • Rarely purchase fashion	(Cardoso *et al.,* 2010)
Challenged Moderates/Indifferent Moderates/Cautious Moderates	Low	• Take little pleasure/interest in fashion products • Less motivated • Less sensitive to symbolism attached to apparel • Will make purchase decisions on simply heuristics	(Kim, 2005; Simpson *et al.,* 2008)
Moderates	Medium	Fashion followers	(Cardoso *et al.,* 2010)
Enthusiasts/ Knowledge Enthusiasts/Challenged Enthusiasts	High	• High levels of innovativeness • Branding is an important to them • Regularly purchase fashion, <1 month • Identified as fashion innovators and opinion leaders • Express higher interest and hedonic value • Perceive that apparel has expressive functions for self-identity • Emphasised importance and sensitivity to choosing the right apparel product • High opinion leadership	(Cardoso *et al.,* 2010; Kim, 2005; Summers, 1970; Jordaan & Simpson, 2006; Hourigan & Bougoure, 2011)

3.4.4.2 Decision-Making Involvement

Involvement is also concerned with the relevance of the decision to the consumer (Zaichowsky, 1985). Indeed, involvement is a factor that shapes the decision process (Jordaan and Simpson, 2006). According to Solomon and Rabolt (2009) the extent of involvement in a fashion purchase decision has an effect on the length and stages of the decision-making process. At the need recognition stage of a shopping journey, consumers will be highly involved and motivated (Puccinelli, *et al.,* 2009). In instances where the purchase decision is important shoppers who are at the information search and evaluation stage will expend significant effort to obtain information and reduce uncertainty and risk (Zaichowsky, 1986; Puccinelli *et al.,* 2009). Meanwhile, for the purchase stage, high involvement with a product can increase a consumers' confidence and thus boost the decision-making process (O'Cass, 2004).

Technology has had a role in shaping consumers involvement with fashion and decision-making. The internet has induced changes upon the methods and frequency by which consumers access product related information, and there have never been more opportunities to keep up to date with fashion (Hourigan and Bougoure, 2011). High involvement fashion consumers are likely to engage in a broad range of ongoing information search activities (Hourigan and Bougoure, 2011). Therefore, shoppers who are interested in a product category and an associated decision about a product category will also be interested in channels that provide information about that product category. Technology enables not only information seeking but also interactions whereby users can feel part of a brand through utilising a range of channels and devices. Likewise, touchpoints (channels) surround an activity with involvement (Duncan and Moriarty, 2006). Therefore, the omnichannel environment, with its array of channels and devices, facilitates involvement by providing consumers with access to an array of information.

3.4.5   Past Experience

Consumers can rely on past experience and knowledge in relation to decision-making (Senecal *et al.,* 2005). Within the decision process consumers are exposed to marketing stimuli and process these through the memory function (Blackwell, *et al.,* 2006). While Blackwell *et al.* (2006) do not use past experience as a label it is referred to within the discussion on situational environmental influences (Blackwell *et al.,* 2006). The label of memory has been applied to reflect its role as an external influencer and subsequently past experience effects of consumers individual customer experiences. However, the current study asserts that past-experience is a consumer characteristic because the consumer has to make a choice to accept and retain a past-experience memory, making it an internal consumer characteristic. Past experience can either heighten or decrease consumers perception of risk with shopping (Shim et al., 2001). Furthermore, in multichannel customer management past experience was identified as an individual difference (Neslin *et al.,* 2006).

3.5   Decision-Making in Consumer Behaviour

Importantly, consumer behaviour is not solely based upon the transaction or exchange process, but instead seeks to capture the totality of consumers' decisions (Solomon and Rabolt, 2009; Koller and Salzberger, 2007; Jacoby, 1976). Therefore, consumer behaviour seeks to provide a comprehensive view of decision-making and consumption. Decision-making in consumer behaviour is a method to decrypt consumer interactions (Solomon & Rabolt, 2009). It is decision-making that specifically considers the cognitive dimension of consumer's shopping behaviour (Schröder and Zaharia, 2008). Therefore, the decision process is a valued and popular area for research within the consumer behaviour domain (Cho and Workman, 2011; Koller *et al.,* 2008; Bruner and Pomazal, 1988; Hansen and Sia, 2015). A summary of recent studies of decision-making in fashion consumer behaviour are shown in Table 9.

Table 9 Summary of Key Consumer Decision Process Studies

Author	Description	Findings
(Cho and Workman, 2011)	Fashion & Multichannel - Survey conducted of both male and female university students. Study examines whether gender, fashion innovativeness and opinion leadership, and need for touch has an effect on consumers' multi-channel choice and touch/non-touch shopping channel preference in clothing shopping.	- Multichannel decision choice influenced by fashion innovativeness and opinion leadership. - Irrespective of gender fashion innovativeness and opinion leaders those who used more than one channel preferred online, TV and catalogue channels.
(Park and Cho, 2012)	Fashion - An empirical survey study using female university student to understand how social media communities can affect information seeking behaviour and decision-making for apparel shopping.	- Positive relationship identified between commitment to a social media community and information-seeking behaviour at the community. - Commitment is developed when individuals are psychologically attached to the community.
(Puccinelli et al., 2009)	Customer Experience – A literature-based paper which examines specific aspects of consumer behaviour and their role in the consumer decision process.	- Need recognition encompasses, goals, involvement and affect. Information search considers goals, memory, involvement and affect. Evaluation features goals, memory, involvement, attitudes, affect, atmospherics, attributions and choices. Purchase includes: goals, attitudes, affect, atmospherics, attributions. Post-purchase considers same elements as purchase. - Key finding: motions affect (moods & emotions) influence all stages of consumer decision process.
(Balasubramanian, Raghunathan and Mahajan, 2005)	Multichannel - Customer interview study to identify that consumers employ different channels and media at different stages of the decision process.	- Development of a conceptual framework to delineate the utilities consumers derive from channels (economic, quest for self-affirmation, quest for symbolism, quest for social interaction, reliance on schemas and scripts) - Consumers will traverse across channels across during a decision process.
(Nicholson, Clarke and Blakemore, 2002)	Multichannel - Exploration of consumer decision-making & selection across multiple channels using female consumers in focus group research and shopping diaries	Identification of situational variables based upon a Belkian analysis. Paper calls for research to revisit consumer decision-making models to understand the different functions that channels serve at different stages of decision process.
(Neslin et al., 2006)	Multichannel - A conceptual paper to propose a framework for multichannel customer management to address challenges (including consumer behaviour challenges) and depicts the linkages between them.	- Framework can be used to map which channel is used at which stage of the decision process to better co-ordinate channels and is based on consumer decision process. - Study highlights determinants of channel selection including situational factors and individual differences.
(Wolny and Charoensuksai, 2014)	Decision Process & Customer Journey – Qualitative interview study exploring the integration of multiple channels into the decision process. Highlights that customer decision process models have remained unquestioned despite the development of the digital marketing discourse. Employs 16 diaries, sample employed for diaries also used for 16 interviews. Study focused on beauty context.	- Identifies the need for multichannel journey's to be mapped - Identification of key channel influences across different stages of decision-making. - Segments customer journeys into three distinct patterns.

3.5.1   Consumer Decision Process

The cognitive dimension of consumer behaviour recognises purchase decision-making as a problem-solving process with several steps (Schröder and Zaharia, 2008). The consumer decision process model was developed by Engel *et al.* (1968) and derives from the theoretical foundation of Dewey (1910) who introduced the original five-stage decision process and Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs model based around human motivation. There have been many subsequent revisions to the Engel *et al. (1968)* 'EKB' decision process model and the current study employs a recent iteration by Blackwell *et al.* (2006), as indicated in Figure 3.

Figure 3 Consumer Decision Process Model
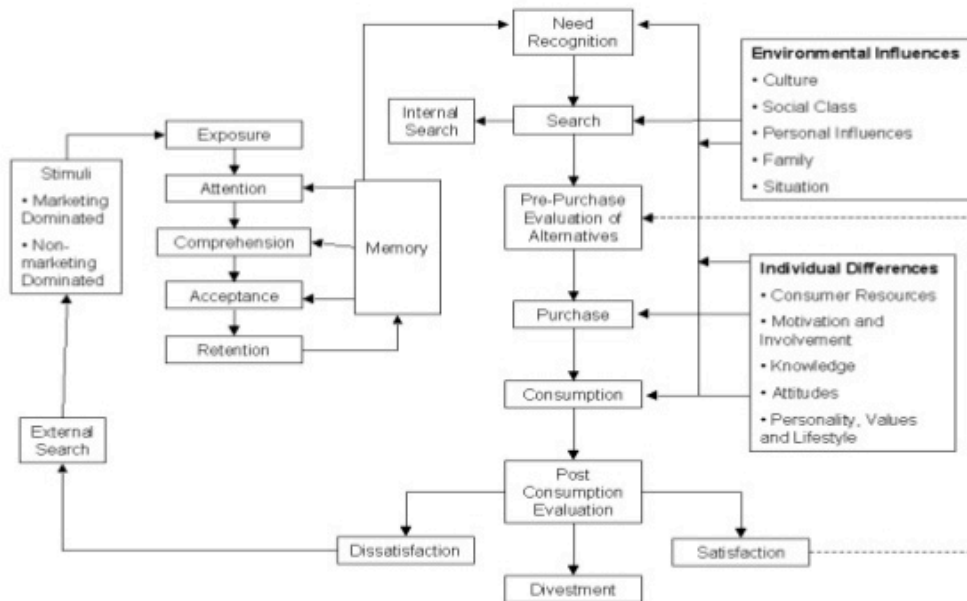
Source: Blackwell *et al.* (2006)

The Blackwell *et al.* (2006) version of the consumer decision process model comprises of four sections namely: information processing; the decision stages, environmental influences and individual differences. The central decision process is the critical element of the structure and identifies the consumer decision-making as a seven-stage journey and the stages are outlined in section 3.5.1.1 onwards. The consumer decision process flows in a linear structure (Kardes, *et al.,* 2014; Wolny and Charoensuksai, 2014).

3.5.1.1 Need Recognition

Mirroring Dewey's (1910) model, stage one of the consumer decision process framework by Blackwell *et al.* (2006) commences with need recognition. Need recognition is the point at which there is inconsistency between the consumers actual and desired state that subsequently motivates a consumer to begin a search for information in order to satisfy a need (Blackwell *et al.,* 2006).

The motivations of consumers are important because it aids in the understanding of subsequent fashion consumer behaviours (Goldsmith *et al.,* 2012a). Maslow (1943) formulated one of the earliest theories about human needs as indicated in Figure 4. Clothing fulfils the most basic survival needs, providing humans with warmth and protection to ensure physical survival (Rath *et al.,* 2015). However, status and social approval can drive the choice of fashion brands at a higher level than just the aforementioned basic survival needs (Auty and Elliott, 1998) as fashion is powerful symbol to communicate self-identity (Ahuvia, 2005; Goldsmith *et al.,* 2012a). Women in particular experience greater involvement in fashion shopping and use clothing to gain social approval

(Carey *et al.,* 2014; Davis and Lennon, 1985). Hence, clothing transcends across the needs hierarchy.

Figure 4 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Source: Maslow (1943)

The need recognition stage therefore identifies the internal psychological process of motivation (Belch *et al.,* 2005). Problem identification of a need can be triggered by many factors such as the need to replenish stock, dissatisfaction with a product or current state, the development of new needs, the need for related products, marketer-induced problem identification where product switching is encouraged when an existing product satisfies the need (Belch *et al.*, 2005). It is the marketers job to know what these needs or problems are and attempt to translate these into purchase criteria (Belch *et al.,* 2005).

3.5.1.2 Information Search

Stage two, the information search, recognises that each decision process that a consumer engages in demands different levels of complexity and effort dependent upon the needs identified. Information search can be both internal and external. When relying on pre-existing cognitive memory this will include past experience. Consumers go through a process of stimuli exposure, attention towards that stimuli, comprehension (understanding of the information), acceptance of information and retention to create memories (Blackwell *et al.,* 2006). Consumers are motivated to search for external information when it is perceived to be a more efficient route to satisfying the need. Through seeking information, the consumer is better placed to satisfy a need. Additionally, consumers can reduce risk and the potential for regret through this process (Mitchell and Boustani, 1994). The level of involvement associated with the product category will also moderate the extent of the information search, for example individuals who are less involved in the product category may employ simple heuristics for quick decision-making (Simpson *et al.,* 2008). The information search stage is concerned with consumer perception i.e. how the information is perceived, interpreted and retained (Belch *et al.*, 2005). Thus, the decision process recognises that consumers will subjectively process information.

3.5.1.3 Pre-Purchase Evaluation

At stage three of the consumer decision process the model considers the evaluation of alternatives. The stage identifies the most suitable product to satisfy the need and where the product can be obtained from (Blackwell *et al.,* 2006). During this stage consumers will also compare products from different brands and potential options are identified as the consumer's consideration set, a group of brands that are suitable for purchase (Belch *et al.,* 2005). This is a key goal for marketers who want their brand to be at the forefront of the consumers mind (Belch *et al.,* 2005). This stage denotes attitude formation because consumers will hold attitudes (a summarised positive or negative evaluation) towards products and brands (Belch *et al.*, 2005).

3.5.1.4 Purchase

Consumers may or may not purchase as a result of the decision process. During the purchase stage shoppers may have a preference for which retailer they want to purchase from, although a promotional event may result in the purchase taking place with another retailer (Blackwell *et al.,* 2006). This is where moderators such financial resources can affect whether or not the purchase will be made in any case. Also, if the product is out of stock then the consumer is unable to purchase it (Blackwell *et al,* 2006). The stage depicts the psychological process of integration which is when knowledge, beliefs and meanings are combined to evaluate and compare two or more alternatives (Belch *et al.,* 2005).

3.5.1.5 Consumption

The consumption stage recognises the point at which the consumer actually uses the product; this may be immediately or at a later date (Blackwell *et al.,* 2006). Consumers may consume products at a later date, as a result of purchasing multiples of the same product. How carefully the product is used will determine how long the product lasts for (Blackwell *et al.,* 2006).

3.5.1.6 Post-Consumption Evaluation

At post-consumption evaluation users will evaluate the product, being either satisfied or dissatisfied as means by which to assess their choice (Blackwell *et al.,*2006). As part of this activity within stage six, the consumer will use this information so as to make subsequent decision-making more productive. Unfavourable outcomes will result on a negative attitude to the brand (Belch *et al.,* 2005). Consumers may also seek reassurance from others at the post-purchase stage (Belch *et al.,* 2005), for example when experiencing post-purchase dissonance. As a result of post-consumption evaluation shoppers will also pay greater attention to marketing by the brand they have purchased from (Belch *et al.,* 2005).

3.5.1.7 Divestment

At divestment, users choose to dispose of the product. Disposal can occur in a variety of ways from selling online, donating to charity, recycling or even throwing the product away (Blackwell *et al.,* 2006). Online sites such as Depop, Ebay and Vestiaire Collective provide ways for fashion consumers to resell garments online and earn money. Retailers such as Marks and Spencer enable shoppers to recycle clothes and earn shopping vouchers.

3.5.2 Impact of the Online Environment on Decision-Making

The consumer decision process model was developed pre-internet and therefore, the model does not reflect the emergence of new technology (Wolny & Charoensuksai, 2014). The influence of technology has become a key factor in successful retailing and thus the fields of information systems and human computer interaction have also become intertwined with consumer behaviour and fashion as explored by Blázquez (2014).

The primary role of the online channel was to provide price–related and product-related information in order to reduce search costs and enhance satisfaction for the consumer (Park & Kim, 2003). Therefore, the Internet has empowered consumers with greater information before making a purchase decision. One reason for utilising online is the ease of comparison shopping (2015). Other impacts of online include the rise of social media which has facilitated brand engagement. The online environment has also added new elements to the decision-making process making it more comprehensive from the consumer perspective e.g. product availability and delivery time (Senecal *et al.,* 2005). Previously, the online environment offered a much poorer experience compared to the physical channel and called for technology interfaces for shopping to be optimised for shopping style, the stages of the decision process, and product type (Burke, 2002). However, now the online environment experience has been improved to now simulate physical retail experiences with non-static contact e.g. videos of products on a model (Ashman & Vazquez, 2012).

3.6   Brand & Fashion Consumer Decision-Making

This section examines the correlation between brand and fashion consumer decision-making. The section contributes towards research objective five which was to examine the distinct role that brands play in consumer decision-making in an omnichannel retail context. Fashion consumers use the omnichannel environment as a way of enabling them to make decisions about fashion brands through using a variety of different channels over the course of a temporal shopping journey. The use of brand in the current study is three-fold. Firstly, brands need to be managed effectively in order to support decision-making and ultimately build a relationship with a customer. Secondly, brands are a way of enabling and simplifying consumer decision-making and serve as an important heuristic specifically with regards to making decisions about fashion products. Thirdly, fashion brands are particularly symbolic for consumers in terms of conspicuous consumption. Hence this section will explore more deeply how the dyad of brand, fashion and consumer decision-making interplay. Each of these aspects are therefore discussed in the following sub-sections.

3.6.1   The Value of a Brand

Brands were originally designed to act as a symbol of legal ownership (de Chernatony & Dall'Olmo Riley, 1998; Bridson & Evans, 2004; Keller, 2003). As brands became more widespread their purpose was to distinguish and differentiate between products. Brands were seen as a way to demonstrate that a product was augmented to such an extent that the buyer perceived a certain level of uniqueness which also correlates with the consumers' own needs (De Chernatony & McDonald, 1992). Such a need for product differentiation meant that brands were formulated from both the tangible and intangible assets of a product (Levitt, 1960; de Chernatony, 2002; Doyle *et al.,* 2008; Aaker, 1991; de Chernatony et al, 1992; Aurand, 2005).

Principally, three key elements make up a brand, these are: brand identity, image and personality. Brand identity includes assets such as: name, logo, colour palette, statement of values, colours, copy, imagery, marks and straplines and symbols (Rowley, 2009; Rowley, 2004, Magrath & McCormick, 2013; Okonkwo, 2007). A company that uses brand identity elements effectively is then able to strengthen its brand image (Karjalainen, 2007). The facet of brand image represents the sum of beliefs, attitudes, and impressions which are either important or aspirational to the consumer (Barich & Kotler, 1991; Darcy *et al.,* 1989). It is essential that a brands positioning is continuously reinforced and communicated to consumers (Kotler *et al.,* 2013). It is through having a clear brand image and personality that brands are able position themselves to appeal a specific segment of consumers and therefore consumers are able to identify themselves with a given brand (Solomon *et al.,* 2010).

The value of a strong brand is mutually beneficial for both the retailer and the consumer. From the outset, brands are viewed as source of economic superiority for an organisation since consumers are willing to pay a premium for a brand that possesses a unique strength and is differentiated from others in the market place (Magrath & McCormick, 2013; Jacoby & Chestnut, 1978; Nykiel, 1997). Strong brands can also result in higher revenue (Aaker 1991; Kapferer 2004: Keller 2003). For the customer, brand equity aids decision-making as a path to purchase because brand equity enhances the customer's interpretation and processing of information (Aaker, 1991). Brand equity can aid consumer confidence in the purchase decision because consumers are more comfortable with a brand that was last used, a brand that is considered to have high quality, or a brand that is familiar (Aaker 1992). To this end, brands can form part of a consideration set to aid decision-making (Baldauf e*t al.,* 2003).

Key drivers of brand equity include marketing strategies that influence brand awareness and perceptions (Verhoef & Lemon, 2013). Multichannel shopping was one such strategy that was focused on enhancing customer brand equity (Flack, 2000). However, retailers are yet to achieve best practice in across channel retailing, as discussed in the previous chapter. This study asserts that the context of omnichannel has the potential to affect consumer attitudes towards a retail brand and ultimately affect brand equity. This is supported by Swoboda *et al.* (2016) who assert that omnichannel retailing is important to brand equity because brand image for a single brand can be different both offline and online and there is a need for retailers to manage the brand image

across channels. The basis for strong brand equity is through the strength, familiarity and uniqueness of the brand all playing a role in creating the differential impact (Keller, 1993). In an omnichannel environment the strength of the brand across channels is important because each channel contributes to the consumers perception of the brand. Therefore, there is an even greater need to ensure that the brand must be managed effectively across channels in this new retail environment. Where brand equity is achieved it signifies that the customers subjective perception of the firm's offering is beyond its objectively perceived value in terms of product differentiation and customer recognition (Verhoef & Lemon, 2013; Keller, 2003; Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993). High brand equity means that brands possess high loyalty, high perceived quality, strong brand association, name awareness and channel relationships, and can command a large premium (Rowley, 2004; Keller, 1993).

3.6.2   Brand Management

Brand management is a marketing tool which is concerned with understanding the perceived value of a product and encompasses managing the brand identity and the brand positioning; creating a preference for the brand in the market place (Kapferer, 2012; Kapferer & Bastein, 2009). The need for brand management derives from the original purpose of a brand which is concerned with product distinctiveness and differentiation and for the product to eventually satisfy the needs of consumers (Doyle *et al.,* 2008; Levitt, 1960). Originally, the 4Ps marketing (product, price, promotion and place) were focused upon achieving brand recognition and acquisition among the target audience (Kapferer, 2012; Kotler, *et al.,* 2013). Through this approach brands would achieve awareness (Kotler *et al.,* 2013; Baldauf, 2003). Therefore, the 4Ps approach took a transactional view of marketing focused on customer acquisition. However, a noted criticism the 4Ps model was that it failed to acknowledge the role of a two-way relationship between the consumer and the brand (Waterschoot and Van Den Bulte, 1992 *op cit.* Duncan and Moriarty, 1998).

More recently, brand management literature has moved away from focusing on transaction and customer acquisition to a more relationship-based orientation which considers the lifetime value of the customer and forming deep bonds with the customer (Kapferer, 2012; Webster, 1992; Sheth 1991; Duncan and Moriarty, 1998). Now, the importance of creating bonds with customers has become so important that brand management has become synonymous with building and managing customer relationships. (Story and Hess, 2010). The role of the brand now is to provide reassurance and generate trust. (Kapferer, 2012). It was this drive to manage consumer relationships that acted as the catalyst relationship marketing and marketing communications (Duncan and Moriarty, 1998). A relationship-based approach recognises the importance of communication and interaction not simply at the point of transaction but also before and after to help create bonds with customers. Thus, when applying this to the theory of the consumer decision process brand management is important across each of the stages of the decision-making process. There is a need to examine more deeply how each of the interactions across each different stage of the journey contribute towards the consumers' overall brand experience.

Achieving customer satisfaction is another component in building successful customer relationships. Consequently, brand management must also consider the importance of understanding and managing customer expectations. Consumer expectations are key determinants of their consumption experiences (Ofir and Simonson, 2007). Today, it is about achieving satisfaction not just at the transaction but at post-purchase as well (Kapferer, 2012). It is the role of the brand to and consequently the brand manager to set expectations (Ofir and Simondson, 2007). Although, brands are complex and are perceived, interpreted and internalised by the consumer (McGoldrick, 2002; Carbone and Haeckel, 1994). This can mean that consumers perceptions of brands can differ from that intended by marketers (McGoldrick 2002). Reflecting upon this, it is also necessary for brand managers to understand and examine any gaps in the consumer experience whereby the brand does not live up to expectations. The pressure as a result of high expectations means that the brand must reinforce the brand value and deliver on the expectations set at each step of customer contact to ensure a flawless experience (Keller, 2017; Schreuer, 2000). It is the perception in the consumers mind that is paramount not simply the organisational view. Brand management is also about meeting consumers expectations

consistently in order to foster loyalty (Kapferer, 2012). In instances where expectations are set, and the brand does not deliver these, it will exaggerate disconfirmation (Lee and Back, 2008). Brands that do not deliver on expectations will suffer as customers not only leave but also share their experiences (Schreuer, 2000). This is even more visible in the omnichannel context because of the rise of social media.

What brand management and expectations highlight is that consumers use brands as a source of reassurance in the decision journey. Therefore, by meeting expectations customers are reassured. Rosenbaum-Elliott *et al.,* (2015) assert that successful branding will provide customers with reassurance. Reassurance denotes a safe choice and demonstrates a deeper connection with the brand and it is the consistency of the brand over time which serves as reassurance in the mind of the consumer (Rosenbaum *et al.,* 2015). This reassurance helps ease the burden of decision-making as the consumer can expect the brand to fulfil needs or wants because of the connection with reassurance and past experience or brand perception. This finding begins to demonstrate the role of brand within decision making as a source of risk reduction. Through reassurance consumers are able to reduce or minimise their risk (Beneke *et al.,* 2013). Consumers desire the reassurance of a well-known brand (Aaker, 1992; Kapferer, 2012). This is no more optimised by the luxury market where the reassurance is expected from a luxury brand and enhances the value (Vigneron, 1999; Keller 2017).

Through brand management and building a strong brand, consumers are able to associate that brand with a specific need or product class (Keller 2001; Keller 2010). The role of brand management has even more importance in the fashion marketing and retailing. It is under the remit of brand management that fashion marketing strategies are executed (Liu *et al,* 2016). For fashion, effective and efficient brand management is critical in the positioning and also the repositioning of a fashion brand (Moore & Birtwistle, 2004). Brand management is critical for the apparel category because of the social and psychological values associated with fashion and more so for this study because Kwon and Lennon (2009) indicate that fashion brands are especially important to young fashion consumers. In fashion, the reassurance of the brand extends beyond the product quality to reassurance in supporting the consumer's personal image (Porter and Claycomb, 1997).

3.6.2.1 Brand Management Across Channels

The retail brand management process involves the creation and reinforcement of the branded shopping experience (Varley, 2014). Although many contributions exist there is a still a need for more research on customer experiences to understand how it can contribute to knowledge on brand management (Payne *et al.,* 2009). Currently, there is a need focus on managing brands effectively across an array of channels. By doing so, brand equity can be optimised (Keller, 2010). Retail channels, in particular, facilitate brand recognition, strengthen brand associations and influence experiential feelings (Keller, 2010). Channels can also shape judgements and feelings towards a brand (Keller, 2010). However, brand management across channels presents a number of challenges. When a retailer has multiple channels the cross-channel experience should be complementary and seamlessly integrated to one another to avoid risking dilution of the overall brand image (Kwon and Lennon, 2009). Brands that are managed successfully across channels can benefit from a 'halo' effect whereby a strong brand image in one channel is projected onto another channel of the same retailer (Kwon and Lennon, 2009). Likewise, there will be a negative impact should one channel fail to live up to the consumers expectations of the brand.

Brand management is, therefore, about actively managing the processes to support the customer experience (Frow and Payne 2007). It is the role of the brand manager to be responsible for the total management of the brand and delivery of integrated marketing communications (McGoldrick *et al.,* 2002; Kotler, 2013). Hence, for omnichannel brand management needs to have cross-channel responsibility rather than functioning in a silo-like manner. Cross-channel strategic brand management has been receiving growing attention in the literature for example, Kwon and Lennon (2009). Whilst channels were previously discussed from a distribution point of view, channel management and channel communications has gradually become merged, recognising the

role of relationships as being important (Duncan and Moriarty, 1998). Today consumers have the option to choose how they wish to communicate and interact with a brand. In the omnichannel environment shoppers are using a variety of channels to acquire knowledge and engage with brands and also to interact with other consumers.

Branding scholars have been deeply engaged in the identification of different interactions between brand and consumer (Jones & Runyan, 2013). The tight integration of multiple channels has tended to focus upon the functional integration of infrastructure, but integrated multiple channel brand strategies are now needed to facilitate symbolic and experiential brand management (Kwon and Lennon, 2009). Channels are no longer viewed simply a means of facilitating transactions between the customer and the brand. Channels facilitate brand management and aid in establishing and developing relationships. For example, the store channel can be used as a device of brand communication (Doyle *et al.*, 2008). Jones and Runyan (2013) found that channels serve as a critical moderator among the brand-consumer relationship and recognised the importance of brand management in multichannel settings. Accordingly, cross-channel brand management is essential because cumulatively interactions can undermine or enrich the brand (Kotler *et al.,* 2013; Carlson & O'Cass, 2011). The concept of omnichannel and brand management link well since both concepts are concerned with being customer-centric. Unlike multichannel, omnichannel has a specific mandate to focus on the brand experience which emphasises the need for greater discussion on brand management across channels.

3.6.3   Brands Enabling & Simplifying Decision-Making

Brands are a means of both enabling and simplifying consumer decision-making. The theory of bounded rationality posits that consumers are beset with numerous decision situations every day and the extent of each decision-making instance is moderated by the situation, the time available, an individual's cognitive capacity and attention (March, 1978; 1979). Consequently, individuals will look for shortcuts to ease the burden of decision-making to avoid being constantly paralysed in thought (Doyle, 1991; Soars, 2003). Decision-making in an omnichannel environment shares a specific link with bounded rationality because in today's challenging retail environment shoppers are subject to information overload. This information is not only in the form of retailer marketing but as a result of the fashion industry being democratised, whereby consumers can reach out to peers and bloggers, via social networks, to gain information. Consequently, the cognitive burden associated with decision-making for fashion is particularly great.

Conveniently, brands serve as a heuristic route to enable the decision-making process by simplifying it (Keller, 2013; Davis, 2000, Keller, 1993; Goodyear, 1993; de Chernatony & Dall'Olmo Riley, 1998; Macdonald & Sharp, 2000). For the consumer, fashion forms a critical part of everyday consumption decisions (O'Cass and McEwan, 2004). What branding contributes to this overall discussion is that fashion branding is a pernicious and constant influence for the fashion consumer who buys and wears brands every day, displaying these to others. Fashion consumers will seek to choose brands whose image, identity and personality correlates with their own identity or their aspirational self. However, the success of a fashion purchase decision is the ability of the consumer to choose the right brand (O'Cass, 2004).

A brand name initiates memory nodes in the mind (Aaker, 1991) and as a consequence, certain brands will become embedded within an individual's consideration set (Keller, 2003). Shoppers are therefore able to use brand names as an alternative to seeking-out product information (Ward & Lee, 2000). For the product category of fashion, brand is important since there is little to functionally differentiate fashion products and it is through identity elements, that the fashion product can be visually differentiated in the mind of the consumer (Fernie *et al.*, 1997). For example, when a consumer makes a decision in relation to fashion brand the insignia or label may conjure images of the fashion hierarchy or associations, thus influencing the purchase decision (Hancock 2009). As brands become embedded in the mind of the shopper brands also act as a form of 'competitive insulation' (Jones & Kim, 2010). What brands do in such instances is aid buyers in forming expectations (Davis, 2000). For example, the brand name and image can infer information about quantity, quality and variety of products (Teo & Yeong, 2003; Oh & Fiorito,

2002). Brands also serve as a guarantee for trust and risk reduction (Ha & Perks, 2005; Darley *et al.*, 2010; Matzler *et al.,* 2008; Radder & Huang, 2008; Davis, 2000. This emphasises that brands provide reassurance that expectations will be met by being consistently over time.

Yet, what is clear is that the extent of brand influence stretches beyond the purchase transaction. Brands play a role in future purchase intentions whereby consumers will repurchase brands time and time again (Jones & Kim, 2010; Rowley, 2009; Park & Stoel, 2005; Teo & Yeong, 2003; Keller, 2003). In a study of college students' consumer decision-making styles both brand consciousness and brand loyalty were positively correlated with online apparel shopping (Cowart & Goldsmith, 2007). From a brand loyalty perspective consumers who make repeat purchases base this upon a deeply held commitment towards a brand (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Day, 1969; Cowart & Goldsmith, 2007; Oliver, 1999, Jacboy & Chestnut, 1978). Brand loyalty is a key component of achieving a competitive success and brand equity in the fashion industry (Nunes & Agante, 2014). High loyalty is also associated with omnichannel consumers which highlights the relevance of brand within the omnichannel context. What is also interesting with fashion is that brand loyal fashion consumers will also be willing to share their opinions regarding brands through positive word of mouth (Zeithaml *et al.,* 1996; Park & Cho, 2012; Foxall and Yani-de-Soriano, 2005). This is something which the omnichannel environment facilitates and this needs to be more greatly evidenced in decision-making models.

3.6.4   Importance of Brands for Fashion Consumers
As mentioned in the previous section, fashion clothing is inextricably linked to the self (Solomon and Rabolt, 2009; Kaiser, 1990). It is this self-concept which mediates the purchase decision-making process (Dolich, 1969; Mehta, 1999). Therefore, fashion is not simply about meeting functional needs but also fulfilling the hedonic needs of the individual (Hameide, 2011; Rowley, 2009; Bhat & Reddy, 1998; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; O'Cass & Frost, 2002). Brands play an important role in fulfilling those hedonic needs and can also aid in the evaluation of products through the connotations that a particular brand signifies and this is explored as follows:

3.6.4.1   Conspicuous Consumption & Symbolism
Conspicuous consumption is defined as the creation of identity and achievement of greater social status through specific consumption practices, such as placing a high emphasis on brands (O'Cass & Siahtiri, 2013; Veblen, 2009). Within conspicuous consumption the impact of brand is powerful since individuals will make purchase decisions in order to optimally assert their desired identity alongside their actual identity. Fashion brands, are inherently associated with conspicuous consumption and are used to create identity and enable image portrayal and personal status to be communicated others (O'Cass & McEwen, 2004; Eastman *et al.,* 1999). By owning particular brands an individual may achieve a certain social status and prestige that they desire (O'Cass & McEwen, 2004; McCracken, 1988).

The purchase of luxury brands epitomises the high importance of fashion in society, whereby clothes are used to signal social status and for self-expression to reflect how individuals feel or see themselves and how they wish to be viewed by others (Tungate 2008, Kim, 2012; Veblen, 2009; Sproles, 1979). Consumers will actively display such brands and products overtly in order to gain approval, recognition or acceptance from others (O'Cass & McEwen, 2004; Veblen, 2009). For females, in particular, fashion is a prominent device in which to communicate status (Loulakis & Hill, 2010; O'Cass, 2001). The concept of conspicuous consumption therefore recognises an individual's psychological motivation for to "show-off". Hence, in the current study will seek to find evidence of activities where consumers seek to gain recognition, approval or acceptance in a social context during the shopping journey for fashion and how young female consumers do this using a variety of channels and devices.

In order for brands to convey meanings they must not only be conspicuously consumed but also be symbolic (Ross, 1971). Symbolism has a specific role in decision-making, it is critical because consumers make consumption decisions based upon subjective criteria such as the desire to express one's self and it is the symbolic functions of brands that satisfy such needs for needs

self-expression (Schiffman & Kanuk, 1994; Neumeier, 2003). This means that consumers will choose fashion brands whose image and brand personality corresponds with their own ideals and serve as a means of self-expression in enhancing social and self-identity (Solomon *et al*, 2014; Fionda and Moore, 2009; Kim, 2012; Fang and Ma, 2012; Bhat and Reddy 1998; Michaelidou and Dibb, 2006). From the retailer point of view, it is necessary to reinforce the fashion credentials of the brand to aid decision-making when consumers reach the store (Lea-Greenwood, 2013; Barnes & Lea-Greenwood, 2010). Therefore, in the decision-making journey of omnichannel consumers it is necessary to understand consumers expectations of a brand that operates across many channels and to examine how effective brands are at communicating their identity across channels to avoid it becoming confused and ultimately diluting a brand's symbolic value.

3.6.4.2 Fulfilling Aspirations

Linking to the discussion on brand symbolism and conspicuous consumption, brands also play a crucial role in signifying the aspirations of the brand wearer (Evans, 1989). Consumers construct and represent themselves through their choice of brand associations and place the highest importance of possession on those brands that integrate the consumers' self-image with their aspirational image (Escalas and Bettman 2005). It is specifically the values of a brand that are able to connect with and match an individual's aspirational desires (Doyle, 1991). For fashion, it is the fulfilment of aspirations that drives the marketing process (Craik, 2009). Consequently, aspirations can be a driver of the consumer decision process since new needs and wants are being continuously identified by the fashion consumer.

Fashion clothing as a product category is known as a medium which is commonly used to reflect an individual's aspirations (Kasier, 1998). In such instances, consumers will select products for their prestigious image and desirable qualities in the belief that such characteristics will then transfer onto consumers themselves (Solomon *et al.,* 2006; Fionda and Moore, 2009; Keller, 2009). Moreover, aspirational values towards fashion are especially important to young consumers when examining clothing behaviours (Goldsmith *et al.,* 2009). Even though some fashion brands may be completely inaccessible to particular consumer groups, certain brands can still be perceived as aspirational (Troung, 2009).

The outcome of fulfilment of aspirations is that individuals can expect to achieve happiness (Goldsmith *et al.,* 2009). In the omnichannel environment there is a need to revisit the beginning of the decision process to gain an in-depth understanding as to how and which channels are used in the omnichannel environment to aid in decision making, need recognition and aspiration development. This is important as it will provide insights as to how digital channels such as social media are employed to help consumers commence their shopping journeys for fashion. The information will also aid understanding about how consumers learn about brands in the first place.

3.6.4.3 Enabling Social Belonging

Materialism is about an individual's orientation towards material goods as a route to personal and social gain and is determined by personality traits and upon the importance that an individual places upon such possessions (Ward and Wackman, 1971; Belk, 1985; Schaefer *et al.,* 2004) The act of consumption is a method to denote group membership (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001; Fournier, 1998; Hogg *et al.,* 2009). Brands can serve as a tool for social symbolism, whereby the meaning of a brand is shared by a wider community or group and not simply in isolation, between an individual and the label (Escalas & Bettman, 2005; Jones & Runyan, 2013). In a fashion context, clothing brands serve as a "communicative short-hand" to denote social belonging and assert aspirations (Evans, 1989 *op cit.* Fernie *et al.,* 1997). Interestingly, individuals will proactively seek to define themselves by being part of specific social groups (Karaosmanoglu & Melewar, 2006).

Examples of social belonging includes groups such as: brand communities, consumers tribes and reference groups. Brand communities have become important whereby consumers who have a shared interest in a brand can come together as a collective and serve as advocates for the brand (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001; Cova & White, 2010). Tribes distinctively focus on consumption communities with common interests that are not centred upon singular brands and are therefore

more fluid in nature (Cova *et al.,* 2007). Reference groups act as a source of influence credibility for consumers providing information (Childers & Rao, 1992). Examples of reference groups include fashion bloggers. While social belonging is useful for the consumer it is also beneficial for brands as a powerful way of communication in marketing environments which are overloaded with communications (Algesheimer *et al.,* 2005). Therefore, in the omnichannel environment and through the use of social media, brands can rapidly gain awareness.

The social context of brand influence extends beyond social belonging and group membership and can affect individuals at a deeply personal level. From a decision-making stance, personal image is tied to the outcome of the purchase decision for fashion category purchases (Stanton and Paolo, 2012). Fashion is highly symbolic dimension and shoppers will seek to avoid negative external evaluation from others (Bannister and Hogg, 2004; O'Cass, 2004, Kaiser, 1990; Shim and Koh, 1997; Beaudoin and Lachance, 2006). Therefore, this highlights a human's need for social approval and their perception of risk (Witt & Bruce, 1972; Bearden & Etzel, 1982). There is a further level of complexity that adds to this. The rise of social media technology has been useful as a way of connecting brands to their audiences as well as connecting consumers with common brand interests together. However, this open communication also exposes the consumer to greater levels of risk as peers both familiar and unknown peers can make comments both positive and negative regarding an individual's fashion choices. Haubl and Trifts (2000) and Teo and Yeong (2000) agree that as consumer decision-making activity moves to the digital environment, the cognitive and social dimensions decision-making will evolve and are yet to be fully explore. Wolny and Charoensuksai (2014) also touch upon this acknowledging that shopping in a multichannel context has now become socially-mediated. The current study will seek to understand how and why social evaluations takes place within the decision-journey for fashion.

3.6.5 Omnichannel Brand Marcomms Enabling Decision-Making

Online branding is defined as a brand that has a presence online and how the online channel is used to support the brand (Rowley, 2009). In a now digitised world of fashion retailing channels have exponentially increased and created marketing communications information overload. Accordingly, brands have become even more so important because they aid the decision-making process customer time by reducing their search costs and helping them to make choices in a world that is replete with choice (Rowley 2009). Digital literature has progressed to reflect this growing range of channels and yet, there is only limited work to understand consumer behaviours in a multichannel setting and specifically how brands moderate this (Jones & Kim, 2010; Noh & Lee, 2011). Emergent discussions highlight the need for consistency of brands across channels which has been an issue which first surfaced in discussions on the multichannel environment (Jones & Runyan, 2013; Berman & Thelen, 2004; Kwon & Lennon, 2009). However, as brands are failing to achieve best practice across channels this suggests that more investigation is required. Brand consistency is an important issue since consumer attitudes from one channel may be transferred to another (Wang, Beatty and Mothersbaugh, 2009; Kwon and Lennon, 2009). This is further important in an omnichannel setting because the transition across channels should be seamless. Omnichannel is a good basis from which to explore the role of branding in decision-making journeys that encompass an array of channels. The call by Nysveen *et al.* (2005) and Rowley (2009) to understand the contribution of different channels to brand relationships has yet to be fully answered. Indeed, Rowley (2009) states that delivery of a consistent and joined-up brand experience is dependent on operational integration.

Unlike multichannel, where integration was an operational ideal and did not reflect reality. Omnichannel's point of difference is that the concept has a specific mandate to focus on cross-channel brand experiences and is about operational integration as a key benchmark rather than an aspirational goal. Furthermore, branding forms part of the defining components of omnichannel as demonstrated in section 2.5. The current study can add to knowledge by exploring how the stages of the customer decision journey affect a consumer's relationship with the brand. Specific attention can be directed towards examining how consistency or inconsistency affect decision-making, to understand what elements of the brand the consumer values as being consistent and to understand how branding affects the journey at a holistic level. From a decision-making view,

consumers need to reconcile information about products and brands in their own mind and this therefore suggests that inconsistency could hamper decision-making for the consumer. Added to this, the nature of the fashion product as a complex product category means that the experience is important as well as the product itself when purchasing (Jones & Kim, 2010; Rowley, 2009).

3.7   Risk in Consumer Decision-Making

Objective four sought to analyse how the shopping behaviour of young high involvement female fashion consumers has changed and the impact this has on decision-making, specifically in terms of perceived risk in the context of an omnichannel shopping journey. Consequently, there was a need to examine literature on risk and its relationship with decision making and this is discussed in this section.

Expected utility theory underpins decision-making under risk and asserts that individuals will make decisions under conditions of uncertainty and will make choices based upon all the availability of options and the probability of each outcome (Kardes *et al.,* 2011). The underlying rule of decision situations is that consumers will attempt to aim for a positive outcome and are naturally risk averse (Kardes *et al.,* 2011; Dubois, 2000; Liljander, 2009; Quintal *et al.,* 2005). In the case of fashion consumer behaviour specifically, decision-making is also motivated by the expectation of achieving a successful outcome (Solomon and Rabolt, 2009). Therefore, it is necessary for the fashion consumer to manage and deal with risk in their decision-making journey.

As a construct, perceived risk is concerned with the nature and amount of risk in a purchase decision (Cox and Rich, 1964). In Bauer's (1960 *op cit.* Ross, 1975) definition, perceived risk recognises that consumer behaviour involves perceived risk and that any action taken by a consumer will incur uncertainty of an outcome and consequences. Uncertainty relates to the risk uncertainty - as a subjective feeling rather than a probability of an outcome - and consequences relate to the severity of negative outcomes associated with a choice (Rousseau, 1998; Matzler *et al.* 2008; Koller and Salzberger, 2007; Laurent and Kapferer 1993,1995). The risk perceived can be inherent risk associated with a particular product category as well as handled risk which derives from brand information and a given shopping situation (Bettman, 1973; Cox and Rich, 1964, Park and Stoel, 2005). These aspects of risk will be examined in more detailed in the following sub-sections.

3.7.1   Fashion Product Category & Risk

Different product categories vary as to the extent of the risk associated with them. As mentioned earlier, risk with a product class is derived from the inherent risk associated with the product itself and the handled risk which is determined by brand information in a given shopping decision situation (Bettman, 1973; Cox and Rich, 1964, Park and Stoel, 2005). Clothing is a high-risk product category due to risk associated with sizing and fit (Park & Stoel, 2005) and because it is a product category that is consumed publicly (Goldmsith *et al.,* 2012). The consequence of the extent of risk associated with fashion is significant. Clothing is associated with high social and psychological risk and in instances when such risks are realised it could induce low self-esteem (Beaudoin & Lachance, 2006). In making decisions about fashion, consumers desire to purchase apparel that is reflective of the self, that is consistent with how one would want to appear to others and correlates with how the individual views their ideal self (Solomon & Rabolt, 2009). Therefore, implications of getting such a fashion purchase wrong could present a negative psychological effect on an individual.

Fashion forms part of everyday consumption decisions (O'Cass and McEwen, 2004). The nature of fashion emphasises its complexity as a product category and enables the research to identify distinctive phenomena in relation to risk. Perceived risk is a multi-dimensional construct and a number of core types of risk can emerge for the fashion product category: financial risk (prices of apparel, financial loss), performance (style, durability or wear life of apparel product), physical (bodily discomfort, discomfort, appearance), psychological (self-esteem) and social risk and temporal risk (Mitchell, 1992; Jacoby and Kaplan, 1972; Park and Stoel, 2002; Kwon *et al.,* 1991; Winakor *et al.,* 1980; Laurent and Kapferer, 1985; Schoenbachler and Gordon 2002). The

literature also highlights that some of these risks are related. For example, socio-psychological risk encompasses fashion innovation, acceptance, planning purchases and social conformance (Park and Stoel, 2002). What is particularly important for the current study is that fashion possesses a high social value (Banister & Hogg, 2004; O'Cass 2004). The extent of this social value is typified by the fact that literature has suggested that the social importance of clothing actually outweighs the importance of apparel as a tool to express individual identity (Noesjirwan & Crawford, 1982). Therefore, as consumers progress through the decision process fashion choices are subject to the perception of others and not just to the opinion of the wearer. Self-image and psychological risk are also applicable whereby an individual's self-esteem can be affected as a result of a poor fashion choice (Liljander *et al.,* 2009). The risk of making a poor decision can result in the consumer experiencing negative effects such as: anxiety. Anxiety is triggered when the decision is regarded as significant to the individual, where there is deficient information or due to limited familiarity (Soutar & Sweeney, 2003). Feelings of confusion may also be triggered when choosing from a range of alternatives (Walsh & Mitchell, 2010; Simpson *et al.,* 2008). Hence fashion is a complex product category which is deeply rooted in the psyche of the fashion shopper unlike other product categories which do not possess such severe implications. In attempting to understand risk in consumer decision-making the study is therefore aware that there are specific dimensions of risk that are specifically related to fashion.

3.7.2 Involvement and Perceived Risk Relationship

Adding further complexity to fashion decision-making is the fact that the consumers in this study are highly involved in the product category of fashion and this presents further implications for risk. Involvement and perceived risk are both inextricably linked yet individually distinct constructs. While involvement purchasing requires problem solving behaviour and having some high degree of personal importance (Patterson, 1993; Pires *et al.,* 2004). The nature of perceived risk on the other hand is important in defining customers information needs and processing of information during decision making perceived risk (Dholakia, 1997). Within the consumer behaviour literature involvement and perceived risk share commonalities, including their product specific nature, the common denominator of extensive information search and information processing and the overall depth, complexity and extensiveness of cognitive and behavioural processes associated with both constructs (Dholakia, 1997). The constructs are also distinct because product risk considers only the negative consequences arising from the purchase and consumption while the level of product involvement also accounts for by positive consequences and also connected to ego-involvement (Dholakia, 1997). Furthermore, in post-purchase behaviour, high involvement means a more intense post-purchase evaluation (Patterson, 1993). Complex buying behaviour is often characterised by high involvement. The complexity of this stems from the fact that perceived risk tends to be higher for high involvement product choice situations (Dowling 1986; Pires *et al.,* 2004; Patterson, 1993). Furthermore, high involvement purchase situations are particularly suited to studies on perceived risk (Dowling and Staelin, 1994) and apparel is a common product category and provides a good basis from which to examine perceived risk and involvement (Mitchell, 1999). Hence, the current study will be able to provide a rich view of high involvement consumer perceptions of risk across the omnichannel decision-making journey for fashion.

The nature of the fashion market at present means that individuals who are highly involved in the product category are constantly able to acquire new information because of fashion trends and seasons change rapidly. Therefore, this perpetuates the consumers high involvement tendency and also perpetuates risk because the fashion retail environment is constantly changing. From a perceived risk perspective fashion is deeply connected to an individual's self-concept therefore by examining risk and involvement together we are able to have a deeper understanding of how consumers are affected by fashion decision-making rather than a study featuring only one of these dimensions. This is further supported by Moorthy *et al.* (1997) since involvement is not adequate alone to induce extensive information search but that there is a need for uncertainty (risk) for the extensive information search activities to be useful. Dissonance reducing buying behaviour is also characterised by high involvement and in order to reduce such dissonance shoppers will gather information about a purchase which is favourable and reinforces a choice (Mitchell, 1992). In the

fashion context, there is a need to understand how consumers reduce the dissonance they experience through using the omnichannel environment as a context.

3.7.3 Consumer Decision-Making Process & Risk

Perceived risk has a long and varied research tradition, yet many authors have failed to recognize in their research how pervasive the construct across the stages of the buying process (Mitchell, 1992). Risk influences different stages of the decision process and this is summarised in the following Table 10. In particular the pre-decision phase is one which is typically concerned with perceived risk (Koller & Salzberger, 2007). Risk is present before the purchase because consumers are unable to guarantee that a particular purchase will fulfil a particular set of buying goals (Cox and Rich, 1964). At this stage, it is also about focusing on increasing the amount of certainty that a satisfactory product will be purchased (Mitchell, 1992). While the post-decision phase is associated with the reduction of risk (i.e. the reduction of the consequences of an unsatisfactory purchase) (Mitchell, 1992).

Table 10 Risk & Dissonance in the Stages of the Decision-Making Process

Stage of Decision Process	Risk Experience	Authors
Problem/Need Recognition	• Marketers use perceived risk to stimulate problem/need recognition.	(Mitchell, 1992)
Information Search	• Engaging in an information search is a result of perceiving risk in the purchase. • The amount of information or intensity of information search may vary dependent upon the level of risk.	(Mitchell, 1992; Bauer, 1960; Cox, 1967; Gemunden, 1985; Koller and Salzberger, 2007; Park and Stoel 2002)
Evaluation of Alternatives	• Consumers use criteria or attributes to judge products e.g. brand and use weightings to judge the importance of each attribute. However, uncertainty is still present.	(Mitchell, 1992; Cox and Rich,1964;)
Purchase Decision	• If the item cannot be purchased for a reason there may be an associated risk and an alternative will be chosen which may heighten risk. • The risk associated with which store the purchase will be made from. • The risk associated with the timing of the purchase. • The risk of getting the purchase wrong.	(Mitchell, 1992)
Post-Purchase Behaviour	• Customer is either satisfied or dissatisfied with the purchase. • In instances of dissatisfaction the consumer will try to reduce internal dissonance through reducing the consequences of an unsatisfactory purchase e.g. through returns.	(Mitchell, 1992; Koller and Salzberger, 2006)

In order for consumers to reduce the amount of risk experienced, information is required in order to decrease uncertainty and to assess consequences. For this reason, information search is a key component of decision-making and is concerned with decreasing perceptions of risk (Park and Stoel, 2002). Information seeking is a useful strategy to cope with uncertainty and risk (Cox 1967, Park and Stoel 2002, Sheth and Vekaesan 1968). Information seeking involves three processes: information acquisition, processing and transmission and for apparel purchasing the process involves acquiring, processing and transmitting information about the apparel product and/or

associated services (Park and Stoel, 2002). Within the consumer decision process fashion presents challenges for the consumer when shopping across both physical and remote channels because consumers will have to make decisions about a product with incomplete information, such as not being able to try the garment on in advance and this therefore presents a high level of risk. Apparel has a sensory and interactive nature, where consumers are likely to physically examine the characteristics of a garment such as: colour, size, design, fabric and fit (Ha and Stoel, 2004; Blázquez, 2014). Interacting with a garment prior to purchase helps to manage the risk associated with it. Therefore, the shopping experience via digital channels has the potential to be more negative because the opportunity to interact with the product is not available. Information is one of the ways in which fashion retailers seek to reduce perceived risk online. This is further supported by the fact that intention to search for information and satisfaction with the level of information provided has a direct effect on the intention to make a purchase (Shim *et al.*, 2000; Park and Stoel, 2002*)*. Product information cues relating to apparel will include colour, price, fibre content, care instructions, country of origin and identification of manufacturer (Park and Stoel, 2002). This information decreases perceptions of physical and socio-psychological risk, customer service information also influences perceptions of risk e.g. returns (Park and Stoel, 2002).

While it is evident that risk is present across different stages of the decision process there is still a need to examine how the omnichannel decision journey affects consumers perceptions of risk at a holistic level in terms of both heightening and mitigating the risk experienced. There is also a need to examine post-purchase decision behaviour with regards to risk. Based upon Table 10 post-purchase behaviour is once again grouped and therefore there is not a detailed breakdown of how risk is experienced at a more granular level at post-purchase. Therefore, the current study can contribute by understanding the specific post-purchase stages of the omnichannel journey and how they relate to risk. Consumers also have to deal with managing positives and negative aspects of decision-making therefore the current study will look at the risk-reduction strategies that fashion consumers employ in order to manage the risk associated with a fashion purchase decision in the omnichannel environment.

Decision-making can be stressful or positive (Korgaonkar & Moschis, 1982). From a marketing point of view, satisfaction is the ultimate goal of decision-making, it reflects a positive judgement on the decision by the consumer and is a positive indicator of business performance (Jones & Reynolds, 2006; Otieno *et al.,* 2005; Liljander *et al.,* 2009). For the fashion consumer, decision-making is motivated by the goal of achieving a positive outcome. Not only this, but even during the decision process positive feelings reduce the complexity and time required to make a decision (Isen *et al.* 1982). However, should satisfaction not be achieved consumers may demonstrate negative behaviours such as negative word of mouth and disloyalty (Korgaonkar & Moschis, 1982; Jones & Reynolds, 2006).

3.7.3.1 The Role of Cognitive Dissonance

Both perceived risk and cognitive dissonance are considered to be important triggers of uncertainty in the decision-making process. Cognitive dissonance explains consumer decision-making behaviour at the post-purchase stage. The construct describes the psychological discomfort for example, frustration, caused as a result of inconsistency between beliefs and behaviours and reflects the complexity associated with decision-making (Festinger, 1957; Aronson, 1969). The term dissonance reflects and combines learning, thinking and reasoning with discordant thoughts or feelings. Shoppers are unable to achieve absolute confidence when making decisions are therefore are likely to incur decision dissonance (Kassarjian and Cohen, 1965). Following the point at which at which a decision has been made consumers can begin focus on the unfavourable properties of the chosen alternative as well as the favourable features of the rejected alternatives triggering dissonant feelings. At this point the consumer is in doubt whether his or her choice was the best that could have been made and is therefore experiencing post-purchase dissonance (Koller and Salzberger, 2007). To reconcile any dissonant feelings an individual will display positive bias towards a chosen product against the rejected alternatives (Brehm, 1956; Nadeem, 2007). Thus, consumers will attempt to internally justify their choices to reconcile such discordant thoughts or feelings.

Quintal *et al.,* (2005) call for a model that provides a greater understanding of and risk in order to better understand how consumers respond to making a purchase and to provide strategies to reduce these forms of anxiety. Therefore, the study will look at risk reduction strategies across the decision stages of the journey for fashion. Meanwhile there is still a need for further research which examines the role of dissonance in the context of the digital retailing environment. It is anticipated that technology in the omnichannel environment will have an effect on consumers perceived risk and the potential for dissonance and it is the role of the current study to articulate how this manifests itself.

3.7.4   Nature & Intensity of Risk

The intensity of risk associated with a product category can be classed as high or low risk. As discussed earlier, and as supported by Park and Stoel (2005), apparel is a high-risk product category. Fashion is high risk due to practical issues with sizing and fit (Park and Stoel, 2005) and because fashion is symbolic and highly visible to others (Lamb *et al.,* 2014). The nature of the fashion industry itself also perpetuates the product category as being high risk because fast-fashion, since the early 2000s, has fuelled consumers changing tastes and efficient consumer response in supply chains has enabled fashion retailers to respond more quickly. For example, fast fashion retailer Zara is now able to deliver product from catwalk to store in three weeks.

The consumer also has a role in moderating the degree and intensity of risk experienced when making shopping decisions. The recognition of risk is not the same for all consumers. Individuals will differ in the amount of risk they are willing to tolerate in a particular situation i.e. an individual's level of risk aversion (Mandrik and Bao, 2005). Risk aversion is defined as the preference for a guaranteed outcome rather than probabilistic one (Qualls and Puto, 1989). Risk averse consumers feel threatened by novel and ambiguous situations and are reluctant to try new products and will tend to stay well established brands to avoid possible losses of trying unknown brands (Matzler 2008). Risk aversion is also dependent upon the level and type of risk in a situation e.g. high social risk or high financial risk (Mandrik and Bao, 2008; Matzler, 2008).

Fashion is an enduring high involvement product category (Fairhurst *et al.,* 1989; Bloch *et al.,* 1986; Warrington and Shim, 2000). For women, especially, fashion clothing is important (Dowling and Staelin, 1994). Hence the high-risk nature of fashion combined with the perceived importance of the product category for women compounds the degree of risk associated with fashion clothing decision-making. The extent of a consumer's level of involvement in a purchase decision will influence their perception of risk and particularly the purchase situations that are high involvement are suited to the study of risk perceptions, such as fashion (Dowling and Staelin, 1994). However, what can be understood is that there is a positive correlation between one's involvement in fashion clothing and the belief in one's own decision-making ability (O'Cass, 2004). Alongside involvement there is also the consideration of the consumers own disposition and propensity towards risk taking behaviour. If an individual is keen to take risks, then the degree of risk they perceive with a particular choice of product or brand may be lower compared to an individual who is naturally more risk-averse.

Aside from the product category and the consumer, the degree of perceived risk is said to vary dependent upon the shopping situation. Due to the nature of retailing existing in both stores and digital channels this has had an impact upon consumers experiences of risk. For example, the digital channel heightens perceived risk because consumers may not be able to interact with the garment prior to making the purchase. Due to the tactile nature of apparel shopping and being unable to try on and inspect the item on prior to purchase, the online channel has therefore been associated with a higher level of perceived risk (Bhatnagar *et al.,* 2000; Hahn and Kim 2009; Ashman and Vazquez, 2012; Choi and Park, 2006). Yet, retail channels have evolved, and now additional digital technologies have enabled multisensory input to be translated to the digital channels (Blázquez, 2014). For example, fashion brand ASOS offer videos of garments alongside static product information as a way to overcome the risks associated with apparel shopping via remote channels.

3.7.4.1 Risk Reduction Strategies

As defined earlier, the concept of perceived risk is concerned with the uncertainty and consequences of making a decision. Being aware of perceived risk means that consumers will look for strategies to reduce risk either by reducing the amount at stake or by doing something to increase the prediction of the probable consequences of the decision. Consumers possess a wide degree of risk-reduction strategies (Dowling & Staelin, 1994). Strategies to reduce to risk include selecting brands, information seeking, relying on past experience and deliberating a purchase, along with risk reduction strategies the digital environment. The subsequent paragraphs in this section discuss different risk reduction strategies that can be employed. However, it is important to note that over time the intensity of such risk-reduction strategies changes, as consumers instead form shortcut decision rules (heuristics) to simplify decision-making processes (Sheth and Venkatesan, 1968).

Taking steps to reduce risk involves the potential to rely on an idea or person (Sheth and Venkatesan, 1968). Therefore, branding comes into play by serving as a popular risk reduction strategy. A brand's basic function in decision-making is to effectively reduce perceived risk and the potential for dissonance in decision-making (Roselius, 1971; Davis, 2000; Festinger 1962; San Martín & Camarero, 2009; Jones & Kim, 2010; Tan, 1999; Fishcer *et al.,* 2004 *op cit* Matzler *et al.,* 2008). Consumers will rely on brands as a heuristic in simplifying the decision. Brands serves as a tool to create confidence and trust among consumers and minimise purchase risk (Sheth and Venkatesan, 1968; Palmer, 1996; Mccoll & Moore, 2010; Birtwistle & Freathy, 1998). In such cases, it is the image of the brand that will be relied upon (Sheth and Venkatesan, 1968). During the decision process consumers will seek a trustworthy and familiar brand in order to avoid risk associated with buying a product (Delgado–Ballester and Munuera Aleman 1999 op cit Matzler *et al.,* 2008; Sheth & Venkatesan, 1968). For clothing purchases, a brand name is a key source of information that consumers will seek (Park & Stoel, 2005; Yang *et al.,* 2007). Brands are also applicable to the online environment and studies have examined brand reputation and brand name as a strategy for risk reduction (Bui & Kemp, 2013; Akaah & Korgaonkar, 1988). In the context of risk aversion consumers who have higher levels of risk aversion tend to be more loyal as a way in which to reduce risk (Matzler *et al.,* 2008; Roselius, 1971*)*. These risk averse consumers will refrain from trying new products and brands in order to avoid losses and will focus on using familiar brands. Over time shoppers will use their memory to help with decision-making. Internal information such as past experience or familiarity with the brand will reduce the risk associated with the decision. In-effect the brand provides reassurance to the consumer that expectations will be met and be satisfied. Consequently, it will important to understand the role that brand plays across the stages of a decision journey as it will have the potential to affect the consumers perceived risk. This is even more so important for fashion since the product category is deeply connected to self-identity and therefore fashion brands are even more prolific in their ability to reduce risk.

Information seeking is a key strategy by which consumers reduce risk. This is particularly important to risk-averse consumers who focus on seeking information to help with decision-making (Moore and Lehmann, 1980; Gemunden, 1985; Cox, 1967). The intensity of an information search in order to reduce risk is based upon balancing purchase situation factors against with the overall perceived risk against what is an acceptable level of risk perceived by the consumer against the ability to sustain loss, as shown Figure 5.

Figure 5 Process Model for Perceived Risk and Information Search
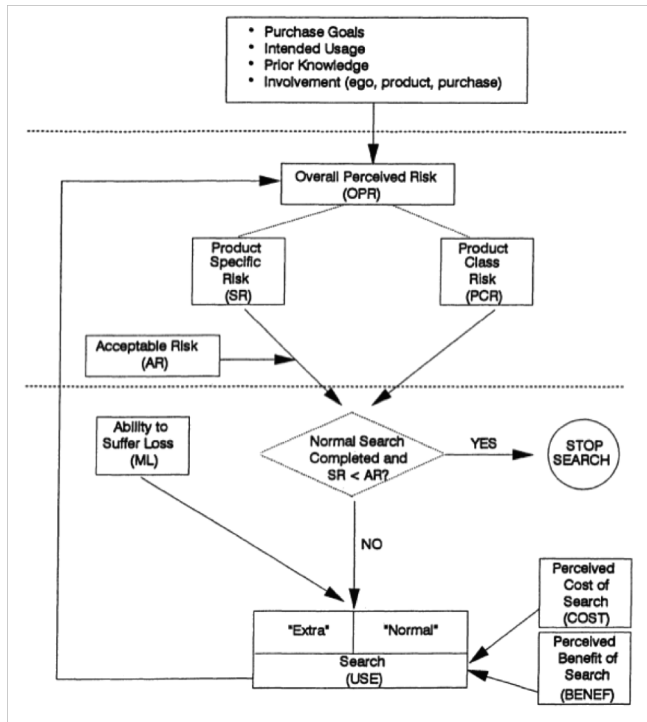
Source: Dowling and Staelin (1994)

Instances where the need for extensive information seeking is evident reflects increased intensity of perceived risk (Mitra *et al.,* 1999; Dowling & Staelin, 1994; Thongpapanl & Ashraf, 2011). Therefore, when discussing a high involvement decision-making instance such as the purchasing fashion apparel the level of acceptable risk and ability to suffer loss becomes a very personal experience which could ultimately have a negative effect on the individual and this creates a strong motivation to seek information extensively. Bloch (1982) suggests, that for high involvement decisions, decision-making is more complex and more evaluative information processing is required whereas low involvement decisions will involve information processing to a lesser extent.

Even once the activity of information search has the reached saturation the decision is not final. Consumers will deliberate a purchase based upon information regarding alternative brands and the greater the uncertainty the greater the active information seeking (Sheth and Venaktesan, 1968). Consequently, choosing between a range of alternatives increases one's propensity to deliberate (Iyengar and Lepper, 2000). Crucially, at this point, the consumer may have a number of potential buying options available, therefore complexity still exists at this stage in the decision-making. During this stage of pre-purchase deliberation, the buyer will digest information and structure cognitions related to alternative brands (Sheth and Venkatesan, 1968). Over time pre-purchase deliberation declines and instead brand loyalty increases (Sheth and Venkatesan, 1968) and this links back to the development of heuristics.

In instances where the consumer has little information and therefore perceives high uncertainty, past experience becomes important (Cox and Rich, 1964). Past experience serves as a means of risk reduction and this also applies to online retailing (Cases, 2002). Past experience can take the form of the consumer relying on a particular store, product, brand or advertising to aid the decision-making (Cox and Rich, 1964). The benefit of past experience is that it allows the perceived level of risk to be modified as a result of past experience to enable consumers to feel confident and to enable decision-making. However, past experience can be limiting since

individuals are more restricted by relying on past information rather than being more risk-taking and seeking new, potentially better, alternatives.

The onset of the online channels has implications for risk reduction strategies. The role of brand transcends channels both physical and digital therefore brands are a risk reducer to aid the consumer in looking to alternative channels and facilitate trust. In the digital environment, the role of product reviews is a strategy employed by consumers to reduce risk (Utz *et al*, 2012). In the context of the current study it will be useful to understand further how having access to an array of channels aids shoppers in minimising risk particularly with regards to understanding how a consumer feels as a result of the advantages and challenges using so many channels across the journey.

3.7.4.2 Omnichannel & Multichannel Risk

The context in which a consumer makes a decision can also affect the level of risk experienced. The growing array of retailing channels that a fashion consumer has access to, such as mobile, online, in store, catalogues, call centres adds a further level of complexity to the decision journey. Handled risks are specifically related to the uncertainty associated with the retail environment, the place of purchase and mode of purchase (Park and Stoel, 2002, 2005; Rosa *et al*, 2006). These risks are even more important in this new digital-omni retailing environment.

Previous literature emphasises that where consumers perceive higher risk in remote channels versus the store this is because shoppers are unable to interact with the product prior to purchase (Eastlick *et al.,* 2006). In light of the growing channels, not only will consumers perceive risk related to the product but perceive uncertainty associated with the process where the customer does not have complete confidence in the transaction process (Choi and Park, 2006). Examples of risks consumers may perceive in such contexts include risks related to delivery, customer service and transaction related security (Choi and Park, 2006; Hahn and Kim, 2009). However, today's consumers are now more confident in shopping across both physical and digital channels for fashion and thus perceive less risk in purchasing in a multichannel environment (Schoenbachler and Gordon, 2002; Blázquez, 2014; Lee and Huddleston, 2006). The use of branding has been a general strategy to reduce risk both towards the purchase of fashion as a product category but also to aid consumers in managing the risk associated with traversing channels. This is because brand experiences increase brand familiarity (Alba and Hutchinson, 1987). Customers will perceive less risk in shopping across multiple channels of a given brand and exhibit greater purchase intention (Schoenbachler and Gordon, 2002; Hahn and Kim, 2009; Park and Stoel, 2005).

The fashion product information that facilitates consumer decision-making varies dependent upon the channel and the retail brand. In the physical retail environment, the consumer has access to and can physically evaluate the garment. Retailers have made significant improvements to the fashion product information they provide across digital channels in an attempt to mitigate risk for consumers, for example by providing: product imagery (both static and moving), use of size comparison tools and reviews. However, this information presents further challenges for consumer decision-making. Information does not always correlate in perceived risk reduction and can instead confusion can occur as a result of increased and conflicting information, and conflicting information (Mitchell, 1992). The omnichannel environment is an environment which provides consumers with access to an overwhelming amount of information and therefore perpetuates information overload which can inhibit decision-making at the information search and evaluation stages, resulting in "analysis paralysis".

As retailers have progressed from a multichannel to omnichannel approach shoppers are now placing more emphasis on returns behaviour due to the increasing volumes of returns, as discussed in chapter two. This demonstrates a development in consumer decision-making. It is no longer simply the case of deciding which item to buy but also considering whether or not to return. Therefore, the risk of the decision uncertainty is reduced by having such flexibility (Bernon *et al.,* 2016). Therefore, shoppers will purchase a product to avoid missing out and have the

flexibility to return the item if it is unwanted. Therefore, in the omnichannel context there is significant emphasis on post-purchase dissonance alongside. This is because the consumer does not need to commit to the product at the point of purchase and because returns behaviour has become normalised.

3.7.5 Limitations of Research on Perceived Risk

Now that consumers are accustomed to using a variety of channels there is a need to understand how consumer behaviour with regards to understanding how perceived risk has changed as a result of interacting across an array of channels. For example, due to the fact that returns are becoming ever increasingly important in an omnichannel environment consumers can be less committed to a product at the purchase stage and therefore the perceived risk can be lessened. There is a lack of studies which examine the customer journey across channels and the role of perceived risk, consequently there is a need to understand how the combined usage of channels helps the consumer manage risk associated with their shopping journey and also instances in which the risk is heightened. Unlike the research by Dowling and Staelin (1994) there is a need to more comprehensively understand risk not just at the point of information search, but across decision-making stages of the journey with specific attention to the strategies employed to reduce risk at different stages. The omnichannel journey is one that has the potential to also heighten risk for high involvement fashion consumers and there is a need to understand how the role of newer channels such as social media actually make decision-making journeys for fashion more pre-disposed to risk because shopping is a more social activity. Understanding the role of brand across channels in helping reduce risk for the consumer and this is also an area that needs to be examined further in this new omnichannel setting.

3.8 Multichannel Behaviour

Schoenbachler and Gordon (2002) provide a model of multichannel shopping behaviour, as shown in Figure 6. The model shares a number of links with the consumer decision process. Firstly, the model considers an individual's past experience, in this case with different channels. Perceived risk shares links with the evaluation stage of the consumer decision process, such as considering the price of the product or the social risk and familiarity with a brand. The motivations to buy from a channel link to consumers individual characteristics, for example demographics. However, where multichannel behaviour begins to separate from the consumer decision process is within the perceived risk associated with using channels and the design of channels. However, as the shoppers in the current study are digital natives it will be interesting to explore if this is still an issue.

Figure 6 Multichannel Shopping Behaviour Model

Source: Schoenbachler and Gordon (2002)

3.8.1 Multichannel Decision-Making

The retail environment has evolved whereby there is a proliferating number of channels and also media to formulate, evaluate and execute buying decisions (Wolny and Charoensuksai, 2014). As part of conceptualising multichannel situations, consumer decision-making models were proposed as a way to examine the functions served by particular channels at different stages in the decision process as indicated by Nicholson et al. (2002) in Figure 7. This approach suggests that different channels may be appropriated to different stages of decision-making, albeit the stages are slightly different at the beginning of the model compared to the decision process.

Figure 7 Multichannel Decision-Making Situations

Source: Nicholson, Clarke and Blakemore (2002)

3.8.2 Situational Moderators

As consumers now routinely use multiple purchase channels in interesting and innovative ways this requires situational approach for understanding factors underlying channel selection (Nicholson, Clarke and Blakemore, 2002). Likewise, the consumer decision process also recognises that situations are an external influencer of the consumer decision process (Engel, Blackwell and Miniard, 1995). These are variables which are observed, but do not derive from the consumers themselves or stimulus attributes and are associated with a particular time and place of observation (Belk, 1975; Neslin et al., 2006). Table 11 provides a synopsis of situational moderators based on the multichannel literature. It is important to note that while the consumer decision process suggests time as a consumer resource the current study agrees with the multichannel literature that temporal factors are situational because the urgency of the purchase can change dependent upon the situation whereas financial resources cannot

Table 11 Situational Moderators

Moderator	References

Physical Setting
          Weather
          Location
          Crowding
	(Verhoef *et al.*, 2009; Neslin *et al.*, 2006; Nicholson *et al.*, 2002)

Antecedent State Mood	(Nicholson *et al.*, 2002; Neslin *et al.*, 2006)

Temporal Factors
          Time of day
          Level of urgency associated with the purchase
	(Nicholson *et al.*, 2002; Neslin *et al.*, 2006)

Social Environment
          Interactions with staff
          Shopping with friends
          Reviews
          Reference groups
          Consumer tribes
	(Verhoef *et al.*, 2009; Neslin *et al.*, 2006; Nicholson *et al.*, 2002)

3.8.3 Channel Choice

Previously, retailers would respect shoppers' individual channel choice and would aim to offer a complete experience within the confines of each individual channel (Schoenbachler and Gordon, 2002). Yet, within the multichannel domain, consumers face greater choice and have access to a wide array of channels (Gensler, Verhoef and Böhm, 2012). How consumers choose between channels has been an important area of multichannel consumer behaviour research (Dholakia et al., 2010; Neslin et al., 2006).

Neslin *et al.* (2006) identifies six key determinants of channel selection namely, firm marketing efforts, channel attributes, channel integration, social influence, situational variables and individual differences. A number of these elements are already accounted for through the situational moderators and consumer characteristics discussion earlier in this chapter. Although what Neslin *et al.* (2006) add is that particular channel attributes play different roles dependent on the stage of the decision-making process and provide a list of core channel attributes which correlate with channel selection based upon empirical literature. These are: ease of use; price; after-sales; search convenience; search effort; information quality; aesthetic appeal; information comparability; service; risk; purchase effort; negotiability; speed of purchase; privacy; assortment; enjoyment; security; channel category associations. In addition, channel integration considers the ease of moving between channels and that the more integrated the channels are the more likely desirable consumer behaviours will occur (Neslin et al., 2006)

Consumers may also associate particular products with particular channels (Inman, Shankar and Ferraro, 2004). From a product category perspective, channel choice for online can be affected by the need for touch or lack of sensory experience (Dholakia et al., 2010). This is a theme particularly relevant to the current discussion since channels such online websites lack the sensory interaction where consumers desire to physically examine the product (Ha and Stoel, 2004; Bhatnagar and Ghose, 2004). The consumer disposition may also affect channel choice for instance, individuals high in fashion innovativeness and opinion leadership are more likely to use multiple channels for clothing shopping (Cho and Workman, 2011) and in instances where product involvement is high, consumers will show a preference towards the traditional store channel (Wang, Song and Yang, 2012). Alongside the basic determinants, consumers use different channels at different stages of the shopping process in order to satisfy distinct goals, as indicated in Figure 8 and this links back to the hedonic and utilitarian shopping motivations discussed earlier in this chapter.

Figure 8 Channel Choice Goals

Economic	• Pursuit of efficiency & utility
Self-Affirmation	• The opportunity to play out subjectively perceived expertise in influencing channel choices
Symbolic Meaning	• Anticipated satisfaction from investing effort and attention
Socialisation & Experiential Impact	• The desire to be part of social milieus • The desire to be part of stimulating environments
Schemas & Scripts	• Maintaining regularity and familiarity

Source: (Balasubramanian *et al.,* 2005)

Shoppers will choose and switch channels based upon the factors of time, product price, shopping experience pleasure, the perceived value of the product and the associated risk with each channel (Reardon and McCorkle, 2002; Dholakia *et al.,* 2010; Xu-Priour *et al.,* 2012). The common propensity for consumers to switch channels has become a thriving behaviour during the shopping decision and purchase experience (Chiu *et al.,* 2011). As this has become more common research progressed from looking at the adoption of channels to the integration and usage of multiple channels by consumers (Fernández-Sabiote and Román, 2012). Channel switching occurs when the benefits of moving channels outweigh the costs associated with switching (Reardon and McCorkle, 2002). Within the multichannel context this was important, particularly where switching has been challenging and can negatively influence customer intention towards a company. Therefore, it was about reducing switching costs for the consumer (Hsieh *et al.,* 2012). Specifically, when a consumer is involved they will perceive the cognitive effort as lower and will search more and be more disposed to switching channels (Chatterjee, 2010). There is a need to therefore investigate how fashion consumers switch between channels and the reasoning behind this along the course of the shopping journey.

3.9   Omnichannel Shopping Behaviour

Multichannel shopping behaviour which characterises consumers as those who use many channels to make a purchase (Kumar and Venkatesan, 2005). While omnichannel is concerned with consumers who are channel agnostic and who engage in a journey for a brand experience (Aubrey and Judge, 2012; Picot-Coupey *et al.,* 2016; Piotrowicz and Cuthbertson, 2014). Brand experience and engagement is a key facet of omnichannel consumer behaviour, and social media has driven this engagement. Following a survey of 1,750 UK fashion consumers, 73% of consumers stated that the actively engage with brands by commenting on posts, liking links and posting questions and 61% of 18-24 year olds follow fashion brands via social media sites (Retail Week , 2015). Now consumers are seeking to engage and interact with brands not purely for the purposes of a transaction but for a brand experience. Hence, omnichannel as a concept stretches beyond the functional needs and is not centred solely upon the interaction. Omnichannel suggests a much deeper and ongoing relationship with the consumer.

Other omnichannel shopper behaviours include engaging in click and collect shopping experiences (Aubrey and Judge, 2012). For instance, clothing and footwear account for 54% of all click and collect expenditure and this is anticipated to grow by 85% over the next five years (Verdict Retail, 2016). Showrooming is another behaviour which omnichannel consumers engage in (Business of Fashion, 2014; Lazaris *et al.,* 2015). Showrooming occurs when a consumer evaluates a product

first-hand in the store and will simultaneously use a mobile to compare products for purchase across other channels (Rapp et al., 2015; Heitz-Spahn, 2013). Similarly, web-rooming also depicts omnichannel consumer behaviour where shoppers will research online and then purchase from a store (Barnes, 2016; Chatterjee, 2010). Therefore, omnichannel highlights channels being used in combination with one another to derive a greater benefit and also simultaneous channel usage. This is an activity that would not fit within the multichannel context since channels were still being used independently.

Omnichannel drives loyalty amongst customers (Business Insider, 2017; Deloitte, 2014) and research has revealed that omnichannel consumers will spend twenty percent more than their multichannel counterparts (Bodhani, 2012; IDC Retail Insights , 2010). However, to counter-balance this, omnichannel consumers also return more products. Returns are a key challenge for retailers who are operating in an omnichannel environment. Therefore, consumers have greater confidence in their purchase decision although it will likely increase the propensity of returns as the consumer has more options (Bernon *et al.,* 2016). A key driver in returns volumes is denoted by the fact that consumers are purchasing additional items to compare them and fashion is the most popular category with up to 23% of orders containing duplicate items (KPMG, 2016).

Omnichannel as a modus operandi is epitomised by connected consumers and the characteristics of whom are outlined in Table 12. A study of millennial fashion consumers indicates that 55% purchased from a store; 25% via home computer; 25% via work computer, 7% tablet, 7% via mobile and 2% by catalogue or phone order (Shaw & Towers, 2015). As much as 83% of UK consumers regularly access the Internet and are likely to own multiple devices [64% laptop, 52% smartphone and 12% tablet] (Forrester, 2013). The connected consumer signifies a highly evolved, customer-centric and agile retail omnichannel retail ecosystem (Forrester, 2013; Berman and Kesterson-Townes, 2012; Deloitte, 2012; Aubrey and Judge, 2012). Connected consumers are those individuals who are willing to exploit a number of retail channels via digital means (IBM, 2013; Forrester, 2013; Aubrey and Judge, 2012).

From a fashion context, mass communication has increased the need for regular fashion trend information (Lea-Greenwood, 2013). Accordingly, omnichannel fashion consumers are highly connected using a variety of platforms such as smartphones, tablets and laptops seeking to research products prior to purchase to make more considered decisions (Alexander and Alvarado, 2014). Omnichannel can therefore be also described as a contributor to democratising fashion shopping, for example through activity on social media, with shoppers now being more empowered and informed than ever.

Table 12 Characteristics of Connected Consumers

Characteristic	References
Actively participating in social media	(Berman and Kesterson-Townes, 2012; Deloitte, 2012; Forrester, 2013)
Empowered and informed	(Berman and Kesterson-Townes, 2012; Deloitte, 2012; Blázquez, 2014; Aubrey and Judge, 2012)
Interacting with user generated sites and content e.g. review sites	(Berman and Kesterson-Townes, 2012)
Receptive to digital channels	(Aubrey and Judge, 2012)
Seeking personalised experiences from retail interactions	(Berman and Kesterson-Townes, 2012)
Time poor	(Deloitte, 2012)
Viewing a variety of types of media content	(Berman and Kesterson-Townes, 2012)

3.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter has reviewed the literature on fashion and consumer behaviour. The literature revealed that as a result of involvement, consumers experience heightened levels of interest in

fashion because the product category is connected to important goals such as the consumer self-concept. The chapter also examined the consumer decision process to understand the stages of the process in detail and explored branding and risk alongside this. Multichannel consumer behaviour was also explored to understand the role of situational moderators which have an effect on multichannel decision-making situations. A view of omnichannel shopping behaviour was also presented. The next chapter will discuss the customer journey and the theories that underpin the concept.

4   Chapter Four Customer Journey

4.1   Chapter Introduction

The current chapter is designed to explore the customer journey in order to contribute to the first research objective. The literature base is drawn from the themes of experience and engagement to understand the complexity of consumers' interactions. Earlier literature suggests that it is simply at the point of purchase that consumers seek to render a satisfying experience (Abbott, 1955). However, that benchmark shifted, and individuals are now seeking positive experiences each time they engage (Norton and Pine, 2013). Subsequently, the consumer-brand relationship is now about encouraging consumers to form deep relationships with brands (Simon et al., 2013; Esch et al., 2006). Omnichannel is a concept which is founded upon consumers heightened expectations as shoppers are now accustomed to shopping in environments with multiple channels, which has been facilitated with the development of web 2.0 technologies.

The current chapter commences with an insight into integrated marketing communications to understand the challenges that organisations currently face in delivering cross-functional communications. The concept of the customer journey is explored, and existing models are examined. The chapter then considers the experience literature, paying specific attention to service, customer and brand experience. The chapter then focuses on the engagement literature to understand the influence of technological interaction as a moderator in consumer experiences with brands. Finally, a chapter summary highlights the need for further research.

4.2   Integrated Marketing Communications

As retailing has evolved to an omnichannel strategy, marketing communications has also experienced a parallel progression. Marketing communications describes promotional elements of the marketing mix that are designed to inform and persuade customers and prospects about the firm and its products, in order to satisfy needs and wants (Kitchen, 1999; Pickton and Broderick, 2005). The progression of marketing communications to integrated marketing communications (IMC) was triggered by the need for a holistic and customer-centric way of looking at the marketing process. The integrated marketing communications approach aims to co-ordinate marketing activities thus achieving greater effectiveness (Pickton and Broderick, 2005; Cummins, Peltier and Dixon, 2016; Schultz and Schultz, 2003). By providing a synergistic, cross-functional approach brand communications are linked rather than operating independently (Kitchen and Schultz, 2009; Kotler, 2003; Duncan and Mulhern, 2004).

Integrated marketing communications reflect an aspirational, idealistic state of communicating but the reality of achieving this has been hampered due to operational restraints. Organisational and operational siloes still exist in marketing and sales functions (Cummins et al., 2016). Alongside this, literature has now become increasingly concerned with the interaction between channels and brands (Verhoef et al., 2015). Adding to this, consumers are also demanding closer relationships with brands, since one third of consumers want to be able to reach brands 24/7 (Mintel, 2015). Such a lack of integration creates significant organisational deficiencies (Dabas et al., 2012). For example, in instances where consumers are experiencing a variety of brand messages that were not consistent or cohesive (Mulhern, 2009). Omnichannel overcomes these challenges by intelligently optimising the consumer shopping experience through organising complimentary functions across channels, as well as understanding the inter-connectedness of channels working together (Hsieh et al., 2012; Grewal and Levy, 2007; Hsaio et al., 2012). Literature has called for a deeper understanding of touchpoints to understand the relationships and interactions between them and how they influence various stages of the customer journey (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016; Cummins et al., 2016) and the need to specifically map out the interdependencies and relationships between touchpoints (Duncan and Moriarty, 2006).

4.3   Experience Economy

As the fourth wave of value, the experience economy recognised the transition away from service economies and compelled businesses to engage with consumers in a more memorable and hedonic way (Pine and Gilmore, 1998). This phase was triggered by products and services

converging and becoming less distinguishable. Accordingly, experience was no longer an amorphous thing but a tangible means by which companies could differentiate themselves along with their goods and services. In parallel to this phase, technology was also facilitating deeper levels of experience (Pine and Gilmore, 1998).

A key lesson from the experience economy was that it encouraged companies to proactively design, stage and take control over experiences with consumers (Pine and Gilmore, 1999). Omnichannel is one such strategy borne out of the experience economy. The omnichannel concept represents the fusion of online and offline channels to create a consistent, seamless and ubiquitous interaction which highlights the social and service experience elements of retailing (Rigby, 2011; Xu and Quaddus, 2013; Piotrowicz and Cuthbertson, 2014; Elliott *et al.,* 2012). This means that firms should no longer consider individual interactions with separate channels but consider the holistic encounter as a cumulative experience in order to develop a single view of the customer. Despite this, UK retailers are yet to achieve best practice in delivering an omnichannel strategy (Kurt Salmon, 2012) and there remain many unanswered questions regarding omnichannel strategy. One such example is how customers may act towards a single company or brand across different channels (Piercy, 2012).

4.3.1   Servicescape

The origins of experiences derive from service-dominant logic and servicescape literature. Service-dominant logic focuses on taking the customer perspective of experiences rather than the organisational view (Lusch *et al.,* 2007; Lush and Vargo, 2014). It recognises that customers interpret their experience at a personal level which can result in an affective experience (i.e. emotional reactions) which lead to judgements (i.e. satisfaction/dissatisfaction) and behavioural intentions such as word of mouth or complaints (Johnston and Kong, 2011).

The term 'servicescape' was introduced to specifically consider the role and design of the physical environment in which service experiences take place (Bitner, 1992; Lovelock and Wirtz, 2011). Channels are a physical dimension of the fashion retail environment. Moreover, channels are a way in which to operationalize service-dominant logic because each touchpoint provides an experience and an opportunity to increase brand recall, knowledge and contributes to the emotional value (Duncan and Moriarty, 2006). Channels also collectively present brand messages and create brand meaning (Duncan and Moriarty, 2006). Servicescapes recognise that no one dimension of the design can be developed in isolation; hence servicescapes must be viewed holistically (Fahy and Jobber, 2015; Duncan and Moriarty, 2006). This links to customer journey and customer-brand experience on three levels. Firstly, branding comes into play in the servicescape as the representation of the brand is through the physical aspects of the channel (Fahy and Jobber, 2015). Secondly, brand experience originated from the service-based literature where brand experience was about managing the emotional experience across the different stages of the service journey (Morrison and Crane, 2007). Thirdly, the view that two-way interactivity communication with multiple overlapping and interacting touchpoints maintaining customer relationships is a summative process (Duncan and Moriarty, 2006). It is at this point that service-based experience literature intersects with integrated marketing communications which was designed to manage touchpoints and the experience associated with them (Duncan and Moriarty, 2006).

Combining the integrated marketing communications and servicescape streams of thought together recognises the complexity of marketing management with numerous touchpoints (channels), the need for cross-functional management for successful interactions and consistency in brand messages to support relationships (Duncan and Moriarty, 2006). Therefore, service literature presents a more "transcending view of relationships" which is unlike the more traditional, transactional view of marketing (Brodie et al., 2011; Vargo, 2009). This is critically important in the omnichannel context since today's omnichannel consumers now seek brand experiences (Aubrey and Judge, 2012); in effect, a relationship. The chapter now discusses these aspects in greater detail.

4.3.2 Service Blueprinting Model

The origins of customer journey may be placed within service design spheres according to Voss *et al.* (2008). Accordingly, the customer journey shares similarity with service blueprinting (Bitner, Ostrom and Morgan, 2008). Service blueprinting is a diagrammatic model to and visually depict service operations (Bitner *et al.,* 2008; Patrício *et al.,* 2011; Tseng *et al.,* 1999) with the interactions presented in a sequential order. The service-blueprinting model was first developed by Shostack (1982; 1984). The premise of the model was to enable managers to ensure quality in the delivery of a service experience as well as to isolate failures and identify the potential for innovation in the service process (Shostack, 1984; Tseng, Qinhai and Su, 1999). Service blueprinting is a means of creating best practice, in-effect a benchmark, by which firms can measure themselves and to help in the planning and development of new service delivery.

There have been many iterations of the service-blueprinting model, such as that offered in Figure 9 by Ostrom (2009). Essentially, the model separates the line of visibility with customer front-end interactions and actions between the customer and the touchpoint, with back-end processes, which are not visible to the customer (Patrício et al., 2011; Segelström and Holmlid, 2011). The model presents a highly firm-based perspective, as there is significant focus on the 'below the line' elements. Therefore, there is a need to view the experience and interactions through the eyes of the consumer as this could provide additional insight. Service-blueprinting and customer journey are complementary models because they provide a complete overview of the service with customer journey (Segelström and Holmlid, 2011). Both models depict an experience, the interactions with channels and the movement between channels. Both models include the stages before and after the service interaction (Segelström and Holmlid, 2011). Furthermore, the customer journey covers elements such as temporality, interactions and emotional triggers (Segelström and Holmlid, 2011). Indeed, the customer journey is a richer consumer behaviour-based perspective based on the in-depth study of the front stages (actions) and the on-stage interaction of technology.

Figure 9 Service-Blueprinting Model
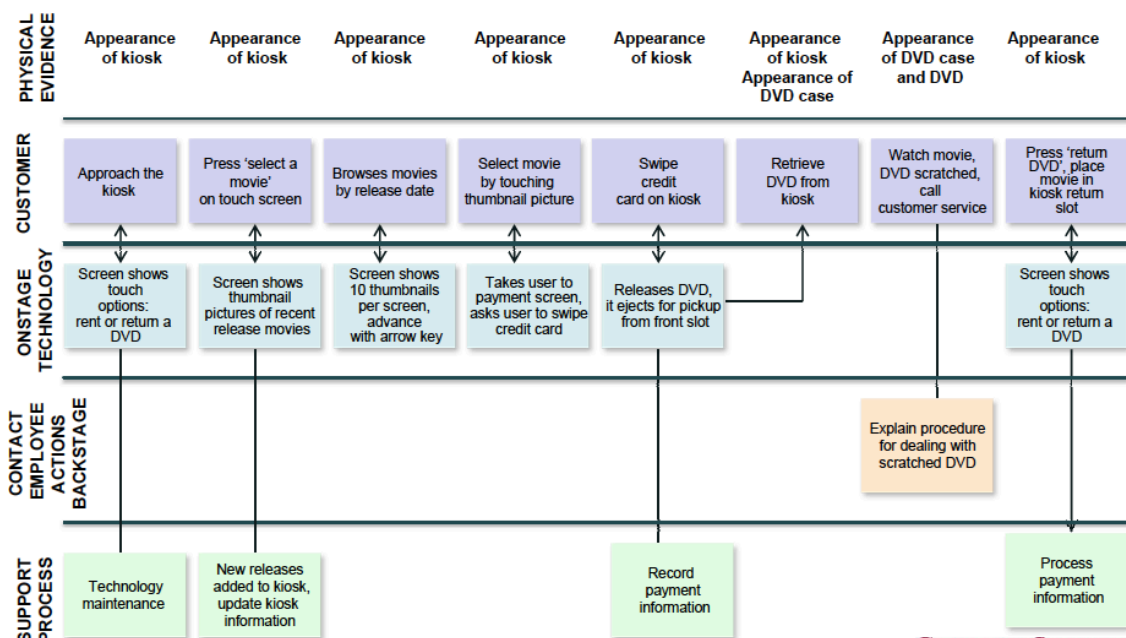
Source: Ostrom (2009)

4.4 Customer Journey Definition

Customer journey mapping was originally used ''…as a market research tool to help commercial businesses understand consumers' motivations and behaviors'' (Crosier and Handford, 2012: 67). Thus, the customer journey enables organisations to understand the complete pattern of customer behaviour in a structured manner. A customer journey is a time-based visual

representation to depict interactions with a firm or service (Johnston and Kong, 2011; Forrester Research, 2010; Yeh *et al.*, 2012) and encapsulates the various touchpoints a consumer may engage with (Alves et al., 2012; Johnston and Kong, 2011; Forrester Research, 2010; Edelman, 2010; Lemke, Clark and Wilson, 2011; Zomerdijk and Voss, 2010; Ang and Buttle, 2002). In effect, the customer journey is, "a walk in the customers shoes in an attempt to depict the customer experience" (Alves et al., 2012). Usefully the customer journey considers an individual's actual interaction rather than merely what the organisation has dictated for the journey (Zomerdijk and Voss, 2010; Norton and Pine, 2013). Customer journey mapping is also ideal for identifying the "glitches" in the service process, just as it is in identifying what works well (Crosier and Handford, 2012).

Unlike the consumer decision process, the customer journey has a specific mandate to focus on channel interactions (Parker and Heapy, 2006; Patrício *et al.,* 2011; Wolny and Charoensuksai, 2014). Furthermore, customer journeys highlight emotional responses of the encounter which is not included in the decision process (Crosier and Handford, 2012; Wolny and Charoensuksai, 2014). The stages of a customer journey not only capture the point of interaction but also the lead-up and post-interaction phases also (Segelström and Holmlid, 2011). The stage and sequence should reflect certain actions such as transaction interaction and knowledge gain (Norton and Pine, 2013). This shares similarity with the stages of the consumer decision process such as information search and purchase.

While the customer journey is a well-established commercial tool used by marketing practitioners there is a lack of empirical research literature to depict the evolution and development of the customer journey as a theory. This finding is surprising despite the fact that customer journey mapping is a widely accepted industry tool for customer journey design (Alves *et al.,* 2012). Studies on customer journey mapping derive from a range of philosophical dispositions. For example, the service design model that focuses on the blueprinting of the service experience (Patrício *et al.,* 2011; Ostrom, 2009; Shostack, 1984). The tool aids organisation in understanding the different steps of the journey in context and although some of these elements many not seem significant in isolation these elements can cumulatively contribute towards improving customer experience (Crosier & Handford, 2012). Usefully the work of Wolny and Charoensuksai (2014) has once again raised customer journey as a point for further research discussion. As the literature begins to recognise the value of customers cross-channel experiences there is a timely need to explore the customer journey. The unique link between the concept of the customer journey and omnichannel is because both themes take into consideration all interactions of a customer, therefore offer a holistic outlook.

4.4.1   Customer Journey Drivers

As a consequence of a connected retail environment it is now standard practice for consumers to engage with a variety of channels within a single shopping journey. This has presented a significant challenge to multichannel retailers, who have struggled to keep pace and reflect the level of retail sophistication that consumer's desire. One such challenge is the desire to create a single view of the customer. For many, this has yet to be achieved as organisations are continuing to manage customer information in silos, rather than co-ordinating information to gain a complete view (Peterson *et al.,* 2010; Skinner, 2010). The complete customer journey emphasises the organisational aspiration, to gain a comprehensive view of the customer journey and the sharing of information across channels (Skinner, 2010). This is further supported by literature that has called for a more complete view of the customer's entire journey (Peterson *et al.,* 2010) and there is a need to understand the sequence of the customer experience (Norton and Pine, 2013).

A failure of technology is the lack of understanding of a customer's needs or wants from a touchpoint at a specific stage in the process (Rockwell, 2008). To achieve a single view research has called for a detailed view outlining the customer's buying process and the channel demands and preferences at each stage of the decision process (Van Bruggen et al., 2010). Alongside this, research has also highlighted that there is a need to examine groups of stages of the consumer decision process rather than look at these singularly (Teo and Yeong, 2003). This suggests taking

a more holistic or overall view of the consumers entire interaction. By developing a complete view of the customer journey organisations will be better equipped to develop interactions that will also deliver a more consistent experience for customers, which ultimately could enhance the perception of a brand in the mind of a customer (Edelman, 2010; Roberts and Alpert, 2010). Consistency of the customer journey creates a strong link between omnichannel since consistency is a key goal of an omnichannel strategy as indicated earlier in this work, in Table 3.

4.5   Customer Journey Model Development

While research on the customer journey is limited, this section attempts to examine models currently used and these are discussed as follows:

4.5.1   ORCA Customer Journey Model

The ORCA model by Molenaar (2012) is a digital model of consumer behaviour that combines buying stages of a shopping journey, as shown in Figure 10. Molenaar's (2012) original model is not derived from or grounded in the peer-reviewed literature but is a practitioner approach and therefore has not been tested rigorously in relation to other theories of consumer behaviour and specifically, decision-making. Yet the stages of the ORCA model do share similarities with the consumer decision process model, for example, the research and action stages are similar to the stages of information search and purchase. Nonetheless, a key advantage of the model is that it provides a single view of the customer across a range of channels. In addition, the ORCA model identifies the "zero moment of truth" (ZMOT) and is concerned with an orientation stage whereby consumers do not consider themselves to be shopping and the stage involves scanning for product before which triggers a shopping journey to commence. This is pertinent given the rise of channels providing consumers with inspiration and brand interaction.

Figure 10 ORCA Model
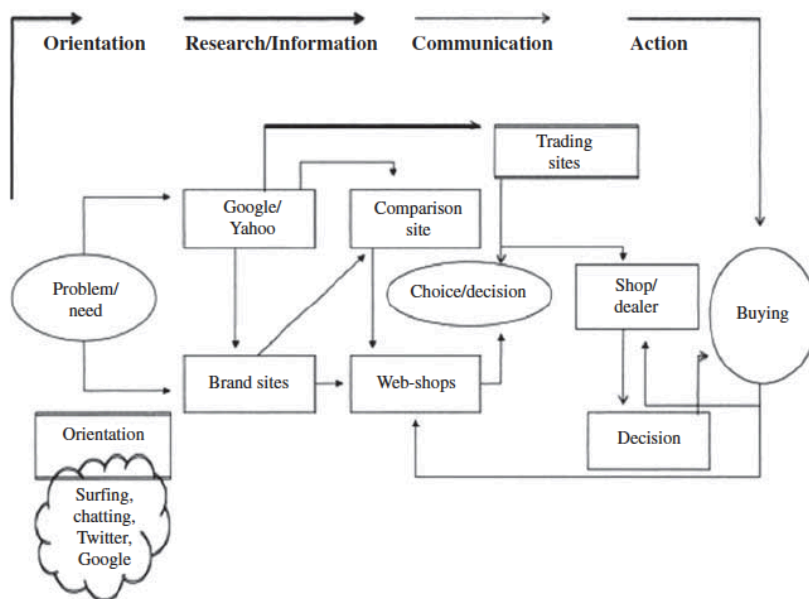
Source: Molenaar (2012)

Wolny and Charoensuksai (2014) have, however, applied the ORCA model to specifically identify the multichannel influences across different stages of a shopping journey for cosmetics as shown in Table 13. The results identified specific customer journey segments through distinct patterns of channel-journey behaviour: impulse journeys; balanced journeys; considered journeys (Wolny and Charoensuksai, 2014). What is evident is that while the revised interpretation by Wolny and Charoensuksai (2014) highlights more stages compared to the original ORCA model and builds a richer view of the customer journey.

Table 13 Channel Usage at Different Stages in Cosmetics Shopping

Stages	Description	Channels
Orientation/Inspiration/ Horizon Scanning	- Consumers do not think of themselves as shopping. - Consumers are consciously or unconsciously scanning the market place referring to their own previous experience.	- Friends, bloggers, product reviews, videos from YouTube and social networks, magazines, product display (in-store and online), Prior experience.
Information Search	- Consumers have intention to shop and search for information prior to shopping. - Consumers try to get directed information from product reviews, ratings and swatches.	- Blogs, videos, review sites and friends.
Evaluation	- Consumers narrow down the choice of purchase and search more information on price, physical attributes, availability and purchase channels. - Trying product in-store and browsing product online are widely reported stages at this stage.	- Physical store, online store, mobile channel, as well as friends, social media for confirmation.
Purchase	- Consumers make a decision regarding final purchase.	- Physical store or online store.
Post-Purchase	Consumers tend to share their shopping experience through word of mouth. - Offline word of mouth, telling friends about their cosmetics experience was more widely reported than eWOM through social media.	- Friends and/or social media.

Source: Wolny and Charoensuksai (2014)

A distinction of the Wolny and Charoensuksai (2014) model is that it focuses on the cosmetics product category. Therefore, the model is not directly applicable to the study of fashion products. Although the Wolny and Charoensuksai (2014) adaptation of the ORCA model proposed is more comprehensive than the original, only a single post-purchase stage is identified. Therefore, the current study questions this and will aim to understand decision stages and channel usage more deeply during post-purchase interactions. This reinforces how the ORCA model does not consider the empirical decision process which tackles post-purchase stages in greater detail. Moreover, the model does not yet address the situational and consumer characteristics which influence the journey which are also indicated when using the decision process to build a comprehensive view.

Although the model provides a discussion about emotional drivers e.g. impulse journeys, it would also be helpful to understand shoppers positive or negative experiences at each stage of the journey. This is important as the ultimate goal of the customer journey is to identify "glitches" and improve the experience. While Wolny and Charoensuksai (2014) look at the channels shoppers engage with during a journey more detail could be added as to what channels shoppers prefer at each stage. Also, as part of the consumer journey consumers will use devices to access digital channels therefore the journey would be more comprehensive if it considered this as a key part of accessing channels. Finally, Wolny and Charoensuksai (2014) highlight that seamlessly integrating channels is an ongoing challenge yet there is no consideration as to how the consumers' perception of the brand is affected as a result of their channel interaction. However, this is to be

expected since it is the concept of omnichannel that is concerned with brand experience (Piotrowicz and Cuthbertson, 2014).

4.5.2   Crosier Handford Customer Journey Model

A similarly useful approach to customer journey mapping was applied by Crosier and Handford (2012) to understand consumer behaviour and motivations in relation to social sciences as an advocacy tool for disabled people and the challenges they face as a consumer when shopping in town centre. Whilst the research by Crosier and Handford (2012) derives from outwith the field of fashion retail it is useful to draw upon for the current study. Crosier and Handford (2012) agrees with the current research that there is a lack of information about the applying customer journey as a technique. Indeed, Crosier and Handford (2012) failed to identify any peer-reviewed articles on the subject. The Crosier and Handford (2012) approach depicts a graph to capture the temporal, emotional and linked events of the customer journey to gain an overview of the overall customer experience and in-depth responses in these areas, as shown in Figure 11.

Figure 11 Crosier Handford Customer Journey Model
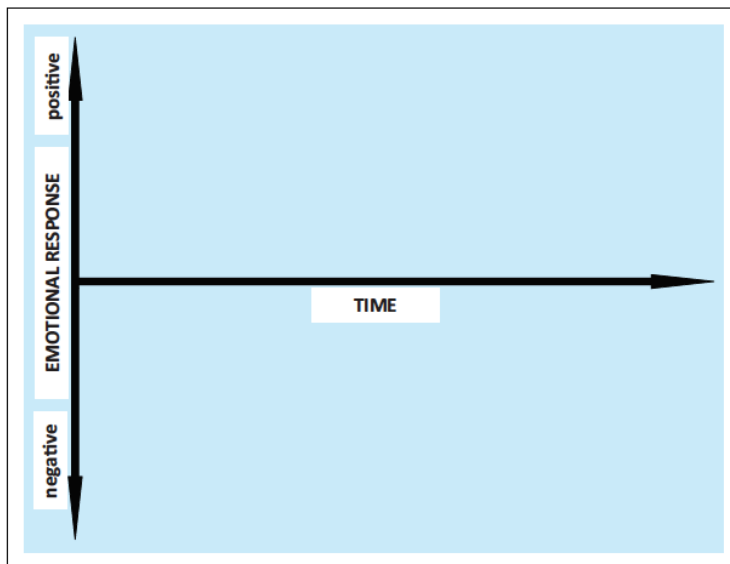
Source: (Crosier and Handford, 2012)

By putting the journey encounters in context some activities, which may have previously been seen as dismissive, are attached with greater importance and consumer emotions and reflections on their encounter with a service can be shown in a visual manner, as per Figure 12. This enables the key glitches to be identified and helps to focus upon the areas that require improvement in order to deliver a better experience. Hence the customer journey is a structure to explore how satisfied consumers are with channels at different stages of the journey. This approach helps to fill the gap of the Wolny and Charoensuksai (2014) model by capturing the positive and negative experiences. Furthermore, the model demonstrates evidence of there being key stages of the journey which is denoted by the yellow labels.

Figure 12 Application of the Customer Journey Model
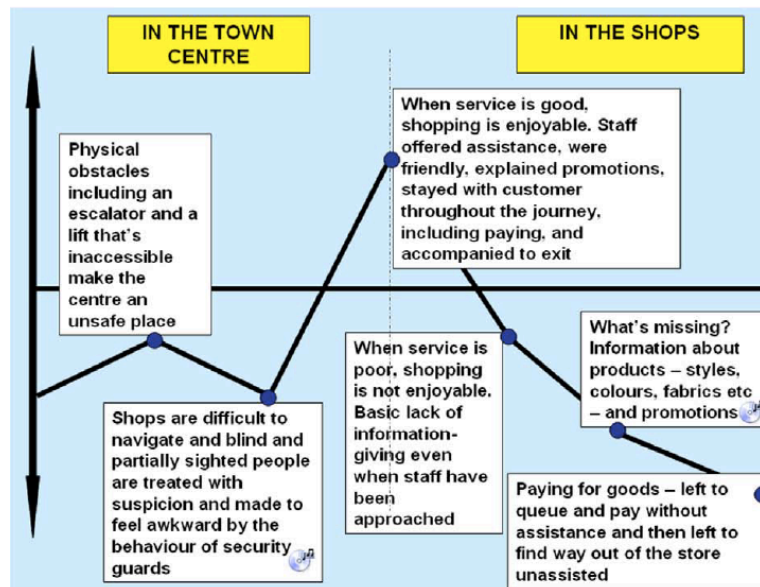
Source: Crosier and Handford (2012)

4.6 Customer-Brand Experience

Experiences are defined as, "…private events that occur in response to some stimulation…experiences are usually not self-generated but induced […] experiences are 'of' or about something; they have reference and intentionality […] experiences may be viewed as complex, emerging structures." (Schmitt, 1999: 60-61). Experiences are also discrete and therefore personal to each individual (Pine and Gilmore, 1998; Gupta and Vajic, 2000; Johnston and Kong, 2011; Meyer and Schwager, 2007).

Table 14 Experience Perspectives

Experience Perspectives	References
Product Experience	(Zarantonello and Schmitt, 2010; Hoch and Ha, 1986)
Shopping Experience	(Skard *et al.,* 2011; Hui and Bateson, 1991; Kerin *et al.,* 1992)
Service Experience	(Dube and Helkkula, 2015; Skard *et al.,* 2011; Zarantonello and Schmitt, 2010; Patrício et al., 2011)
Consumption Experience	(Skard *et al.,* 2011; Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982; Babin *et al.,* 1994)
Customer Experience	(Verhoef *et al.,* 2009; Johnston and Kong, 2011; Meyer and Schwager, 2007)
Brand Experience	(Brakus *et al.,* 2009; Ueacharoenkit and Cohen, 2011; Aubrey and Judge, 2012; Jones and Runyan, 2013; Igelsias *et al.,* 2011)

There are many perspectives from which to view experiences, as shown in the table. The chapter has already explored service experience through discussions on the servicescape as a basis for the customer journey and both of these elements are operational tools that specifically support the design of the customer experience (Johnston and Kong, 2011). The following discussion considers the customer-brand experience. The customer-brand experience links to the omnichannel definition in section 2.5 because the goal of omnichannel is to provide a seamless and holistic customer experience as well as a consistent brand experience.

4.6.1   Customer-Brand Experience Frameworks

For retailers, providing a superior customer experience is a key objective in the current retail environment (Verhoef and Lemon, 2013). The three implementation steps of the customer experience are: designing the brand experience, structuring the customer interface and engaging in innovation (Schmitt, 2003). This further supported by O'Loughlin *et al.* (2004) who argue that customer experience consists of a brand, transactional and relationship experience. What these sources highlight is that customer and brand experience are highly intertwined. This has also been reflected in recent literature which has begun to discuss customer and brand experience concepts together for example: Rowley (2009), Skard e*t al.* (2011), Huré *et al.* (2016) and Ismail *et al.* (2011).

Customer experience is defined as ''the internal and subjective response customers have to any direct or indirect contact with a company'' (Meyer and Schwager, 2007: 2). Customer experience is also defined as a summative impression in the mind of the consumer (Carbone and Haeckel, 1994; Bagozzi *et al.,* 1999; Gupta and Kim, 2007; Johnston and Kong, 2011; Meyer and Schwager, 2007). Figure 13 identifies that customer experience encapsulates the cognitive, affective, social and physical responses to a retailer (Verhoef et al., 2009; Shaw and Ivens , 2005). The framework also recognises there are distinct situational moderators and consumer moderators can shape an experience (Verhoef et al., 2009; Puccinelli et al., 2009).

Figure 13 Conceptual Framework of Customer Experience Creation
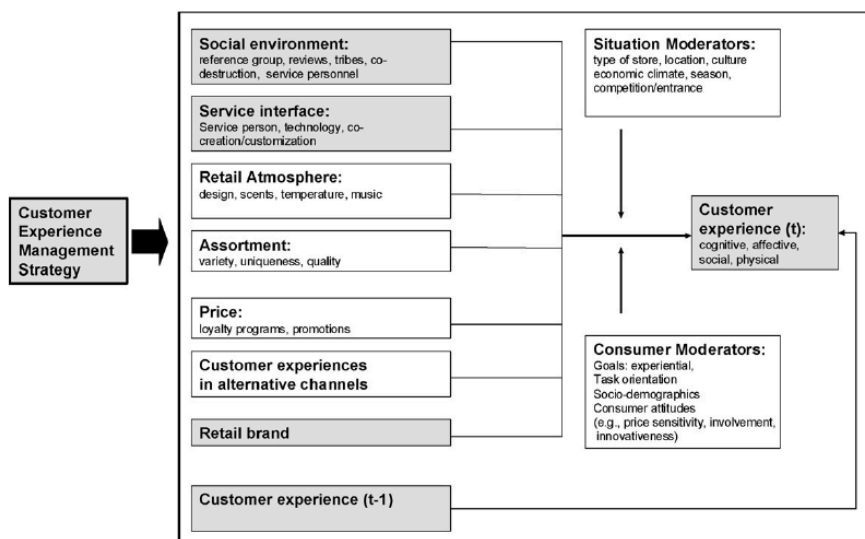
Source: Verhoef *et al.,* (2009)

There is growing emphasis on the holistic nature of connected customer experiences which binds and embodies multiple interactions together (LaSalle and Britton, 2003; Ismail *et al.*, 2011; Skard, *et al.*, 2011; Verhoef *et al.,* 2009; Zomerdijk and Voss, 2010; Patrício *et al.*, 2011; Rose *et al.*, 2012; Blázquez, 2014). Customer experience recognises that such interactions involve multiple retail channels (interfaces) and active involvement between firms and consumers at different stages, such as pre-consumption, during consumption and post-consumption (Verhoef *et al.,* 2009;

Lemon and Verhoef, 2016; Stone, 2011; Ismail *et al.,* 2011; Brakus *et al.,* 2009). Therefore, the customer experience also links to the consumer decision process because of the stages.

In a similar vein to the holistic customer experience, omnichannel calls for holistic approaches that integrate a plethora of channels to reflect the reality of consumer shopping experiences, whereby consumers can conduct their shopping journey in a barrier-less environment, moving across channels flexibly (Piotrowicz and Cuthbertson, 2014; Savastano, Barnabei and Ricotta, 2015; Kim, Ahn and Forney, 2014). This has been termed in the omnichannel definition as a seamless experience. This has occurred as a result of consumers heightened expectations of their interactions with channels (Hansen and Sia, 2015; Peltola , Vainio and Nieminen, 2015; Savastano, Barnabei and Ricotta, 2015; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016; Rigby, 2011). For the current study, there is a need to uncover what the ideal omnichannel customer experience looks like by understanding consumers expectations when interacting with a variety of channels and at different stages of the journey. Therefore, the study will seek to understand what constitutes a seamless omnichannel customer experience in the eyes of the consumer.

Scholars also view experience as central to the development of brands (Igelsias *et al.,* 2011). When customers are exposed to brands they encounter a brand experience (Duncan and Moriarty, 2006). This connects to omnichannel which is also concerned with delivering a brand experience (Merrilees, 2016; Piotrowicz and Cuthbertson, 2014; Cao, 2014). A brand experience is when a logical connection is observed between the core concept of the brand and the needs, goals and evaluative criteria of the consumer (Franzen and Moriarty, 2009). Similar to customer experience the encounter is a subjective, internal consumer response (sensations, feelings, and cognitions) and denotes behavioural responses evoked by brand-related stimuli, which form a brand's design and identity, packaging, communications, and environment, as shown in Figure 14 (Brakus *et al.,* 2009). The importance of brand experience is that while functional differentiation between brands becomes more indistinguishable it is the hedonic, experiential and emotional elements of the brand encounter that more significantly affects a brand's success (Gentile *et al.,* 2007; Brakus *et al.,* 2009; Skard *et al.,* 2011; Mascarenhas *et al.,* 2006).

Figure 14 Brand Experience Framework
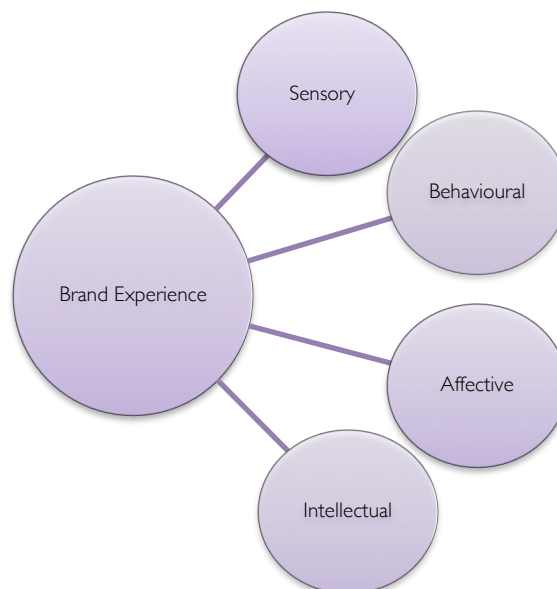
Source: Image adapted from Brakus *et al.* (2009)

Omnichannel consumers are channel agnostic, seeking experiences with brands as opposed to individual channels (Aubrey and Judge, 2012). Research calls for studies to understand how customers react towards a single brand across a variety of channels (Piercy, 2012). This is important since consumers will now transfer attitudes from one channel to another (Wang *et al.,*

2009; Kwon and Lennon, 2009). For omnichannel brands, this is a priority since retailers need to connect channels together to ensure that each new channel lives up to expectations and that the brand experience is consistent across the different interaction points. Accordingly, the current study will explore what constitutes a consistent omnichannel brand experience and how that actually manifests itself.

A positive brand experience can lead to self-identification and social (brand community) identification which can result in behavioural loyalty (Jones and Runyan, 2013). The relationship between brand experience and loyalty appears to be mediated by satisfaction (Brakus, Schmitt and Zarantonello, 2009). Superior brand experiences may also trigger emotional responses from consumers which can lead to satisfaction, commitment or loyalty (Igelsias et al., 2011).

4.6.2 Fashion-Brand Experience

It is necessary to understand the dynamics of the fashion process as it can aid in the understanding of consumers brand experience both temporally and in situations (Miller et al., 1993). The fashion brand experience is constructed by synchronising the brand equity approach in line with the consumers cognitive, affective and behavioural experience perspective (Kim, 2012). Customers' experiences and interactions with a brand differs across products and services; hence it is useful to explore and understand consumers interactions and experiences related to a specific product category. Fashion is an interesting product category since fashion brands hold the highest level of brand equity when compared to other product categories (Simon & Sullivan, 1993; Haejung, 2012) and is particularly experiential (Aaker, 1996).

The fashion brand experience depicts the cognitive, affective and behavioural dimensions as indicated in Figure 15. When consumers shop for and consume fashion brands they are exposed to various specific brand-related stimuli e.g. brand identity elements. These elements are referred to as the fashion-brand experience and the power of a brand lies in what customers have learned, felt, seen and heard about a brand as a result of experiences over time (Haejung, 2012). Within the fashion brand experience framework by Haejung (2012) and what is of particular interest to this study is consumers affective dimension of the fashion brand experience. The affective dimension considers the brands potential to elicit an emotional response (Haejung, 2012; Keller, 2013). Despite research by Haejung (2012) there is a paucity of research on the emotional aspects of the fashion brand experience and within an interactive omnichannel environment. Therefore, the current study should offer further insights as to consumers brand experience for fashion across numerous channels. Literature calls for future research to examine the role of the fashion brand experience and to explore feelings arising from consumption (Haejung, 2012) and by examining the post-purchase stages of the omnichannel decision-making journey the study will provide a contribution to knowledge. The study will also provide a further contribution by exploring how social approval and feelings materialise through the different stages and channels used in the journey.

Figure 15 Fashion-Brand Experience Framework
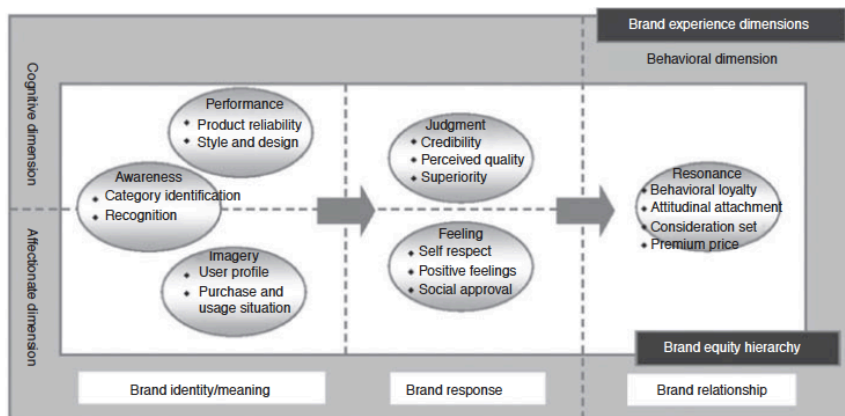
Source: Haejung (2012)

There is an incentive for fashion retailers to offer a positive brand experience. In instances, for example when a positive emotion is experienced, shoppers will experience a favourable attitude toward the brand (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Furthermore, should a successful fashion brand experience be achieved the outcomes can include behavioural loyalty, attitudinal attachment, becoming part of the consumers' considerations set and commanding a premium price (Haejung, 2012). Hence, in an omnichannel environment, it will be useful to explore the outcomes of a fashion brand experience from a customer decision-making journey involving numerous stages and channels. This is triggered since omnichannel consumers are typically more loyal and spend more, hence it will be useful to find out why this is the case and what the triggers for this are.

4.6.3 Affective Experiences

While brand experience consists of sensory, affective, intellectual and behavioural dimensions (Brakus et al., 2009) customer experience is based on the cognitive, affective, social and physical (Verhoef et al., 2009). For this research, the affective dimension is interesting to explore as it is a dimension that unites customer experience, brand experience and the customer journey. The affective dimension consists of feelings, moods, emotions and the emotional experience (Hamzah et al., 2014; Gentile et al., 2007).

Emotions are important since experiences themselves are emotional (Hirschman and Holbrook, 1982; Huang et al., 2015) and emotion is an important substrate of consumption (Brakus et al., 2009; Babin et al., 1994; Heitz-Spahn, 2013). Based on preceding seminal studies in psychology on emotion by Laros and Steenkamp (2005) emotion can be classified as either positive or negative, see Table 15. Positive and negative as a classification for emotion has been discussed in fashion retailing research papers including (Moody et al., 2010; Park, et al., 2006; Nicholson et al., 2002; Park and Kim, 2008). Although papers have examined emotion in a fashion consumer behaviour context the present study will provide a new contribution to research by mapping emotions across the shopper journey stages. This is supported from a channel perspective since emotions can be triggered as a result of the interacting with particular channels such as the store (Aubrey and Judge, 2012; Alexander and Alvarado, 2014; Kotler and Armstrong , 2009; Rigby, 2011) and online (Blázquez, 2014; Eroglu et al., 2001; Retail Week , 2012).

Table 15 Emotion Words Synopsis

Negative emotion words	Positive emotion words
Aggravation[a,b,c], Agitation[a,b,c], Agony[b,c], Alarm[b,c,d], Alienation[b], Anger[a,b,c,d,e,f,g], Anguish[a,b,c], Annoyance[a,b,c,d,e,f,h], Anxiety[a,b,c,e], Apologetic[c], Apprehension[a,b,c], Aversion[e], Awful[c], Bad[c], Bashful[c], Betrayal[c], Bitterness[a,b,c], Blue[b,c,i], Bothered[c], Cheerless[c], Confused[h], Consternation[c], Contempt[b,c,e,g], Cranky[c], Cross[c], Crushed[h], Cry[c], Defeat[b], Deflated[a,b], Defensive[c], Dejection[a,b,c], Demoralized[c], Depression[a,b,c,d,h], Despair[b,c], Devastation[c], Different[c], Disappointment[a,b,c,e,f], Discomfort[c], Discontent[a,c], Discouraged[c], Disenchantment[c], Disgust[a,b,c,e,g,h], Dislike[b,c,g], Dismay[b,c], Displeasure[a,b,c], Dissatisfied[a,c], Distress[a,b,c,d,g,i,j], Distrust[c,e], Disturbed[c], Down[a,c], Dread[b,c], Dumb[c], Edgy[c], Embarrassment[a,b,c], Empty[a,c], Envy[a,b,c], Exasperation[b], Fear[b,c,d,e,f,g,h,i,j], Fed-up[a], Ferocity[c], Flustered[a], Forlorn[c], Foolish[c], Frantic[c], Fright[a,b,c,h], Frustration[a,b,c,d,f,g], Fury[a,b,c], Gloom[b,c,d,h], Glumness[c], Grief[a,b,c,f], Grouchiness[b,c,i], Grumpiness[b,c,i], Guilt[b,c,e,g,j], Heart-broken[a,c], Hate[b,c], Hollow[c], Homesickness[a,b,c], Hopelessness[b,c], Horrible[c], Horror[a,b,c,f], Hostility[b,c,h,i,j], Humiliation[b,c], Hurt[a,b,c], Hysteria[b], Impatient[a,c], Indignant[c], Inferior[c], Insecurity[b], Insult[b,c], Intimidated[h], Irate[a], Irked[a], Irritation[a,b,c,e], Isolation[b,c], Jealousy[a,b,c,e], Jittery[i,j], Joyless[a], Jumpy[c], Loathing[b], Loneliness[a,b,c,i], Longing[c], Loss[c], Lovesick[a], Low[a,c], Mad[a,c], Melancholy[b,c], Misery[a,b,c,d], Misunderstood[c], Moping[c], Mortification[a,b], Mournful[c], Neglect[b,c], Nervousness[a,b,c,i,j], Nostalgia[c], Offended[a], Oppressed[c], Outrage[a,b,c], Overwhelmed[a], Pain[c], Panic[b,c], Petrified[a,c], Pity[a,b,c], Puzzled[h], Rage[b,c,e], Regret[a,b,c,e,g], Rejection[a,b,c], Remorse[a,b,c], Reproachful[c], Resentment[a,b,c], Revulsion[b], Ridiculous[c], Rotten[c], Sadness[a,b,c,d,e,f,g,h,i], Scared[a,c,h,j], Scorn[b,c,j], Self-conscious[c], Shame[a,b,c,e,g,j], Sheepish[c], Shock[a,b,c], Shy[c], Sickened[a,c], Small[c], Sorrow[a,b,c,e,i], Spite[b], Startled[c,h], Strained[c], Stupid[c], Subdued[c], Suffering[b,c], Suspense[c], Sympathy[b], Tenseness[b,c,h], Terrible[c], Terror[a,b,c], Threatened[h], Torment[a,b,c], Troubled[c], Tremulous[c], Ugly[c], Uneasiness[a,b,c], Unfulfilled, Unhappiness[a,b,c,i], Unpleasant[h], Unsatisfied[c], Unwanted[c], Upset[a,c,e,j], Vengefulness[b,c], Want[c], Wistful[c], Woe[b,c], Worry[b,c], Wrath[b,c], Yearning[c]	Acceptance[c,h], Accomplished[c], Active[i,j], Admiration[c], Adoration[b,c], Affection[b,c], Agreement[c], Alert[h,j], Amazement[h], Amusement[a,b,c], Anticipation[c], Appreciation[c], Ardent[c], Arousal[a,b,d], Astonishment[b,d,i], At ease[a,d], Attentive[h,j], Attraction[b,c], Avid[c], Bliss[b], Brave[c], Calm[a,d], Caring[b,c], Charmed[a], Cheerfulness[a,b,c,h], Comfortable[c], Compassion[b,c], Considerate[c], Concern[c], Contentment[a,b,c,d,j], Courageous[c], Curious[h], Delight[a,b,c,d,h], Desire[b,c], Determined[j], Devotion[c], Eagerness[b,c], Ecstasy[a,b,c], Elation[a,b,c,i], Empathy[c], Enchanted[c], Encouraging[c], Energetic[f], Enjoyment[b,c,f], Entertained[c], Enthrallment[b], Enthusiasm[b,c,e,f,j], Euphoria[b,c], Excellent[c], Excitement[a,b,c,d,f,i,j], Exhilaration[b,f], Expectant[c], Exuberant[c], Fantastic[c], Fascinated[c], Fine[c], Fondness[b,c], Forgiving[c], Friendly[c], Fulfillment[c], Gaiety[b,c], Generous[c], Giggly[c], Giving[c], Gladness[a,b,c,d], Glee[b,c], Good[c], Gratitude[c], Great[c], Happiness[a,b,c,d,e,f,h,i], Harmony[c], Helpful[c,h], High[c], Hope[b,c,g], Horny[c], Impressed[c], Incredible[c], Infatuation[b,c], Inspired[j], Interested[f,j], Jolliness[b], Joviality[b], Joy[a,b,c,e,f,g], Jubilation[b,c], Kindly[c,i], Lighthearted[c], Liking[b,c,g], Longing[b], Love[a,b,c,e], Lust[b,c], Merriment[c], Moved[c], Nice[c], Optimism[b], Overjoyed[a,c], Passion[a,b,c], Peaceful[c,f], Peppy[c], Perfect[c], Pity[c], Playful[c], Pleasure[a,c,d,f,i], Pride[a,b,c,e,f,g,j], Protective[c], Rapture[b], Reassured[c], Regard[c], Rejoice[c], Relaxed[c,d,f], Release[c], Relief[a,b,c,e,f,g], Respect[c], Reverence[c], Romantic[c], Satisfaction[a,b,c,d,f,i], Secure[c], Sensational[c], Sensitive[c], Sensual[c], Sentimentality[b,c], Serene[d,c], Sexy[c], Sincere[c], Strong[i,j], Super[c], Surprise[b,e,f,i], Tenderness[b,c], Terrific[c], Thoughtful[c], Thrill[a,b,c], Touched[a], Tranquility[c], Triumph[b], Trust[c,h], Victorious[c], Warm-hearted[c,j], Wonderful[c], Worship[c], Zeal[b], Zest[b]

Source: Laros and Steenkamp (2005)

The study by Saraneva and Sääksjärvi (2008) examined the emotions of young compulsive buyers when shopping, as shown in Table 16. The study attempted to identify emotions at different stages in the journey and revealed that consumers move up and down the emotional spectrum as they progress through the different stages. From a decision-making angle, emotion plays an important role since consumers are no longer assumed to make largely utilitarian and rational decisions, but they also encompass the hedonic and as a result the affective (Laros and Steenkamp, 2005; Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982; Gentile *et al.*, 2007). By studying the affective experiences at each stage of the omnichannel decision-making journey for fashion it will help to pinpoint how different stages contribute positively or negatively to the customer journey and brand experience. The idea of optimising the stages and channels of the shopping journey is supported prior literature on omnichannel (Huré *et al.*, 2016; Piotrowicz and Cuthbertson, 2014). The current study will build upon the work of Wolny and Charoensuksai (2014) who examined emotion within the multichannel journey for cosmetics. However, within the Wolny and Charoensuksai (2014) study emotions were so far discussed as the emotional drivers which led to instances such as impulse drivers rather than examining the emotions which occurred at each of the individual stages of the journey.

Table 16 Young Compulsive Buyers' Feelings While Shopping

Feelings before	Feelings during	Feelings after
Eagerness	Satisfaction, joy, and relief	Satisfaction and joy
Anticipation, hope, and expectations	Eagerness, enhanced self-esteem	Guilt, bad conscience
Joy	Frustration, anxiety, and stress	Tiredness
Excitement	Disappointment	Eagerness to try out new purchases
Restlessness		Frustration
		Insecurity and despair

Source: (Saraneva and Sääksjärvi, 2008)

4.7   Customer-Brand Engagement

Engagement as a concept is interparadigimatic and draws from the fields of marketing, psychology, information systems, and management (Vivek *et al.*, 2012) within the marketing perspective engagement has been recognised as a research priority for 2014-2016 (Marketing Science Institute, 2014). Engagement has been both a progression and a contribution in experience research and is concerned with recognising the customer's active role in the experience (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016). This links to the omnichannel definition which highlights empowered consumers who are choosing to take control of their journey. The concept of engagement consists of cognitive, emotional and behavioural dimensions (Hollebeek, 2011b) and therefore shares commonality with experience. Yet, it is the behavioural dimension that distinguishes engagement whereby the concept goes beyond hedonic experiences and acts as a motivational force which encourages consumers to take action (van Doorn et al., 2010; Higgins , 2006).

Research has recognised online customer brand engagement as part of the online customer experience with consumers actively engaging with brands online (Mollen and Wilson, 2010). The rise of channels has now provided a range of ways in which consumers can engage with brands. The basis of customer engagement is underpinned by theory on interactive experience and marketing relationships (Brodie *et al.*, 2011; Fill, 2005; Vivek *et al.*, 2012). The relationship basis of engagement is one that exceeds a transaction and illustrates instances whereby interaction such as attitudes and behaviours occurs between a consumer and company beyond the purchase and extends the consumers role beyond that of a buyer (Vivek *et al.*, 2012; Alexander and Jaakkola, 2016; Aberdeen Group, 2012; Lemon and Verhoef, 2016). The "reaching out" (or engagement) results in cognitive, emotional, behavioural, sensorial and social responses on the part of the customer, customer engagement becomes part of the overall customer experience and, in its specific manifestations, constitutes channels along the customer journey (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016). For the marketer, it is about understanding how brand engagement can be enhanced (Rappaport, 2007). As an outcome of brand engagements trust, commitment and loyalty and retention and customer satisfaction are viewed as potential consequences (Hollebeek, 2011a; Gambetti *et al.*, 2012; Bowden, 2009; Dwivedi, 2015; Brodie et al., 2011).

The pace of change concerning technology has provided new ways in which retail brands can engage with consumers for example, social media and online has enabled fashion retailers to develop rapidly into global players (McCormick et al., 2014; Keller, 2009). The rise of web 2.0 has transformed marketing communications from one-way into two-way dialogues as shown in Figure 16. Today consumers participate in a wide variety of engagement activities including: product recommendations, ratings, co-creation, word-of-mouth, user-generated content social media sites, wikis, media sharing, blogs and virtual worlds, liking and commenting on social media posts (Hollebeek, 2011a; Hanna et al., 2011; Pentina et al., 2013; Sashi, 2012; Alexander and Jaakkola, 2016; Van Doorn et al., 2010; Brodie et al., 2011; Wallace et al., 2014). The web 2.0 model reflects the new retailing channels which facilitate dialogue between consumer and brands (McCormick et al., 2014). This has had specific implications for fashion retailers as interactivity and deeper relationships are facilitated between consumers, prospects and brands and particularly with fashion retailers who have acquired some of the largest user communities on social media (McCormick et al., 2014).

Figure 16 Traditional vs. Web 2.0 Marketing Communications Model
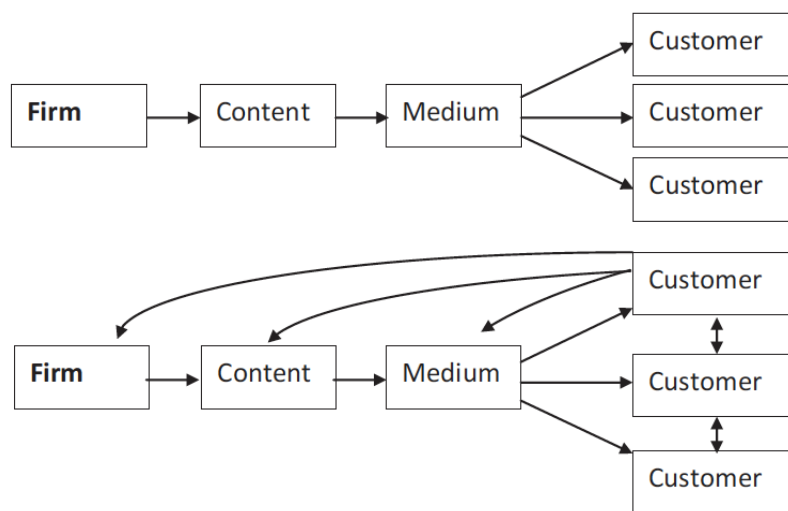
Source: McCormick et al. (2014) based on the *Marketing Communications Model* by Hoffman and Novak (1996)

4.7.1   Customer-Brand Engagement Frameworks

The framework of customer engagement (see Figure 17) is concerned with the behavioural manifestations engagement and transcends the state of the customer simply being passive (Vivek et al., 2012). These outcomes share similarity with outcomes of experience such as loyalty and trust and also highlight new outcomes such as word of mouth.

Figure 17 Theoretical Model of Customer Engagement
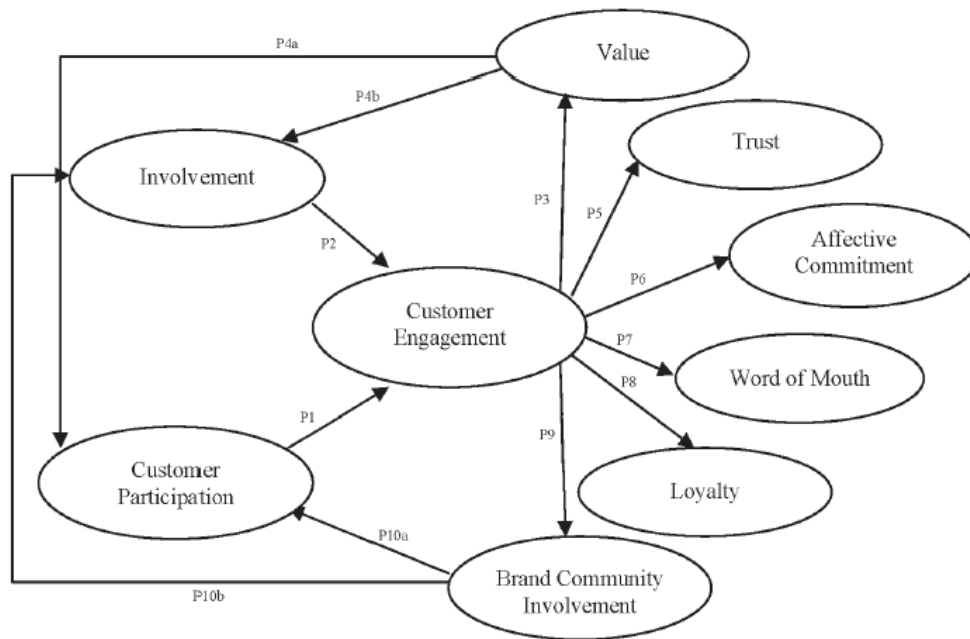
Source: Vivek, Beatty and Morgan (2012)

However, a key issue of both the engagement model of Vivek et al., (2012) and the consumer decision process is that they do not reflect how technology enables the engagement process. This is despite technology being a key component of customer engagement. The engagement model by Sashi (2012) in Figure 18 does begin to highlight web 2.0 engagement more effectively as it highlights engagement stages such as advocacy. The advocacy stage is defined as connected consumers who utilise social networks to spread the word about their positive experiences with a brand, product or company (Sashi, 2012). Nevertheless, there is still a need to map out engagement activity. The customer journey provides a suitable basis to do so because it highlights not only the stages of the consumer journey but also the technology used at each stage. For example, Balasescu (2013) suggests that social media is a powerful enabler of engagement. Thus the customer journey could explicitly map the stages at shoppers are using social media to provide further support for Balasescu's (2013) point. Therefore, the customer journey enhances the consumer decision process and engagement models as it demonstrates the specific points at which technology, namely channels and devices, are used to facilitate engagement.

Figure 18 Customer Engagement Cycle
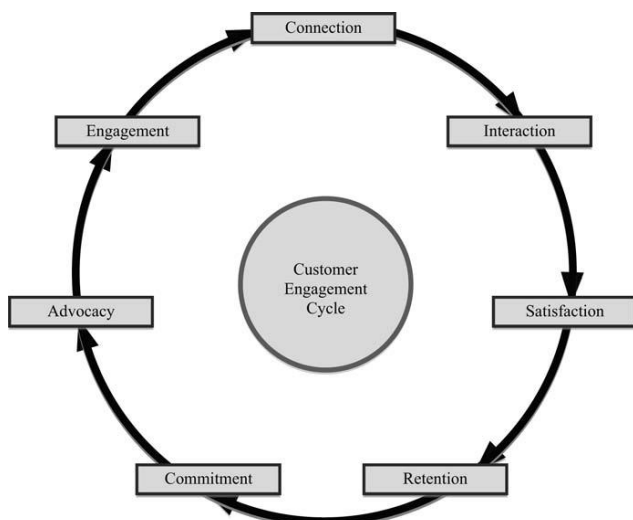
Source: Sashi (2012)

Figure 19 depicts a dedicated customer-brand engagement model and reflects the two-way interactions between a subject and object i.e. with different channels and in doing so, relationships begin to form with brands (Hollebeek, 2011a). The model also reflects that engagement is developed over a linear period, which shows links with the customer journey. Additionally, over time the engagement level will vary as a result of cognitive, behavioural and emotional dimensions. So, engagement further links to experience and the customer journey through the emotional dimension.

Figure 19 Facets of Customer-Brand Engagement
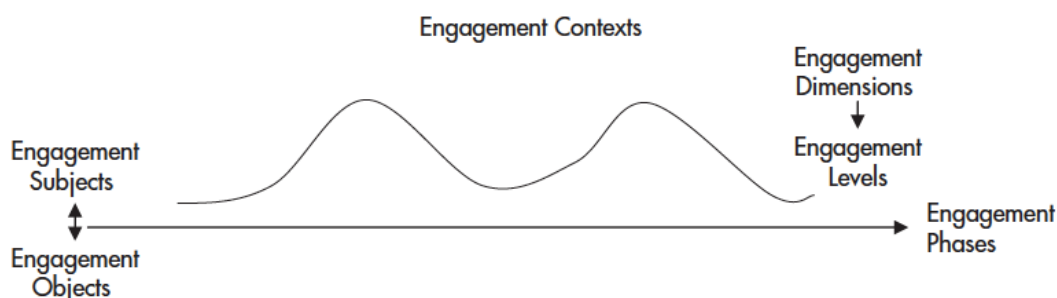
Source: Hollebeek (2011a)

4.7.2   Fashion Brand Engagement

Greater brand engagement is positively associated with clothing involvement because consumers feel rewarded by their association with these brands (Goldsmith *et al.,* 2012a). This therefore links to the discussion self-concept in section 3.3.1 because digital channels provide another outlet for consumers to express themselves. Young consumers in particular seek gratification rewards with their association with branded fashion products because they carry symbolism and express the self-identity, status and materialism (Goldsmith *et al.,* 2012a). Furthermore, there is a positive association between status display and specifically university female undergraduate consumers for clothing (Loulakis and Hill, 2010).

The potential benefits from creating a strong brand are significant. For example, brands can aid in simplifying decision-making (Keller, 2013; Davis, 2000; Keller, 1993; Keller, 2010). When consumers have trust in a brand, they are more likely to also develop loyalty (Delgado-Ballester and Munuera-Alemán, 2000; Delgado-Ballester *et al.*, 2003; Aurand *et al.,* 2005). However, as discussed in the previous chapter, brands also mean that consumers hold heightened expectations (Davis, 2000; Keller, 1993; Keller, 2010). Since fashion is highly cyclical involved shoppers are driven to constantly seek out new information about fashion brands. The omnichannel environment therefore facilitates this engagement because consumers can be connected to brands and their communities 24/7. However, expectations of consumers have heightened and now consumers demanding quick, detailed engagements with brands, in order to stay informed and expect the flexibility of being able to purchase across many channels (Retail Week , 2015).

Dwivedi (2015) calls for brand engagement studies to examine different product categories, therefore this study will contribute to the brand engagement literature by understanding the role of brand in the omnichannel and fashion context. The current study will seek to understand if and how consumers engage with brands across the customer decision-making stages of an omnichannel shopping journey. The fashion sector is a leader for digital engagement and in a survey of 1,750 UK consumers 73% were actively engaged with brands by commenting, liking links and posting questions (Retail Week, 2015). Fashion involvement is behind the motivation for shoppers to engage in talking about and interacting with fashion brands for example through e-word-of-mouth (Wolny and Mueller, 2013). This is a consumer-driven based marketing trend which means that traditional sources of information for fashion are being challenged by social networks and the mass media (Kim *et al.,* 2014).

4.8   Chapter Summary

From the literature, it is evident that customer journeys are an emerging concept. There is scope to contribute to knowledge by developing a detailed customer journey framework which is grounded in the empirical literature and one reflects a comprehensive and holistic account of consumers cross-channel interactions and how these affect the brand experience as a result. The chapter revealed that emotion is a theme that binds the customer journey together with experience and engagement. Thus, consumers emotions should be included in the framework for the current study. By including consumers emotions, the study will be able to identify negative stages in the journey where consumers expectations are not currently being met. This is important because the key distinction between omnichannel and multichannel is that consumers now hold heightened expectations and now seek a seamless customer experience. The product category context of fashion presents a specific challenge because of its links to consumers self-concept and the high levels of engagement with brands make this product category particularly interesting for exploring digital engagement interactions. The customer journey framework will therefore seek to understand how consumers engage with fashion brands during their omnichannel customer journey and identify at what stage in the journey this occurs. The next chapter will discuss the theoretical framework for the current study.

5 Chapter Five Theoretical Framework

5.1 Chapter Introduction

The aim of this study is to examine the stages of consumer decision-making in the omnichannel journey for young high involvement female fashion consumers. The literature on the themes of omnichannel and customer journey are still emerging, while the consumer behaviour-based decision process is a long-established theory. Moreover, research that focuses on these constructs from the product category perspective of fashion is still under-developed. The perspective of the thesis is orientated around the themes illustrated Figure 20. The diagram demonstrates the explicit scope of this current study and highlight where the literature themes intersect.

Figure 20 Literature Perspective Venn Diagram
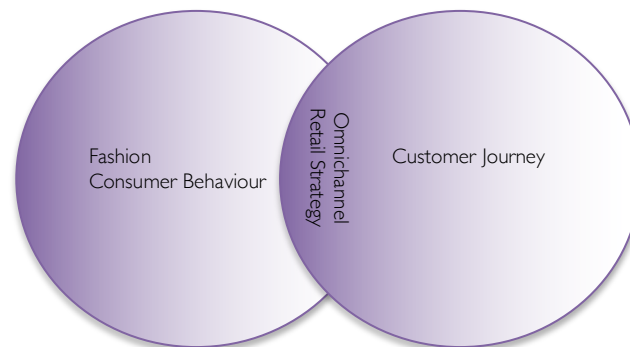
To address the aim, a theoretical framework has been employed to support the research methodology. This chapter reviews a range of theoretical frameworks, specifically from a consumer behaviour and decision-making perspective. This is in addition to the frameworks discussed in the preceding chapters which were intertwined with the literature discussion. The conceptual framework from this chapter will be refined and developed through the analysis of primary data and will form as the eventual outcome of this inductive study.

5.2 Definition of Theoretical Framework

Theoretical frameworks take many iterations as: a conceptual map (Novak, 2005), a conceptual framework (Miles and Huberman, 1994) or as an integrative diagram (Strauss, 1987). A framework is defined as either a visual or narrative explanation of a theory which can span from the complex to simplistic, that identifies the main elements to be studied, such as factors, constructs or variables (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Silverman, 2005). The integrated nature of framework development provides richness whereby connections, links and relationships are established between different concepts, constructs and ideas (Urquhart, 2013; Silverman, 2005). Hence, it is this identification and integration of themes that create the basis for a research project. A key challenge of this omnichannel study is that it is a concept which can be viewed from a number of different perspectives such as distribution and logistics, marketing and consumer behaviour or human-computer interaction. Furthermore, knowledge on omnichannel is constantly developing, therefore, the framework serves as a way to keep the project manageable. A further benefit is that a framework helps to identify what is in and importantly, outwith the scope of a study (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

5.2.1 Process Versus Variance Maps

There are different ways in which theoretical frameworks can be represented. According to Maxwell (2005), variance maps are timeless and depict the general relationship between factors using causal links. Meanwhile process maps "there is a beginning and an end, and the concepts are often specific events or situations, rather than variables" (Maxwell, 2005). This study chooses a process framework in line with the stages of the decision process and temporal progression of a customer journey, although there is an appreciation that consumers may switch back and forth between various devices and channels. Process maps describe sequences and emphasis is placed

on the use of arrows to demonstrate the flow of the process (Hays and Singh, 2012). This is also evident in the approach to service blueprinting (Shostack, 1984).

5.3   Consumer Behaviour Frameworks

This section acknowledges frameworks that serve as a basis to explain how consumer behaviour is organised. The theory of reasoned action and the theory of planned behaviour are both rule-based models to explain consumer behaviour, with the technology acceptance model being a later adaptation (Bray, 2008). The S-O-R model is also discussed as a cognitive model of consumer decision-making.

5.3.1   Theory of Reasoned Action

The theory or reasoned action (TRA) indicates that consumer beliefs determine attitudes, which in-turn predict behaviour and therefore both elements being equal (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975). The theory also takes account of subjective norms, which highlights the influence of others, driven by the innate desire for conformity. The model has been used to study intentions to use technology as well as decision-making (Keen *et al.*, 2004). The theory of reasoned action has been applied to multichannel customer management. In such instances, the TRA framework has been used to understand channel choice and channel migration in multichannel contexts, such as Verhoef *et al.* (2007) and Pookulangara (2011). Verhoef *et al.* (2007) indicated that their study was limited, and the model did not include all channels as the authors indicated that it would make data collection too extensive. Thus, it is proposed that using the framework of the consumer decision process would help bring structure to understanding the usage of an extensive variety of channels and make the data collection on omnichannel practicable within the time-frame available.

Figure 21 Theory of Reasoned Action
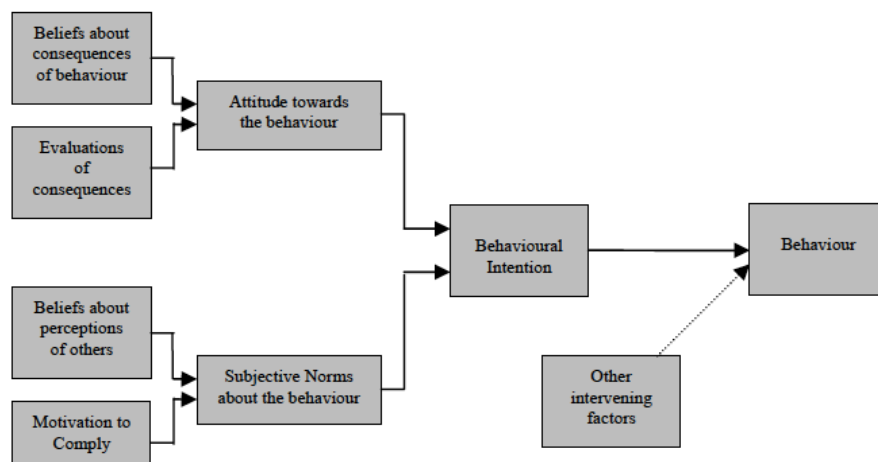
Source: Fishbein and Ajzen (1975); Loudon and Della Bitta (1993)

5.3.2   Theory of Planned Behaviour

Within the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) model there are additional elements when compared with TRA. Firstly, perceived behavioural control accounts for consumers' perceived ability to perform a behaviour. While, actual behavioural control is concerned with consumers' actual ability (i.e. utilities and skills) to perform a given behaviour (Ajzen, 2006; Bamberg *et al.*, 2003). TPB has been applied to an array of contexts as a motivations and intentions model including social media (Ngai *et al.*, 2015) and the use of technology (Taylor and Levin, 2014). Within multichannel research, the work has been applied to channel switching because of the skills and resources which affect how a consumer will choose to take action (Pookulangara *et al.*, 2011).

Figure 22 Theory of Planned Behaviour
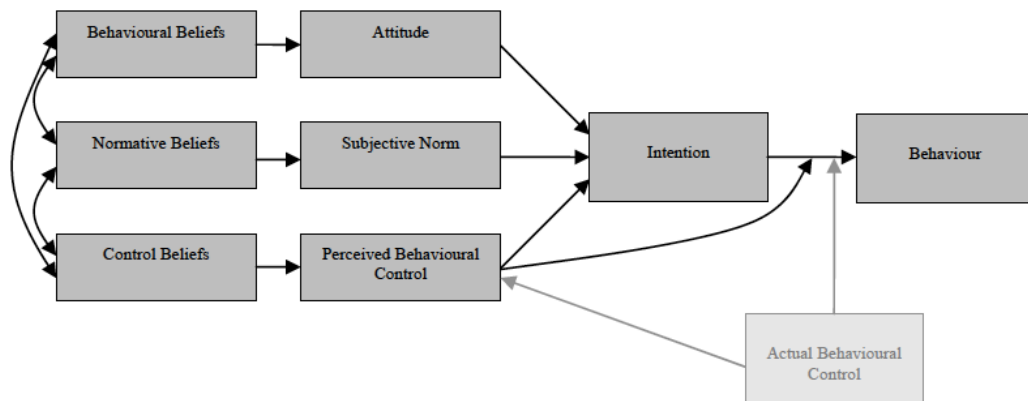
Source: Ajzen (2006)

Both TRA and TPB are limited in their ability to cover the range and depth of consumer purchase decisions (Bray, 2008). One such factor and one which is pertinent to the present study is because the models do not take account of the affective and hedonistic influences upon consumer purchase behaviour since these models are cognitively based and therefore demonstrate a lack of 'completeness' (Bray, 2008). In the context of the fashion product category hedonic and affective influences can be particularly salient for example when an individual experiences involvement towards fashion. Furthermore, the current investigation seeks to explore consumers affective experiences which is not featured within the TPB model.

5.3.3   Technology Acceptance Model

Technology is currently top of the agenda in the development and enhancement of retail (Deloitte, 2012; Elliott et al., 2012) since consumers now desire a highly integrated shopping experience (Euromonitor GMID, 2012). The technology acceptance model (TAM) was first developed by Davis et al. (1989). The model provides an understanding towards an individual's characteristics when adopting new technological environments (Shim and Mahoney, 1991). Within this, TAM specifically considers perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use, with perceived usefulness as the most significant of the two elements. TAM has been used understand the acceptance of online technology for fashion shopping (Lee et al., 2011); for example, when examining attitudes towards the adoption of mobile commerce (Magrath and McCormick, 2013; Li et al., 2012).

Figure 23 Technology Acceptance Model
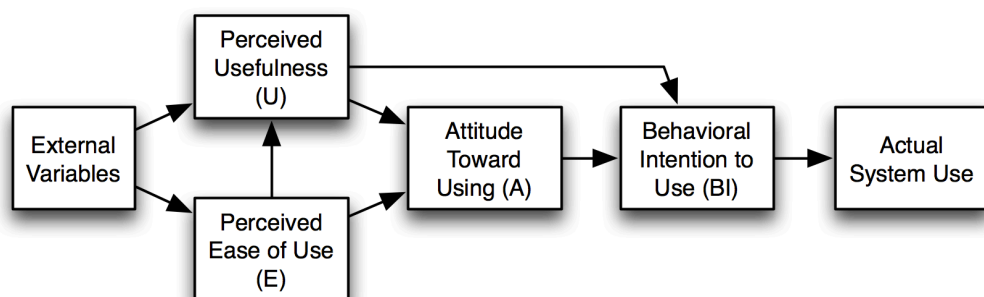
Source: Davis (1989)

However, TAM considers technology singularly and is not easily able to view cross-channel experiences. A driver for the current study is that the consequences of cross-channel experiences

are still worryingly unknown (Piercy, 2012), which is something that this model does not accommodate for. Furthermore, unlike TAM, this study is not concerned with looking at consumers adoption of technology but what happens post-adoption i.e. how the technology is used. Therefore, the priority of omnichannel research studies should not be driven by the technology. Instead, technology should be viewed in the context i.e. using a customer journey or decision process theory context to understand how technology is used at a given stage to provide a richer explanation. This idea is supported by Van Riel (2013) since technology should be explored from the perspective of different channels and touchpoints that link together to form a customer journey.

5.3.4   Stimulus-Organism-Response Framework

The stimulus-organism-response framework was originally developed from an environmental psychology perspective by (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974), see Figure 24. The framework depicts the idea that environmental inputs will affect consumers perceptions and emotional responses which result in actions, such as approach or avoidance behaviour.

Figure 24 Stimulus-Organism-Response Framework
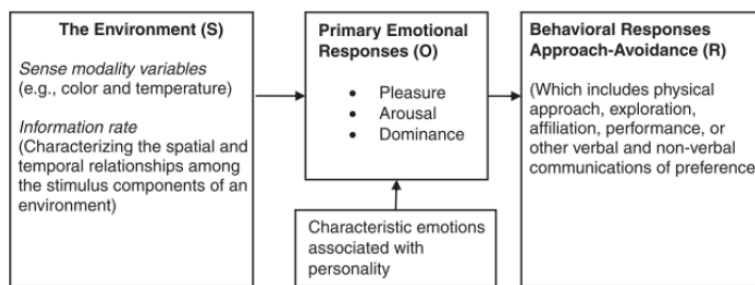
Source: (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974: 8)

The S-O-R framework is suitable for studying consumer behaviour from a positivistic research disposition (Petermans *et al.,* 2014). This is unlike the current research which takes an interpretivist view. Donovan and Rossiter (1982) applied the framework to the retail environment, namely the store, to explore how store atmospherics affect the emotional states of consumers, which then influence shopping behaviours. The framework is also applicable to online contexts (Mummalaneni, 2005) and for mobile (Li *et al.,* 2012). The S-O-R framework has also been applied to examine multichannel consumer behaviour to explore how multichannel customers evaluate overall satisfaction across distribution channels. (Hsieh *et al.,* 2012). However, Bray (2008) suggests that stimuli are unconditioned in the S-O-R framework and it does not take account of the impact of past experience. In contrast, the consumer decision process of Blackwell *et al.* (2006) considers consumer and situational/environmental moderators and therefore encompasses past experience. Furthermore, the S-O-R model does not understand how different channels contribute to different stages and this detail would be a particularly useful contribution for marketing practitioners. However, the model does recognise the value of emotional responses in decision-making.

5.4   Grand Models of Consumer Behaviour

The consumer behaviour flowchart (Nicosia, 1968), the theory of buyer behaviour (Howard and Sheth , 1969) and the consumer decision process model (Blackwell *et al.,* 2006) - first developed by Engel et al. (1968), are collectively known as the 'Grand Models' of consumer behaviour. The foundation of the 'Grand Models' stems from the work of Dewey (1910) who introduced the five-stage decision process, which consists of problem recognition, information search, alternative evaluation, choice and outcomes. The multiple stages are a consistent feature across decision-making models to reflect the shopping purchase process (Kacen *et al.,* 2012; Van Bruggen *et al.,* 2010; Verhoef *et al.,* 2007). This section draws attention to both the Nicosia and the Theory of Buyer Behaviour models. The consumer decision process has already been addressed in section 3.5.

5.4.1   Nicosia Model

The consumer behaviour flowchart (Nicosia model) is a holistic framework of consumer behaviour, which captures the relationship between a firm and the consumer (Nicosia, 1968). What is significant about the model (see Figure 25) is that it usefully puts consumer interactions with a firm into the context of a whole decision process and examines how relationships and variables interact within the dynamics of that whole process. The connection of variables links well to omnichannel as it is about how the channels work together and create summative benefits as a result of combined usage. However, the model does not shed light on an emotional experience or highlight the influence of technology.

Figure 25 Nicosia Consumer Behaviour Flowchart Model
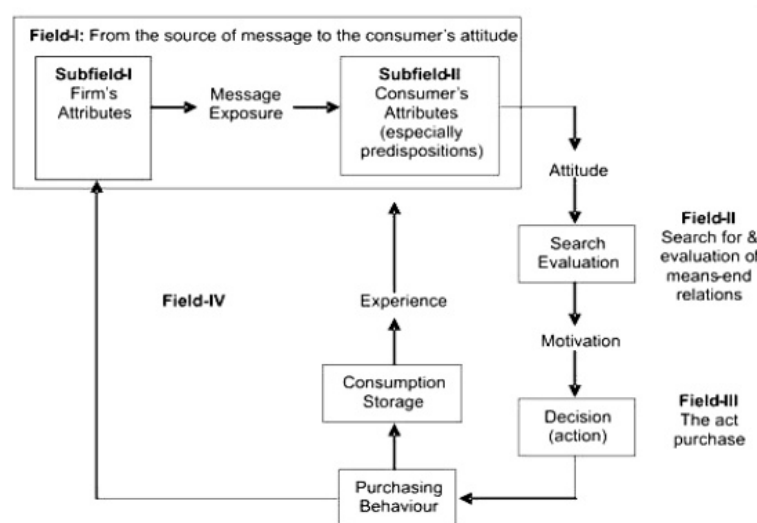
Source: Nicosia (1968)

5.4.2   Theory of Buyer Behaviour

The theory of buyer behaviour is an early sequential model designed to understand brand choice behaviour (Howard and Sheth, 1969), see Figure 26. The theory integrates psychological, marketing and social influences of consumer choice behaviour into a systematic sequence of information processing within a temporal context (Foxall, 1990). The model shares similarities with the core stages of decision-making of the Blackwell *et al.,* (2006) model. The model recognises that decision-making can occur on three distinct levels: extended problem-solving, limited problem-solving and routine response behaviour (Foxall, 1990; Howard and Sheth, 1969). Therefore, consumers will be motivated to engage in extended problem-solving if the decision is important to them. A key feature of the model is that it considers the role of marketing communications and branding by looking at marketing messages and the consumer's attitude towards them and importantly recognises the effect of past-experience i.e. the consideration and its effect on future behaviour.

Figure 26 Theory of Buyer Behaviour

Source: (Howard and Sheth, 1969)

The Howard and Sheth (1969) model itself is complex simply due to the number of variables which are visible on the model. The study chooses the consumer decision process model over the theory of buyer behaviour as the consumer decision process is more concise (Foxall, 1990). The choice is further explained by the fact that the framework has gone through several revisions since its initial publication in 1968 (Engel *et al.,* 1968) which has improved the explanatory power of the consumer decision process. Given the nature of an omnichannel study, there are a high number of variables that need to be explored e.g. channels and devices, therefore, a concise framework can simplify the research process and ensure it is manageable. Furthermore, the consumer decision process model considers consumer involvement and motivation, and this will be useful when studying fashion, which is a high involvement product category.

5.5   Theoretical Framework Adopted

Omnichannel is a topic which has been evolving since the commencement of this research, yet there is a lack a theoretical framework to examine the stages of consumer decision-making in the omnichannel journey for young high involvement female fashion consumers. To address this research aim, a framework has been developed to aid the research methodology and data collection, as illustrated in Figure 27. From reviewing the different frameworks within the literature review chapters and across the current chapter it is clear that while the foundation of the framework will be based upon the consumer decision process there is a need to integrate elements of other frameworks in order to comprehensively respond to the research aim. Furthermore, omnichannel is a holistic concept, and so the final framework is designed to reflect this by drawing from the frameworks discussed in this thesis. Each element of the framework is discussed, as follows:

Stages of the Journey
The framework identifies the stages of the customer decision-making journey, and these are derived from the consumer decision process framework by Blackwell *et al.* (2006). While the literature did identify models for examining the customer journey, as per section 4.5, the stages of these models were not empirically grounded within the research literature. For example, Wolny and Charoensuksai (2014) use the practitioner-derived ORCA model by Molenaar (2012). In contrast, the model of the consumer decision process is one that has evolved through many iterations. The consumer decision process offers a more detailed depiction of stages, particularly for post-purchase. This is in contrast to the customer journey model of Wolny and Charoensuksai (2014) whose application of the ORCA model identified post-purchase as solely one stage. From a fashion perspective, the use of the consumer decision process is further supported, since fashion consumer behaviour has drawn theoretical foundations from the consumer decision process (Solomon and Rabolt, 2009). The literature discussion also identified at a granular level the

presence of perceived risk across different stages of consumer decision-making. However, there is a need to understand at a more holistic level how risk affects an omnichannel journey for fashion.

Channels & Device Engagement
The mid-section of the framework, which identifies channel usage, is integrated from the multichannel customer management framework by Neslin *et al.* (2006), as identified in section 2.4.4. This is also supported by Wolny and Charoensuksai (2014) who identify different channels at different stages of the journey. This framework reflects that experiences in one channel can affect and cross-over into another consumer (Blázquez, 2014; Verhoef *et al.,* 2015). The current study will provide insight as to the channel preferences at each stage. Unlike the Neslin *et al.* (2006) the current study will also identify channels at problem recognition and in more detail following post-purchase. The theory is extended further by considering which devices are used at each stage of the journey. In an omnichannel journey, the consumer's choice of method for interaction is important (Piotrowicz and Cuthbertson, 2014). There is also a need to understand how each of these interactions integrate with the brand experience since consumers are now channel agnostic.

The Emotional Experience
The proposed framework also includes identification of consumers emotional experiences. This is in line customer-brand experience, and specifically affective experiences in section 4.6.3. Furthermore, Wolny and Charoensuksai (2014) identify emotions as part of the customer journey. The x-axis represents the temporal stage of the journey while the y-axis represents either a positive or negative emotional response and this is supported by the journey model of Crosier and Handford (2012). Identification of the emotions derives from emotion words by Laros and Steenkamp (2005) and also emotional experiences during the shopping process from Saraneva and Sääksjärvi (2008). The usefulness of understanding the journey with an emotional perspective is that it will elicit responses as to highs and lows of the journey and identify weak areas of the omnichannel decision-making journey for fashion.

Outcomes
Omnichannel represents a unified customer experience as a result of the channels being managed together (Piotrowicz and Cuthbertson, 2014). The section on the right of the framework attempts to consider the experience outcomes which occur from an omnichannel customer decision-making journey. It is anticipated that outcomes will occur based upon the outcomes that occur as a result of a customer-brand experience & engagement, this is based upon the positive outcomes which are mentioned in sections 4.6 and 4.7. The element of loyalty has been specifically pinpointed as it is discussed in both the customer-brand experience and engagement literature, and also in the omnichannel literature. This is because omnichannel consumers more loyal than their multichannel counterparts (IDC Retail Insights , 2010).

Consumer Characteristics
The left side of the framework indicates the consumer characteristics which are important influencers impacting the omnichannel customer decision-making journey. Consumer characteristics outlined in section 3.4 include demographics, such as age and gender, shopping motivations, consumer resources, attitudes – i.e. involvement and past experience. These themes were derived from the consumer decision process along with additional literature on customer experience, fashion consumer behaviour, and multichannel customer management literature, as depicted in Table 6.

Situational Moderators
The theoretical framework also shows the anticipated situational moderators associated with an omnichannel decision-making journey because empirically, situational moderators can affect channel selection (Nicholson *et al.*, 2002; Belk, 1975). The framework will initially draw from the moderators from the multichannel literature, and consumer behaviour literature such as: Nicholson *et al.* (2002); Verhoef et al. (2009); Neslin *et al.* (2006); Belk (1975). These moderators will be used as a basis, but the data collection will seek to explore the definitive situational moderators and consumer characteristics for the omnichannel decision-making journey inductively.

Figure 27 Proposed Theoretical Framework for the Thesis
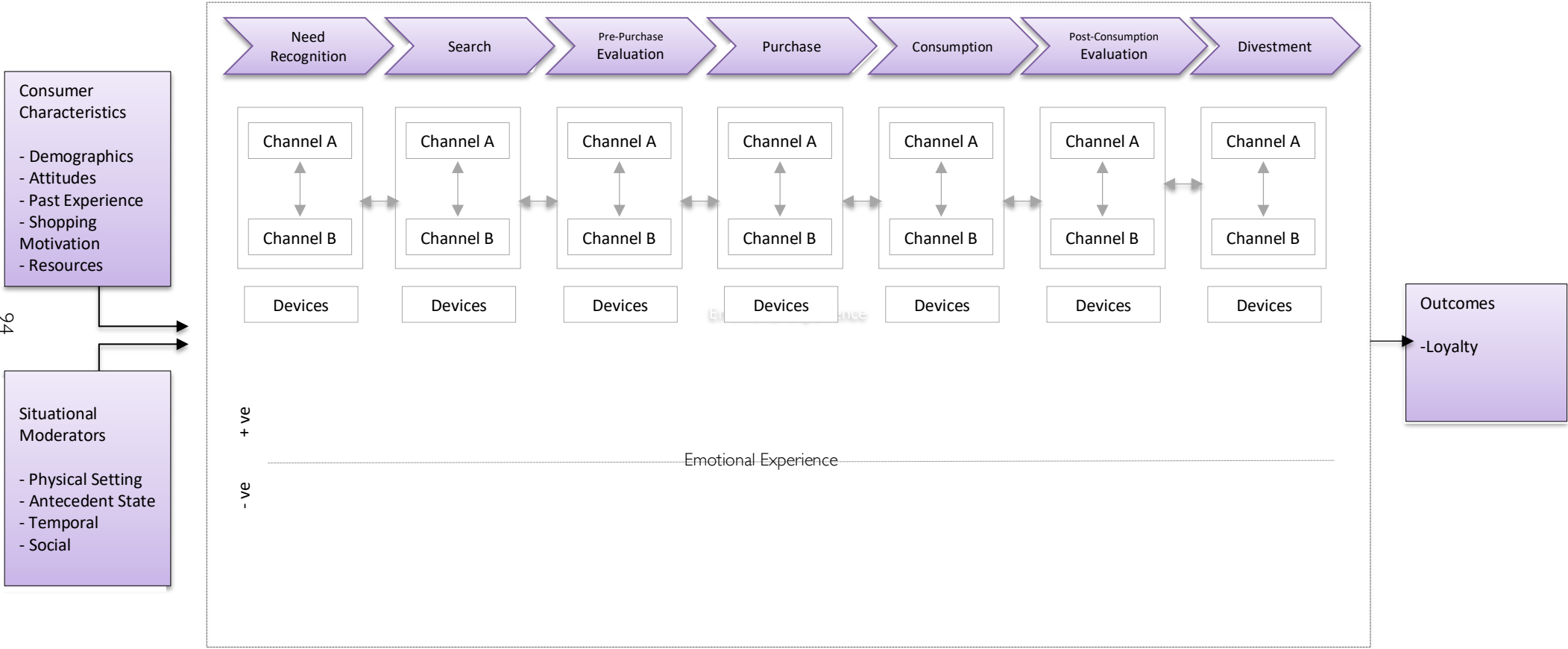
5.6   Review of Literature Gaps

The study seeks to offer a contribution to knowledge based upon the original research aim which was to examine the stages of decision-making in the omnichannel shopping journey for young high involvement female fashion consumers. In order to provide a contribution several gaps have been identified from the review of literature in the preceding chapters. The gaps will not only serve as a basis for the contribution to knowledge, but will inform the methodological approach and framework.

An over-arching gap in knowledge is that the literature is still unable to answer the research question of *what is the decision-making journey for fashion consumers in the context of the omnichannel environment*? There is a no clear literature at this point which comprehensively addresses this issue. Consequently, this study seeks to address this question and examines decision-making within the context of omnichannel and fashion retailing by specifically mapping omnichannel customer journeys of young high involvement female fashion consumers. It is by positioning the research within consumer behaviour and specifically decision-making that the study provides value and a contribution to knowledge. This is because omnichannel, as a concept, is typically situated discussions distribution and supply chain, as per the work of Hübner *et al.* (2016) and Ishfaq et al. (2016), rather than the domain of consumer behaviour and marketing. Although some studies have sought to look at customer journeys in consumer behaviour, such as Wolny and Charoensuksai (2014), the work has not been based within the context of omnichannel and instead focused on its predecessor, multichannel. The omnichannel environment provides a new context in which decision-making for fashion retailing can be studied and to date omnichannel decision-making journeys for fashion have yet to be fully explored.

The decision-making process is an important aspect for understanding consumer behaviour with regards to fashion. Thus, recognising the current work as a specifically consumer behaviour and decision-making study focuses the scope of the study. Consumer behaviour is not solely based upon the transaction or exchange process but instead seeks to capture the totality of consumers' decisions (Solomon and Rabolt, 2009; Koller and Salzberger, 2007; Jacoby, 1976). Similarly, in an omnichannel context each channel, device and stage interaction are valuable in contributing to the overall omnichannel journey experience and potentially a brand experience, which is something that this study will examine. Indeed, Pucinelli (2009) states that by understanding shoppers in greater depth retailers can achieve enhanced customer satisfaction and performance.

There exists a gap in the literature to provide an in-depth qualitative study. There is a need to position the current research as a study of depth in order to more comprehensively understand decision-making associated with omnichannel journey for fashion. The study will probe consumers at length to raise consciousness of participants to purposely think about the steps they take in their journey. An in-depth study consisting of multiple phases will add further robustness to help evidence the findings between and amongst the stages. By conducting multiple phases of data collection, the study is able to build up a picture of not only the stages of the journey but also the experiences within each of these stages. By doing so, the phases of the study become greater than the sum of their parts. The study is also able to provide a more involved understanding by carrying the same participants through each phase of data collection. Therefore, the methodological approach of the study becomes a contribution in its own right as it probes deeper and deeper throughout each data collection stage.

The product category of fashion has yet to be fully explored in the context of omnichannel. Early contributions have begun to emerge from (Kent *et al.,* 2015). There is a specific need to articulate how fashion consumer behaviour has changed in light of omnichannel and specifically for decision-making. For example, there is yet to be a discussion on the particulars of decision-making involvement in a fashion context and how these issues translate into the omnichannel retail environment. One issue is that the study will explore how consumers who are highly involved in the product category of fashion are susceptible to risk. This raises the question of how risk is experienced by the high involvement fashion consumer through the shopping journey. Decision-making theory highlights the importance of risk as a fundamental part of the decision process.

However, studies on customer journeys and on decision-making for omnichannel have yet to address the concept of risk. Risk is pertinent to the current research investigation since the product category of fashion adds additional complexity for the consumer because of the social risk the product category carries along with fashion's role in asserting one's self-identity as identified in chapter three of this thesis.

There is a further gap in the need to correlate high involvement with the omnichannel decision journey for fashion in terms of the stages, channels and devices employed. As the literature review identified, cross-channel behaviour is common specifically among high involvement female consumers (Piercy, 2012). The current study will consequently contribute to knowledge by articulating a map of the different stages used across a temporal shopping journey for fashion. Based on the review of literature there is scope to explore the post-purchase journey in greater detail. While Wolny and Charoensuksai (2014) recognise that a number of activities take place during post-purchase these are, however, not separated into distinct stages. Furthermore, the Multichannel Customer Management model by Neslin et al., (2006) identifies post-purchase as a single aftersales stage. Post-purchase stages in the journey are relevant to omnichannel shopping particularly for fashion because omnichannel enables consumers to have greater confidence in a purchase decision due to returns flexibility (Bernon et al., 2016). Omnichannel returns are also high for fashion due to sizing and fit of garments and also by the fact that today fashion consumers are accustomed to ordering duplicate products of the same style for these reasons. Wolny and Charoensuksai (2014) do not address such issues since the research was centred upon beauty products, which features a limited returns period and does not share some of the complexities with fashion clothing such as the aforementioned issues with garment size. Hence there is also product category influence dimension which shapes the customer decision-making journey both pre-purchase and at the post-purchase stage.

Within the stages of the omnichannel journey there is a need to map the use of channels and devices. While academic studies have highlighted that the propensity for consumers to switch channels has now become the norm (Chiu et al., 2011). Research which maps the use of channels at different stages of a journey has been highly limited with helpful recent contributions from Wolny and Charoensuksai (2014). Instead research has been predominantly orientated upon channel choice and research methodologies have looked at channels in isolation of one another. Recent research by Lemon and Verhoef (2016) and Cummins et al., (2016) has called for further understanding as to how different channels influence different stages of the customer journey. Consequently, this research will examine how different channels are used at different stages and why they are associated with particular stages for the fashion decision journey. This will contribute to Nysveen and Rowley (2009) who call for a greater understanding of the contribution of different channels towards an overall brand relationship. Alongside this issue, there is little evidence of research examining how consumers are accessing channels i.e. what devices are being used. This is important as Piotrowicz and Cuthbertson (2014) suggested that consumers should be able to select the channel and method of interacting with the retailer, and so this will also be examined in the current research.

Examining the affective experiences across the stages will also provide clues as to how high involvement consumers experience for fashion. To date there has been a paucity of omnichannel and customer journey research which explores the affective experiences of consumers. This is despite affective experiences being a key feature of the customer journey. Recent research by Wolny and Charoensuksai (2014) has sought to examine the customer journey but the study has yet to fully address the affective experience of consumers. Hence, there is a need for an in-depth study to address the affective experience in terms of feelings and emotions of an omnichannel shopper for fashion at each stage of the decision-making journey. This is something which will be better achieved through a qualitative approach since qualitative studies are designed to investigate human behaviour such as feelings, experiences and opinions (Patton, 2002). By identifiying negative feelings in the omnichannel journey the study this could potentially reveal glitches in the omnichannel journey experience and pinpoint areas for marketing practitioners and retailers to draw their attention to. The affective experience reinforces the link between customer journey

and service-based literature. This is because a brand experience is about managing the emotional experience across different journey stages (Morrison and Crane, 2007).

One of the defining and distinguishing dimensions of the omnichannel concept is that it is a brand experience as identified in section Table 3. Therefore, omnichannel suggests a much deeper, ongoing relationship with the consumer. This study will seek to examine the role and influence of brands in omnichannel decision-making by specifically examining how an omnichannel decision journey affects the consumers experience of a brand and examine how the brand experience across an omnichannel journey manifests in the eyes of the consumer. For example, two dimensions of the omnichannel concept definition is the expectation and need: a consistent (Huré et al, 2016; Verhoef et al., 2015; Lazaris and Vrechopoulos, 2014) and seamless experience (Lazaris and Vrechopoulos, 2014; Piotrowic and Cuthbertson, 2014; Bernon et al., 2016). There is a need for a study to contribute to the literature and articulate from the consumers' perspective what represents a consistent and seamless experience and how that seamless and consistent experience manifests in the eyes of the consumer. Ultimately brands who are not effective at delivering a seamless and consistent experience could become confused and ultimately dilute the brands symbolic value to the customer and brand equity. By having a clearer understanding of what consumers value in terms of their expectations seamless and consistent experience the study will respond to Swoboda's (2016) call for retailers to manage their brand image across channels effectively.

In pursuit of examining the decision-making journey for fashion shoppers in the context of omnichannel the findings of the current study need to be developed into a customer decision-making journey framework which is robust by being grounded in the empirical literature and through utilising the findings from the in-depth primary data collection. The literature did highlight frameworks that have been have been suggested in order to map customer journeys effectively, such as the ORCA model by Molenaar (2012). Nevertheless, the ORCA model is not grounded in empirical research and takes a solely practitioner view. The multichannel customer management model by Neslin et al., (2006) does features the aspect of channels across the decision-making stages however lacks in areas such as comprehensive stages, device usage and emotional experience. Similarly, other models such as the customer journey model by Crosier (2012) while useful do not comprehensively analyse the stages of decision-making and are not specifically geared towards consumer behaviour for fashion retail. When looking critically at the consumer decision process as a basis for the framework in the current study, the consumer decision process has largely remained unchanged despite the developments in technology, which gives consumers more autonomy. Furthermore, the consumer decision-process model does not take account of different technologies such as a channels and devices, nor does it address consumers emotional experiences during the journey. Despite these factors Blackwell et al's, (2006) consumer decision process model provides a comprehensive view of the stages of decision-making as a model which underpins consumer behaviour. Therefore, based upon these findings, there is a need to propose a new customer journey framework. This new framework should comprehensively address not only the stages of the journey, but also maps the channels, devices and emotional experiences encountered. The framework should seek to integrate consumer decision process with the multichannel customer management and customer journey models to capture the totality of omnichannel customer decision-making journeys. The nature of this work is exploratory and conceptual because any final framework produced will be based upon the output of data collection rather than being tightly constraints to the bounds of existing theory and frameworks.

5.7   Chapter Summary

The conceptual framework presented provides a means of organising the themes identified from the literature. In developing the framework, different models have been combined to create a more robust customer decision-making journey model as an alternative to those that are already available and delivers one which is underpinned by the robustness of the consumer decision process by Blackwell et al. (2006). The framework defines the limits and scope of the study to focus the methodological treatment of the research subject. The preceding chapter outlines the methodology adopted for the qualitative study and explores. The data collection will then explore the propositions outlined in the theoretical framework. The results and discussion, along with the

conclusion will review the findings to refine and develop the final customer decision-making journey framework, which is a research output of this thesis.

6 Chapter Six Methodology

6.1 Introduction

The purpose of the methodology chapter is not one of superficial discussion to argue the dominance of the current study against other works but is, instead, centred upon understanding the mechanics of the research process to develop a reasoned and considered approach to tackle the research aim and objectives.

This chapter supports the methodological objective of the study which is to employ a range of qualitative techniques, namely: focus groups, interviews and shopper diaries in order to examine consumer decision-making at an in-depth level in the context of the omnichannel journey for fashion. From an academic disposition, research is an approach to solving a problem using a systematic and logical process (Blaxter *et al.,* 2001). From a management practitioner disposition, research is the "application of a scientific process to explain a particular phenomenon" (Babin *et al.,* 1994: 4-5). In conducting thesis research, it is critical to understand the methodological nature of the study. A methodology is the "theoretical and philosophical assumptions upon which research is based and the implications of these for the methods adopted" (Saunders *et al.,* 2009: 595), therefore this chapter will outline these in order to fulfil the research aim and objectives of Chapter 1.

This research seeks examine the stages of decision-making in the omnichannel shopping journey for young high involvement female fashion consumers. Consequently, the empirical aim of this study is to answer the underlying question of: what is the omnichannel decision making journey for the fashion consumer? Based upon a review of the literature this question has still remained unanswered. The objectives of the research and the aforementioned empirical aim are discussed as follows:

1. To review the theoretical foundation of consumer decision-making in the omnichannel context based upon literature from omnichannel retailing, fashion consumer behaviour and customer journey, in order to develop a research framework. Based on a comprehensive review of the literature, section 5.6 indicated that there were still a number of research gaps that remain unanswered. The overarching gap was that current literature was unable to answer the research question – what is the omnichannel decision making journey for the fashion consumer? Therefore, this question served as the empirical research aim for the study, serving both a motivation, framework basis and contribution of this study.

2. To employ a range of qualitative techniques, namely: focus groups, interviews and shopper diaries, in order to examine consumer decision-making at an in-depth level in the context of the omnichannel journey for fashion. The empirical research requires an in-depth view of decision-making. Therefore, the study was narrow and focused on a small group of participants in order to get to the depth required to understand the decision-making journey of female fashion consumer. Consequently, the study was positioned as a study of the depth of decision-making in the omnichannel context. The empirical research sought to demonstrate a connectedness between and amongst the research phases by carrying the sample participants through all four stages. In doing so, the study builds a deeper picture of decision-making and this adds a greater robustness to the study. What it also does is it enables the methodological approach of the study to become a contribution in its own right because of the way in which the data is analysed where by one phase of data collection is analysed and then reinforces and supports another, thus making the work more robust. The study builds a deeper picture, in effect instances of decision-making, whereby the phases of data collection are greater than the sum of their parts. The relationship between the respondents and the researcher becomes more involved as the data collection progresses through each of the stages. Therefore, the research itself becomes a journey, mirroring the output of the work.

3. To analyse themes from the data collection to develop a theoretical framework that refines, evaluates and reflects the decision-making journey for fashion consumers in the omnichannel environment. The empirical research sought to map the channels, devices and emotions encountered at each stage of the journey as well as identify and articulate each stage of the journey in detail. The value and importance of doing so was that it would provide depth of detail in the findings for each decision-making stage of the journey, in contrast to the past literature. Furthermore, articulation of the journey more accurately reflects the complex nature of decision-making and specifically the cognitive burden placed on the consumer as a result of this evolved retail environment.

4. To examine how the shopping behaviour of young high involvement female fashion consumers has changed and the impact this has on decision-making, specifically in terms of perceived risk in the context of an omnichannel shopping journey. The empirical research sought to identify how the omnichannel environment aids high involvement consumers in reducing concerns over perceived risk of the purchase and reassuring consumers of their choices. The value of this empirical research is that high involvement consumers are typically more sensitive to regret. Therefore, the current study provides brands with guidance on how they can ensure a more seamless experience for customers.

5. To examine the distinct role that brands play in consumer decision-making in an omnichannel fashion retail context. The empirical research sought to examine how the holistic experience of a journey affected consumers experience of the brand and also at the outset of the journey how the omnichannel journey influenced the consumer in terms of their expectations towards a brand. Thereby providing retailers with an understanding of the standards that fashion consumers expect from a brand experience that crosses channels. This will aid retailers in optimising the omnichannel customer experience and contribute towards delivering customer satisfaction.

6.2   Research Philosophy

A research philosophy is a primary consideration at the start of any research inquiry and before the development of a research question (Saunders *et al.,* 2009). The selected research philosophy will have a fundamental influence in shaping the research conducted, and in the formulation of any new theory (Saunders *et al.,* 2009). When philosophical choices are made in a research project, there are two key underpinnings, which must be considered, as per Table 17.

Table 17 Research Underpinnings

Underpinning	Nature of Enquiry	References
Ontology	What is the nature of reality?	(Creswell, 2007)
Epistemology	Assumptions concerning how knowledge is gained about the world	(Maxwell, 2005)

The process of adopting ontological and epistemological dispositions should be a conscious decision by the researcher, rather than simply following a research tradition (Easterby-Smith *et al.,* 2012). The ontological and epistemological stances will then influence the appropriateness of, and guide the choice of, a given methodological structure (Easterby-Smith *et al.,* 2012).

6.2.1   Ontology

Ontology is the starting point within the philosophical discussion and explores the philosophical assumptions about the nature of reality and existence (Easterby-Smith *et al.,* 2012). Ontological stances are dichotomised by objective or subjective postures. Therefore, the key consideration is whether social entities are objective or whether they are social constructions, which are subjective to the individual and thus built upon perceptions (Easterby-Smith *et al.,* 2012).

6.2.1.1 Objectivism

Objectivism denotes realism which reflects a world in which there is a single truth and where facts can be accessed readily through direct observation of phenomena (Easterby-Smith *et al.,* 2012), this means that facts cannot be interpreted in multiple ways. Under objectivism, social phenomena are entities in their own right, and exist independent of any influence (Saunders *et al.,* 2012; Bryman and Bell, 2011). It also means that reality is separate to the researcher's descriptions of a reality and can be studied when the correct methods are employed (Bryman and Bell, 2011: 18). Objectivism is aligned with positivism and realism epistemological research traditions.

6.2.1.2 Subjectivism

A subjective ontology recognises the individuality of human beings and their individual meanings, beliefs, perceptions and actions. Subjectivism characterises social phenomena as deriving from perceptions and actions of social actors (Saunders *et al.,* 2012). Under subjectivism, multiple truths exist, and the facts of which are dependent upon, and created by, the observer (Easterby-Smith, *et al.,* 2012). Thus, the researcher's individual interpretation will affect which truths and facts are revealed.

6.2.2 Epistemology

Epistemology explores assumptions relating to the ways in which the physical and social world may be examined (Easterby-Smith *et al.,* 2012). An epistemological position seeks to probe to an in-depth level and is concerned with debating what is or should be considered as acceptable knowledge in a particular discipline (Gill and Johnson, 2010; Saunders *et al.,* 2012; Bryman and Bell, 2011). For the social sciences, epistemology argues whether or not research requires the application of similar or contrasting principles, methodological procedures and ethos, in comparison to those applied within the natural sciences (Crowther and Lancaster, 2009; Bryman and Bell, 2011). The epistemology is a decision to adopt the poles of either a positivist or a interpretivist approach.

6.2.2.1 Positivism & Realism

The positivist research paradigm denotes quantitatively based, objective in nature, scientific approach, based upon deduction (Malhotra, Birks and Wills, 2012; Bryman and Bell, 2011; Gill and Johnson, 2010). Positivism is associated with the concept of *Erklaren* whereby research seeks to explain what is happening through facts and it is about looking at the causality of variables, the proving or disproving of a hypothesis, randomised sampling and statistical probability (Malhotra, Birks and Wills, 2012; Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 2012; Bryman and Bell, 2011). The paradigm advocates that the social world can be studied in the same way as the natural sciences (Bryman and Bell, 2011). The role of the researcher is therefore to be independent of the subject and not to affect the subject or be affected by them, so human interests and preferences should not influence the study (Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 2012). As a result of a positivistic approach, the appreciation of the social world is as a result of taking a completely objective view. Realism and positivism share similarities, but are not identical. Positivism "is real and apprehensible", realism denotes a reality which is true but only, "imperfectly and probabilistically apprehensible" (Sobh and Perry, 2006). Similarly, to the discourse of positivism, realism denotes that reality still exists as a single truth and that reality is one which is separate to the researcher's perception and interpretation of that reality (Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 2012; Bryman and Bell, 2011).

6.2.2.2 Interpretivism & Social Constructionism

Interpretivism directly contrasts positivism (Malhotra *et al.*, 2012; Bryman and Bell, 2011). Interpretivism is concerned with the concept of *Verstehen* - to understand, rather than simply explain what has occurred. Interpretivism is characterised as: qualitative, subjectivist, humanistic, phenomenological and revolutionary (Malhotra *et al.,* 2012). The approach considers human behaviour and the nature of its subjectivity, which respects, and reflects the differences and distinctiveness of individuals (Bryman and Bell, 2011). There is an implied understanding that individuals and objects of the natural world are separate to one another and thus people are different to the study of the natural sciences (Bryman and Bell, 2011). The researcher and participant relationship are interactive rather than independent of one another (Malhotra *et al.*,

2012). Therefore, under interpretivism, social phenomena interrelate rather than being disconnected which makes interpretivist and positivist views fundamentally different. The process of interpretivism is typified by recognising the value of the researcher, which will have a legitimate impact on a given study in terms of observation, questioning, probing and interpreting (Malhotra *et al.,* 2012). Interpretivism also allows flexibility for research design to evolve and makes use of perceptive decision-making by the researcher (Malhotra *et al.,* 2012). Social constructionism also denotes an interpretivist approach to the epistemology of research. Social scientists who adopt social constructionism will similarly appreciate the variety of constructions and meanings that are placed on their experiences in order to develop theoretical abstraction (Easterby-Smith *et al.,* 2012). Both social constructionism and interpretivism are about exploring a subject rather than commencing with finite hypotheses.

6.2.3 Philosophical Underpinning

This research selects a subjective ontology. It is clear that certain ontological underpinnings are linked with particular epistemological stances (Easterby-Smith *et al.,* 2012). Respectively, it is also clear that epistemologies are not entirely distinct of one another (Blaxter *et al.,* 2001). Epistemologies therefore vary in their strength. Strong versions of particular epistemologies may be closely aligned to other ontological perspectives. This study asserts that knowledge is subjective whereby individuals will develop subjective meanings of their own experiences (Creswell, 2007). A belief in the complexity of the subjective world means that actions and meanings will be distinct to individual consumers. For this work, the epistemological view of positivism is rejected since it is the opinion of the study that a natural scientific approach is not a comprehensive means by which to understand the social world, as proposed by Malhotra *et al.,* (2012). Qualitative research does not rely upon measurement but the establishment of facts and so does not fit within or adhere to the positivist traditions. Whilst positivist philosophy does not dismiss the use of qualitative research, it is however, regarded as a preliminary technique or as a prelude to using more rigorous choices of measurement which demonstrates a limited view of value on qualitative techniques and their usage (Malhotra *et al.,* 2012). Hence, an interpretivist epistemological stance is favoured. Interpretivism enables the study of the complex social world.

The interpretivist approach may be delineated from a positivist stance through the relationship between the participant and the researcher being interactive rather than disaffiliated as in the positivist paradigm (Malhotra *et al.,* 2012). An interpretivist stance allows meaning to be derived from in-the-field data collection (Creswell, 2007). A connected and interactive relationship between the researcher and the participant enables values to affect observations, questioning, probing and interpretation (Malhotra *et al.,* 2012). The concept of omnichannel is one, which is yet to be fully explored and the current research will benefit from added richness specifically through probing and interpretation of the primary data collection as more is learned about the concept through the different data collection phases. Furthermore, interpretivism is useful to uncover insights regarding consumer experiences (Petermans *et al.,* 2014). In line with this, methodological choices will be influenced by interpretivism. This study will therefore employ a qualitative approach, one which is affiliated to the interpretivist philosophical underpinning and research design.

6.3 Research Approach

The research approach specifically considers the relationship between theory and research (Bryman and Bell, 2011). The approach provides options in terms of data collection, conclusion generation and the culmination of theory development. There are two divergent opinions concerning a research approach (Crowther and Lancaster, 2009). Based upon the ontological and epistemological assertions identified for the current study, the research may take either a deductive or an inductive approach. Inductive and deductive reasoning are methods by which to solve the research problem (Flynn and Foster, 2009). To summarise, the core distinctions between an inductive and deductive research approach are indicated in the following table:

Table 18 Comparisons Between Deductive and Inductive Approaches

Dimension	Deduction	Induction
Logic	When the premises are true, the conclusion must also be true	Known premises are used to generate untested conclusions
Generalisability	Generalising from the general to the specific	Generalising from the specific to the general
Use of Data	Data collection is used to evaluate propositions or hypotheses in relation to an existing theory	Data collection is used to explore a phenomenon, identify themes and patterns and create a conceptual framework
Theory	Theory falsification or verification	Theory generation and building

Source: adapted from Saunders *et al.* (2012)

6.3.1 Deduction

A deductive approach is driven by hypotheses on what is known about a research domain and which are either accepted or rejected based upon an examination of empirical evidence (Crowther and Lancaster, 2009; Bryman and Bell, 2011; Gray, 2014). Hence, deduction is an approach which is rigid and one that is based on systematic knowledge and reasoning (Ghauri and Grønhaug, 2005; Malhotra *et al.,* 2012) and also requires the existence of a well-developed theory from the outset (Malhotra *et al.,* 2012). The deductive process is about creating conclusive laws to explain something (Collis and Hussey, 2014). Consequently, a deductive approach fits with a positivism and objectivism (Gray, 2014). Figure 28 indicates the linear process of deductive research.

Figure 28 Process of Deduction
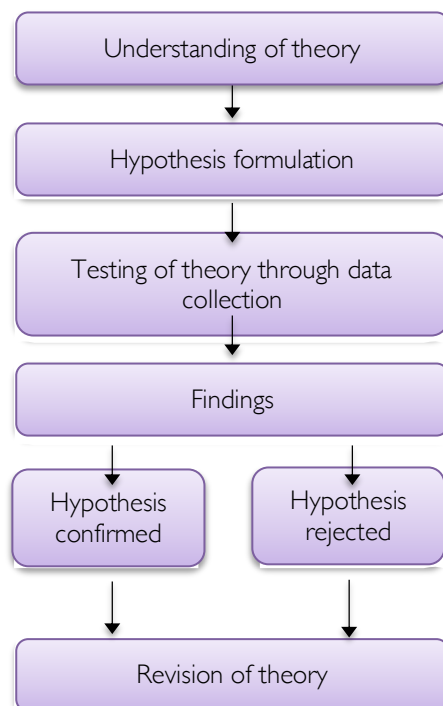
Source: adapted from Bryman and Bell (2011: 11)

The figure above demonstrates that deduction is a linear process. This approach is not always reflective of a practical research project, for example, when new theories/findings are generated as the study is being undertaken (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Another challenge of deductive research is that the social world becomes objective and absolute, without leaving any opportunity to contribute subjective interpretations of that social world, which can affect the analysis (Holloway and Wheeler, 2002). This contextual and subjective nature is key to social science research, and, instead, deductive reasoning is about control and testing. Therefore, while the approach may be suitable for the natural sciences it is not for the study of the social sciences because of the differences between nature/physical elements versus human beings (Gill and Johnson, 2010). So, the deductive approach is perceived as limiting when studying social sciences as the richness of the data can be lost through the pursuit of controlled hypothesis research testing.

6.3.2 Induction

Research problems can be so new that it is difficult to formulate the questions since there is no prescribed theory available to researchers at the start of the research task. The purpose of inductive research is to discover the questions to be answered in future research (Flynn and Foster, 2009; Crowther and Lancaster, 2009). An inductive view of the relationship between theory and research, whereby the former, is generated out of the latter (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Within an inductive and interpretive approach, the researcher can also utilise their perspective to help develop and create the conceptual framework as they are not separate to the research. Hence, inductive research is suitable when there is a lack of empirical frameworks or theoretical work underpinning the study from the outset (Malhotra and Birks, 2003). It is on this basis that inductive research "does not set out to corroborate or falsify a theory, instead through a process of gathering data, it attempts to establish patterns, consistencies and meanings" (Gray, 2014). Therefore, inductive research seeks to generate theory (Bryman and Bell, 2011; Becker, 1993). The inductive reasoning process is summarised in the figure below:

Figure 29 Inductive Reasoning Process
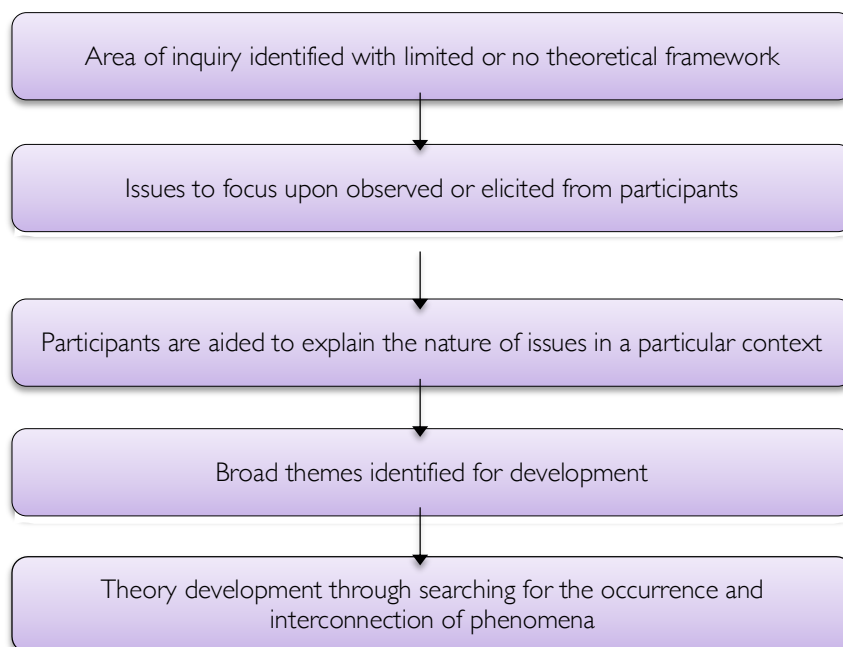
Source: adapted from (Malhotra *et al.*, 2012:196)

Inductive research is concerned with theory generation, as a means by which to make sense of the social world. In contrast to deductive studies, an inductive approach offers flexibility during the research process, whereby new ideas can be included in the approach as the theory begins to be developed. As a result, induction aids research where there is a lack of empirical or theoretical underpinning from the outset (Malhotra *et al.,* 2012). A risk of inductively proposed theories is the

conclusiveness of any theory generated. Inductive reasoning does not offer a definitive or guaranteed outcome since the conclusions are founded upon observation and interpretation (Ghauri and Grønhaug, 2005).

6.3.3   Research Approach Employed

Both deductive and inductive are not wholly distinct from one another. Both approaches recognise the iterative nature of research, whereby, data collection and theory will be revised and revisited (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Inductive research is associated with qualitative research perspectives (Bryman and Bell, 2011). The approach provides an easy yet systematic process when analysing qualitative output, which is both reliable and valid (Thomas, 2006). The benefit of inductive research is "the researcher begins with an area of study and allows theory to emerge from the data" (Strauss and Corbin, 1998: 12). As yet, theory on the omnichannel customer decision-making journey is yet to be fully developed. Studies on multichannel are useful in guiding the current research. A purely deductive approach would be restrictive and limiting to omnichannel research. Whilst, an inductive methodology offers freedom to enable findings to emerge from raw data without such restraint of structured approach (Thomas, 2006). It also enables focusing on individual meaning and understanding complexity in a situation (Creswell, 2007). The choice of an inductive approach is supported by empirical literature on the customer journey "allowing for realistic patterns to emerge of how consumers use and react to different media and channels in their shopping journeys" (Wolny and Charoensuksai, 2014; 319). Inductive approaches are also evident within studies of fashion shopping behaviour such as Jacobs and de Klerk (2010). The data collection for the current study commences with inductive focus groups to explore and understand the theme omnichannel, which was useful at a time when omnichannel research was limited. The focus groups helped to identify key areas and focus the boundaries of the study for the investigation in the subsequent data collection phases.

6.4   Research Design

Both the ontological and epistemological disposition will influence how an individual research methodology will be conducted. The methodology addresses the practicalities of the research project and it is the selection of techniques and their appropriateness to explore a given research problem (Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 2012). Without giving thought and consideration as to the research design, difficulties can be encountered later in a research project (Royer and Zarlowski, 2001). The research design is a blueprint for a particular research approach which guides the collection and analysis of research data, to ensure that the stipulated research problem is addressed (Churchill *et al.*, 2010: 78; Malhotra and Birks, 2003; Bryman and Bell, 2011). There are a variety of research designs available and the choice of which will be dependent upon the needs of the research problem posted (Walliman, 2010). Figure 30 overleaf, indicates the research design as part of the overall research process

Figure 30 Process of Research Design
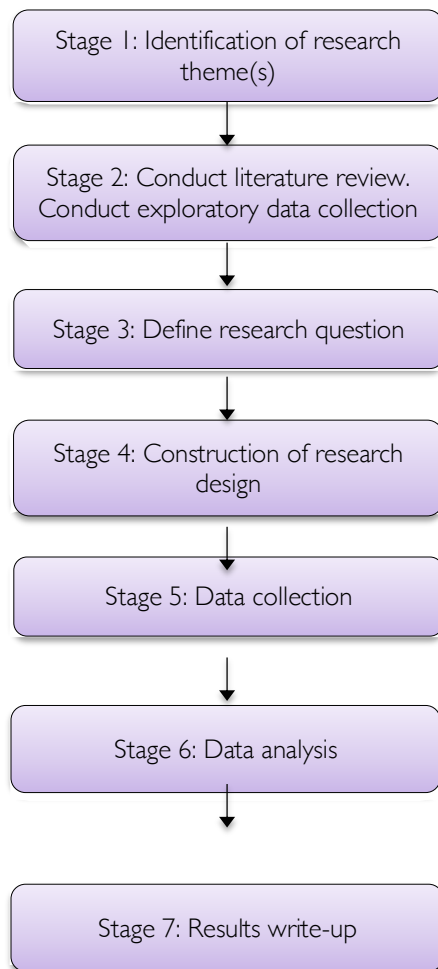
Source: adapted from Royer and Zarlowski (2001: 118)

Research is not a completely linear process, and the stages are inextricably linked and cyclical by nature, since the researcher will be continuously rethinking and evaluating the approach (Blaxter *et al.,* 2001; O'Reilly, 2012). In an inductive research design, the goal is to maintain a flexible approach throughout the course of the research project. This means interacting and keeping involved with the data and emerging analysis and therefore maintaining closeness with the data (Charmaz, 2014). It is recursive and therefore responsive to change (Raewyn Bassett, 2010).

6.4.1   Exploratory Research

Exploratory research is also about increasing familiarity between a researcher and a research task or question. Exploratory research is aimed at discovering new ideas and insights (Churchill *et al.,* 2010). An exploratory research design consists of a flexible approach that is designed to understand the nature of marketing phenomena that may be challenging to measure (Malhotra and Birks, 2003). Key instances where an exploratory approach will be applied include:

1. To obtain some background information where absolutely nothing is known about the problem area.
2. To define or increase familiarity with a problem area fully and to formulate hypotheses for further investigation and/or quantification.
3. To identify and explore and clarify concepts in the development of new products or forms of marketing communications.
4. To identify relevant or salient behaviour patterns, beliefs, opinions, attitudes, motivations, etc. and to develop structures of these constructs

Source: adapted from Malhotra and Birks (2003: 89) and Churchill *et al.,* (2010: 81)

Exploratory research is also linked to the concept of *verstehen* where it is about seeking to understand a phenomenon rather than derive any form of law-making argument (Churchill *et al.,* 2010). Exploratory research seeks to define and clarify, and may serve as a prelude to more conclusive research studies (Malhotra and Birks, 2003). It is therefore, not about conclusions and confirmations, but more about the discovery of a concept and its nature (Deshpande, 1983). An exploratory research design commences with a research question rather than a particular hypothesis to allow probing for new themes as the project evolves and to enable the researchers to form a deeper understanding of the research problem to proceed further (Malhotra and Birks, 2003).

Exploratory research likewise fits within an interpretivist research paradigm (Hutchinson *et al.,* 2006). Qualitative methods align well with exploratory studies, including techniques such as in-depth interviews, observation and focus groups (Hollebeek, 2011b; Malhotra and Birks, 2003; Churchill *et al.,* 2010; Atkins and Kim, 2012). Typically, these studies will employ small samples to allow for flexibility, and to enable the research to evolve in its own right (Malhotra and Birks, 2003).

6.4.2 Descriptive Research

Descriptive research is concerned with the frequency with which something occurs or the extent to which two variables co-vary (Churchill *et al.,* 2010). This research seeks to "examine situations in order to establish what is the norm, i.e. what can be predicted to happen again under the same circumstances" (Walliman, 2010:10). Research designs, which are descriptive, aim to describe market characteristics or market functions and are specifically based upon testing pre-set hypotheses or research questions which have been developed in a structured way from the outset of a research investigation (Malhotra *et al.,* 2012). Descriptive research represents one form of conclusive research design – which is on the other end of the continuum when compared with exploratory research. Typically, conclusive-descriptive research designs employ large-scale, representative samples and are affiliated to quantitative analysis approaches (Malhotra *et al.,* 2012). Examples of descriptive research designs include cohort analysis, cross-sectional designs and longitudinal studies.

6.4.3 Causal Research

Explanatory research designs may be descriptive or causal. Through the testing of hypotheses, causal research develops evidence to support cause and affect relationships (Malhotra and Birks, 2003; Churchill *et al.,* 2010). Causal research requires the precise identification of variables and their relationships (Easterby-Smith *et al.,* 2012). Hence, causal research aligns with a quantitative approach (Creswell, 2007). The output of causal research is that it enables the researcher to develop a true statement that can serve to explain a situation or that describes the causal relationships of interest.

The extent of causality relationships can vary from nomothetic to spurious (Babbie, 2013). Nomothetic causality studies can produce false outcomes e.g. the research that is unable to determine complete causality or causal relationships that can only be identified for a minority of instances (Babbie, 2013). It is still up to the researcher to decide what constitutes acceptable knowledge of a particular phenomenon. While conclusive techniques are favoured for their conclusiveness, they are by no means more important or dominant over exploratory research designs.

6.4.4 Research Design Employed

Exploratory research is suited to research questions where there is little known about a phenomenon (Churchill *et al.,* 2010). Both omnichannel and customer journey are emergent literature themes and therefore there is rich scope for an exploratory study and to build a conceptual framework to provide greater *verstehen*. Malhotra and Birks (2003) advise that it is desirable to begin a study with exploratory research when there is little knowledge available. Secondly Kumar *et al.,* (2002) found that exploratory qualitative approach provides insight particularly to consumer experiences as useful. Without such a foundation, it will be challenging for future studies to undertake nomothetic research.

6.5   Data Sources

Different types of data are distinguishable regarding attributes, benefits and disadvantages. Primary data represents researcher-generated data in response to the current research question. Primary data collection is concerned with developing knowledge on particular elements (Waters, 2008). Secondary data is generated for another purpose and collected by someone else, it does not belong to the secondary researcher (Blaikie, 2009). The data provides an understanding of the research context (Waters, 2008). The optimum use of data sources in research is concerned with the use of both primary and secondary sources in combination (Stevens *et al.,* 2006; Waters, 2008). The research process is concerned with understanding what knowledge already exists within a given field prior to contributing to knowledge through undertaking primary data collection.

6.5.1   Primary Data

Within primary data, the researcher is able to explain the rationale and procedure for the data collection (Blaikie, 2009). As Baumard and Ibert (2001: 73) advise, "primary data gives researchers the opportunity to experience directly the reality that they have chosen to study." Primary research data will be unique since it is the outcome of undertaking a complete research process and may be generated from a variety of sources (Crowther and Lancaster, 2009). Primary data is most authoritative due to the first-hand and raw nature of the data as well as it not being subject to any aggregation or prejudice as a result of being unfiltered and uninterpreted (Cooper and Schindler, 2003). Examples of primary data generation may include case studies; experimentation; observation; interviews and surveys (Cooper and Schindler, 2003). It is pertinent to validate the conclusions of primary data research (Baumard and Ibert, 2001).

6.5.2   Secondary Data

Secondary data may be used in exploratory research designs and includes qualitative, quantitative, raw and processed data (Saunders *et al.,* 2012). Examples of secondary data are indicated in Figure 31. Secondary research is arguably less resource intensive. This may be attributed to the fact that secondary research is not research in its own right (Crowther and Lancaster, 2009). The remit of secondary research data is to enable the researcher to build upon empirical work by understanding the findings of those works and to avoid the researcher merely repeating studies which have already been conducted (Stewart and Kamins, 1993; Saunders *et al.,* 2012; Crowther and Lancaster, 2009; Malhotra *et al.,* 2012). Since secondary data is not collected directly, it may only have limited applicability to the current study.

Figure 31 A Classification of Secondary Data Sources
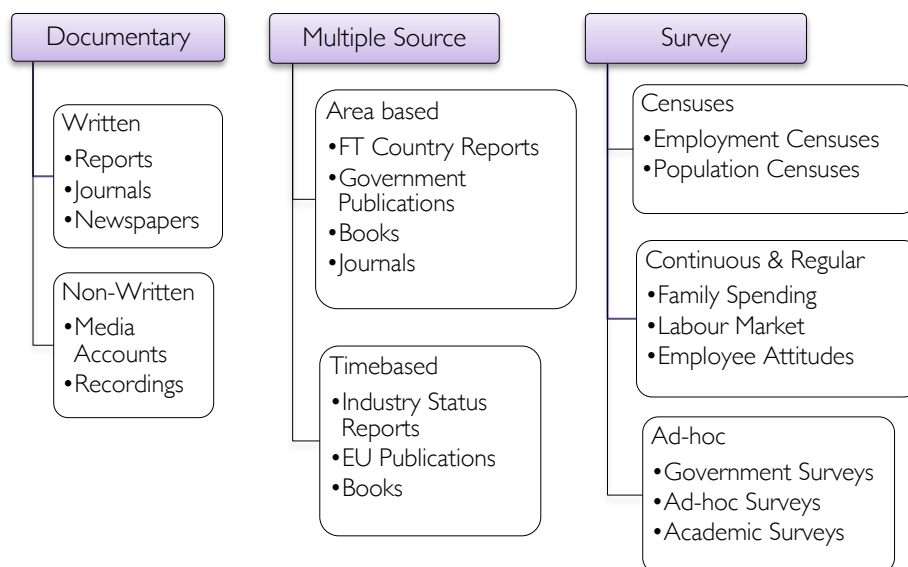
Source: adapted from Saunders *et al.,* (2009: 259)

The use of secondary data should be on the premise that there is an awareness that the research is imperfect. Data may be flawed, inaccurate, enhanced or exhibit bias (Saunders *et al.,* 2012). For diligence, processes must be employed to understand the applicability and quality of the research, such as that proposed in Figure 32. The process of revisiting existing research through the literature review chapters, has provided a deeper understanding on the subjects of omnichannel, customer journey and experience, fashion consumer behaviour (including the consumer decision process) and branding. It is intended that secondary research identified will aid in positioning any new findings and provide further contextualisation of primary data (Saunders *et al.,* 2012).

Figure 32 Secondary Research Effectiveness
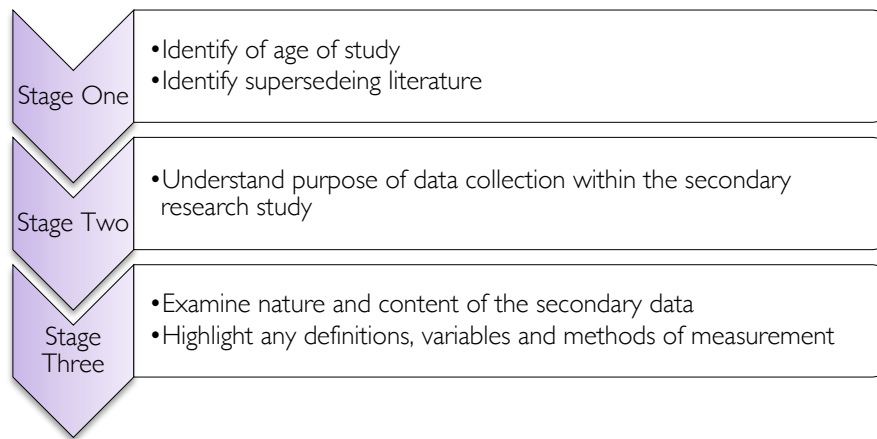
Source: adapted from Malhotra and Birks (2002: 87)

6.5.3   Primary and Secondary Data Mix

The basis for the collection of primary data is as a prerequisite in order to specifically address the aims and objectives of current research inquiry. Secondary data collection has been indicated within the preceding chapters of this study. The collection of secondary data through journal articles, key texts and industry information enables the refinement of the scope of the proposed primary data collection in order to ensure that there is a true contribution to knowledge and the opportunity to acknowledge and evaluate work that already exists within the field. It is also a critical component in developing the research aim from the outset.

6.6   Data Collection Approaches

With any given research paradigm both qualitative and quantitative methods may be employed (Hussey and Hussey, 2003; Lewis-Beck *et al.,* 2004; Patton, 2002; Saunders *et al.,* 2009). The decision of whether to adopt a qualitative or quantitative can be legitimately influenced by the researcher's orientation, knowledge and prior experience (Flynn and Foster, 2009; Ghauri and Grønhaug, 2005). The paradigms of qualitative and quantitative still present a dichotomy since both approaches do hold distinctions, as per Table 19. There are many variations of opinion as to the merits of using either approach or combining techniques.

Table 19 Differences Between Quantitative and Qualitative Study

Quantitative	Qualitative
Seeks facts and causes of social phenomena Obtrusive and controlled measurement Objective Researcher is removed from the data Verification orientated Hypothetico-deductive (reductionist) Outcome orientated Reliable Generalisable Particularlistic Assumes a stable reality	Understanding behaviours from actors own frames of reference Naturalistic and uncontrolled observations Subjective Researcher is close to the data Expansionist and exploratory Descriptive and inductive Rich and deep data Ungeneralisable Holistic Assumes a dynamic reality

Source: adapted from Blaxter, Hughes and Tight (2001).

6.6.1 Quantitative Research

Quantitative research is defined as data collection, whereby concepts, variables and people or phenomena are represented in numerical form (Flynn and Foster, 2009). In taking such an approach, studies apply statistical analyses to develop conclusions. Examples of quantitative analyses include variance, co-variance, factors or clusters. Quantitative data collection methods include surveys, structured observations and questionnaires (Malhotra and Birks, 2003; Saunders, et al., 2012). Quantitative projects require theories or hypotheses to be present from the outset of the research project and that the research design uses percentages, probabilities, values and variances (Lewis-Beck et al., 2004; Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). This dictates that that research theory is supported using large volume sampling, so that findings are generalizable. This approach is guided by positivism and the measurement occurs prior to data collection (Creswell, 2007).

6.6.2 Qualitative Research

Qualitative studies are a popular approach to research data collection, yet they have been fraught with a need to prove their legitimacy (Blaxter et al., 2001). Qualitative studies are concerned with investigating the ideography of human behaviour such as feelings, experiences, opinions, knowledge and actions (Patton, 2002). Qualitative data is derived from words, as opposed to numerical data. Qualitative studies are founded upon the premise that the social world is in constant change and that references are ungeneralisable (Lewis-Beck et al., 2004). It is understanding and interpreting how individuals view their world. Qualitative studies recognise that the social interpretation is a critical part of qualitative data collection (Saunders et al., 2012). This means that the nature of qualitative data is more ambiguous and complex in comparison with quantitative data and consequently "qualitative data exhibits richness and fullness and permits thick abstraction of data" (Saunders et al., 2012: 546). There are four key dispositions which qualitative research studies may take; these are grounded theory, phenomenology, narrative inquiry and ethnographic research (Creswell, 2007). The main steps of qualitative research are indicated in Figure 33.

Figure 33 Key Steps of Qualitative Research
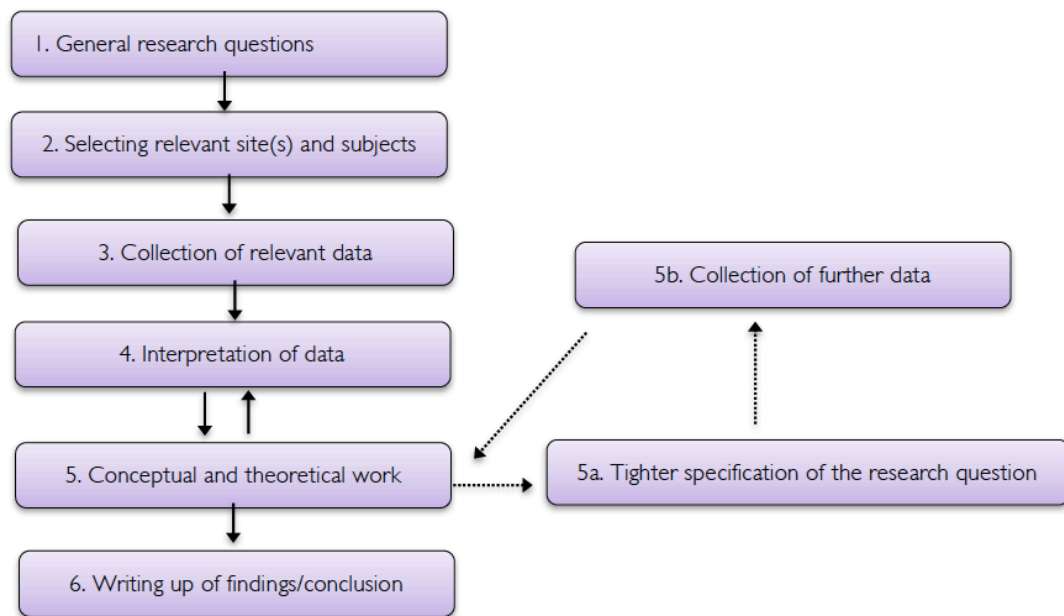
Source: adapted from Bryman and Bell (2011: 390)

Qualitative research is underpinned by an inductive approach and an interpretivist epistemological stance (Bryman and Bell, 2011). With qualitative research, it is not explicit from the outset what the research findings will be (Richards, 2015). Therefore, qualitative research is exploratory by nature. Qualitative techniques include observation, interviews, focus groups, case studies, conversation and discourse analysis (Flynn and Foster, 2009; Patton, 2002; Bryman and Bell, 2011). Qualitative research enables the researcher to interpret and represent findings from participants as a means of contributing new knowledge (Wright, 2008). The analysis of qualitative data is achieved by the classification of data into categories that may then be linked together to a framework. This framework may be developed before, during, or after data collection and is defined as the research progresses (Saunders *et al.,* 2012). The uniqueness of qualitative research design enables the researcher to flexibly adjust the design as the research progresses. Sampling within qualitative studies is focused upon small volume studies for in-depth studies, to extract themes and patterns (Patton, 2002; Lewis-Beck *et al.,* 2004).

6.6.3 Mixed Methods Research

There is growing use of mixed methods approaches whereby research and analysis are conducted both from qualitative and also quantitative poles. Mixed methods are useful to increase validity, generalizability, and potential for theoretical contribution (Easterby-Smith *et al.,* 2012). The practice offers a richer approach to data collection, analysis and interpretation concerning being able to test a theoretical proposition, for example, a quantitative method could be followed by a qualitative study to take a richer and more meaningful perspective (Saunders *et al.,* 2012). The sequencing and dominance of a mixed methods approach are challenges which arise from using both qualitative and quantitative approaches within one research project (Easterby-Smith *et al.,* 2012). Pragmatism is the adopted philosophical stance for research, which engages in both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Pragmatism is more pluralistic whereby the researchers is not committed to one specific epistemology (Saunders *et al.,* 2012; Creswell, 2007).

6.6.4 Data Collection Approach Employed

It is for the researcher to make a choice as to the orientation of the research (Lewis-Beck, Bryman and Liao, 2004). Although consideration should be given to which approach will deliver the most optimum measurement and understanding when examining consumers (Malhotra and Birks, 2003). A solely qualitative investigation has been selected since the study does not seek to draw

any form of statistical conclusion or nomothetic argument. Data collection will be exploratory in order to develop a conceptual framework which identifies the stages of the omnichannel customer decision-making journey. Exploratory research is more suited towards qualitative and organic investigation (Blaxter *et al.,* 2001). The subjective ontology and interpretivistic epistemological disposition of the researcher demonstrates consistency and correlation with the qualitative approach. The application of a qualitative research approach is evident in the study of Internet experience such as (Hamzah *et al.,* 2014). Other qualitative studies on studying consumers journeys across channels include Wolny and Charoensuksai (2014).

6.7   Data Collection Methods and Procedure
Only limited applications of multi-methods approach have been used in omnichannel studies such as Alexander and Alvarado (2014) and in shopping journey research Wolny and Charoensuksai (2014). Therefore, the current study adopted a four-phase approach for the research, consisting of focus groups, interviews and online blog diaries and follow-up interviews. The use of these methods is designed to ensure the overall aim of the research is met and to specifically respond research objective two. An exploratory and qualitative approach was adopted which is recommended to provide insight into consumer experiences (Dennis *et al.,* 2010; Black *et al.,* 2002).

Furthermore, the study sought to position itself as providing an in-depth view of decision-making therefore the participants were carried through the phases in order to probe deeper and deeper at each stage. By producing such connected phases of data collection, the data collection process became a journey. The role of the researcher and the participant was found to be more interactive and heightened because of the rapport that developed over the course of the phases of data collection. The narrow focus of the study was important in achieving the level of depth necessary. If the study were to be not as narrowly focused it could run risk the of delivering findings that were overwhelming in terms of volume and too broad to deliver robust and insightful view of decision-making. In essence, each phase of the data collection was a point of reflection and a refinement process to build a picture of the omnichannel decision-making journey and providing evidence to support the assertions made. The stages combined produce insights and findings that are greater than the sum of their parts probing deeper and deeper into consumers thoughts to draw out important insights. A discussion of the data collection methods and procedure are outlined in the following sub-sections. The sub-sections also discuss how the phases were interconnected.

6.7.1   Phase One - Focus Groups
Focus groups and interviews are similar as they both use questions to disseminate a research enquiry, however focus groups employ a one-to-many approach. The benefit of using focus groups at the first stage of data collection was that participant interaction provided added insight where new themes can be developed which may not have been contemplated initially by the study (Babbie, 2013; Blaxter *et al.,* 2001; Patton, 2002). Focus groups offer the ability to explore a concept in-depth by exploring the attitudes, behaviours and intentions of participants and opens-up the concept for further investigation (Babbie, 2013; Morgan, 1997; Dennis *et al.,* 2010). The method is suited to exploratory studies to generate theory when the components of such theory are not explicit from the outset of a study (Black *et al.,* 2002). Focus groups also provide a suitable means to obtain feedback from customers, particularly concerning new concepts and to examine decision-making (Patton, 2002).

Phase one focus groups sought to review the theoretical foundation of omnichannel and understand more about decision-making journeys for fashion at a holistic level. At this point in the data collection, there was limited discussion within the academic literature on the subject of omnichannel, as it was a new and innovative concept and this was also the case for the customer decision-making journey. The focus groups provided a useful method by which to understand consumers views and perception of what omnichannel was, particularly regarding expectations and provided a broad and interactive discussion. This first phase was also concerned with acquiring suitable participants that would participate across multiple phases of the data collection.

Focus groups, like interviews, may be unstructured, semi-structured or structured (Patton, 2002). Less structured can be useful when conducting exploratory research as it enables the participants to "speak for themselves" and offers a greater opportunity to "learn about the participants perspectives" but this can make focus groups harder to compare and analyse (Morgan, 1997). Focus groups in this study were semi-structured. Topics for the focus group were prepared as a way of deconstructing the empirical literature, in line with McCracken (1998). This helped to focus the priorities of the semi-structured focus group discussion and can be found in appendices 10.3 (customer decision-making journey focus groups) and 10.4 (omnichannel focus groups). Questions were open-ended to identify patterns and to encourage spontaneity of response (Dennis et al., 2010). Both data collection tools provided a semi-structured approach for the groups, yet flexibility was allowed for questioning based on participant responses.

Five focus groups were held lasting approximately 60 minutes each. Each focus group was moderated in line with Patton (2002) and this was done by the researcher. At the outset of each phase, participants were made aware of the purpose of the data collection. Focus groups were held at the University of Manchester campus in a meeting room. Silverman (2005) Indicates the use of pilot studies as a component of high quality research. The first two focus group also operated as a pilot. By having pilot focus groups, this meant any questions that didn't work could be refined before the commencement of the second focus group (Krueger and Casey, 2015). The students participating in both pilot focus groups were targeted from fashion related courses and highly-involved in fashion. Additionally, one student was recruited outwith the fashion courses, who was not highly-involved in fashion. This was useful at the pilot stage as a way to understand and justify shopping behaviour between low and high involvement consumers. The pilot participant, who was not highly involved with fashion highlighted that it had been one year since they purchased an item of fashion clothing and they emphasised their shopping was based upon when they needed (rather than wanted) something and in such cases, they would visit the store. The participant also expressed that they were not confident when it came to fashion shopping. This was useful as a check to understand the difference between high involvement and low-involvement consumers, therefore the study continued to focus on high involvement consumers. All focus groups were digitally recorded by the researcher and these were transcribed immediately after the session for analysis purposes. A disadvantage of the focus group was that due to the volume of participant responses the transcription process was particularly time-consuming (Babbie, 2013) as it was done manually by the researcher.

The data generated from the focus group discussions on omnichannel and the customer journey were designed to aid the researcher in narrowing the scope of the research. The focus groups helped clarify the research in terms of understanding what consumers knew and understood about the subject of omnichannel and the customer decision-making journey, at a time when the research literature was limited. It aided particularly in understanding consumers expectations of an omnichannel journey in terms of understanding what a seamless and consistent experience represented from the consumers point of view. It also began to discuss the concerns that consumers held over the purchase. As with every stage of the subsequent data collection the focus group data was analysed prior to conducting phase two interviews and helped to shape the agenda, namely the questions for the phase two interviews. Without this, the interviews would have been too broad in terms of the questions asked and not focused enough to deliver robust findings. It was necessary that the participants for phase two interviews derived from the from the focus group sample because of the study being positioned as an in-depth work on decision-making. The focus group analysis and findings raised more questions about consumers interactions and experiences and therefore the study sought to probe more deeply among the sample participants by asking them to subsequently identify the stages of their shopping journey.

6.7.2 Phase Two - Interviews

Interview studies feature a small number of cases and employ open-ended questioning (Silverman, 2005). Phase two interviews were designed to identify the stages of the fashion-shopping journey. As a method of qualitative data collection, interviews yield verbal descriptions from individuals about experiences, attitudes, interactions and behaviours at a highly intrapersonal and one-to-one level (Patton, 2002; Babbie, 2013; Blaxter et al., 2001; Malhotra, 2010). Interviews, however, are

therefore more limited than focus groups regarding scale (Malhotra, 2010). Despite this, in-depth interviews are more extensive than focus groups as they are able to cover even greater depth to reveal hidden issues (Malhotra, 2010; Harding , 2013; Belk, Fischer and Kozinets, 2013). This is achieved by asking further general questions but also asking for more detail about a particular theme brought up by the participant to understand its nature more clearly. Interviews enable topics to be viewed from the perspective of the participant and draw out aspects most important to the respondent (Harding, 2013). The application of in-depth interviews is also, a popular approach to understanding shopping behaviour as they are useful to understand complex behaviour that requires probing of the respondent (Malhotra, 2010).

There are a variety of interview types including in-depth, causal, group and self-interview (Belk, Fischer and Kozinets , 2013). In-depth interviews are the most extensive and reflect a probing interview style to gain depth of insight regarding a subject, as the interview progresses (Belk, Fischer and Kozinets , 2013). This is dependent on the ability of the moderator to probe effectively. Similar to focus groups, semi-structured interviews are recommended for the structure they provide and to help structure analyses (Harding , 2013). Once again, the open-ended nature of the data collection enabled the participant to direct the course of the interview and allow unanticipated thoughts to be included. The semi-structured nature also enables flexibility both within each interview and across each interview, however this was dependent on the interviewer's skills in listening and questioning based upon responses provided.

Eleven participants were sourced from phase one focus groups. There was no need for secondary screening as this was achieved in phase one. Interviews took place at the University of Manchester for participant convenience. A question/topic schedule was prepared in advance of data collection (Cohen and Crabtree , 2006; Harding , 2013; Belk, Fischer and Kozinets, 2013). Participants were briefed as to the purpose of the interview (Malhotra, 2010) and gained access to the data collection guide before the commencement of the interview (appendix 10.6). As the data was collected the guide was further refined for the next interview (Cohen and Crabtree , 2006). The length of interviews ranged between 45 minutes to one hour (Malhotra, 2010).

Discussions commenced by asking participants what drives them to use many channels. The researcher asked participants to recount a shopping journey for fashion apparel to explore journey stages in-depth with participants recounting between one and two journeys. This enabled participants to discuss not only abstract dialogue but an actual experience, which holds rich context as a recountable experience (Thompson and Haytko, 1997). Following the guidance of Lowrey *et al.* (2005) and Harding (2013), interviews were treated individually, therefore, there was flexibility for the interview to be tailored to the participant. Finally, some general questions were asked on themes regarding the customer decision-making journey, customer-brand experience and omnichannel. The interview reached saturation with regards to customer journey stages at the final interview.

Photographs were included in each research interview (Harper, 2002). Images (see Appendix 10.8) were taken by the researcher before the information. The photo-elicitation technique evokes and elicits deeper responses by participants in comparison to interviews which do not employ photo-elicitation (Tonge *et al.,* 2013; Jacobsen, 2007). Photo-elicitation is a methodology for studying on consumer perspectives concerning experiences in retail environments and especially when studies are geared towards holistic research (Petermans *et al.,* 2014). Photo-elicitation depicted images of channels and devices to act as a visual aid in triggering memory when participants recounted shopper journeys. Device images portrayed the devices listed in section 2.6.3.1 and channel images reflected those listed in section 2.3. Actual devices were also laid out in the interview room, in case participants wanted to interact or use them to articulate their shopping journey in a more tangible manner. For both the channel and devices multiple photo-elicitation cards were available in case a consumer interacted with the same channel or device on multiple occasions. Although the photo-elicitation cards featured pre-determined channels and devices participants were encouraged to participants to highlight any other interactions.

As discussed at data collection phase one, there was a need to probe more deeply into participants responses. This was because at this stage in the data collection the study was still unable to fully identify the omnichannel decision-making journey for this segment of fashion consumers. Phase two was tasked with going to into the specifics of identifying the stages of the decision-making journey. This enabled the study to begin to reflect and compare these findings with Blackwell et al's (2006) consumer decision-making model. The stage also delved into the affective experiences of consumers across the shopping journey and identified the channels and devices at each stage. The interview setting and the fact that participants were now comfortable having already interacted with the researcher in phase one enabled more personal views of omnichannel customer journeys to be shared and for deeper responses from participants to be articulated that might not have been divulged during the social setting of a focus group or if the interviews were held as the first phase. Therefore, the value of the interviews as a second phase of the study was that the interviews demonstrated the depth and complexity of the shopping journey. For example, while shopping journeys were mapped participants concerns with a potential purchase started to emerge bringing in the concepts of risk into the omnichannel journey discussion. By phase two, a sense of rapport had been established between the participants and the researcher which created a better environment in which to delve into affective experiences of participants without them feeling intimidated by the research data collection process because they were already familiar from phase one. Phase two did not simply map stages but it analysed consumers experiences within those stages specifically the channels and devices used and affective experience, in order to build a richer picture.

6.7.3   Phase Three - Digital Blog Diary

Phase two interviews helped to inform phase three digital blog diaries. This was important since while consumers had articulated their journey based on experience and mapping stages of the journey phase three was about qualifying the findings from phase two interviews, providing evidence of consumers experiences in real-time to add further robustness to the study. Both the interviews and focus groups highlighted glitches in the journey and points of concern over shopping for fashion items, such as instances where concerns about risk or uncertainty were being experienced. Hence, the phases were able to give insight as to the consumers thought process. The blog diary was useful to explore decision-making in real-time for live shopping journeys. Once again phase three participants derived from the interview phase. As the research progressed the study was becoming highly focused and the richness of the findings justified the narrow nature of the study and the data collection. The relationship between the participants and the researcher at this point was now highly established. It also enabled the researcher to become more and more involved in the journey. There was an openness in this relationship whereby the researcher could ask questions as participants filled out the blog diary in real-time and participants were keen to interact and answer these. The value of the digital blog diary stage and the interview stage was that it raised participants consciousness of their decision-making as they had to verbalise what they were thinking about and specifically verbalise decision-making thoughts making the data collection more extensive and detailed because consumers were discussing the complex nature and cognitive burden was placed upon them during a shopping decision-making journey.

Due to the timescales within the research project, it was identified that online blog diaries would be more achievable and still deliver rich results as opposed to an accompanied shop. There is a need to find methods of data collection that are suitable for understanding complex shopping behaviour, such methods identified include accompanied shopping and shopper diaries (Schröder and Zaharia, 2008). Diaries are a qualitative method which provide a source of data and narration as they happen (Kaun, 2010; Nicholson et al., 2002; Patterson, 2005). Diary-based approaches are commonly used in marketing research (Baron et al., 2006) and provide a situational approach to consumer behaviour study (Nicholson et al., 2002). As a form of ethnographic research, diaries act as documentary evidence and insights into every day, taken for granted, experiences, offering a rich descriptive output (Given, 2008). Such logs enable the consumer to "reflect upon what they did in these activities to raise consciousness" (Baron et al., 2006: 120). Consequently, researchers can access participant experiences at a much deeper level through exploring reflections. Importantly, this phase was led more by the participant unlike the previous two which again provided a further level of depth.

As technology has progressed, it has likewise been reflected in the generation and presentation of qualitative data collection (Hein, *et al.,* 2011) and specifically for the development of research diaries (Morrison, 2012; Patterson, 2005; Vincente-Marino, 2014; Given, 2008). This is particularly pertinent since digital native millennials have grown-up with technology. Diaries have been recommended as a means by which to understand young people and also their relationship with technology and consumer practice (Baron *et al.,* 2006). Digital diaries such as those typed online into websites or emails entries offer distinct benefits over traditional diaries which are conducted using paper, print or audio recording (Suzuki, 2004). Digital diaries are hierarchized by the newest entry; they enable interactivity through posting comments and publishing occurs in real time, which is unachievable using other qualitative approaches (Suzuki, 2004; Bolger *et al.,* 2003). Digital diaries have also been applied to research on multichannel journeys and conducting electronic diaries, "respondents were encouraged to incorporate multimedia, photos, videos and links," (Wolny and Charoensuksai, 2014: 319). There is still a lack of discussion about the embeddedness of technology within fieldwork and that blogging and web 2.0 has the potential to offer further opportunities (Hein *et al.,* 2011). For the current study, a blogging website (Blogger) and the corresponding app were employed. This provided convenience to participants who could access the blog from their mobiles. The medium enabled reading and writing but also proliferated discussion between readers and writers of the blog to create interactive richness in communication. Due to using a blog format the researcher was able to ask questions to participants via the comments pages on each blog entry.

The key focus of the online blog diary was to identify the different channels and devices that consumers used as part of their shopping journeys and the various stages of the journey. Also, the study wanted to explore further the situational factors and motivations of omnichannel decision-making journeys. Diaries took a semi-structured approach in line with (Nicholson *et al.,* 2002) and were conducted over a 4-week period (Wolny and Charoensuksai, 2014). Seven participants from the interview participants expressed willingness to participate in this next stage of research and were provided with a brief as to the diaries, their structure and practical use (see appendix 10.10). When conducting participant diaries, a participant can be asked to recount just one shopping experience (Nicholson *et al.,* 2002). However, for this study participants were asked to recount all fashion shopping over a four-week period to gain as much insight as possible. An exemplar of the diary was not provided to participants to allow the data collection phase to be inductive and to avoid restricting the participants in their responses, this was in contrast to Wolny and Charoensuksai (2014) and since an exemplar was highlighted as a limitation by Baron *et al.* (2006).

A challenge diary studies face is to ensure completion rates are achieved (Baron *et al.,* 2006). The challenge in maintaining a longitudinal sample exists where enthusiasm may subside and run the risk of data decline (Nicholson *et al.,* 2002). To address these issues the incentive for this phase of the study is that one participant would receive a shopping voucher following the successful completion of the blog. The researcher was in regular contact with each participant to provide encouragement (Easterby-Smith *et al.,* 2012; Baron *et al.,* 2006). A copy of the transcripts is located in Appendix 10.11 Following completion of the diaries the transcripts were downloaded and then analysed. As discussed, results from phase three shopper diaries were analysed and this prompted further questions which needed to be addressed by the researcher through phase four. Furthermore, participants were highly positive about participating a fourth phase as they had more that they wanted to discuss which demonstrated their increasing involvement towards the research project.

6.7.4   Phase Four - Follow-Up Interviews

Phase four was the point at which the rapport between the participant and researcher was heightened further. This was because participants were now more engaged and invested in the study because of the extensive data that they had provided. As a consequence of this and due to individuals being high involvement consumers in fashion shopping, participants were eager to share their experiences at this final stage. This added further richness to the study which would not have been achieved had different respondents been chosen for phase of the study. The follow-up

interview added value to the study as it provided the opportunity for the participant to have an open conversation to reflect on what they had said and experienced throughout this research journey and was driven both by the researcher but primarily the participant.

Multiple interviews may exist with one participant and it may be necessary to engage with the participant through preliminary or follow-up interviews (Belk *et al.,* 2013; Xia, 2010). Following transcription analysis, blog participants were invited to undertake an optional 15-25 minute follow-up interviews. Six follow-up interviews were conducted out of the original seven participants who completed the shopper diary. The face-to-face, in-depth interview style allowed for deeper probing than compared with over the phone (Lowrey *et al.,* 2005). The follow up interviews were optional for the participants. The interview was semi-structured, however, questions specific to each blog participant rather than delivered from a schedule. In line with Lowrey *et al.* (2005), the follow-up interview enabled the researcher to clarify remaining questions of interest. The interview also enabled eager participants to provide additional information and reflective insight and to confirm/add/remove or modify what they wished to convey (Clarke *et al.,* 2012; Zwich and Dholakia, 2006). Each follow-up interview was digitally recorded and transcribed as indicated in appendix 10.12.

6.8   Sampling

Samples are designed to meet the needs of the research problem (Trochim and Donnelly, 2008). The purpose of such a sample is to extract some of the characteristics of a given population (Malhotra, 2010; Trochim and Donnelly, 2008) and should be justified. Sampling enables the efficient reduction of data required to conduct research study (Saunders *et al.,* 2012). As opposed to other approaches, such as the census data, sampling is concerned with making the research task achievable within the given time frame and with the resources available for the study. For this study, the intended sample is designed to generate some insight about the omnichannel concept from a small number of individuals. Sampling in this capacity, therefore, enables an in-depth study to be undertaken (Malhotra *et al.,* 2012; Saunders *et al.,* 2012). The stages of the sample design process are indicated, as follows:

Figure 34 Sampling Design Process
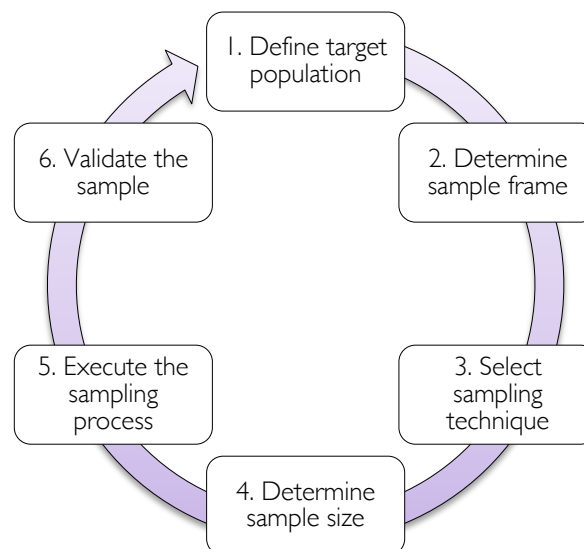
Source: adapted from Malhotra *et al.,* (2012: 496)

6.8.1   Target Population

The target population is the source from which the sample is drawn and from which inferences will be made (Malhotra *et al.,* 2012). A target population should consist of elements, sampling units, extent and time according to Malhotra *et al.* (2012: 496). Table 20 provides details of the target population for this study. Elements are the unit for analysis (Webb, 2002; Malhotra *et al.,* 2012). Young female fashion consumers are presented as the element for this research which is

due to the discussion on age in section 3.4.1.2, gender in section 3.4.1.1, and attitudes relating to high involvement consumers 3.4.4. Sampling units are the means by which the research will be able to access the element (Webb, 2002). Therefore, the sampling unit identifies consumers who have purchased fashion recently i.e. within the past two months. By defining the sampling unit, the relevance of the prospective sample can be even more closely linked, narrowed and refined to support the research study.

Table 20 Defining Target Population

Target Population	Description of This Study
Elements	Age 18-24 (McCormick and Livett, 2012; Auty and Elliott, 1998; Cho and Workman, 2011; Dennis et al., 2010) Female (Cho and Workman, 2011; Jones and Kim, 2010; Bakewell and Mitchell, 2003; Piercy, 2012; Bakewell and Mitchell, 2003) High involvement (Park and Cho, 2012; Jones and Kim, 2010; O'Cass, 2004; O'Cass, 2000)
Sampling Units	Consumers who purchase fashion regularly fashion i.e. within the last 1 month (Cardoso, Costa and Novais, 2010
Extent	University of Manchester and Manchester Metropolitan University Students (Kim and Park, 2005; Lee and Kim, 2008; McCormick and Livett, 2012)

Source: adapted from Malhotra, Birks and Wills (2012: 496)

The extent of the target population is the geographical boundary within which the research is conducted (Malhotra *et al.,* 2012). The study was confined to Manchester and specifically to the two major universities situated within the city. The sampling frame represents all those who are eligible to participate in a research project (Easterby-Smith *et al.,* 2012; Webb, 2002). Marketing studies have utilised student samples, and students have the ability to reflect on consumer routines and processes which emphasise their attributes of intelligence and inquisitiveness rather than mere convenience (Baron *et al.,* 2006). Furthermore, young consumers tend to be more explorative and participative in their use of new media which made this segment of consumers and multichannel fashion retailers all seek to appeal to the demographic within this study (Mintel, 2014b; McCormick and Livett, 2012) making them even more desirable. The recruitment of participants was performed extensively through social media posts, email lists, in-class recruitment and notices, with contact details to provide maximum unbiased reach to the student population. Recruitment for focus groups can be a major hindrance to data collection (Morgan , 1997). Once individuals demonstrated interest, they were asked to fill out some information pre-focus group to narrow down potential suitability, as shown in Appendix 10.2. Along with breadth of reach in recruitment methods, shopping vouchers were used as an incentive for each the research.

6.8.2   Sampling Technique
The first decision of sampling is whether to adopt a Bayesian or traditional sampling approach. Bayesian sampling involves elements being selected sequentially where each element is added to the sample data. However, this is not prevalent within marketing research due to cost and practicality and the need for prior information (Malhotra *et al.,* 2012). The preferred sampling approach for the current study is the traditional approach where the entire sample selection is identified prior to data collection and is a commonly used approach in marketing research (Malhotra *et al.,* 2012). The next decision is the choice of probability or non-probability sampling.

6.8.2.1   Probability Sampling
A probability sample is representative of the entire population using statistical techniques and the laws of probability and chance (Webb, 2002; Malhotra *et al.,* 2012). The method is useful in instances that require a precise understanding of the sample and population from which the

sample is drawn. (Easterby-Smith *et al.,* 2012). Probability sampling means that there is a fixed chance of each element being selected for the sample (Malhotra *et al.,* 2012). Based on probability sampling, studies are then able to yield useful inferences or projections about the target population from which the sample is drawn through the use of confidence intervals (Malhotra, *et al.,* 2012; Easterby-Smith *et al.,* 2012). As probability sampling relies on chance, there is no opportunity for the researcher to use their judgement, hence the approach demonstrates the objective nature of probability sampling techniques. Principally, there are five major probability sampling techniques, these are summarised in Table 21.

Table 21 Classifications of Probability Sampling Techniques

Probability Sampling Technique	Description
Simple random sampling	Every sample entity will have an equal chance of being selected for the sample. Samples are drawn by random numbering which is often achieved through the use of computers.
Stratified random sampling	Division of sample entities into homogenous groupings and extracting a sample from within each grouping.
Systematic random sampling	Relies on a list of the units in the population which is organised randomly then samples systematically selected from the random list.
Cluster sampling	Divides population into clusters and then samples entities within a group of selected clusters.
Multi-stage sampling	Combines multiple probability sampling techniques for greater efficiency whilst ensuring representativeness.

Source: adapted from Easterby-Smith *et al.,* (2012: 226-227)

6.8.2.2 Non-Probability

In non-probability sampling, the chances of any member of the population being selected are unknown and sampling relies on the judgement researcher as opposed to a statistical chance (Malhotra *et al.,* 2012; Easterby-Smith *et al.,* 2012). Hence, confidence levels are not determined in order to identify whether any one sample is reflective of a given population when drawing conclusions through research (Easterby-Smith *et al.,* 2012). This can highlight a weakness of non-probability samples since there may be a lack of credibility between a sample and the original population (Easterby-Smith *et al.,* 2012). Table 22 provides a synopsis of non-probability sampling techniques.

Table 22 Classifications of Non-Probability Sampling Techniques

Non-Probability Sampling Technique	Description
Convenience sampling	Selecting sample entities based upon their ease of accessibility for the purposes of the study. The value is derived from purpose of research. No guarantee that sample will reflect population concerned.
Quota sampling	Divides population into segments or categories until sample of required size achieved within each segment or category to represent quota proportions of a given segment or category within the wider population.
Purposive (Judgemental) sampling	Characteristics of a sample unit are specified then potential sample entities are approached and tested to see if they meet eligibility criteria. Negative samples are rejected.
Snowball sampling	Sample entities that meet study criteria are asked to provide additional sample persons. Suitable when it is hard to distinguish sample.

Source: adapted from Malhotra *et al.,* (2012: 501-507); Easterby-Smith *et al.,* (2012: 228-229)

Non-probability is recommended as a technique for in-depth and exploratory research (Malhotra *et al.,* 2012). Another advantage is that non-probability sample designs usefully address some of the practical frustration of conducting research (Easterby-Smith *et al.,* 2012). For example, participants may be more familiar with the researcher through the judgemental means by which the sample is selected. Non-probability techniques enable greater precision, since the sample is being purposely selected for a particular research agenda (Easterby-Smith *et al.,* 2012). Care must be taken in order prevent conscious or unconscious bias (Malhotra, Birks and Wills, 2012).

6.8.2.3 Sampling Technique Selected

Considering the advantages and disadvantages of sampling techniques and the exploratory nature of the research, non-probability sampling was chosen. The research programme involved the combination of both purposive (judgemental) and snowball sampling. The sampling technique for the study was purposive and judgemental, allowing the study to critically consider those most appropriate for data collection and the need for depth of insight. Such advantages would not be afforded through the use of probability sampling, but this may be of use to subsequent research studies, which seek to develop the findings of this initial research. Purposive sampling enables participants to be selected based upon fitting the research objectives (Silverman, 2005). Moreover, purposive sampling is an approach associated with the grounded theory method of research as it is about pursuing the theoretical lines of enquiry rather than outright representativeness of the sample (Saunders *et al.,* 2012). Purposive sampling is particularly useful in studies which seek to build theory (Miles and Huberman, 1994), which fitted well with this exploratory investigation. Purposive sampling is also associated with focus groups (Morgan , 1997) and diary research (Siemieniako and Kubacki, 2013). The study benefitted from the combination of adding snowball sampling since participants were able to name other individuals who might be eligible for the study in line with Easterby-Smith *et al.* (2012).

6.8.3 Sample Size

Sample size refers to the number of units included within a research study (Bryman and Bell, 2011). For qualitative studies samples are small in number (Malhotra *et al.,* 2012). Qualitative research seeks to gain an in-depth understanding about a sample, rather than derive conclusive findings for an entire population which would require a large-scale sample. The optimum sample size to achieve the research aim and objectives will be achieved when participant responses reach a saturation point. The study will also be guided by empirical research as to the necessary sample sizes for the different data collection techniques.

For focus groups, literature identifies three to six groups per project (Morgan , 1997; Krueger and Casey, 2015; Black e*t al.,* 2002). However, the ideal number of participants for a focus group continues to remain undefined despite discussion as to the upper and lower limits (Maguire, 2003). Participants numbers per focus group range from six to ten (Morgan , 1997; Krueger and Casey, 2015; Black et al., 2002), five to seven (Pookulangara and Sheppard, 2013) or between four to eight (Wong and Amrik, 2003). Pilot focus groups were useful to examine the suitability of the sample and ensure a robust sampling procedure. The current study chose five focus groups with five to seven participants per group. For interviews, the literature identified 5-8 interviews (when employing photo-elicitation) (Zaltman, 2003) while studies on fashion consumers have identified twelve interviews (McCormick and Livett, 2012) but without any prior research phases. Eleven interviews photo-elicitation interviews and were conducted with young female fashion consumer participants who were selected from the focus group. Seven shopper diaries were conducted based upon those participants from the focus group research who were willing to participate in the next stage. Furthermore Nicholson *et al.* (2002) suggest that diaries are a good way to supplement other methods of research such as focus groups. The study by Wolny and Charoensuksai (2014) indicated 16 shopping diaries. In line with the holistic objectives of the research, it is about the research achieving theoretical saturation (Strauss and Corbin, 1998; Krueger and Casey, 2015). Finally, six follow-up interviews were conducted based questions arising for shopper diaries.

6.9   Data Analysis

Data analysis means understanding and answering the research problem. The process occurs by identifying patterns, developing new perspectives and links, which culminate in the creation and the interpretation of new theories to explain what the patterns mean (Blaxter *et al.,* 2001; Babbie, 2013; Belk *et al.,* 2013). The process is also a means by which to qualify the research question, to realise that the data does not answer the research question or to recognise that a research question is interesting or can be answerable (Belk *et al.,* 2013). Qualitative data analysis is the "process of making sense of data that are not expressed as numbers" (Malhotra *et al.,* 2012: 285), as shown in

Figure **35**.

Figure 35 Four Key Stages of Data Analysis

Data Assembly
- Gathering data from disparate sources including theoretical sources shape the research, documents made by participants, transcripts of any audio recordings.
- Field notes may also assist the researcher during the research process to gain a deeper understanding.
- Deciding lines of enquiry to develop upon and those to disregard as a study progresses.

Data Reduction
- The organisation and structuring of qualitative primary data such as transcripts.
- Emphasis on taking care in the transcribing process. Use of coding to break down the data to discrete and meaningful segments that form similar ideas, concepts, themes, steps or process stages.
- Identification of relationships and interpretation of theme significance.

Data Display
- Presenting the newly developed concept which may be in graphical form to show hierarchy, interconnecting relationships in a simplified way and is a summary of what was discovered from the original data.
- Logic of connections should be clear and furhter connecting evidence should be sourced from revisiting transcripts.
- A qualitative analysis package may be used.

Data Verification
- The process of seeking alternative explanations for the interpretations that have been developed as a result of the coding process by using other data sources and theorem.
- Data meanings should be evolving at first and and become subsequently explicit and grounded. Meaning can be sourced from literature.
- Final conclusions must be tested thereby using triangulation (cross-verification with two sources e.g. different kinds of data from diferent methods, plus participant feedback).
- Research should be validated through explosure to the critique of other researchers.

Source: adapted from Malhotra, Birks and Wills (2012: 291-304)

Data analysis can be achieved through a pre-determined theoretical framework or as an outcome of the research itself (Belk *et al.,* 2013). The outcome of the current study is to produce a theoretical framework which depicts the omnichannel customer decision-making journey stages based on a proposed framework from section 5.5. The framework draws from the consumer decision process within a richer customer journey decision-making framework. The resulting framework will enable inferences to be drawn regarding the concept of omnichannel itself. In the multi-phase study of the current investigation data analysis is an iterative process, whereby each stage of data collection interrelates and builds upon another to create both cumulative and overall analysis. There are a variety of techniques in which to explore qualitative data, three techniques

are discussed: grounded theory analysis, content analysis, template analysis (Easterby-Smith *et al.,* 2012).

6.9.1   Content Analysis

In qualitative studies, content analysis is a systematic approach to identifying themes within text (Trochim and Donnelly, 2008; Miles *et al.*, 2014). In comparison to other analysis approaches, content analysis emphasises the qualities of a systematic and also objective approach (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Hence, the approach highlights a separation or lack of 'closeness' between the researcher and the data set. The use of content analysis can be applied to both inductive or deductive research studies (Cho and Lee, 2014). Yet, it is argued to hold a more deductive orientation than compared with other methods of analysis, such as grounded theory (Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 2012). Furthermore, while content analysis is qualitative by nature, it is an approach to data analysis which enables quantification i.e. to quantify content (Bryman and Bell, 2011). Therefore, the approach is rooted in quantitative research. Content analysis involves assigning categories from a volume of script; these codes may be then grounded and compressed into themes (Stemler, 2005; Silverman, 2011; Malhotra *et al.*, 2012). The approach is particularly advantageous for comprehensive processing of large quantities of data (Cho and Lee, 2014). The outcome of content analysis approach is a list of priority categories or themes that cover the data, as opposed to a substantive theory i.e. grounded theory (Cho and Lee, 2014). Content analysis is not recommended for explorative research (Ehnert, 2008; Bryman and Bell, 2011). This links to the objective and controlled approach of content analysis which could hinder the organic development of exploratory research.

6.9.2   Grounded Theory

Grounded theory is an established method for conducting inductive research in order to develop theoretical explanations to explain the social world (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill *et al.*, 2012; Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 2012). Grounded theory, as a research philosophy, is the antithesis of a positivistic view (Saunders *et al.*, 2012). The technique is concerned with the process of extracting patterns and organising them into themes and it is the repetitiveness of themes that indicates their significance (Blaxter *et al.*, 2001). Whilst grounded theory analysis is an organic process, the significance of structure is still recognised through the coding process using open, axial and selective coding. The aim of grounded theory is to construct new theory generated from the data. Consequently, grounded theory hypotheses are not tested but rather developed as a theoretical outcome of the research project (Silverman, 2013).

Data collection under a grounded theory approach can be a lengthy process, which is time consuming, intensive and reflective; there is also uncertainty as to the output and subsequent value of the research produced (Saunders *et al.*, 2012). Another of the criticisms of grounded theory is for its failure to acknowledge implicit theories that guide the work at every stage (Silverman, 2013). Based upon a review of the literature, there are both purist approaches to grounded theory analysis – where the findings are purely derived from the primary data. Meanwhile other researchers for example, McCracken (1998) who acknowledge the role and importance of existing theories and literature that have a valid role to play in theory formation. The researcher recognises that there is a continuum or scale as to the strength of the grounded theory approach and it is the decision of the researcher as to which level of concentration of grounded theory they choose to apply. This is supported by Corbin and Strauss (2015: 383) "since no researcher enters into the research process with a completely blank mind".

6.9.3   Template Analysis

Template analysis is a thematic way to organise and analyse qualitative data (King, 2004). The technique requires a template of codes to represent the themes in the textual data, with some themes being defined in advance of the data collection process (*a priori*) which are then iteratively revised as the primary data is analysed until the saturation is reached (King, 2004; King and Horrocks, 2010). The approach affords flexibility as the research progresses. The final themes generated are then organised in a hierarchical way to demonstrate the relationships between them, which is a basis to build findings (King, 2004; Cassell and Symon, 2004). Ultimately, the richest codes will have the greatest depth and any subordinate themes will represent

manifestations or distinct instances of headline codes (King and Horrocks, 2010). Template analysis is not suited to pragmatic research methodologies, but the approach offers greater flexibility (King, 2004; Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). Template analysis is less rigid when compared to the defined steps of the grounded theory approach (Saunders et al., 2012; Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). The fact that codes are developed before data analysis can be somewhat restrictive (Silverman, 2011). Furthermore, the approach supports a variety of epistemological dispositions including positivistic perspectives (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012).

6.9.4   Data Analysis Technique Employed

The approach of grounded theory is preferred for this study, as opposed to template analysis to avoid the force-fitting of data and to enable challenging of existing literature assumptions. Moreover, the choice of grounded theory offers a structured technique by which to generate new insights from the new data, while still providing flexibility and richness. While content analysis and grounded theory are discussed as two different alternatives they are based upon a continuum (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). It is for the researcher to decide at which point along the continuum a chosen data analysis technique lies. A grounded theory approach will be applied to the study but not in the purist form. This is because the study acknowledges the importance of existing literature to inform the investigation, but balances this with the view that the primary data will take dominance over the existing theory, and the research investigation requires flexibility because of its exploratory nature.

6.9.5   Data Preparation

This research seeks to ensure the integrity of the data at the preparation stage. Data preparation is about the researcher becoming immersed in the primary data and organising the data to commence analysis. Poor preparation of data can negatively impact the data analysis process, and the researcher must play an active role (McLellan et al., 2003). The study will adhere to some general rules when preparing data, as follows:

1. Intellectual content – contributes to knowledge
2. Extensive raw data – use of a range of sources and quality in the transcription of data
3. Evidence of consent
4. Evidence of anonymisation
5. Maintaining copies of all important materials including supporting documentation – interview schedules, evidence of coding themes
6. Designing and implementing a system for labelling and logging interviews
7. Cataloguing or indexing all documents and artefacts
8. Establishing the safe storage of all materials
9. Checking for missing data
10. Developing a process for reading and reviewing text
11. Archivability – preserving research in a suitable format for future re-use.

Source: adapted from McLellan et al., (2003); Southall (2003); LeCompte and Schensul (1999)

For the transcription of raw data this study provided an exact reproduction to generate a verbatim account of participant responses (Mergenthaler and Stinson, 1992). Data from different phases were transcribed verbatim immediately after the encounter by listening to a digital recording. The transcribed data was then printed and a line-by-line review was conducted, as directed by Spiggle (1994) to ensure the account was an accurate representation. By listening to the recording again, a final check for errors was completed. For the shopper diary phase, data from each blog post was already filed by participants in date order.

6.9.6   Coding Process

Following the choice of the grounded theory for data analysis and the data preparation phase, the coding process is now discussed. Coding in-effect enables the researcher to boil-down the data into meaningful units to generate key themes for comparison and analysis (Creswell, 2007; Belk et al., 2013; Blaxter et al., 2001). Coding can consist of a word, line, sentence, paragraph or section of text which is highlighted, and a label assigned (Silverman, 2011). Within coding conventions,

emic codes derive directly from the language of participants, while etic, codes derive from the field of study (Belk *et al.*, 2013). The iterative nature of coding means "each item of data collected is compared with others as well as against codes being used to categorise the data…Where appropriate, new codes are created and existing codes reanalysed as the new data is collected" (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012: 186). The strategy used for the current research was to code the data as the research was conducted, in order to build a final conceptual framework.

Grounded theory offers a structured and precise approach to analysis and the level of this structure is dependent upon the grounded theory strategy selected (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012). Key authors on grounded theory include Charmaz (2014); Glaser and Strauss, (1967); Strauss and Corbin (1998) and Corbin and Strauss (2008). The major distinction between the approaches is the removal of the open coding stage (Charmaz, 2014) and the merging of open and axial coding (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). The grounded theory strategy of Glaser and Strauss (1967) which has been further explored by Strauss and Corbin (1994), depicts coding as a three-stage process: open, axial and selective coding. This will be applied for the current study because it offers structured procedures and yet delivers a flexible approach to data analysis, as indicated in Table 23.

Table 23 Grounded Theory Coding Stages

Stage	Description
Open Coding	Disaggregation and reorganisation of field data generated into units and each unit is associated with a label (Saunders *et al.*, 2012; Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Malhotra and Birks, 2002). The output includes a multitude of code labels which will be produced and there will then be a need to group these into broader categories (Saunders *et al.*, 2012).
Axial Coding	Identifies themes are the most promising primary themes for development in a research project (Malhotra and Birks, 2002). Should also recognise, establish, evidence and explain the relationship between primary categories and sub-categories (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Saunders *et al.*, 2012). Any subsequent data collection should look to test and provide evidence to support the relationships proposed (Saunders *et al.*, 2012). Developing codes into categories, and then identifying relationships is classified as inductive thinking (Saunders *et al.*, 2012).
Selective Coding	Selective coding requires the integration of categories into principle categories which underpin the theory proposed (Saunders *et al.*, 2012; Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

The process of grounded theory research reflects the iterative nature of research. Each item of data collected is compared with others and against the codes being used to categorise the data, to identify similarities and differences (Saunders *et al.*, 2012). As the comparison takes place, new codes will be created, and existing codes reanalysed, as any new codes come to light. Theoretical sampling seeks to understand, confirm or establish the boundaries of thematic codes, by collecting further data to explore the development of the categories and relationships (Silverman, 2005; Saunders *et al.*, 2012). Theoretical saturation is the point at which data collection ceases to reveal new insight and all themes have been thoroughly exhausted (Gill and Johnson, 2010; Saunders, *et al.*, 2012). Categories are well developed, understood, and relationships between the categories have been verified to provide a theoretical explanation of what has occurred (Saunders *et al.*, 2012).

6.9.7   Data Display

From a grounded theory perspective, visual displays of data are regarded as an important part of theory development (Strauss and Corbin, 1998) as a means of synthesizing the major theoretical concepts and their relationships (Verdinelli and Scagnoli, 2013). Each research project is unique; therefore, the chosen method of data display will also reflect this (Miles *et al.*, 2014). The ultimate goal of this thesis will be to present a visual display of the findings as theoretical framework of the

omnichannel customer decision-making journey stages for high involvement young female fashion consumers.

There are different choices as to how data display can be processed in order to develop the final framework. CAQDAS (computer assisted qualitative data analysis systems) are designed to enable the organisation and analysis of unstructured data (Alhojailan, 2012; Smith and Hesse-Biber, 1996; King, 2004). Such systems are unable to take on the role of the researcher with regards to decision-making, interpreting or processing the data (Alhojailan, 2012; Welsh, 2002). Meanwhile, manual data analysis allows a certain closeness and an immersive experience with the data, to enable understanding as to how codes relate to one another and to begin to form connections. This is reinforced by Saldaña (2009: 22) "there is something about manipulating qualitative data on paper and writing codes in pencil that give you more control and ownership of the work". For the current study, coding will be conducted manually and using Microsoft Excel and Word to interrogate the data. As indicated by Microsoft Office programmes can also be used for data analysis and display (Ryan, 2004; La Pelle, 2004). The decision to not use a dedicated CAQDAS approach is through the awareness of the infinite possibilities that the software offers which could cause the researcher coding paralysis without developing any valuable contribution (Welsh, 2002).

6.10 Research Credibility

Research credibility is essential for work to be regarded as plausible, believable and trustworthy (Saunders *et al.*, 2012; Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Bryman and Bell, 2011). Ways in which credibility can be achieved are through transparency in the details of the steps taken in the research process (Neuman, 2000; Creswell, 2007). Validity and reliability are the two further foundations which support the credibility of this research (Saunders *et al.*, 2012). Research credibility is therefore the combination of validity and reliability is about ensuring rigour in the researcher's actions.

6.10.1 Validity

In a research study there is a need to understand how the research conclusions offered are valid (Prezworski and Salomon, 1995) the accuracy with which the study is conducted (Gill and Johnson, 2010) and also the appropriateness of the approach for the research problem. (Babbie, 2013; Gill and Johnson, 2010). For the current study, this is through outlining the methodological procedures and steps described through the course of this chapter which understand how good research practice should be employed. Besides, there is no consensus on a set of procedures to apply to ensure validity of qualitative research. However, a range of authors give guidance in the pursuit of research validity.

In qualitative research design triangulation can be employed, whereby multiple methods are used which results in multiple sources of evidence from the study (Creswell, 2007) and hence the current study features multiple phases of data collection. Member checking is a critical technique for validity whereby interpretations of data are returned to participants to check the data, and narrative account (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Creswell, 2007) and this study provided copies to participants. This links to authenticity and descriptive validity which are about ensuring that the researcher was present during the research, compiled a genuine account of the research experience and developed a deep understanding of what took place (Golden-Biddle and Locke, 1993; Maxwell, 1992). Therefore, all data collection and transcription will be conducted by the author of this study. Overall this study is interpretivist and while the study may make sense to one researcher conducting the study, the work may also be interpreted by another researcher in a different way. Although there should be some consensus among researchers.

6.10.2 Reliability

Reliability is a litmus test to ensure replication potential and dependability, so that if the research procedure were to be performed again the methods would derive consistent findings and inferences (Saunders *et al.*, 2012; Creswell, 2007; Collis and Hussey, 2014). Reliability is therefore about the consistency of the measurement process (Gill and Johnson, 2010). Reliable research should be free of bias to prevent the unfair recording and interpretation of participant responses (Saunders *et al.*, 2012). This is tackled in the current study through verbatim responses and also unbiased questioning during the different phases of research. Reliability is also about ensuring that

the right sample is selected for the study (Saunders *et al.*, 2012) which is justified within this chapter. Reliability is also the ability of the work to be audited, keeping a record (Saunders *et al.*, 2012) which is provided within the appendices.

Finally, refutability seeks to refute the initial assumptions about the data in order to achieve objectivity, which is achieved through constant comparison (Silverman, 2013). In the current study, constant comparison is both through data within each phase of data collection as well as across the phases of research.

6.11 Chapter Summary

This chapter explains and justifies the methodological choices to ensure authority in both theoretical understanding and the legitimacy of the research output, and to competently address the research aim and objectives indicated outlined in chapter one. A qualitative exploratory study which makes use of grounded theory is used to explore the omnichannel concept and to clarify the customer journey decision-making stages of omnichannel fashion consumers. The preceding chapter fulfils the proposed methodology and communicates the output of this research process through data analysis results and discussion.

7 Chapter Seven Results & Discussion

7.1 Chapter Introduction

This chapter is designed to contribute knowledge on omnichannel fashion retailing and the customer decision-making journey. The chapter specifically responds to research objective three by analysing themes from the data collection to develop a theoretical framework that refines, evaluates and reflects the decision-making journey for fashion consumers in the omnichannel environment. The chapter also contributes to the overall aim of the study which is to examine the stages of consumer decision-making in the omnichannel shopping journey for young high involvement female fashion consumers. Within this chapter, three fundamental activities took place. Firstly, the data analysis enabled excerpts of the raw data to be processed. Secondly, new and emerging patterns and meanings from the results were identified, thus producing findings. Thirdly, the findings were discussed in relation to the existing body of literature examined in the earlier chapters and in relation to the proposed theoretical framework in section 5.5. The proposed framework was also used to structure the analysis for this results and discussion chapter, with a final framework subsequently being presented in section 7.8. This chapter is also supplemented by the appendices in section 10.

7.2 Consumer Characteristics

In the pre-data collection framework, in section 5.5, the framework identified a range of consumer characteristics based upon the empirical literature, such as demographics, attitudes, past experience and task orientation. The results of the study confirmed that the consumer characteristics of the participants influenced consumers omnichannel decision-making journeys significantly. The consumer characteristics identified were age, shopping motivation, and past experience and lifecycle. Attitude was removed since the consumers high involvement nature was a pre-requisite for the study. The influence of some of these characteristics highlighted a relationship in the framework between consumer characteristics and the channels used by the consumer. The identification of this relationship was a new finding as a result of the data collection. The revised framework in section 7.8 illustrates this relationship and this is discussed further in the following sub-sections.

7.2.1 Demographics

The demographic characteristics of age and gender were identified as consumer characteristics influencing the omnichannel customer decision-making journey. Gender was not explicitly discussed by participants but was included in the final results as it was a pre-requisite of participating in the current study.

Age
Participants recounted age as moderating factor in their omnichannel encounter journey. Being of a young age represented the fact that the participant sample were digital natives who were confident in using technology for shopping journey. This output agreed with findings by PWC (2013) and also Ha and Stoel (2004) that millennials are adept in using technology. Such confidence may also explain why this segment of consumers hold heightened expectations of omnichannel encounter, which is discussed later in this chapter. Within the final framework of this study the results highlight the relationship between age and the channels in the consumer shopping journey. This is because these digital natives were conversant and comfortable in using a wide array of shopping channels and this digital retail environment represents the norm for these individuals.

INT7	*Em I think because I have used the internet from quite a young age. I think it is a generation thing. I'm not really scared to just buy loads of things and send them back or young consumers as digital natives.*
INT1	*I think because we've sort of grown up with a lot of technology and em the use of smartphones and apps, that makes it a lot easier.*
INT9	*[…] we have just been brought up with it. So, like probably when. I remember the first thing I*

	bought, I remember signing up for eBay when I was 17 but I remember like that was kind of buying experience online. I know that's old now but it's quite young. I don't know why I feel so confident about it.
INT11	*I think it's just the ease of it and the fact that we've grown up with it.*

7.2.2 Shopping Motivations

Belk's (1975) concept of task definition highlights the cognitive and motivational elements of a shopping situation and therefore as a situational moderator (Nicholson *et al.,* 2002). Yet, Verhoef *et al.* (2009) suggest task definition as a consumer moderator that can affect customer experiences. This study takes shares the view of Verhoef *et al.* (2009) that consumers' orientations towards shopping are a consumer characteristic. This is supported by the fact the consumers' involvement in fashion is a motivation to engage in fashion shopping and is likewise a consumer characteristic. The results of the current study revealed that the high involvement nature of these consumers meant that they possessed very distinct motivations to engage in an omnichannel decision journey and the findings blend both hedonic and utilitarian shopping motivations. Both of the shopping motivations outlined agree with Blázquez (2014) who suggests that hedonic and utilitarian shopping values can be applied to consumer shopping experiences when shopping across different channels.

Omnichannel Shopping Motivations – Fear of Missing Out
Fear of missing out is a relatively new concept to depict apprehension caused by others engaging in potentially rewarding experiences which an individual is not part of and is concerned with social connectedness between people (Przybylski *et al.,* 2013). In the current study the findings revealed that the fear of missing out was a motivator to engage in an omnichannel decision-making journey, as illustrated:

INT2	*Kind of to keep all options open, kind of to check that I've seen everything before I make a purchase.*
INT5	*I think it's just because I…I don't really know I have just always done it. Em, I guess I want to see if there is anything that I am missing out and I want to see if there is anything else I can find.*
INT1	*I think because I knew all the research I had done and I knew that that was one of the dresses. Almost by purchasing that I knew I wasn't going miss out on anything else because I had already seen everything else. I felt like I had seen everything else, the amount I searched.*
INT9	*Different ones yeah. Which is probably why I feel like I have to use each of them because without one then my shopping journey is not complete.*

Participants were confident in their ability to make a fashion purchase decision as a consequence of having looked at an array of channels prior to making a decision. Again, this reaffirms the framework relationship between shopping motivations and the channels. This also demonstrates the rationale of the high involvement consumer to participate in an omnichannel journey because they feel that their journey is not complete without using a range of channels. Therefore, by using an array of channels risk is reduced in relation to the fear of missing out. Therefore, this suggests that from the outset the omnichannel decision journey is one that is predicated on risk. The strength of this motivation was further evidenced by one participant who explained, that without going through the process of using an array of channels, consumers would feel as if the journey was incomplete. This finding, consequently, highlights the utilitarian function that omnichannel shopping journeys provide.

Omnichannel Shopping Motivations – Brand Engagement and Interaction
While a high involvement sample was pre-requisite for the study, individuals expressed that they wanted to engage and involve themselves with brands. Therefore, brand engagement and interaction serves as a motivation in the omnichannel journey. This also demonstrates how high involvement consumers constantly see information and inspiration from brands. Therefore, brand plays a role in the omnichannel journey even before the journey has commenced.

FINT1	*Yeah, I think the actual way you view the brand I think that is one of the biggest positives of it all. The way you see a brand and the way you kind of involve yourself with them*

FINT5	*Definitely I would say it is, ...with River Island I am interested in what they are doing behind the scenes and Ark as well.*
INT3	*I don't really know I think for me I am passionate about clothing and fashion and stuff. I do find it fun sitting and browsing through and finding new websites.*
BP7	*I like that many retail brands have got so many ways of communicating with me and how accessible they make it to view their products as it makes me feel much more involved with that brand.*

Participants explained that in their omnichannel shopping journey they were passionate about fashion and felt that the variety of channels facilitated involvement and added deeper dimension to viewing the fashion brand. The findings therefore confirm the work of Wolny and Mueller (2013) that fashion involvement motivates consumers to engage in interaction with fashion brands. The findings also recognise that technology has heightened the opportunities to interact with brands (Hourigan and Bougoure, 2011). Consequently, the relationship between consumer characteristics and channels is identified and is demonstrated in the final framework for the thesis in section 7.8. In the original framework (pre-data collection) attitude was used as a label rather than explicitly involvement. However, the data collection revealed that even consumers recognise themselves specifically as involved and emphasised the importance of being involved with the brand across channels to feel more connected to them. The findings further help to answer research objective four which is to understand how the shopping behaviour of young high involvement female fashion consumes has changed. The data collection reveals that consumers desire to feel involved and connected to their chosen retail brands and not just the products themselves.

7.2.3 Past Experience

It was evidenced during the accounts of omnichannel shopping journeys that participants held consideration sets of fashion retailer brands, this demonstrates brands being used as a decision-making heuristic in the omni journey for fashion and furthermore in order to reduce risk when searching for an item. This was evidenced through the brand apps on participants mobile phones. Furthermore, respondents highlighted that they would only have retailer apps for brands they regularly use. This presents a new finding to the literature that mobile apps are a digital reflection of consumers fashion brand consideration set and therefore brands need to understand this may be a method by which to segment their most loyal customer base. Participants further recounted that brands who are constantly visible across channels and those that they follow acted as a way for brands to become further embedded within the consumer consideration set. The finding therefore disagrees with Dwivedi (2015) that past experience does not impact engagement.

INT4	*But I'd only have apps for ones that I regularly go on like ASOS, Zara - ones that I would shop at regularly […] I think I have got about five.*
INT8	*Ark obvsiously, River Island and obviously Warehouse. I have been using their app and website quite a lot recently and going into store and things. But they are like the main ones.*
FINT5	*I would say so because it's a lot more so of like there. You go to your phone the apps are there, you go to your laptop it's on my favourites and like Instagram they are constantly posting because I have chosen to follow them.*
BP1	*I believe that River Island and Topshop do this very well as I see content daily from these retailers on various channels which keeps them in my mind.*
BP3	*Overall retailers with other channels have a bigger chance of getting my purchase I think because they are always in my mind.*
FINT6	*Cause it is 'cause I'm on my phone all the time and everyday I am reminded of them even if I am not going shopping, or even if I am not going on the website I'm reminded of them.*

The finding of past experience also reinforces the relationship between consumer characteristics and channels in the revised decision journey framework which is presented at the end of this chapter. This is further supported because participants were interacting with favoured brands regularly. The omnichannel interaction aided brands in becoming part of the consumers consideration set. Additionally, when shopping for fashion consumers would visit their consideration set brands channels simply because they were always in the consumers mind.

7.2.4   Lifecycle

Lifecycle was a stage which was directly related to the consumers usage of channels and this is represented in the final framework. Participants financial resources were not discussed in the results and discussion as an independent consumer characteristic, as originally identified by Blackwell *et al.* (2006). This was due to participants discussions on their financial resources being intertwined with being a student in higher education. Consequently, the stage was labelled as the consumer lifecycle in line with Thomas and Sullivan (2005). For the current study the lifecycle was a way of bringing together the factors of income, occupation and education level. Participants, as students, recounted that they were financially restricted and so conscious to get a 'good deal' when purchasing fashion, which is shown in the results that follow:

FG2, P9	*[…] I think being a student you need to know that you are getting your money's worth and that you are not going to have to go instore and take it back and deal with all the hassle.*
FG2, P10	*If I was going to spend more, I would definitely want to go into store…Cause, say if you are gonna spend see, well a lot of money for me because I'm a student, will probably be over £100 whereas for some people it might just be £500, £1000.*
FG2, P11	*Someone is the same like students, student fashion bloggers are the same sort of age group and you scroll through and you see it so simply and you think "hmm I could see myself in that"*
INT2	*It's just a kind of personal thing, because I am so poor as a student I like to know that I've got the best that I can for my money. By using multiple different channels, it allows me to check everything.*
INT8	*Normally ASOS do free returns, student discount and free delivery, so that is quite a key online site.*

In order to find a 'good deal' participants recounted using multiple channels to seek promotion discounts and for reassurance that the most optimum deal was being obtained. The findings concur with Aubrey and Judge (2012) who suggest that omnichannel consumers are empowered as a result of technology. Obtaining a good deal also links back to the aforementioned omnichannel shopping motivation because participants did not want to miss out on a better option.

7.3   Situational Moderators

The results of the study confirmed that situational moderators shaped participants decision-making journeys within the omnichannel environment. The following situational moderators were specifically identified: physical (weather, location and crowding), antecedent state (mood), temporal (time of day and urgency). This relationship between situational moderators and channels is reflected within the final theoretical framework in section 7.8 since situational moderators would affect which channels consumers would use.

The social factors (interactions with staff, shopping with friends, reviews, reference groups and consumer tribes) were not discussed as situational moderators. This was because participants talked about these points in the context of using specific channels at specific stages. For instance, participants discussed interacting with staff when recounting an interaction within the store channel, rather than as an overall influence upon the journey. This corresponds with Balasubramanian *et al.* (2005) that one of the factors in channel choice is the desire for socialisation.

7.3.1   Physical Setting

Physical moderators included weather, channel effort and crowding. Channel effort was used as a situational moderator as opposed to location because decision-making journeys take place using a combination of both digital and physical channels. Each of the physical moderators are discussed, as follows:

Physical Setting - Weather
Weather conditions influenced omnichannel participants choice of channel. Shoppers were less willing to shop via a store, as shown in the verbatim responses. This reinforces the relationship

between situational moderators and consumers usage of channels as identified in the framework in section 7.8. The finding agrees with the literature by Neslin *et al.* (2006) and Nicholson *et al.* (2002) that weather is a moderator in multichannel buying. Examples of verbatim to highlight this include:

INT3	*Well sometimes online...if you're at home and you don't fancy going into town because there's weather like this yesterday, it was raining em then I guess you wouldn't fancy going into town.*
FG2, P11	*It's so cold outside. [...] It's so much easier to just go online now. Everything is online anyway.*
FG2, P9	*Weather.*
FG2, P6	*It really depends though on like, I think, on my mood and the weather.*

Physical Setting - Channel Effort

The required effort of using a channel was an important consideration in participant accounts and was a further moderator in the journey, in terms of the choice of channels, as shown in the final framework. For example, participants discussed the risk of potentially being disappointed upon reaching the store, if they could not find the item they had intended to locate. The findings link with earlier multichannel moderators where Nicholson *et al.* (2002) explain that the consumers proximity to the store location can be both a positive or negative influence. Additionally, participants discussed the online website and mobile app channels as both being especially convenient therefore requiring less effort, for example:

INT5	*I think it's because they're the two things that I like least. Store because you have to make an effort to get there. Generally, things that I want are from places like John Lewis and our nearest one is the Trafford Centre so it will take me all morning to get there and to go look round. Or even going into town it will take me half an hour from my house to go and look around and find what I want, might not be there and then have to go back. So then I feel really guilty because I feel I should be doing work or you know something else that I should be doing instead. So I think I leave that as a last resort because I feel like I am having to make an effort, to make time.*
FG3, P14	*I like using click and collect but I only use in Manchester because when I go home I have to drive to the shops.*
INT4	*I guess the store one, when it is rubbish I just think why do I bother coming in. I think I just might as well look on the website but because it's a lot more of effort to go into the store.*
FG4, P21	*I think online for me is just more convenient because I don't like to try things on in fitting rooms the lighting is not very nice.*
INT1	*I definitely went on Asos' website. They have a greater variety of brands. So again, that made it more convenient, so I could look at lots of brands in the same place*
INT7	*Just cause they [apps] are easier to navigate and faster and it saves manual text entry and things like that it's just more convenient.*

Thus, the findings revealed that potency of a physical situational moderators would vary dependent upon the channels. This builds upon the channel choice considerations of search effort and purchase effort (Verhoef *et al.,* 2007) but instead reflects on the effort associated with the channel rather than the stage.

Physical Setting - Crowding

The transcript extract shows that the theme of a busy retail environment was significant in response to consumers interactions with the retail store channel. This corresponds with Nicholson *et al.* (2002) that crowding is a situational moderator. Likewise, the findings agree with Hui and Bateson (1991) that crowding is a situational factor which can affect consumer behaviour negatively in the retail store channel. Therefore, this affects consumers channel choice. The findings further concur with Aylott and Mitchell (1998) that crowded shopping environments contribute to stress, for example:

INT4	*Yes, when it's busy that lets you down em, cause it makes it a lot more complicated than just buying something.*
FG4, P23	*Not if it's like a really crowded shop and you're waiting in a queue for the fitting room, then for the till and it's just like eugh.*
INT5	*Because essentially, I'm probably quite lazy I don't like having to make the effort to go into town*

	and fight through crowds of people to get what I want so yeah, I find that online websites and mobile website's are really handy and they really work well for me because I can just use them all.
INT1	*Then the final stage where I was going into store and trying things on was definitely stressful because it was a Saturday in London which is definitely the best place to do it. Em because the queues and the crowds I just don't have time for. But then once I knew I made the right choice with the dress I was really like happy and pleased.*

The finding suggests why consumers may seek digital channels; perhaps due to the more structured environment and in order to avoid such negative experiences. This can be supported by Dabholkar and Bagozzi (2002) who assert that crowding is a factor that can sway channel usage intention. Nevertheless, despite the busy environment, one consumer did identify that it did not hinder them from making a purchase. Thus, an individual's involvement in the product category drives them through the journey. This further reinforces omnichannel as a shopping motivation within the omnichannel framework.

7.3.2 Antecedent State

The axial theme of antecedent state which was discussed in section 3.8.2 was also confirmed in the results and specifically refer to an individual's mood.

Antecedent State - Mood
Participants cited mood as a moderator which affected consumers' channel choice in terms of having to be in a specific mood to use a specific channel. The findings agree with multichannel literature by Nicholson *et al.* (2002) that mood can affect channel patronage, for example:

FG2, P6	*It really depends though on like, I think, on my mood […]*
FG4, P18	*Online you would have to be in a good mood yeah.*
FG5, P29	*It's based upon your mood as well. Like sometimes you feel like online shopping sometimes you feel like going to the actual shop.*
FG2, P7	*Yeah mood is a big one.*
INT6	*Then going into the store I don't know, maybe I was just in a bad mood, I was just kind of feeling like drained and really like worn out.*

7.3.3 Temporal

In examining the temporal moderators, two main codes emerged: time of day and urgency were identified. These situational moderators are also reflected in preceding multichannel situational moderators (Nicholson *et al.*, 2002; Neslin *et al.*, 2006).

Temporal - Time of Day
The time of day moderated consumers choice of channels. The morning was an opportunity for participants to engage with social media platforms, retailer apps and online for emails, as illustrated:

FG2, P10	*My first port of call, as soon as I wake up in the morning, is getting up in the morning and checking all of my social networking… I am a real phone addict though.*
INT2	*Every morning I am checking through all my apps, checking through Topshop, checking the new in and things like that.*
BP5	*My first shopping journey was initiated by a picture I saw on Missguided's Instagram page this morning whilst procrastinating as usual.*
FG4, P18	*I mean I check my emails every morning then look and if I have got five or something check. So I'd probably if it said something like twenty percent off then I'd go and look at it. If not, they're just straight away delete.*

The findings of this work further highlight the need for high involvement consumers to interact and engage with a brand; this consumer group desires a brand experience. The findings correspond with multichannel situational moderators since the time of day is a moderator in channel selection (Nicholson *et al.*, 2002). The results also agree with Belk (1974) that temporal factors are valid situational variables that affect consumer behaviour.

Temporal - Urgency

When considering the time available to consumers, the results indicated that urgency affected shoppers' choice of channel during the journey, for example:

FG2, P8	*I don't know why I guess if I am looking for a dress for a night out or something I won't think about it until the day then obviously I don't have time to order it and I'm kind of not particularly organized.*
FG3, P14	*And then the store sometimes is just enjoyment if I have just got spare time go shopping.*
FG3, P17	*If I was going to shop but… I think it's just time. If I had more time it's my choice what I use.*
INT4	*If I don't have the time, I'll use the internet rather than go in store.*
INT6	*Like I'll probably always rather go to the store, but I'd use the website if I don't have time yeah.*

Participants were conscious not to waste time during their fashion shopping journey. The more time available, the greater autonomy participants were afforded in terms of shopping channel choices. The store channel was preferred in instances where the participant felt they were under less time pressure during their journey. The online channel was favoured in instances where there was limited time available. However, participants were aware that they may need to resort to the store if order deadlines for the online channel were missed. The findings agree with the channel choice literature that consumers will choose to switch channels based upon the factor of time (Xu-Priour *et al.,* 2012). The findings further reinforce channel choice is affected by situational moderators of high involvement female fashion consumers.

7.4   Expectations

A new contribution to knowledge on the omnichannel customer decision-making journey was that the omnichannel concept is one borne out of high involvement consumers heightened expectations, as a result of participants being accustomed to using many channels for a shopping journey. Consequently, new findings emerged and expectations of both seamless and consistency were added to the final framework in section 7.8. As a result of the data collection the framework contributes to an understanding of the omnichannel concept and how it manifests from the perspective of the consumer.

The findings revealed that consumers possess two distinct sets of expectations. Both sets of seamless and consistency expectations provide greater detail to the omnichannel definition elements discussed in section 2.5. Participants explained how both of these concepts actually manifested at a practical level during the journey and existing definitions of omnichannel do not provide this extent of detail, nor do they give the view of the what the different dimensions of the omnichannel concept mean for the consumer.

The contribution from the data collection helps to further articulate how shopping behaviour has changed for these omnichannel consumers in line with the aim and objectives of this study. Consumers have developed heightened expectations as a result of being accustomed to using an array of channels during their decision journey. Consequently, expectations of a seamless and consistent journey share a direct relationship with the channels in the final framework at the end of this chapter.

7.4.1   Seamless Experience

The results reveal that consumers expectations of a seamless omnichannel customer decision-making journey referred to one that did not feature any glitches that would interrupt the flow of the journey, which in the following verbatim:

FG4, P23	*There's no glitches between, so if I've seen that online if it looks nice I can go into the shop and try it on or I can order it online, try it on at home and send it back.*
FG1, P2	*Something that runs really smoothly from start to finish. Like good customer service, a nice like browsing experience, easy to pay and like if you're ordering online arrives quickly and like hassle free or […]*
INT3	*Yeah, I would say an experience that is easy and keeps you in a positive mood sort of thing.*

INT9	*Like being able to go from one to another and then having the, I keep saying cohesive, but you know what I mean between them.*

The findings at a holistic level revealed that participants expected the journey interaction to be easy, quick, smooth and one which maintained a positive experience throughout. Expectations of a seamless customer journey emphasise that retailers that can actively reduce risk for consumers through elements which are under the retailers control. For the consumer, a seamless customer experience provides a means of risk-reduction. An optimum omnichannel journey experience should be free of 'glitches' whereby the journey is linked across these channels rather than being viewed as independent encounters. This finding draws parallels with the concept of flow in the online environment. In computer-mediated environments the ease of use is an antecedent to the flow experience (Trevino and Webster, 1992). Flow depicts instances where an individual is immersed in an activity and has little attention to any other events occurring around them (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997). The concept of flow also provides clues as to the potential benefits of omnichannel. From a fashion perspective, flow experiences are a building block for engagement (Kim et al., 2014). From a customer experience perspective flow can impact upon satisfaction (Ding et al., 2010).

Within an omnichannel decision-making journey, each encounter contributes to an overall interaction with a brand, and this experience is greater than the sum of its individual parts. These findings are a new contribution to the framework and reflect the channel-agnostic consumers who are now accustomed to using an array of channels when shopping for fashion. The idea of seamlessness helps to distinguish the omnichannel concept from multichannel since multichannel is focused on the management of channels in silos. Based on the findings of this study, consumers embarking on an omnichannel customer decision-making journey are more pre-disposed to flow experience. Retailers must take a proactive approach to facilitate flow experiences by minimising 'glitches' in the seamlessness of the experience in order to reduce risk for shoppers. In terms of a general attitude towards the need for a seamless shopping encounter, users' current experiences of an omnichannel customer decision-making journey referred to delivery, returns and evaluation stages (information).

Seamless Customer Experience - Delivery - Wait
Participants discussed having to wait for extended periods of time between the point of order and delivery. For some shoppers, this meant they felt forgotten about. This is important since the consumer has very little control in the overall delivery process (Kollmann et al., 2012; Schröder and Zaharia, 2008). Even before the point of order some consumers choose alternative products or abandon the purchase altogether as a result of lengthy delivery times. This finding suggests loss of time as a handled risk is important to omnichannel fashion consumers because they desire efficiency from their journey as a result of interactions across channels therefore again reducing the risk of time-loss. Evidence of these points are illustrated, as follows:

FG1, P4	*Yeah you've bought a few things are waiting for it and then the buzz is gone by the time you get it. It's just not the same feeling.*
INT6	*So they kind of miss out on the whole inspiration stage as well because like their website is not really good to shop on and like delivery takes so long so I completely give up on that.*
FINT1	*I just would rather, if I can find it elsewhere and avoid having the kind of waiting three days for delivery, things like that.*

This finding agrees with Bendoly et al. (2005) along with Burke (1997) that a delivery service can influence a purchase decision. In an omnichannel experience consumers expect to have flexible and quick delivery options. The results concur with industry research, which explains that consumers are seeking anytime, anywhere delivery with shorter and specific time slots as standard (Deloitte, 2012; Mintel, 2014b).

Seamless Customer Experience - Delivery - Cost (Free/Subscription)
In omnichannel shopping consumers highlighted their expectation of free delivery, as shown in the following results:

FG4, P21	I've just become much more demanding of free delivery, delivery times [...]
FG3, P14	I only really shop at Asos online cause I know I can get free returns and free delivery and I'm not paying extra.
BP3	If they have product I like and free delivery and returns I will buy.
BP4	I have ASOS prime, so I know if I order today I will receive it tomorrow which is great!
FG5, P24	ASOS has got its uses. Em, I dunno I find it like that kind of thing and you can have your... it's only ten pounds a year and you can get your like clothes delivered next day and you can have the option of like when you want it.

Participants admitted that they were demanding of free delivery and if not available, some consumers would abandon their purchase altogether. The findings agree that cost of delivery can cause drop out of the payment process (Sage, 2014). An unanticipated outcome of participants discussions was that shoppers expressed their willingness to pay for delivery subscriptions, such as ASOS Premier. What this study identifies is that while fashion shoppers are demanding free delivery there is an appetite to pay for premium delivery membership for preferred brands. A bundled delivery option may help close the gap for some shoppers to provide the delivery experience they want, and subscription could potentially absorb the some of the fulfilment costs from an operational perspective.

Seamless - Returns - Ability to Return & Refund at the Store
The expectation of being able to return to the store highlighted consumers desire to receive a refund promptly, as the following results show:

INT7	Not really. I mean the only the only flaw is mainly returns. That's the only time I ever have problems. I mean especially Zara they used to be quite funny with if you bought things online they didn't really like you returning things in the store which they should.
BP2	buying online and being able to return in store is a useful policy.
BP5	Even when I have ordered products online from and retailer with a physical store I tend to go into the shop to return the products as I feel more comfortable with the fact the return is processed right there and then in front of me.
BP4	I like to be able to purchase online but return to a store, so I can get an immediate refund or exchange. Mango do not offer this therefore I will not purchase online from them.

One consumer recounted difficulty with the brand Zara. In returning to the store it identified that some retailers are still not equipped to support omnichannel customer experiences i.e returns across channels. The findings confirm the recent work by Bernon *et al.* (2016) that returns to store the preferred return option for customers. The study, therefore, provides an added contribution, highlighting that the reason for the preference of the store is due to return being immediately handled, unlike other returns processed via other channels. Hence, if retailers are able to speed up returns and refund process via other channels this may reduce the impact on physical stores. This study asserts that returns and refunds should be made an operational priority for retailers in order to enhance omnichannel retail experiences. Again, this highlights a way in which retailers can proactively reduce perceived risk for the customer.

Seamless Customer Experience - Information - Saving Personal Details
A seamless experience also denoted the expectation that retailers should remember customer details, so that shoppers could avoid re-entering this information on the next occasion a channel visit is made or when transitioning across channels, for example:

BP4	I am essentially lazy therefore I like stores to remember me when I use any channels so when I come back I don't need to enter the details over again.
INT7	And it's like ASOS even though I'm normally signed into their app if I try and save something, save an item. Sometimes it'll sign me out and then I have to login again and then I'm like ah forget it because I can't be bothered to enter my email address and password.
FINT4	Yeah, it's really annoying on phone putting in your email address and password all the time. Like it is fine to do once, but I think you should be able to save it and have it there for every-time.

For omnichannel retailers, this is important, since participants explained that they could not be bothered to re-enter personal information, such as addresses details. Saving customer information was a positive feature of a seamless experience. The finding agrees with Shaw and Towers (2015) who identify that consumers make use of technology principally to remember details. Omnichannel customers have moved on from the distrust of online information sharing and a willingness to share information, which is exhibited with multichannel interactions (Premazzi et al., 2010). This is further bolstered as the participant sample are digital natives and are confident with technology (Glass, 2007). Within omnichannel, the difference is that the consumers expect their information to be shared across channels to ensure ease of interaction.

Seamless Customer Experience - Information - Wishlist and Basket
Another unanticipated aspect of information in the omnichannel context was the use of wishlists and baskets where participants expected their information to be visible across channels. This resulted in a feeling of frustration among consumers due to the perceived time-consuming effort to re-identify products again and hence, re-add them to a basket or wishlist. Conversely, in instances where seamlessness was supported participants also felt positive because they were able to continue the 'flow' of their journey on another platform without glitches, as illustrated here:

INT5	Eh I find that really frustrating actually I find that I've already spent the time looking for it. I've spent the time researching it and thinking about and I've made the effort to put it in my basket and now it's not there and I'm going to have to go through and find it all over again.
FINT1	But yeah that's kind of big for me, because a lot of the time I am just scrolling through my phone and find something I like, save it for later to look at on my laptop. Em so that's really important for me to just log in and have it there rather than having to search again for it.
BP4	I have found that when I add items to my basket on ASOS or John Lewis on the app have been transferred to my basket in the online store also.
FINT5	I tried the whole wishlist thing, like trying to like it on my phone and looking at it online and I think it was that website that hasn't got on one or the other. Like New Look didn't have it on one or the other so that was a bit… Obviously that would be really great if they were.

While the study demonstrates that wishlists and baskets working across channels are a standard expectation for consumers, the evidence shows that not all retailers have successfully achieved this. Retailers could potentially miss out on lost sales. The findings confirm with the literature by Picot-Coupey et al. (2016) who call for a persistent customer basket, however, the current study contributes to the findings by examining this from a fashion apparel context.

Seamless Customer Experience - Staff Knowledge
The omnichannel shopping experience places greater pressure on retail staff as participants explained that they expected store staff to have greater cross-channel knowledge, which is shown as follows:

INT2	I think kind of. I think staff should be in the know with the multiple channels.
FG4, P19	Staff need to know what's going on online as well. […] I've had sales assistants say it to customers go home and go online and do it. It's just like what? You should be doing it for me. You expect a shop to do it for you it's their fault it's not in their store.
FG4, P18	I think maybe if the staff… maybe… you couldn't really expect staff to know everything that is online. But if they had access easily to the website, then they would do the searching for you and that would then seem like they were, you know, helpful.
INT9	Sometimes I go in and I say I have seen this online and describe it to them and say how much it is and say do you have it or do you know about it and they'll be like oh, I'm not sure. They're never, yes, I've seen that.

Retailers are potentially losing out on sales due to a lack of cross-channel knowledge among staff. The findings on the role of staff within omnichannel retailing are currently limited and so far, the discussion is about staff and their familiarity with technology (Piotrowicz and Cuthbertson, 2014). Rather than focusing on technology, this study suggests that brands should set guidelines on good cross-channel customer practice i.e. to what extent staff should aid consumers in completing purchases in other channels, to what degree should staff have knowledge about a retailer's other channels i.e. latest campaigns.

In developing the final framework for the study, the findings articulated that consumers seek a seamless experience across the decision journey. Firstly, a seamless experience is concerned with the functionality and flow of the journey as consumers traverse across channels that there should be no glitches so that consumers should be able to move freely across channels. This therefore identifies a relationship between a seamless experience and channels. Secondly, expectations of a seamless experience are also extended to the stages of the journey, such as at the evaluation stage, the delivery stage and the returns stage where consumers hold expectations concerning persistent wishlists and baskets to be available regardless of channel, on-time delivery and ease of returns and speed of refund. This therefore highlights a relationship between a seamless experience and the stages of the journey. By delivering a seamless experience consumers are reassured and this impacts on their overall experience of the brand.

7.4.2   Consistency

Expectations of consistency were related to the channels in the journey also, as added to the final framework in 7.8 as a new finding. Regardless of the channels used by the consumer, there was an expectation that promotional and brand elements would be standardised across the channels and these are discussed in the following section. Consistency is a dimension of the omnichannel concept and refers to the consistency of the brand (Picot-Coupey et al., 2016). The results from the research investigation explained how consistency actually manifests from the perspective of the consumer. In this case participants referred to aspects of the promotional mix i.e. product, price, promotion and place. The findings indicated here provide support for the assertion that an omnichannel decision-making journey is a brand experience.

Consistency – Promotion – Brand Identity

In recounting their experiences of a brand across channels, participants indicated that a fashion retail brand identity should be consistent. This finding contributes to understanding of the brand experience across channels because in instances where the brand identity was consistent across channels it increases trusts and provides reassurance for customers therefore reducing risk in the mind of the consumer. Furthermore, consistency provoked a strong reaction among consumers when the brand was inconsistent, which is illustrated, as follows:

INT6	I feel like Boohoo has got kind of em Instagram page and stuff, but it doesn't really work with their like branding cause their's is red and pink and black and their Instagram is all a bit wishy washy. Whereas the website is really like kind of bold but they use really wishy washy filters so it doesn't quite work.
BP1	The consistency of both of these retailers with their online and store presence heightens my experience with each brand as I feel part of it when I am shopping on either channel.
INT8	They use like all of the same fonts, colours etc. I think that's quite good though because it keeps it in line.
FINT2	You want that same logo, the colours, the images I know Zara are quite photography based, so their look books are quite sharp and they're all about the picture and stuff. And you want that to be consistent across everything.
FINT3	[…] so it just kind of, sometimes when they use like filters and like some filters are, sounds silly but kind of like boho and stuff. I don't think Boohoo is very boho more kind of statement. So, I think when they use a filter that kind of contrasts it just doesn't feel like right.
FINT5	And it also like it shows that they have a stronger brand identity, I think I've mentioned brand identity across like a few and really know who their target market is and it's just a lot more reassuring for the brand I think.
BP7	This increases my trust for the brand because I see it as having a strong brand identity […] If the app/website/store don't look like they are in sync with one another by following the same concept I begin to question whether they are aware of their own brand identity

Within the results, individuals identified the brand identity elements of fonts, colours, logos, imagery, social media filters, layout as elements which need to be consistent. Social media filters, for example, were a new contribution to the literature. In such instances, participants experienced confusion when the filters did not match the brand. Consequently, this demonstrates that with the rise and evolution of channels, new brand identity elements are emerging which need to be carefully managed. Meanwhile, the study confirms that the aforementioned brand identity

elements are essential for consistency and in line with previous multichannel literature such as Magrath and McCormick (2013) and Rowley (2009).

Consistency - Promotion - Brand Image
The significance of the aforementioned findings on brand identity are important because brand identity precedes brand image (Kapferer, 2004; Peirson-Smith, 2014) and therefore brand identity inconsistencies could potentially impact the perception of a brand image. Brand image was concerned with consumers overall impressions of an omnichannel brand, as the verbatim indicates:

BP2	*I am very loyal to my favourite retailers (Topshop and Zara), this is not only down to their product designs and consistency across channels but also because a strong level of trust has been built*
INT3	*I think they've got a strong brand image they're very consistent as well. They're easy.*
INT1	*[…] so, I think they should make stronger links between them they fit together well.*
FG2, P9	*Yeah, we kind of said that they don't have one clear message and that confuses customers because you don't understand what you're getting.*
INT2	*Em, yeah, I think River Island and Topshop are really consistent in the fact that they are very clear in all sorts of channels as to who they're aiming at and who their market is.*
INT6	*I think if they are inconsistent they sort of lose their image and then you sort of lose what they're doing or what they're about.*
FG4, P18	*That's good you want a strong brand image.*
FINT2	*So that's why it's important that it's consistent because if it's not it can become really confusing and can really isolate you as a consumer like you don't want to be a part of something that isn't quite clear…. It all comes together to create a brand image doesn't it […]*

When participants discussed brand consistency the goal of delivering a consistent brand was to convey a distinguishable and clear message, in order for it to be easy to understand. The consequences of the brand not having a consistent image were expressed as the brand not feeling right, having a muddled appearance, difficulty in familiarising with the brand, confusion, isolating and a brand that consumers did not want to be part of. Positive reactions for consistency included the brand being easy to recognise, as possessing a strong identity, providing reassurance, being seen as trustworthy, having a clear target audience, having a distinct style and personality. Therefore, brands with a clear image require less cognitive processing on the part of the consumer. The findings also correlate with the discussion on brand identity that consistency reduces risk in the mind of the consumer. The work also agrees with Schoenbachler and Gordon (2002) and Lazaris *et al.* (2014) that brand image should be consistent across channels otherwise the brand identity can become confused. This study agrees with the multichannel literature, yet, what differentiates the omnichannel context is that consumers no longer view consistency as a desirable retailer trait but instead as a benchmark.

This finding of consistency evidences the importance of brand in an omnichannel journey and contributes a response to research objective 5 which was to examine the distinct role that brands play in decision-making in an omnichannel fashion retail context. The identification of consistency in the omnichannel framework demonstrates that omnichannel retailers themselves can reduce risk and reassure shoppers across the journey by ensuring that the brand in terms of its promotional mix is consistent regardless of the channel(s) that the consumer chooses to interact with. In-turn this creates a strong and distinctive brand in the mind of the consumer. Brands in the omnichannel environment reduce the cognitive effort on the part of the consumer. For example, the results find that consumers are able to better judge what the brand is about and who it is aimed at. This is identified in the omnichannel female fashion consumers want to feel a sense of connectedness and belonging to brand. Therefore by understanding what a brand is about, having a clear sense of identity consumers are able to better bond and engage with the brand because the brand identity is clear and the identity is fulfilling consumer needs for self-expression and self-actualisation since the consumer wants to be associated with the brand in the first place.

Consistency - Promotion – Communications

A further aspect of promotion was communications. The results identified that marketing campaigns should transcend across channels and also the promotions, such as discounts, should be redeemable regardless of channel, for example:

FG4, P18	*I'd expect like their window display or their advertisement or marketing to be similar throughout though. Like you know when you can see consistent that is all, you could tell that it's that brand is a good thing and like if you could tell from, you know, you know from the banner on the first page would also be like an advert in the shop or something […]*
FG1, P1	*Like Topshop Instagram they'll have a wee pink "pastel" skirt but it will be in… there'll be flowers all around it to make it look like more interesting. I think that's what they are trying to do to make things and then, but when you go in store you'll see that skirt and there'll be like a flower board behind it or something behind it relating to it. I think Topshop are really good for that.*
FG4, P19	*The way to get over that is to have all the deals the same consistent across store and online, so you wouldn't have customers complaining that it's different.*
BP7	*I really enjoyed my experience in store of River Island and I felt that the key trends which they featured on their mannequins and in their window displays reflected what the themes of their website/mobile apps.*

Another benefit of marketing campaign consistency is that the reinforcement of campaigns was able to reduce cognitive effort for consumers, as they felt they were able to identify trends due to the continual reinforcement. The current study agrees with the principles of cross-channel marketing communications e.g. Zhang *et al.* (2010) and the earlier principles of integrated marketing communications because this group of consumers are comfortable with interacting across a variety of channels. However, shoppers were also more aware and more able to spot campaign inconsistencies across channels, thus demonstrating heightened expectations.

Consistency - Product - Presentation

The findings reveal that consumers expectations surrounding consistency extended to the presentation of fashion products across each different channel. In cases of product image consistency, participants outlined either negative or positive outcomes. In the instance of a negative experience, individuals highlighted a reluctance to return to the retailer, which indicates the potential of lost sales for the brand. In the instance of a positive experience where consistency was perceived, and a purchase was made, the consumer indicated a higher level of satisfaction to the extent of sharing the purchase, for example:

FG2, P10	*Sometimes when you go into store they look so much nicer than online… They don't photograph good as well.*
INT5	*I want to make sure what I'm purchasing is going to suit me and is going to look like what it says it is online. So, I like to make sure that the colours and the style looks the same across all of the channels and make sure that everything looks the same.*
INT11	*I bought a pair of shoes that weren't the same colour when they came so that kind of like made me not want to go back to the original retailer 'cause it was not what they had on the website, it was completely different.*
FG5, P28	*I know so many people that it has happened to with Missguided or BooHoo. They've like ordered stuff and it has just been completely different.*
BP5	*I went into store yesterday and tried the shoes which fitted perfectly and were exactly what I wanted and were highly consistent with the pictures and description on the app. Since buying them I've used snapchat to send images to my Uni friends back in Manchester as well as WhatsApp to send a photo to my Dad. I'm also thinking of sharing my purchase on Instagram when I wear them later today!*

Participants recounted discrepancies between the online representation and the physical product, whereby, products did not look the same i.e. the colour was different. Such findings could serve as one explanation for omnichannel returns. Brands should provide a greater volume of imagery and more accurate imagery of the product, so consumers can make a more accurate judgement of the product before purchasing. The importance of product consistency agrees with the work of Panigrahi (2013) that product information consistency and the search of information and purchase highlight the importance of consistency across channels. Hence, this research asserts that

inconsistency of product presentation is a risk factor within the omnichannel experience. However, it is a risk that is within the control of the retail brand. By reducing such risks and creating consistency, retailers, will then be in a better position to create a good omnichannel experience (Peltola *et al.,* 2015). The finding of product presentation identifies another strategy in which consumers are able to reduce risk since consumers will check the product across various channels as a means to reduce risk and to reassure themselves the item is an accurate depiction of the product.

Consistency - Product - Pricing
The results below demonstrate that shoppers in the study expected to see consistent pricing across each of the channels. This is another way in which consumers will seek to reassure themselves that they are getting the best price. Yet, their experiences of omnichannel shopping highlighted this was not always the case. The findings that price information should be consistent corresponds with the multichannel context as price consistency is an important expectation amongst consumers (Shankar et al., 2011). However, what this study identifies is that price consistency is still not always the case.

INT8	*Their prices are consistent […]*
FINT4	*Em, pricing as well I guess. You don't want to really find, like Zara they do that special pricing online and it's a bit annoying if you've bought something in store for full price and then they do that special price online. So, I guess you kind of expect there to be consistency for that.*
BP4	*However, in general pricing and stock remains the same between the mobile site, the app and the website for all of the above.*

Consistency - Product - Stock
The results presented below, suggest that product stock availability was inconsistent across channels was a source of frustration and annoyance for participants. This experience was especially evident when consumers searched for products which were in store, but were not available online, either at all or in a certain size.

FG4, P21	*You expect to be able to find everything online if you've seen it in-store, like it's so annoying when you have seen it and you have tried it in the shop and you go online it's not there.*
INT10	*Em I suppose there's higher trust I suppose if it's really consistent between all the channels if they've got like the key items in store like the first ones you see in store are the first ones on the website as well.*
INT8	*Sometimes it's quite frustrating because if you see something in the store that you really like and you're like oh I'll get that off the website and you can't find it anywhere it's just really annoying.*
INT9	*Just like I was saying before with em like with the inconsistency between the products that they offer on the website and the ones they have in the shop.*

The finding, disagrees with the earlier multichannel literature by Berman and Thelen (2004) that too much overlap across channels could result in lost sales opportunities. Omnichannel participants in the current study have made it clear that they expect to see a full array of products across all channels. In instances where it is not practicable to offer a fashion product across all platforms brands should communicate more effectively and clearly. For instance, products could be identified as a channel exclusive for example the store could implement 'store exclusives' or 'coming soon online' which may encourage customers to pick up the item there and then. This is similar to what the online channel is already doing with 'online exclusives'. Hence, in this context, the store channel lags behind the online channel for meeting customers' expectations.

7.5   Stages
In response to the research aim, the study sought to examine the stages of consumer decision-making in the omnichannel journey for young high involvement female fashion consumers. The section sets out these stages and also draws attention to the choice of channels, device usage and emotions associated with each stage. The impact of the results reflects a much richer view of consumers omnichannel shopping encounters than that of the traditional consumer decision process to reflect the complex nature of a shopping journey for fashion. The study is also supplemented by primary data from each stage of the data collection process in appendix 10.

In line with objective 4, the study sought to analyse how the shopping behaviour of young high involvement female fashion consumers has changed and the impact this has on decision-making, specifically in terms of risk in the context of an omnichannel shopping journey. Within some of the stages participants discussed that they would undertake strategies in order to reduce risk. For example, in one stage, participants discussed that by using an array of channels participants felt reassured that they had seen all of the product available and therefore were able to make their decision on that basis. The final framework at the end of this chapter shows these points in the journey where risk is present, and these are depicted through shaded stages. What can be understood from the analysis is that an omnichannel decision-making journey is one which is predicated on risk. Ultimately, fashion consumers are engaging in an omnichannel journey as a means by which to optimise their decision-making towards fashion. This is discussed in the following sections:

7.5.1 Inspiration

The inspiration stage was the first stage, identified within participants accounts of an omnichannel fashion shopping journey. Inspiration links well to high involvement consumers. The theme of involvement is characterised by motivation and enthusiasm towards a product category (Rothschild, 1984). The identification of this stage in the omnichannel customer decision-making journey is evidenced, as follows overleaf.

FG3, P17	*So, my journey so far for those has been: be inspired […]*
INT4	*The inspiration stage because well I'll always be on these every day. So, they're the sort of things that would trigger me to go in the store or purchase something off the website because yeah, I don't really go onto a blog saying I need something to buy. You just see something you like on go onto the website or go into the store.*
INT8	*That'd be one group, so that'd be my inspiration, what gives me ideas of what I want to buy.*
INT9	*Yeah, I probably would. Well yeah so, I'd say style inspiration I would look for online at different social media. More than going into a shop because I don't go into shops just to browse. I think I'd always have a bit of a mission to go into a shop so probably. I think for me style inspiration is more of a kind of everyday I'll pick up on it in little chunks. Like I might go on Pinterest for five minutes or i'll see people round whereas I wouldn't purposely go into a shop to look at different ideas.*
INT11	*Inspiration stage.*
INT7	*[…] getting inspired by a blogger or something I've seen and thinking oh I need to find out the rest […]*

Participants articulated the inspiration stage as instances of browsing to learn about what's new, in terms of new styles and to acquire ideas about what to buy. This finding of the inspiration stage, along with the subsequent stages of the data collection contributes to research objective three which is to analyse themes from the data collection to develop a theoretical framework that refines, evaluates and reflects the decision-making journey for fashion consumers in the omnichannel environment. This is achieved by identifying the stages of that decision-making journey as identified by the consumers themselves.

A further trigger for the inspiration stage was the use of retailer emails. For some participants emails triggered their shopping journeys, this was particularly the case in instances where brands were offering promotional discounts. For some consumers, the emails were a good way to stay connected to a retailer. However, for some, too many emails were off-putting.

INT6	*Em for Boohoo I get a lot emails through on my phone. That was what subconsciously prompted me.*
BP7	*I received an email this morning from New Look to inform me that it was their last day of 20% off*
BP3	*Also, when I have things in my mind when i am emailed or contacted by the retailer with a promotion it almost instantly forms a purchase.*
FG5, P24	*ASOS but sometimes they send me like three emails a day and I just was getting like really bored*
FINT5	*Yeah, it's like River Island, Ark. ASOS at the moment but I think that's because I have been*

	getting emails from them
FINT3	*Yeah on emails as well they've got the link to get you in.*

The identification of the inspiration stage links with earlier literature that states customer shopping patterns have changed with shoppers using the internet to look for ideas and inspiration (McCormick *et al.*, 2014) and the importance of technology in providing fashion inspiration for consumers (Alexander and Alvarado, 2014). When looking to later models which fuse the consumer decision process with technology, the model of multichannel customer management by Neslin *et al.* (2006) still commences with the problem recognition stage and does not consider consumer activities prior to this stage in reaching the point of recognising a need. However, the current study's illustration of the inspiration does agree with Wolny and Charoensuksai (2014). In their application of the ORCA (Molenaar, 2012) model. Wolny and Charoensuksai (2014) identify the orientation/inspiration/horizon-scanning stage where consumers do not consider themselves to be shopping but are, instead, scanning the marketplace. However, the Wolny and Charoensuksai (2014) study examines consumers on a shopping journey for cosmetics rather than fashion, hence the current study provides a new contribution to knowledge.

The findings that inspiration is a new stage in the omnichannel journey and contrasts the original propositions in the proposed theoretical framework, as identified in section 5.5. The original framework followed Blackwell *et al's* (2006) stages of the consumer decision process which commences with need recognition. While the traditional consumer decision process is concerned with mapping the stages associated with a purchase the findings of the data collection reveal that participants perceive the decision-making journey as more than simply stages which are geared towards an eventual transaction. The omnichannel context reveal that the journey commences for the consumers when they are not even considering making a purchase or even perceive that they are actively shopping, but are instead gaining inspiration to from future needs and wants. Therefore, the omnichannel journey is a more comprehensive view of the consumers activities. Need recognition is still present, however, it is positioned in the omnichannel journey as an outcome of the inspiration stage. The proposed pre-data collection framework in section 5.5 did not therefore adequately take account of the start of a consumer's journey for fashion. Accordingly, the first stage in the new journey is inspiration - which more accurately reflects how the journey begins and this is depicted in the final framework in 7.8.

Where the findings do recognise need as the outcome of the stage this concurs with the empirical literature that need identification occurs when there is a difference between an individual's actual versus desired state (Dewey, 1910). This is at the point where the need attracts the customers attention and customers are then deciding to take action and find a solution to their problem (Bruner and Pomazal, 1988; Blackwell *et al.,* 2006). This links well to the Molenaar (2012) ORCA model employed by Wolny and Charoensuksai (2014) as the need recognition stage is positioned as an outcome of the inspiration stage also. Need recognition, in the case of the data collection, is therefore, the point at which participants recognised that the need or want for a particular item, as an outcome of inspiration.

The findings further agree with Workman and Studak (2006) that fashion opinion leaders will have a want-based rather than a need-based approach to fashion problem recognition, for example:

INT2	*Em probably identifying that I actually need, well I don't really need it but identifying that I wanted it. Before it was just something that I liked but I guess after looking at it more I was kind of like oh well yeah that is the sort of thing that I would really like.*

7.5.1.1 Channels

Channels support various activities (Slack *et al.,* 2008). Channel choice is not one channel for all purposes, but consumers may use more than one channel in the decision-making process (Frambach *et al.*, 2007; Slack *et al.*, 2008). The results reveal that each stage of the journey requires a different array of channels to provide different functions and benefits for the fashion consumer. For the inspiration stage of the omnichannel customer decision-making journey for

fashion, consumers employed the mobile app, social media, the store and online website channels. The findings also revealed the identification of an additional channels such as: magazines.

Inspiration - Channels - Social Media

Social media was the most dominant channel at the inspiration stage of the omnichannel customer decision-making journey. In such instances, social media was both a source and motivator of inspiration and included activities, such as: viewing blogs, visiting Instagram and going on Facebook. This contribution provides further support for existing literature, which although limited, recognises the growing role of social media in omnichannel (Mirsch *et al.*, 2016; Piotrowicz and Cuthbertson, 2014; Shaw and Towers , 2015).

The current study pinpoints that the importance of social media at the beginning of the journey. The findings agree with Blázquez (2014), that social media has quickly become a place to commence the process of shopping. The immediacy of social media meant that participants found it easy to stay regularly informed and participants found themselves engaging in social media on a daily basis to obtain such information. Therefore, social media acts as a source of immediate gratification for information related to fashion shopping. The following verbatim evidences the role of the social media at the start of the customer decision-making journey:

INT8	*[…] and I would only ever use the social media for em like with the purpose of being inspired or at the end of my shopping journey, showcasing what I've bought.*
INT9	*Well yeah so I'd say style inspiration I would look for online at different social media.*
FINT4	*Social media is really about looking for inspiration, especially on Instagram.*
INT1	*I think the social media is what drives the inspiration […]*

Social media as a source of inspiration confirms the findings of other recent studies. For example, recent multichannel customer journey studies concur that the primary channel used for inspiration was social media (Wolny and Charoensuksai, 2014). The study also agrees that media content is, therefore, becoming a critical component for fashion brands (Hansen and Sia, 2015; Forbes, 2014). Rich responses to social media were provided, as being an effective way to interact and engage with a brand. So, in an omnichannel journey social media facilitates the brand experience. For example:

FINT5	*[…] and you can only do that really through channels like the app, Instagram and social media because like obviously you go into the store, you're just a customer. Whereas on the internet, you can be a lot more involved than when you're just in the store.*
INT8	*Well Instagram I use it every day just scrolling through, just to see what's going on and it's mixed in with favourite retailers, favourite celebs and friends so that sort of […] Whereas their Instagram or their Twitter, it's more sort of like what they're up to, like River Island PR and stuff like it's always what they're up to […]*
FG2, P9	*Like Twitter facilitates conversation with a brand. So people are like if you have a complaint, you are going to tweet them aren't you or if you have like just bought something then you'll be all "woo hoo". So that makes you feel more part of the brand experience.*
BP7	*By following retailers such as Ark and River Island on Instagram and Twitter, I am constantly being reminded of the brand whenever I see a post, and if I see something I like I am likely to follow it up by either finding the product on their app or on their website.*
FG2, P9	*If I wanted to find some interactivity or excitement with the brand I would go through social media to get more of a brand experience.*

This finding corresponds with the fact that social media is a method by which consumers may follow brands (Hansen and Sia, 2015) and that social media facilitates dynamic brand interactions with customers (Kim, 2012). Regular brand engagement reminds consumers of the brand, drives excitement and further motivates consumer willingness to keep up to date. This level of engagement may serve as an explanation as to why omnichannel consumers are more loyal, as shown later in the findings of this study. Participants were also motivated to take action as a result of engagement, whether that be transferring to the retailer app or finding a product via a website. Thus, the connectivity of social media channels enables consumers to transition across channels effectively.

Within the process of becoming inspired via social media, participants also identified specific utilitarian benefits, of using social media for fashion shopping. From product being styled by the retailer, showing whole looks and outfits, to having peers and opinion leaders wearing items. Each of these were activities were helpful as participants said they were able to then visualise the product, thus social media reduced their cognitive effort, for example:

INT6	*It gives you like ideas of ways people put outfits together. So, like I've got this pair of white jeans, and you see how people have paired it. So, you'll see someone with a bright red t-shirt, and you'll be like oh my gosh I need it and then that starts the whole thing.*
INT7	*I mean I use Instagram to kind of look at outfits as a whole if there's bloggers and models that have whole outfits on.*
INT10	*Eh yeah, I'd say like friends on my Facebook like what they're wearing.*
FINT1	*You see it worn by someone exactly like yourself whether that be a fashion blogger or something like that. Because it's all on social media you can see how things look rather than just them just being piled up on a shelf.*

Social media at the inspiration stage was also a source for identifying trends. Trends were observed by looking at what peers were wearing online, as shown as follows:

BP6	*[…] their Instagram account as it is inspiring, and trend led; making me want to shop when they post pictures of products and trends etc.*
INT10	*Yeah like people on the street. Em like, I guess Instagram there is some blogs on Instagram that I kind of follow. It's stuff that I like to see regularly, but I'm thinking yeah or just like what the main trends are and think oh yeah, I haven't actually bought that yet I should probably get that.*
BP5	*This is often because they feature their most popular trends on their social media […]*
BP1	*The constant stream of information you receive from the many, from emails to pictures on Instagram, keep you informed on new products and trends the store is covering.*

Inspiration - Channels - Store

Similar to social media, the store channel featured prominently as an inspirational environment for consumers to browse and gain ideas, for example:

FG1, P1	*You get some inspiration in store as well like models walking about and seeing like what the staff are wearing and things like that, but you just don't get that online.*
FG3, P15	*Someone can gain inspiration from actually being in-store.*
FG3, P13	*I would rather just go to the store and be inspired that way kinda thing.*

A new contribution to understanding the store channels was, that staff acted as a source of inspiration. Staff provided consumers with inspiration regarding putting outfits together and demonstrating the wearability of garments. From a brand perspective, staff were an essential medium by which consumers would also perceive a brand. These findings are illustrated, as follows:

FG1, P1	*You get some inspiration in store as well like models walking about and seeing like what the staff are wearing and things like that, but you just don't get that online.*
FG5, P25	*I like seeing like what the sales assistants in Topshop are like wearing or the mannequins like when they, because it's always changing. I like to see like what clothes go with what, so that's why I like it instore.*
INT2	*I think. I think sales assistants should be there to help inspire customers.*
BP3	*Also, it featured the elle staff wearing the collection, so it made it look more wearable.*
FINT6	*Oh, that's a thing about the Topshop girl I think. In Topshop the staff are very like the Topshop girl like come to life.*

In the store, whole outfit displays acted as a source of store inspiration. This form of inspiration was compelling to consumers since they said they would be more inclined to buy a given product because of how it was styled. By seeing a wider array of product in the store channel this would inspire participants to explore other product categories compared to the online channel which provides a more segregated view in its display of different product types. These findings agree

with the literature on impulse buying where shop looks could trigger transactions (Xiao and Nicholson, 2012). Verbatim responses on whole looks are shown, as follows:

INT8	*[…] you'll go into the store and see it on one of the mannequins, and you're like more inclined to buy the whole outfit so they all link quite nicely.*
FINT4	*Em but it's quite nice to just go and have a look in Topshop sometimes because I think you see a lot more of the product if it's out. Whereas if you are online you're kind of like confined to one category, like if you are searching for dresses you only see dresses. Whereas if you are in the shop you get it with the shoes and the bags and everything together […]*
BP7	*I also like that in store they have the ability to group items into their ranges whereas on their website it is mainly divided up into product type such as trousers/skirts/tops etc., they do have pages with key looks on but it's not something I go to straight away on their website.*

The influence of the store was primarily to create a hedonic brand experience, as indicated in the responses that follow this paragraph. Participants identified that the brand experience was ascertained through the store being entertaining i.e. through atmospherics such as music, displays and merchandising and stories/campaigns. The store was also a more focused environment whereby the brand had the consumers full attention as well as being a more tangible by enabling customers to physically interact with products and brand. The findings agree with the multichannel literature which highlights the role of store atmosphere as important in integrated multichannel environments (Pantano and Visassone, 2015). Stores are therefore a key channel that facilitates the brand experience.

FG3, P13	*I would probably say it's like the whole journey. But like within it, say if you go into like a store that has a really good brand experience, that definitely kind of helps the whole journey in like […] So you'll pick up new things and where you've got like everyone in-store encouraging you, just the music and the whole like environment definitely Feels like better and more fulfilling than just sitting at home.*
FG3, P17	*Even more so by instore it's just more pleasurable, you get the entire experience and things. You see fabrics; you can see the merchandising and stories and you can get inspired by a whole collection by that. […] I'm choosing to do that really just to get… see it more and get that experience at the store. It's that a need to do that.*
INT10	*Em whereas like in store is just kind of like enjoyment, I've got a lot of time, wander round, take it all in. […] Because you just feel like a bit more 'sucked' into the brand in the shop and be like.*

Inspiration - Channels - Mobile App
Mobile apps were employed at the inspiration stage for browsing, for example:

INT8	*Em…I think I use the website if I know that I'm going to buy something, but I use the mobile app if I am just for browsing. Say if I'm sitting downstairs and my laptop's upstairs I'll just have a look and see what's on Ark or River Island at the moment, that's when I use my phone and my apps.*
FINT5	*[…] like an app and then I use the app for like browsing.*
INT2	*So, I'm always kind of browsing different websites, apps and things. Just to keep kind of up to date in the store.*

Participants would use apps to see what was available, for keeping up to date with retailers and for browsing products. This finding agrees with Kim *et al.* (2009) and Lea-Greenwood (2013) that mobile channel is used for searching for product and seeking constant updates from a fashion brand. Again, this highlights that high involvement consumer groups have a need for instant gratification and immediacy through accessing mobile content.

Inspiration - Channels - Online Website
The inspiration stage also featured the use of the online channel, to a lesser extent than compared with social media. For this stage, the online channel was associated with hedonic functionality whereby participants would browse websites for inspiration, as illustrated:

INT1	*Yeah, I used both of them were online website I guess but I used them in two different ways one to look at dresses of all the different retailers and what they had available, and I also used their website for their style advice as well and inspiration.*
FINT6	*Because I think now most of them [online websites] are going more inspirational because they're all like doing features and stuff which I prefer.*
FINT6	*Yeah, I think that would be good. Because I think now most of them are going more inspirational because they're all like doing features and stuff which I prefer.*

Sources of inspiration from websites included obtaining style advice and reading features. The findings therefore agree with the literature that recognises that web 2.0 is becoming more immersive and innovative as discussed by Bjørn-Andersen and Hansen (2011) and Okonkwo (2009) in section 2.3.2. This presents an implication for retail brands that while some consumers are seeking hedonic experiences while leisurely browsing websites, other shoppers want to perform functional activities. Therefore, retailers may need to consider in the future offering two 'faces' to the online website so that consumers can personalise how they want to interact with the brand online.

Inspiration - Channels - Magazines
Magazines were identified as an additional source of inspiration whether in the form of retailer magazines or women's magazines. For the photo-elicitation, magazines were added as a channel card for participants to use. These supplement the list of channels originally identified from the literature in section 2.3. Magazines provided inspiration for fashion, as an alternative to other channels such as the store, social media or blogs. In providing inspiration, magazines therefore serve a distinct function. The findings concur with McCormick *et al.* (2014) that magazines are still a key channel for fashion retailers. In the current study, magazines enabled participants to identify trends, to find new fashion items, new websites, new retailers, and is shown as follows:

INT1	*I think the magazine was more inspiration.*
INT7	*Em so I would use magazines at the inspiration stage I mean I don't buy magazines often but when I do they're for fashion.*
INT3	*But it's kind of Magazines or Instagram a way of getting ideas or a way of findings out about new websites, new kind of shops or something, new styles that are coming in that I would then go on to pick up something like that.*

7.5.1.2 Devices

The current study sought to identify which devices are employed at each stage of the fashion shopping journey, since channels can be accessed in a variety of ways. This is useful for retailers to ensure that their devices are optimised for the appropriate stages of the decision journey. The inspiration stage featured devices including mobiles, laptops and limited use of a netbook. These findings were in line with devices used in shopping across channels as mentioned in section 2.6.3.1 of the literature review, apart from the netbook which was a new addition.

Inspiration – Devices – Mobile
The most dominant device at the inspiration stage was mobile. Mobile phones delivered quick access to inspiration from social media and were also used by consumers for impulsive moments when shoppers wanted inspiration, for example:

INT1	*If I use my smartphone that will cover quite a range of them, so you can use it for inspiration on the social media side.*
INT6	*Yeah 'cause like I said I wouldn't want to purchase something on my phone, but I'd rather do it for inspiration.*
INT8	*Yeah like my phone I would associate with the sort of inspiration.*
FG3, P14	*It's maybe more impulse inspiration like on the phone as well.*

The benefit of phones was that it enabled convenience where consumers could reach for the device while on the go and furthermore because it enabled consumers to fill up their time when they were on the move with something to do. The findings therefore concur with the practitioner

research that omnichannel consumers will access platforms ubiquitously (Thoughtworks, 2011; ComScore, 2013), for example:

INT10	*Eh, just 'cause you can always have it with you. Like you could just go on Pinterest or something and have a flick if you were just on a train or a bus or something.*
INT2	*Yeah so, my phone I use an awful lot em just because it's kind of ease of use. So, on the bus on the way to uni and things like that it kind of fills a void. That's something I use a lot more when I am on the go.*
FG5, P30	*I feel like I would only use mobiles for looking at stuff if I'm like on the bus waiting, I wouldn't sit and just be like… that's just pointless*

Inspiration – Devices – Laptop

Alongside mobiles, laptops were another favoured device during the omnichannel decision-making journey. Laptops were limited at the inspiration stage but were used to browse leisurely for product and view new in products from retailers.

BP7	*I was already on my laptop I went straight on to their website and browsed the 'Just In' collection to see what I could potentially put my gift card towards.*
BP3	*Whereas I used my laptop to browse leisurely.*
INT4	*Well the laptop is sort of like at the beginning.*

Inspiration – Devices – Netbook

The use of netbooks was an unanticipated finding of the study and the use of the device during the shopping journey was highly limited. Only one participant out of the sample owned a Netbook. In the one instance where a netbook was used it was due to the fact the participant did not own a laptop computer. However, the finding identifies a device in addition to the original list in section 2.6.3.1. The netbook was used at the inspiration stage to gain inspiration via social media, for instance:

| INT6 | *Em, so I have got like a netbook instead of an actual laptop. […] But then sometimes, I do like if I've been doing work and I've got bored I will open up Pinterest or something and just have a flick on my netbook and just get some inspiration that way.* |

7.5.1.3 Emotions

The emotions identified from the data collection were classed as either positive or negative based upon the discussed in section 4.6.3. Each emotion identified was linked to a specific stage of the journey to explore how participants were affected as a result of their experience at different stages of their journey. The results also reveal potentially weak stages of the omnichannel customer decision-making journey that could be improved. The study provides a new contribution to the existing knowledge because although Wolny and Charoensuksai (2014) suggest emotional responses are a key feature of customer journeys this study pinpoints the emotions that occur at each stage of decision-making. The overall finding of emotion was that omnichannel shopping journeys are a roller coaster of emotions with participants experiencing highs and lows during the journey and that the emotional experience reinforced that the shopping decision-making was a journey of distinct stages, for example:

| INT5 | *There were a lot of emotions involved so it was excitement thinking oh I'm going to get one and then there was disappointment when my two favourite retailers John Lewis and ASOS and Gap didn't have them.* |
| INT9 | *I've mentioned this collection several times now, so I feel it really has become a shopping journey due to the stages and feelings I've had along the way.* |

Inspiration - Emotions - Inspired

This section addresses the emotions specific to the inspiration stage. During the phases of data collection, respondents spoke of feeling inspired which was synonymous with the inspiration stage

at the start of the customer journey. Thus, by consumers being able to gain ideas about clothing and viewing images they felt inspired and encouraged to make a purchase, for example:

FG3, P17	*[…] then I'll sort of do a Google search, look through images, get inspired, get encouraged to buy it.*
INT3	*Yeah inspired about new garments definitely and inspired about what else I should be wearing and stuff.*
INT7	*[…] just getting inspired and finding other things […]*

Feeling inspired is identified as an emotion by Laros and Steenkamp (2005). The findings also concur with studies relating to specific channels such as online and mobile that imagery can affect purchase intentions (Ashman and Vazquez, 2012; Magrath and McCormick, 2013; McAlexander *et al.,* 2002).

Inspiration – Emotions – Excitement
Excitement was an emotion expressed throughout participant discussions of the omnichannel fashion shopping journey. At the inspiration stage consumers expressed excitement due commencing the journey and at the thought of seeking out new products. The finding also reflected newness as a mind-set whereby the consumer was open to new ideas and in an exploratory frame of mind, as illustrated

INT4	*Em I think this is just the excitement journey at the start.*
INT6	*Ok em, I was like really intrigued and excited at the social inspiration stage […] It's the first kind of ooh, will I like find anything and then em especially on the mobile when I found a nice jumper on Bohoo […] I was quite excited because I found loads of things that I liked […] Probably on my typical journey, inspiration is the same so you'll be like excited at the prospect of new clothes.*
INT9	*I think excitement when I'm on social media and kind of what's the word, I think I'm quite excited and quite exploratory. Like I'm quite open to lots of ideas.*
FG2, P9	*But I don't find it particularly exciting. If I wanted to find some interactivity or excitement with the brand I would go through social media to get more of a brand experience.*
INT6	*Ok em, I was like really intrigued and excited at the social inspiration stage […] It's the first kind of ooh, will I like find anything and then em especially on the mobile when I found a nice jumper on Bohoo […]*

The findings agree with literature, that excitement is a positive emotion and is a form of emotional arousal (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974; Posner, Russell and Peterson, 2005). The findings agree that excitement is a motivator for consumers to undertake a shopping journey (Arnold and Reynolds, 2003) and particularly in the case of experiential shoppers (Wolfinbarger and Gilly, 2001). Excitement at the inspiration stage was also discovered through participants accounts of using social media. This finding corresponds with research on consumers' affective responses, and specifically excitement within the digital retailing environment (Childers et al., 2001; Cox *et al.,* 2005). This finding was supported by literature that suggests fashion information can stimulate excitement (McCormick and Livett, 2012; Rowley, 2009).

7.5.2   Research & Comparison
The research and comparison stage depicts the point at which participants were searching for information and comparing for a specific type of product they wanted. In terms of searching the stage provided participants with more information, for example:

INT2	*Yeah to get more information and to check that I have seen everything available.*
FG3, P16	*I think if you are really precise about what to buy eh, you can get more information, with much more channels online or blogs […] I think all of the channels are giving you different aspects of information and that's how you choose it.*
INT1	*I think that probably applies more to Mango. Just the benefits were getting more detailed information I'd say. Because if I'd just gone in store I wouldn't have felt…Yeah, I'd definitely say a reassurance.*

The combining of information search and comparison functions within this stage occurred as a result of participant journey accounts, as shown in the verbatim:

INT1	*Then I would say the website searching and the comparison – it was fun at first but then it got a bit tedious because there is so many websites and so many dresses.*
INT9	*[…] and it's often easier to look for certain things on the online shop because you can just filter it.*

The identification of the research and comparison stage contrasts the search stage which was indicated in the proposed theoretical framework in chapter 5. In the proposed framework, the stage of search was taken from the consumer decision process model of Blackwell *et al.* (2006). Within the consumer decision process, the search stage was depicted as a stage where consumers will search for information in order to satisfy the need, reduce the risk and that the extent of this search will vary upon the need itself. The findings agree with the multichannel customer management framework (Neslin et al., 2006) which features a search stage. The finding further agrees with Blackwell *et al.* (2006) by identifying that consumers perform a search for information. However, where the findings of this study diverge from the past literature is because the current study highlights that consumers are also at this point simultaneously comparing product, and this is reflected in the final framework.

The comparison stage in the consumer decision process is identified as part of the evaluation stage by Blackwell *et al.* (2006). However, in the current study participants described doing both activities in the verbatim above and in appendix 10.9 participants cited the next stage following inspiration was as either research or comparison. Consequently, this highlights one of the roles of technology in making the customer decision-making journey more efficient. One of the reasons for positioning the comparison element within the research stage was that participants described that they wished to check they had seen everything available before going to try the item on and evaluate it, such as:

INT2	*More confident in what I'm ordering so rather than ordering something and seeing it elsewhere for a cheaper price or something like that or kind of a different style that I would have preferred so I like to use the multiple channels to check that I have seen everything.*
INT1	*I think because I knew all the research I had done, and I knew that that was one of the dresses. Almost by purchasing that I knew I wasn't going miss out on anything else because I had already seen everything else. I felt like I had seen everything else, the amount I searched. And then the feeling obviously as well when I tried it on it made me feel really good and it fit really well, and it was kind of in my price range so it was everything that I was looking for.*
BP2	*This makes me feel like I've found the best deal and explored all my product options, so I've definitely made the right decision.*

The finding reflects that information seeking and particularly reaching a point of mental saturation in seeing everything available as a risk reduction strategy that is used by the digital native fashion consumer during research and comparison. The finding further links back to omnichannel shopping motivations over consumers fear over missing out. Respondents want to make sure that they were making the most optimum fashion choices and feeling confident in their choice. This presents a new finding within the omnichannel literature, since consumers did not feel that their shopping journey was complete without having reached this point of saturation in their minds by using an array of channels to research and compare. The extent of the need to reach saturation ties in with high involvement consumers since Kasper *et al.* (2010) suggests individuals who engage in extensive product comparison, diligent information search, and take more time to consider a purchase decision. Furthermore, high involvement consumers are maximisers and are more sensitive to regret (Koller and Salzberger, 2006; Cui *et al.,* 2009). However, for other, less-involved, consumers they may experience information overload as a result of such a comprehensive and extensive research process.

The identification of research and comparison aids further contributes to answering research objective four which was to analyse by examining how the shopping behaviour of young high involvement female fashion consumers has changed and the impact this has on decision-making, specifically in terms of perceived risk in the context of an omnichannel shopping journey. The research and comparison stage reveals that consumers are undertaking extensive search and that search and comparison across multiple channels consumers is a strategy used by young female high involvement fashion consumers in which to reduce and avoid risk. Consumers recognise risks at this stage because they identify that they want to maximise their journey and ensure they have made the most optimum choice through seeing everything available. Therefore, omnichannel interactions facilitate this because consumers can traverse an array of channels in order to conduct their research and compare items and to maximise their journey. Therefore, the stage reflects a point in the journey at which risk reduction is undertaken and this is evidence in the framework as a shaded research and comparison stage.

7.5.2.1 Channels

The online website was the most dominant channel during the research and comparison stage. This was followed by use of stores, mobile apps and to a lesser extent use of mobile website, and call centres.

Research & Comparison - Channels - Online Website

During the research and comparison phase, the online website channel was useful for finding out information about products and for comparison before considering a purchase. This is supported by customer decision-making journey research that identified online stores are used for information search (Wolny and Charoensuksai, 2014) and in multichannel studies that the research is primarily conducted using the internet or store (Konus *et al.,* 2008). The aspect of comparison also agrees with other studies, since during the search phase it demonstrates the usefulness of the online channel as it enables the easy comparison and reduces search costs (Balasubramanian *et al.,* 2005). Therefore, the online channel facilitates risk reduction by making search and comparison more efficient and enables a broad view of a vast array of product.

INT1	*Then I would say the website searching and the comparison.*
INT8	*Then I would associate the online website with the research em and purchasing […] I'd say this is a normal journey say other than the returns section, so it would normally start on social media for inspiration and then on their website to compare.*
BP3	*Many of the bloggers I read such as We Wore What styled sweatshirts, so I subconsciously started searching for one on the internet and in store.*
INT10	*It depends, sometimes I'll look online first to do the comparison.*

Within the online channel, participants would perform specific activities including price comparison. This finding agrees with earlier studies since prices and product information can be easily compared with the online medium (Kollmann *et al.,* 2012). The finding reflects perceived risk reduction in by participants because they did not want to incur financial loss by not getting the product for the cheapest price. This finding links back to consumers lifecycle stage whereby because participants were students they had a limited income. The research and comparison is made more efficient by using the digital channels. Examples of price comparison activities are illustrated, as follows:

FG2, P9	*I'll be like "Right I like that" then I compare it with River Island or New Look to see if they are offering a better product at a lower price […]*
FG3, P18	*[…] you can compare them from three websites. Like office, actual Adidas website and stuff and you can get the cheapest prices.*
FG2, P9	*Then I'll go online and compare the different high street stores em, see what their prices are, see what they've got […]*

Risk reduction specifically towards the product was identified through use of the online channel. In such instances shoppers would also look on websites for reviews, for example:

FG3, P15	*See it in the thing and read some reviews and then perhaps go.*

INT7	*I think em the website it's just good to see it on a bigger screen, bigger picture maybe look at some reviews and things like that as well on Topshop*
INT11	*Em maybe some online reviews and stuff because they have them on the Topshop website which is quite useful*
BP1	*I read the 3 product reviews which all stated the dress was flattering so I kept the product open in a tab.*

Another activity was comparing through refining and filtering product options to add further support to the decision stage of research and comparison being a combined one. The process of refinement and filtering enabled participants to search more conveniently and compare more efficiently. It highlighted this as an advantage of the online channel at this stage of the journey. The findings agree with fashion literature that consumers gain utilitarian value via online categorisation features, such as refine and sort (McCormick and Livett, 2012). The findings also agreed with purchase behaviour and interactivity literature that the use of filter mechanisms can narrow search results substantially, to obtain relevant product information to enable comparison (Olbrich and Holsing, 2011; Fiore *et al.,* 2005), as shown in the examples:

BP6	*In the meantime, I also opened a new tab for ASOS to search through all brands; again, refining my search options to just white dresses*
INT9	*[…] whereas it's just like a few clicks and you have got all of the similar products in front of you and you can refine if you really want to by anything like size or style or colour or anything and also it's so much easier to look at price.*
INT1	*Again, the website is more comparison and more practical like narrowing it down, em convenience.*

Research & Comparison - Channels - Store
The use of the store was more geared towards the evaluation stage of the customer decision-making journey. However, selected participants did mention occasional instances of using the store to conduct research, as indicated in the verbatim. This further supported by the situational moderators because of the effort required to visit the store channel.

INT9	*I went into Gap for some research […]*
INT8	*Then I would associate the online website with the research em and purchasing, but then I would also associate going into the store as part of my research […]*
BP3	*[…] so i subconsciously started searching for one on the internet and in store.*
FG3, P13	*I do like go shopping and try and look for something get exhausted and go for a coffee, sit on my phone, see if I can find it anywhere and if its like too much, I'll just like order it online but I'll try and go to the store but I've done it before where I've been shopping for six hours and I just kind of need to go home.*
FG4, P19	*Then if you go into a shop and you don't find something you come out feeling a bit eugh and that's a waste and then you go to the next shop.*

Research & Comparison - Channels - Mobile App
The mobile app was associated with the research and comparison stage. The app was particularly useful for quick instances of research. App features such as filter options facilitated this quick search so that consumers were able to refine search results and view the products as well as conduct comparisons. The findings indicated below correspond with the literature that apps provide quick navigation for shoppers (Wisniewski, 2011).

INT7	*Yeah em, I mean the app channel is probably just more for me to research .*
FG4, P21	*Like when you are on the bus just like we already mentioned you can just have a quick flick through the app and for some research.*
BP5	*With the Asos mobile app. I used the apps refine feature to search for products only in my size and with a maximum price of £35.*
BP7	*I am constantly being reminded of the brand whenever I see a post and if I see something I like I am likely to follow it up by either finding the product on their app or on their website.*

Research & Comparison - Channels - Mobile Website
Similar to the app, although not as popular, the mobile website channel was used for conducting research and comparison activities. In particular, the mobile website was suitable for impulsive searches, scrolling through items, searching and viewing images and finding out more product information. Mobile websites were useful for further reassurance because consumers could check to see if images of an item were consistent with pictures from other channels which reinforces consumers expectations of consistency across channels for product imagery.

BP4	*I then moved to the mobile site to see if the images changed and to scroll through items quicker.*
BP1	*Which took me to Topshop's mobile site. I like shopping on Topshop's mobile site when you're searching for something specific as it has a very easy search setting and large pictures.*

Research & Comparison - Channels - Call Centre
The use of the call centre channel was limited and used for research instances, where a consumer was unable to obtain stock of a product. The channel was used by participants out of necessity rather than choice, for example:

INT5	*[…] so, what drives me to use many channels is only if I can't find the thing that I want online so I'll go in store or I'll ring up and see if I can.*
FG2, P7	*[…] like a couple of weeks ago there was a pair of boots I really wanted I ended up ringing John Lewis to see if they had it.*

7.5.2.2 Devices

The research and comparison stage featured the greatest range of devices including laptops, mobiles, tablets and desktop computers.

Research & Comparison - Devices - Laptop
The finding of laptop usage in shopping experiences therefore agrees with Verhoef *et al.* (2015) that a laptop is a device specifically used in omnichannel shopping encounters. At the research and comparison stage participants would opt to use their laptop as it was perceived as the most research-orientated and functional device. It was useful for researching a specific product. Participants found that the laptop was also excellent for comparison since users could open up numerous online website tabs to compare the offerings from a range of retailers. This makes shopping more efficient, as participants could simultaneously switch back and forth between the different tabs as part of the comparison process. The verbatim responses are shown, as follows:

INT7	*[…] but then I do research on my laptop […]*
INT10	*On a laptop like if I wanna search for stuff I'll search for it.*
INT1	*I'd say that it was easier to start on the laptop with the comparison just because you can open a load of tabs at the same time, so it makes it a lot more easier and less stressful than having to traipse round a load of stores.*
FG3, P13	*If you're actually like needing something, then I'll always get my laptop out and like have a good browse and say open all the tabs and compare everything.*

The findings therefore concur that the laptop device offered distinct benefits when viewing fashion products. Participants recounted that laptops featured a bigger screen which provided consumers with clearer, bigger and better images to enable the consumer to view and inspect items in greater detail. These findings highlight how the use of certain devices is evidence of consumers trying to reduce risk associated with the product, as in this case the laptop enabled participants to inspect images of products in greater detail, for example:

FG3, P15	*[…] often, I still use my laptop as well to go on the website because you can get a clearer image*
FG3, P16	*I think I would start with the laptop, it shows bigger images and all the information is on one website.*
INT9	*That's for a bit more serious research it's bigger and quicker and less fiddly so I'd use that.*

Research & Comparison – Devices – Mobile
Again, at this stage mobile smartphone devices were a popular device choice. A key benefit of employing a smartphone at the research stage was that participants could search for products on impulse which suggests the mobile device is convenient for quick research example:

INT7	*Em yeah, smartphone is mainly research […]*
INT10	*Em so mobile is just searching for stuff. I'm not gonna buy anything through my phone.*
FG2, P11	*Research is on my phone or on my laptop.*
INT2	*Em yeah, I think I use my phone a lot more in the research stage.*
FG3, P13	*The mobile will be like when you are sitting and watching telly, just like a really impulse search.*
BP3	*I think this journey shows the differences between my use of laptop or phone. The phone was used to make a very quick and almost impulse decision to sign up. Whereas I used my laptop to browse leisurely.*

However, one of the negative aspects of the mobile device for research was screen size. Participants found the screen size too small which made it difficult to view products, as shown:

FG3, P13	*But I find it's too small on my phone.*
FG4, P21	*Em, I'd say both but more for me online, online. I just find it easier to see like all the products on a big screen rather than just on a small mobile face.*
FG5, P26	*I wouldn't be looking on my mobile really tiny screen.*

Research & Comparison - Devices – Tablet
The responses of participants confirm that tablet devices are used when shopping for fashion and this corresponds with the identified devices in section 2.6.3.1. Like laptops, tablets were used to look at products on a large screen and participants explained that they were able to view a variety of products clearly, as the verbatim comments outline as follows:

INT2	*One of the girls that I live with, she has got an iPad and when I've used that it's a lot easier. I kind of em, because it's got such an enlarged screen compared to my little iPhone it's a lot easier to see like different products and things like that and to be able to flick through different tabs easier than it is on a phone.*
INT5	*I think my iPad I prefer to my phone in general because it's quicker. It's got a speedy screen so I can see the products clearly and I can access the online website rather than the mobile website […] So my tablet is always for research and purchasing […]So I'll have one retailer open on my iPad and one on my phone to see if the price is different or to see if they've got something similar or to compare items to see how different they are.*

Another benefit of tablets was the portability of this device which provided added convenience to users by being portable with one participant adding that the iPad was more associated with being leisure activity when compared with a laptop device.

FG2, P7	*[…] It's so portable you just take it with you and I kind of try and keep my laptop for studious things.*
FG2, P9	*But again, it's portable.*

Research & Comparison – Devices – Desktop Computer
The computer was a less popular device overall in the shopping decision-making when compared with other devices such as laptops and mobiles. This demonstrates that young female fashion consumers have a preference for portable devices throughout their shopping journey. This reinforces the point of Verhoef *et al.* (2015) that firms need to consider the devices used by consumers as part of delivering a seamless shopping experience. The desktop computer was useful for comparing products and for searching for specific items. Yet, one participant described using a desktop computer as not being as seamless as an experience, for example:

FG2, P12	*But comparing it like on the computer it's so hard, it's a bit more manual it's not a flowing thought process.*
FG4, P21	*But if there is something that I see on Instagram that I really love or ASOS especially I will then go and search for it on my computer.*

INT11	*Either a computer or a laptop, possibly a phone.*

7.5.2.3 Emotions

In line with the emotional classifications of Laros and Steenkamp (2005) it was also useful to explore the positive and negative emotions experienced by participants as they recounted their research and comparison stage of the journey. The stage highlighted that emotions at this point were a mixture of highs and lows and very little in between.

Research & Comparison – Emotion – Love

Love was identified as a positive emotion word by Laros and Steenkamp (2005) as one of the most basic human emotions. The results for love of shopping correlate with the findings of shopping enjoyment whereby female university student consumers experienced higher shopping enjoyment and obtained pleasure from shopping (Seock and Bailey, 2008). At the research and comparison stage consumers expressed their love of shopping, as follows:

INT3	*If it's a good day and I've purchased something I do generally love shopping and looking at everything […]*
BP7	*I would never say no to a shopping trip because I love physically seeing the products […]*
FG3, P13	*It's kind of like entertainment kind of. Because I love looking at window displays just yeah just like being entertained when you shop.*

Research & Comparison - Emotion – Enjoyment

The findings concur with Saraneva and Sääksjärvi (2008) and Faber *et al.* (1987) that consumers experienced feelings of enjoyment during shopping. Furthermore, this reinforces how consumers high involvement towards fashion is a moderator in the omnichannel customer decision-making journey, as discussed in section Similar to love, participants also expressed their enjoyment towards the act of shopping itself, as illustrated:

FG3, P17	*I enjoyed it going into shops, finding these collections that are all placed together, and you can see things that go together.*
INT1	*Escapism like browsing online and having a good time and it's like an enjoyable experience*
INT4	*Yeah that's just what I enjoy doing. I enjoy the information as well. I wouldn't really see that as like searching for information I would see that more as enjoyment. I guess I find the store as enjoyment as well except from when it's busy or when it's rubbish.*

Research & Comparison - Emotion - Fatigue

A negative emotional experience was a reflection of the reality of participants not being able to obtain what they wanted. Participants recounted instances of feeling exhausted during the research and comparison stage and in particular when accessing the store channel. Although Laros and Steenkamp (2005) did not identify the emotion of fatigue they did identify the positive emotion of feeling energetic which is a positive antonym of tiredness. Therefore, the emotion of fatigue was still included. The feelings of fatigue were subsequently linked to Hollebeek (2011a) who discussed that excessive brand engagement levels can lead to consumer fatigue and feeling drained. Furthermore, the emotion of tiredness which is similar to fatigue, was identified from the work of Saraneva and Sääksjärvi (2008). Albeit Saraneva and Sääksjärvi (2008) identified this as an emotion experienced post-purchase. Therefore, this study presents a new finding that consumers also experience fatigue pre-purchase.

FG3, P13	*I do like go shopping and try and look for something get exhausted and go for a coffee, sit on my phone, see if I can find it anywhere and if its like too much, I'll just like order it online but I'll try and go to the store but I've done it before where I've been shopping for six hours and I just kind of need to go home.*
FG4, P19	*Then if you go into a shop and you don't find something you come out feeling a bit eugh and that's a waste and then you go to the next shop.*

Retailers should try and mitigate the impact of fatigue. The use of comfortable seating space where consumers can browse other channels at their leisure, take a break from their journey and providing refreshments could potentially encourage consumers to stay longer in the retail store

environment. Retailers could also explore which store atmospherics could be better managed to prevent consumers experiencing fatigue e.g. lighting. Furthermore, better training of store staff to who have better cross-channel knowledge could assist those who are struggling. For example, store staff could be trained on more accurately identifying products which are channel exclusives to avoid the consumer being disappointed.

Research & Comparison Stage - Emotion – Annoyed

Feelings of annoyance were featured throughout users omnichannel customer decision-making journeys. The findings agree with empirical literature that feeling annoyed is an emotion which features within the consumption experience (Laros and Steenkamp, 2005; Richins, 1997; Sweeney et al., 2000). At the research and comparison, stage participants reported feelings of being annoyed as a result of not being able to find what they wanted, similar to the previous emotional experience.

FG1, P2	*If you want something really badly and you've gone on every single channel that the retailer has to offer, and you still can't get it*
FG2, P10	*The last thing I wanted to get was a dress for a wedding that I am going to soon. It was in H&M I didn't go in looking for that specific dress I just saw it and they didn't have my size so I was annoyed and then it was new in stock and it was not on the website so I can't order it so I am going in now to see if I can get it.*
INT8	*Sometimes it's quite frustrating because if you see something in the store that you really like and you're like oh I'll get that off the website and you can't find it anywhere it's just really annoying.*
INT10	*Then I was annoyed because one of them it said it wasn't available anymore.*

The findings agree with Saraneva and Sääksjärvi (2008) who explain that consumers become annoyed in instances where they are unable to obtain an item that they want. Furthermore, this also reinforces consumers expectations of consistency of product stock across channels as discussed in section 7.4.2. An implication of this is that fashion retailers need to either provide stock across all channels consistently or clearly communicate if an item is a channel exclusive, even if that means a store exclusive.

Annoyance was also directed to channel experiences with mobile websites when they were not optimised. Participants were annoyed when accessing retail websites and were automatically redirected to a mobile website. Retailers should avoid automatic redirections and provide consumers with the option to decide what type of site they wish to interact on, to maintain the flow of the journey.

FG2, P12	*Mobile supported sites, not apps on your phone are rubbish they are so frustrating. Even like eBay it's just really annoying like.*
FG4, P21	*So, if it's not mobile optimised then I'll use the app, which is annoying.*
FG4, P18	*It does automatically direct you sometimes which is a bit annoying.*

Research & Comparison Stage – Emotion - Stress

Stress was identified as a negative emotion at the research and comparison stage. Although Laros and Steenkamp (2005) do not identify stress explicitly they do propose 'distress' as a negative emotion word. However, the results do correlate with Saraneva and Sääksjärvi (2008) explain that stress is an emotion that occurs during the shopping journey. The results identified that stress experienced was related to the store channel in terms of the environment i.e. how busy it was and the long queues. This also ties in with the physical situational moderators, as discussed in section 7.3.1. The results therefore also agree with literature that identifies the store retail environment can cause stress Dabholkar and Bagozzi (2002).

BP7	*So today I decided to head to the Arndale for a 'revision break' for a bit of retail therapy; if you can call it that. I found the experience nothing but stressful because of how busy the shops were and how long the queues were. As off-putting as this was, I did actually end up buying something […]*
INT11	*Well I liked all of the social media, that was really nice and stuff and then the online one was fine. It just got a bit stressful when I couldn't find anything in the all of the different shops that I'd looked at online and then into the store and just couldn't find anything. That was a bit annoying.*

Research and Comparison - Emotion - Disappointment

The research and comparison stage triggered disappointment, when participants looked for a particular item that was not in stock or available. Items not being available is a significant issue because of the plethora of negative emotions it evokes. The current study agrees with Saraneva and Sääksjärvi (2008) that disappointment, is experienced during the shopping process, specifically for clothing. It was agreed that consumers emotions could become negative and lead to disappointment in instances where consumers were unable to find what they were looking for. The verbatim demonstrates this point, as follows:

INT5	*There were a lot of emotions involved so it was excitement thinking oh I'm going to get one and then there was disappointment when my two favourite retailers John Lewis and ASOS and Gap didn't have them.*
INT9	*'cause sometimes I just can't find what I'm looking for em and sometimes I'm a bit disappointed.*
BP1	*I often shop online more regularly as I find it less complicated than visiting a retailer's store and potentially being disappointed that a product is not in stock.*
BP6	*It wasn't available so I felt disappointed.*

Research & Comparison – Emotion – Frustration

Frustration was a further negative emotion drawn from the qualitative data analysis for research and comparison. The finding of frustration was mentioned at the stage to reflect further instances when shoppers are unable to obtain what they wanted. The findings concurred with Saraneva and Sääksjärvi (2008) since frustration is a negative emotion during the shopping and concurred with Laros and Steenkamp (2005) who also indicate that frustration is a negative emotion. For example:

INT5	*I think online replenishment is a big thing because quite often it can take retailers a long time to get stock online and some of them that I find really frustrating if they have the picture online and it says out of stock and you click on it and it's not in stock so yeah.*
INT8	*It's quite frustrating because there's the risk if you always go and wait, go into the store, try it on, get back, it might have gone out of stock online and then it's frustrating.*

Research & Comparison - Emotion - Deflated

Similar to disappointment, and although limited, one respondent recounted the feeling of being deflated at the research and comparison stage when a specific item was not available when the consumer went to the store. The finding of this negative experience at the evaluation stage correspond with Yoo et al. (1998) who cite that deflation can occur as a result of 'nullification'; such as when a consumer plans to buy a product, only to find that it is not available in store. The finding also agrees with Laros and Steenkamp that feeling deflated is a negative emotion Laros and Steenkamp (2005).

INT6	*I guess like a negative would be if you see something nice on the website and you go in store and it's not there you feel a bit like euh, deflated.*

7.5.3 Evaluation

The next stage in the omnichannel decision-making journey was evaluation. The evaluation stage emphasised the themes of tactile evaluation, whereby consumers would try the product on, social evaluation whereby individuals seek the opinions of others and finally, internal evaluation through the use of basket and wishlist shopping functions and internal rationalisation processes. The evaluation stage of the omnichannel customer decision-making journey for fashion corresponded with Blackwell et al. (2006) on the basis of identifying which product is capable of satisfying the need in terms of determining attributes of the product e.g. quality and fit, as well as deciding on a potential channel for purchase. Moreover, the evaluation stage corresponds with Wolny and Charoensuksai (2014) who identified the functions of the evaluation stage was for consumers to try a product in store and then review the products physical attributes. The need to try on the product and engage in a tactile evaluation was the first point of evaluation, as illustrated:

FG2, P9	*[…] once I have kind of made a decision I'll go in store and try that outfit on and then buy it.*
FG3, P15	*And then em the next stage its go to the shop and try it on.*

FG2, P8	[…] but then you're more likely to go into store to try on the fit of the clothing and see if it suits you or not.

The tactile evaluation of fashion products fits with the evaluation stage, since clothing requires physical inspection in order to evaluate product quality (Peck and Childers, 2003). The role of tactile evaluation in the customer decision-making journey is further supported since tactile evaluation has a significant role in purchase decision-making (Citrin et al., 2003). The findings reinforced the nature of the study's sample since high involvement female consumers still require the need for tactile input when shopping for fashion (Cho and Workman, 2011; Citrin et al., 2003). Finally, from a channel perspective, findings also highlight the importance of how the offline can complement online through being able to touch the product before purchasing to reduce uncertainty (Herhausen et al., 2015). Tactile evaluation in the omnichannel journey is a form of product related risk reduction. The finding emphasises that due to the nature of the fashion product class fit is an important issue where the consumer requires some pre-purchase reassurance. The stage of evaluation is therefore marked as a shaded stage in the final framework due to evidence of consumers risk reduction.

During the evaluation stage shoppers expressed the need to socially evaluate a fashion item in order to validate one as being suitable for purchase. The key purpose of the activity was for participants to obtain the opinions of friends, family and partners by sharing images or links of the product, for example:

FG5, P6	Yeah, I'd normally send it to my sister or a friend if I know they are on What's app. Em but eh I'll normally take a few angles because we know the mirrors can be deceiving. Em and obviously you look completely different in a picture, don't you?
FG2, P7	So, I was in the middle of the shop and thought I would do a sneaky little SnapChat and send it to 20 people to see if it was a good idea and it wasn't a good idea, so I didn't buy it.
INT11	But this is the final approval, and this is the approval before the purchase kind of thing.

The role of socially evaluating a fashion product enables consumers to validate their choice, reduce the potential risk that the product is not socially acceptable and ultimately, aid the decision-making process. However, the finding of the study demonstrated that the instance of negative feedback, participants would abandon their purchase. Therefore, as well as using social feedback as a risk reduction strategy the stage also arouses risk for the consumer because while an individual may perceive an item as suitable negative feedback from others could change the mind of the shopper. It highlights how shopping for fashion has become a much more social experience which is visible to others. Fashion brands must actively encourage participants to share their potential products with peers for efficient progression through the customer decision-making journey. The results agree with literature when consumers experience consumption stress a form of coping mechanism is to seek social support (Duhachek, 2005). The findings additionally concur with Wolny and Charoensuksai (2014) that social media forms part of the evaluation stage , however the current study asserts this specifically for the product category of fashion.

Due to the study examining fashion it enables distinctive findings related to the product category to be revealed. The findings reinforce that consumers will be influenced internally and externally, to maintain and protect their self-concept, as discussed in chapter 3.3.1. Furthermore, the finding correlates that consumers are keen to protect their self-identity (Hogg et al., 2000; Otieno et al., 2005). The findings also correlate with the practitioner literature by Shaw and Towers (2015) who identified that millennial consumers would ask for feedback prior to purchase. The implications of this identify that uncertainty is reduced by social sharing, by seeking the opinions of others led to consumer feelings of reassurance. The current research highlights that shoppers may be experiencing pre-purchase dissonance prior purchase (Koller and Salzberger, 2006; Koller, Salzberger and Streif, 2008).

An unanticipated finding from the evaluation stage was that participants used the digital basket and wishlist functions as a means of internally reconciling and evaluating products for purchase. In such instances, shoppers would add fashion products that they perceived to be suitable to purchase even if they did not plan to purchase them, for example:

BP5	*I also use the wishlist tool to add products to a list of items I am considering buying.*
FG4, P19	*If you're just browsing online whilst on Facebook and whilst doing work you're not definitely going to buy something, you're just scrolling through, creating a basket which you don't necessarily buy.*
FG4, P23	*Yeah pile up a massive basket and then go, "Oh I don't have any money."*
FG3, P14	*Yeah I like Asos' save for later. I always have like one hundred and fifty items saved for later […] Because I like going back and just looking at them, even if I've not bought them. I guess it's like an online wardrobe […] I just… everything I like I save for later.*

Evidence of participants engaging in shopping journey activities, but without purchase, also agree with the findings of empirical literature (Wolfinbarger and Gilly, 2001; Close and Kukar-Kinney, 2010) since window shopping can provide hedonic value in virtually acquiring desired items as an alternative to buying, consumers may engage in shopping purely for fun. Hence, an omnichannel customer decision-making journey provides a hedonic experience even for consumers who do not plan to purchase. Moreover, this approach to shopping is a distinction from the traditional consumer decision process model as the decision process is concerned with a transaction and does not encapsulate hedonic shopping without acquiring goods.

The basket and wishlist functions proved to be a location in which high involvement shoppers could collate and curate items thus the consumer avoids relying solely on memory. Thus, an omnichannel customer decision-making journey eases the complexity of shopping for fashion. Close and Kukar-Kinney (2010) also concur with this finding since shopping baskets provide a location in which to create a wishlist of desired items and also acts a space in which to organise items of interest. The added benefit of items being organised in this way was that participants could conduct ongoing evaluations of the items and watch for price drops or discounts.

BP5	*I also use the wishlist tool to add products to a list of items I am considering buying.*
INT4	*And then I just tend to just like add loads of things from baskets like hundreds of pounds worth of stuff and kind of like narrow that down a bit.*
BP4	*Alongside this I personally like to browse websites and add loads of products to my basket and then leave it for a couple of days, go back to it and review the items I chose to see if I still like them, and then purchase.*
BP6	*ASOS, I will probably keep checking my saved items to see if they will be reduced in the future.*
INT10	*I had like so many things in the basket and then, then I just thought to myself you don't… like I didn't even need to buy anything and then I had so many things save, and I was like oh it'll be cheaper. Then I narrowed it down to a dress, out of like ten items.*
FINT4	*And then I just tend to just like add loads of things from baskets like hundreds of pounds worth of stuff and kind of like narrow that down a bit.*

The results also explained that consumers would delay purchase by leaving items in their basket for a matter of days, whilst they considered them. This finding corresponds with Renaud *et al.* (2009) who suggests that baskets were used as a holding point for items that consumers may purchase at a later date. Furthermore, the finding illustrates how the omnichannel environment can facilitate risk reduction by providing consumers with a place to curate but also consider their items. This finding demonstrates how the omnichannel environment can help consumers manage the level of cognitive effort involved by using tools such as baskets or wishlists to ensure effective decisions are made. However, an implication for retailers is that they need to ensure that consumers digital wish list and baskets are persistent across channels, as discussed in section 7.4.2 on omnichannel expectations for a seamless experience. Should retailers fail to deliver a seamless experience for wishlists and baskets they could risk potential lost sales through basket/wishlist abandonment or due to the consumer not being willing to search again for the items. Likewise, there are a growing number of studies on basket abandonment at present e.g. (Rajamma *et al.*, 2009; Renaud *et al.,* 2009; Kukar-Kinney and Close, 2010; Shaw and Towers, 2015). The findings also aid in understanding the behaviours of high involvement consumers because omnichannel decision-journeys may not result in a purchase, but the consumer still enjoys the process of curating items. Therefore, wishlists and baskets are a space which retail brands could potentially make into a more engaging and creative space for the customer to make the experience more enjoyable. For instance, adding categorisation tools to curate items for particular purposes to help customers connect their needs which items they potentially like.

In addition to the wishlist and basket internal evaluation, participants likewise describe further internal evaluation activities in terms of rationalisation processes before purchasing. First of all, participants sought to rationalise the purchase through being concerned that the product would sell out or not be available due to its uniqueness. This consequently links to the consumer characteristics of fear of missing out which have been discussed earlier in this chapter. This presents an implication for retailer marketing communications to let consumers know when an item is low stock. Although this is currently implemented by some high street retailers this is not consistent across the board. What retailers could also do is to let consumers know if an item is selling fast or has been highly popular. Again, while some retailers have adopted this for example Topshop this is still not the norm across fast fashion retailers. Secondly, the purchase was justified according to the participant's perception of how versatile the product was about how much wear they would get out of the item. This finding provides an example as to how young female fashion resolve feelings of pre-purchase dissonance. Hence retailers should communicate product versatility by showing the products in different contexts and not just as a single outfit style. User-generated content could be used to communicate how other shoppers are currently wearing the product.

INT6	*[…] if I saw a really nice dress or something from Topshop and I have to go and get it, especially if it is like new in you feel you need to go quickly before it kind of sells out.*
INT5	*It's going back to the way that I buy it. Thinking of a scenario when I'm going to wear it and what it's going to look like when I'm wearing it. I spend a lot of time thinking well I can wear this. If I can wear it on a night out and during the day, then I'll definitely buy it. If I can see it, you know, carrying across seasons as well. If I think it might be something that's going to stay in fashion for quite a while, then I'll reassure myself that it's a good purchase.*
FG4, P18	*Oh, if they told me that they will sell out then yeah, I really would.*
FG3, P14	*And the thing I am assured by the number of outfits I can wear it with. By looking at those things you can say I can wear it with jeans, I can wear it with a skirt and you can wear it with a lot of things, reassures me that it's a good purchase.*

In the proposed framework in section 5.5 the Pre-Purchase Evaluation stage was drawn from the consumer decision process. The original purpose of pre-purchase evaluation in the Blackwell *et al.,* (2006) model was to identify the product most suitable to satisfy the original need and also the comparison of different products. In the final framework in section 7.8 the name of the stage was amended to evaluation simply because the consumer was evaluating the product in different ways than performing comparison (comparison has already been discussed in section 7.5.2). Evaluation rather than pre-purchase evaluation was the label used to denote the stage in the final framework. This was because journeys for this segment of omnichannel fashion consumers may not always result in a purchase and consumers would end their journey at the point of wishlist/basket rather than moving on to purchase. This finding supports the role of the consumer characteristic of lifecycle stage and the evaluation journey stage because it reflects that these young consumers are financially limited and therefore have a limited ability to purchase fashion products therefore the wishlist and basket is an important place in which to curate purchases. Consequently, the stage label of pre-purchase evaluation was too restrictive. Furthermore, the consumer decision process by Blackwell *et al.,* (2006) was transaction-orientated whereas the current journey focuses on journeys regardless of whether or not they result in a purchase. So, the stage was labelled as evaluation.

At the evaluation stage the omnichannel journey demonstrates further how decision making has changed with regards to risk. By consulting others, shoppers were able to reduce risk associated with an item by gaining social approval and in-turn avoid the consequences of making a poor choice. This therefore provides a further contribution to addressing research objective four which was to analyse how the shopping behaviour of young high involvement female fashion consumers has changed and the impact this has on decision-making, specifically in terms of perceived risk in the context of an omnichannel shopping journey. The modern omnichannel decision making journey for fashion is consequently a much more social experience whereby the need for social approval is important not simply at post purchase but also before a purchase is even considered.

Therefore, in the final framework the evaluation stage is shaded in recognition of the role of risk at this stage.

7.5.3.1 Channels

For evaluation consumers used two channels, namely the store and social media. The identification of the channels used at each stage of the journey is a new contribution to the framework as a result of data collection and this is shown in section 7.8.

Evaluation - Channels - Store

The store, as a physical channel, facilitated participants need for tactile evaluation of the product, by trying a fashion garment on and the need for touch. This again indicates product-related risk reduction activity at this stage. Participants discussed trying the item on as this was useful to examine the fit of the garment, to ascertain suitability and try different sizes. For touch, it was about examining the fabric. Each of these are illustrated:

FG4, P18	*If, it's a difficult one, then because if it doesn't look like it will really fit then the convenience of going in-store takes over, to be honest. I won't do it online.*
FG2, P8	*But when it comes to fashion, you might look for pricing online but then you're more likely to go into store to try on the fit of the clothing and see if it suits you or not.*
FG2, P9	*I'll go in store and try that outfit on.*
INT2	*Normally for me, I only go into in store if I need to try something on. If I think that it's something I really need to try on or if I am looking for something for a special occasion.*
BP2	*I'd definitely prefer to shop with a retailer that has a physical store because trying on the garment will always be the most important part of my shopping journey.*
BP7	*I much prefer to shop with a retailer that has a physical store as there is the opportunity to try on an item before you purchase it; this way you can try on different sizes etc.*
BP5	*I do prefer to shop with retailers who have physical stores to allow me to try a product on before I buy it.*
FG2, P12	*Because no matter what new technology you bring in, you are never going to actually be able to feel the product and see exactly how it fits on your body.*

The results link back to the discussion in section 2.3.1 and agree with Aubrey and Judge's (2012) assertion that the store channel continues to remain an important facet in the overall retail proposition. This is moreso the case for the fashion product category. The study also reinforces that the store channel is important in helping consumers to reach a buying decision (Stone *et al.*, 2002) and that stores contribute to reduce perceived risk with a product (Wolny and Charoensuksai, 2014; Kushwaha and Shankar, 2013). Accordingly, despite the fact these digital millennials having grown up with access to the technology, millennials continue to value the use of the store to interact with the product.

A benefit of an omnichannel experience was indicated as participants recounted their customer decision-making journeys. Consumers would engage in prior research for example online to make their store journey more efficient, as illustrated:

BP1	*I believe that using these two channels has added benefits as I was able to find the products quickly instore as I knew what I was looking for thanks to my prior research online.*
INT3	*I went in store and found an item, but it took a lot of previous research to get there sort of thing.*

Evaluation – Channels – Social Media

The current research agrees with earlier work on multichannel customer journey that the social media channel was suitable for confirming a potential purchase (Wolny and Charoensuksai, 2014). Also, social media is a key method for consumers to reduce risk. As the findings revealed that particular forms of social media, such as SnapChat, Facebook, WhatsApp were used for seeking approval of potential fashion products, for example:

FG2, P7	*I actually, for the first time, a couple of weeks ago I was trying to buy a hat. It's not the first time I've tried to buy a hat but the first time that I used SnapChat to get a whole load of friends' opinions on this hat.*
INT8	*Often if I see anything I really like I will copy on paste the link to my friends on a Facebook*

	message and say what do you think of this? I like to get an opinion on something before I buy it.
FINT1	*Yeah, I do that quite a lot because I'm kind of with my clothes. I am quite confident with what I wear but I often do seek someone to be like, yeah, yeah go for it, get that. So I use Snapchat, WhatsApp quite a lot to send pictures to either like my mum or friends and things just for them to kind of sa […]*

The findings confirm that social media plays a particularly significant role within omnichannel retailing and it provides a vehicle for consumers to seek opinions as discussed by Piotrowicz and Cuthbertson (2014). The use of these forms of social media also highlights the immediacy they offer, to obtain opinions and reflect the millennial consumers need for instant gratification and immediacy as a digital native, as discussed in section 3.4.1.2.

7.5.3.2 Devices
The use of devices at this stage in the journey was focused on mobile usage, as discussed:

Evaluation - Devices - Mobile
It was at this stage that phones provided functionality, such as the ability to take an image of an item and then send this to peers seeking an opinion. Mobiles not only facilitate interaction with the retailer but provide a convenient means to facilitate peer social interaction in relation to fashion shopping journey.

FG2, P6	*It may sound weird but if I am in store trying something on I will try and take a picture on my phone.*
INT2	*On the website. Then magazine was just the actual paper magazine. Online website was then on my laptop then the social media snap chat was just off of my iPhone.*
BP3	*Whilst in the changing room I did take a photo with my phone to send to my friend (as I was very happy with them) but didn't send the photo till I got Wi-Fi at home.*
BP7	*Island app on my phone which is incredibly easy to navigate around and found the shoes; I took a screenshot of the image and then sent it to her via WhatsApp.*

Primarily consumers would use their mobiles in store. This finding suggested another differentiation and contribution regarding the definition of an omnichannel shopping journey, whereby consumers would participate in simultaneous channel usage, as per the omnichannel definition in section 2.5. The finding also shows how technology has enabled decision making and risk-reduction at this stage, since consumers are able to interact with peers simultaneously through their devices as they evaluate products. In the case of fashion, consumers would use two channels at once, namely using a mobile in store, for example:

FG4, P21	*It's easy to then if you are in the store and you have got the product code or the product name you can just put it on the app quickly.*
FG4, P23	*Like if you had that experience in a shop you'd maybe check on your phone before you paid for it in-store but that would just be like a one-off.*
INT2	*I'm shopping I'll use my phone to be checking. If I found something in store that I liked I would check quickly on apps on my phone. I'd check quickly to see if there is something else that I might prefer.*
INT1	*I think if you are in store you can just go on the app and double check the price in another store or again if they don't have your size you could maybe order it online straight off your app on your iPhone. So that would definitely make it, add to the convenience factor...I've sat with the sales assistant and just quickly gone on the app with her and just ordered it online.*

7.5.3.3 Emotions
As can be seen from the data collection the affective experience continues during the evaluation stage. Participants gave both positive and negative responses. Emotion words used to describe the stage included positivity, happiness, disappointment and stress.

Evaluation - Emotion - Positive
Participants described feeling positive as a result of being successful at finding a product that they wanted. The results of feeling positive correspond with the emotion words of Laros and Steenkamp (2005). The results also correspond with Saraneva and Sääksjärvi (2008) who identify

positive emotions being experienced during the shopping journey. The results identify positivity, as follows:

FG3, P15	*Normally positive because through all the different channels the chances are you are going to get the final product that you are after.*
INT3	*When I went in store, found this one and tried it on I fell in love with it straight away and so it made me feel positive.*

Evaluation – Emotion – Happiness

Shoppers discussed feelings of happiness as a result of successfully trying the item on and taking the time to consider their product purchases carefully. Again, the emotion of happiness corresponds with Laros and Steenkamp (2005). The findings help enhance the understanding of the evaluation stage by reflecting that the millennial generation of consumers are empowered and more considerate in their purchasing choices. The finding concurs with the practitioner literature by Shaw and Towers (2015) as millennial consumers seek knowledge and in-depth understanding before arriving at a decision, as illustrated:

INT1	*I think just how it made me feel when I put the dress on. I just knew that I felt really comfortable in it and it was a really nice fit and I was really happy with it and I was just like that's what I'm looking for.*
BP3	*Whilst in the changing room I did take a photo with my phone to send to my friend (as I was very happy with them) but didn't send the photo till I got Wi-Fi at home.*
BP1	*Unfortunately, after trying the items on they were not as nice as they had seemed on screen (with the white being more yellow). This made me very happy that I had not impulsively bought them on the Topshop mobile site, as I would have done if I had more money in my account!*

Evaluation - Emotion – Disappointment

Along with the research and comparison stage, disappointment was also experienced at tactile evaluation. The evaluation stage triggered disappointment when an item was tried on, and the fit was not as expected or when the quality was not as expected. The emotion of disappointment was identified as a negative emotion word in line with Laros and Steenhamp (2005), for example:

BP2	*[…] I tried the item on instore I was really disappointed with the fit and this for me reinforces the reasons why I always try on garments instore rather than ordering online.*
INT9	*So, if there's something which I see online which is not in the shop or if I see something online then I see it in the shop then it's not what I expected, say if the quality isn't good then I'm a bit disappointed.*

Tactile Evaluation – Emotion – Stress

Stress was identified as a negative emotion at the evaluation stage since consumers found the store channel stressful when trying on garments. This provided further support for the findings of Saraneva and Sääksjärvi (2008) that stress is experienced during the shopping process and is evidenced by the participants as follows:

INT1	*Then the final stage where I was going into store and trying things on was definitely stressful because it was a Saturday in London which is definitely the best place to do it. Em because the queues and the crowds I just don't have time for. But then once I knew I made the right choice with the dress I was really like happy and pleased.*
FG4, P18	*I kind of find in-store stressful sometimes, especially Manchester on a Saturday. […] And changing room fitting room…Topshop changing room the lighting in there is so horrible. My friend and I went in there the other day with 12 items and walked out with nothing and I was literally like I hate changing rooms.*

7.5.4 Purchase

The purchase stage identified the point at which consumers are ready to buy an item. This stage was consistent with the empirical literature (Blackwell and Engel, 2006; Neslin et al., 2006; Wolny and Charoensuksai, 2014) and the findings concurs with the purchase stage identified in the proposed theoretical framework in section 5.5. The results below depict the purchase stage, as follows:

INT5	*Em and then the store would be on it's own and be final purchase.*
INT11	*Final purchase.*
INT8	*That would normally be like the purchase stage, purely purchase stage because I've already done like the research bit here so yeah.*
INT5	*That was the actual purchasing of it.*

As part of going through the purchase process, participants explained that they would search for promotional discounts or offers in order to reduce the cost of the item. This demonstrates that omnichannel consumers are empowered. Seeking to ensure that they have gained the best deal for their item and again to minimise the potential for missing out on a better or cheaper alternative, for example:

BP1	*This initially put me off, but I searched for a discount code and found a 20% off voucher.*
FG3, P13	*No as well cause like she said shopping online you usually get discounts and promotions and things so like you get kind of like the buzz of that whereas shopping in store it's like fun, but you don't kind of get the benefit that way.*
INT8	*Ark again, you can do click and collect again, and I had another discount code so I used that. So that's what encourages me to buy, when they have like a promotional or something.*

Shoppers recounted that they preferred not to pay for delivery at purchase and would actively seek to avoid it. This finding corresponds with high involvement shoppers' omnichannel expectations at the outset of the journey, where they expect free delivery.

FG4, P21	*Saving money, because I hate paying for delivery. So, if I can get it delivered into store for free, I would much rather go in*
INT7	*I mean delivery plays a big part in whether I am going to order it to home or store because I don't really like paying for delivery.*

Within the process of shopping, participants highlighted that the returns policy was important as part of making a purchase decision. This demonstrates high involvement young female fashion consumers again seeking to minimise their risk in the journey and therefore the purchase stage in the final framework in section 7.8 is shaded to reflect this. However, on this occasion the risk is not concerned with the fashion product but handled risk associated with financial loss and also ensuring that the best deal has been obtained for the product and any associated delivery costs. This demonstrates a connection between the consumers characteristics of their lifecycle stage because these young consumers emphasised that they have limited ability to purchase fashion due to the amount of money they have. This is further supported by consumers in the previous stages of evaluation who would end their journey by leaving items in the wishlist and basket. Hence, brands need to provide an easy and convenient returns policy, as it may further encourage purchase. For example:

BP2	*However, ASOS as a pureplayer retailer provide enough tools and policies (e.g. Catwalk, easy returns, variety of brands, interactive website) to make up for their lack of physical stores. Their catwalk tool and easy returns policy is reassuring in the search for an item.*
FG4, P22	*Yeah with like returning or. Sometimes it's just general, well click and collect's fine it's just deliveries and returns sometimes you have to carefully read the terms policy before I buy something. If it's from a retailer who I've never bought from before especially […]*
FG4, P18	*But I just think that the "faff" of the returns policy I wouldn't want to go through again. So unless I knew something looked like it was really going to fit or something I wouldn't choose to buy it. Like on Topshop it's very easy I think to return something, they have a really good returns policy but if, it's a difficult one then because if it doesn't look like it will really fit then the convenience of going in-store takes over to be honest. I won't do it online.*
FG4, P21	*I think the returns policy. Definitely.*

7.5.4.1 Channels

The main consideration for respondents during the purchase was which channel to make the purchase from, for example:

INT3	*I would go onto to how I would want to purchase any items that I would then desire to buy.*

The results revealed the participants preferred to purchase from the store which was followed by the use of other channels including online website and to a lesser extent the mobile app, mobile website.

Purchase - Channels - Store
During accounts of the purchase stage participants strongly associated the store channel for making fashion purchases. The study identified that participants were keen to purchase from the store thus confirming the findings of Wolny and Charoensuksai (2014) that the store was the preferred channel of the purchase. Yet the current research contributes to knowledge by identifying that this was the as the case for the fashion product category. The store enabled consumers to conduct evaluations before purchasing and enabled shoppers to handle products before final purchase (Peck and Childers, 2003; Alexander and Alvarado, 2014), which is supported by the findings of the previous section. The following verbatim highlights the store as a key channel for purchase, as follows:

FG3, P17	*But now and again if I have time I will go in-store and buy them.*
FG4, P19	*When you're bored and, on the go, you sort of… I always research before I buy and then so some channels for me is like the research channels then in-store and online are the actual purchasing channels.*
INT5	*Em and then the store would be on its own and be final purchase.*
INT3	*But in store for example if you're coming out with all your bags and stuff you tend to feel good if you've purchased something you like or if you know you are going to wear it tonight and you know you look good […]*

However, going to store was dependent upon participants availability of time. Accordingly, time affects consumers channel selection and the findings links to the aforementioned discussion on temporal situational moderators of the omnichannel customer decision-making journey.

Participants felt the experience of the store channel was more rewarding by being able to receive an item immediately in-hand. This finding highlights the fact that high involvement consumers possess a need for instant gratification. This was also helpful for consumers who wanted to avoid waiting or wanted to wear the item soon after purchase. The responses related to the immediacy of store purchases are further discussed in the emotions section of the purchase stage since consumer experienced gratification as a result of direct purchasing from the store. This finding agrees with the literature that the store provides the benefit of immediate fulfilment (Bell *et al.,* 2013; Avery *et al.,* 2012), which reinforces the value and contribution of the physical channel in the omnichannel customer journey.

FG1, P4	*Whereas you go in, you get it; it goes straight from the store into your own hands.*
FG4, P22	*But I probably won't mind going in-store just to check out, see if they have anything in-store because obviously, you can get it there and then.*
INT3	*But in store for example if you're coming out with all your bags and stuff you tend to feel good if you've purchased something you like or if you know you are going to wear it tonight and you know you look good or whatever then that experience is much better than waiting on.*
FG2, P8	*I think the thing with like going in store, I think I just like the instant gratification. It's done, I've got it. Um … I'm not particularly patient or organised or anything so I just like to have it then and there. I don't know: it's weird.*

Physical retail stores also made participants more susceptible to impulse purchase. This finding is supported by empirical literature that the store environment can increase the propensity for impulse buying (Savastano, Barnabei and Ricotta, 2015). Purchasing unplanned items occurred as a result of being less focused as the store organised product in collections rather than the more filtered style of online websites, for example:

FG5, P30	*I find shopping online I really restrict what I buy, like instead of like in-store. I feel like I always buy loads but like online, I'm like searching for the best deals and then I order a bag and I'm like*

	oh my gosh I can't spend that much. Then I'm what do I need. I was on ASOS like that the other day and like oooh and I got it down to like one thing and I had like then to start off with.
INT1	*Em probably just I would make more of an impulse purchase in the store. Sometimes I go in to look for one thing, and I completely get taken over by something else.*
INT10	*I feel like it's a bit easier to be tricked into buying things though when I'm in store, whereas online it's just a bit more focused.*

This provides further justification that digital channels should try to deliver a similar experience online. For example, shoppers should be given the option on how they wish to view the product. Shoppers could be offered a utilitarian view to search, filter and compare a product category specific or in a hedonic format which is more editorial based. This view could replicate the hedonic experience of the store even more online by displaying full outfits and providing customers with inspiration of outfits.

Purchase – Channels – Online Website

The online website was the next channel associated with the purchase stage as illustrated below. The identification of the channel at this stage confirmed the multichannel customer journey findings of Wolny and Charoensuksai (2014) and Kollmann *et al.* (2012) who also identified both the store and online website as purchase channels.

FG2, P6	*I actually do buy quite a lot online compared to actually going in store.*
FG3, P15	*Like if I'm really sure of it I'll see it online and either buy it there.*
INT6	*Em so like purchasing I would always do store or online if I kind of had a choice.*
INT8	*Then I would associate the online website with the research em and purchasing, but then I would also associate going into the store as part of my research as well as getting a physical feel for my product and also purchasing as well.*

Purchase – Channels – Mobile App

In addition to the store channel and online being suitable for the purchase stage, the participants also discussed purchasing fashion using mobile apps. At the purchase stage, mobile apps had a distinct function to facilitate quick purchasing and buying when shoppers were on the move, which was a new contribution to the literature. For example:

INT5	*If I'm using a mobile app it's because I'm going to purchase something […] The purpose of an app for me is to like purchase. I go on there to purchase I don't go on there to price things.*
FG3, P17	*So I tried it on and then I love it but I was then like it would look better if it was slightly more fitted so then I kind of then stood in the changing room on my phone bought it as I was in the changing room because was in a bit of a panic, I wanted to buy it, I need to get this product now so I remember I did that once.*
INT1	*[…] if I get to try something on to purchase it like online or off an app because I just can't be bothered to stand in a queue.*
INT8	*[…] the dress I ordered today was on the mobile app.*

Another finding was that some shoppers would simultaneously use channels at the purchase stage. For example, one participant recounted using an app in store to purchase an item as they did not want to wait in a queue. This demonstrates further product-related risk reduction activity whereby technology would support risk reduction in terms of getting stock of an item to avoid missing out and support the high involvement consumers need for immediate gratification. Simultaneous channel usage is important for high involvement consumers and supports the omnichannel definition dimensions in section 2.5. This presents a further implication for retail stores since self-service purchasing similar to the Apple and Amazon Go experience could make the purchase of fashion more convenient and appealing for this type of consumer.

Purchase – Channels – Mobile Website

Only limited responses were provided for the use of the mobile website at the purchase stage. Similar to mobile apps, this was a further contribution which was not previously covered by studies, such as Wolny and Charoensuksai (2014). The mobile website channel was suitable for purchase when the consumer has identified a specific product. The findings add further support to Barnes (2014) and Magrath and McCormick (2013) that online and mobile consumer are

different. In the case of the current findings, mobile websites are about finding specific items quickly for purchase.

INT5	*I'm not a huge fan of mobile websites because like I don't mind purchasing things on my phone, but I only do that once I know what I want so I can type in like the product, and it pops up, and I can just purchase it. I don't like searching for things on my phone.*
BP1	*I had not impulsively bought them on the Topshop mobile site*
BP5	*This is what I used to order my dress and I have to say I was a lot happier with the overall experience using a mobile site rather than trying to view their normal site on my little phone screen.*

7.5.4.2 Devices

Devices used for the purchase stage included laptops, mobile smartphones and netbooks. Of all the devices, the mobile phone continued to dominate for this high involvement consumer group.

Purchase – Devices – Mobile
Participants held strong views towards using mobile phones for purchasing. While some consumers advocated the device for purchase, other participants would not use the device for that stage. The main reason for this, was due to perceived risk of saving details and the device was not being perceived as secure. This was an unanticipated finding which highlighted that although digital natives are confident in using technology they are still hesitant to a degree regarding the security of mobile phones. Therefore, this demonstrates how an omnichannel journey can arouse risk for the consumer. This presents an implication for retailers to reassure their millennial consumers of a secure purchase process rather than assume that this is the case. This finding also reinforces the point by Shin and Shin (2011) that understanding consumers risk perceptions relating to a channel is a key goal for marketers to understand how perceptions relate to purchase behaviours. The findings are shown, as follows:

INT5	*[…] so, it's research and purchasing for both smartphone and tablet and laptops are just to purchase something.*
FG3, P17	*I have bought things when I have been out about on my phone…Yeah […]*
FG2, P9	*I've bought far more since having an iPhone.*
FG2, P7	*Because I have got an iPhone now I do far more internet shopping because its got things like buy now with one-click on it and right it says its being sent to your address right now. It's a dangerous relationship because I look and oh now I've bought it.*
FG4, P21	*I do use my mobile to shop to buy clothes and click and collect and in-store and online, so everything I think, and I've used, I have bought through Facebook before once.*
INT6	*Oh, actually I was going to say I can't imagine buying anything on my mobile but then I have.*
INT10	*I'm not gonna buy anything through my phone.*
FG5, P24	*I wouldn't do it for buying I'd just be like looking at stuff. Plus, I don't like saving my details on my mobile in case it got stolen or I got hacked.*
INT6	*So, like on my phone, then again I say I wouldn't want to buy something on my phone because I dunno it doesn't feel like maybe as like secure […]*

Purchase – Devices – Laptop
At the purchase stage laptops offered distinct benefits. Laptops were particularly suited to functional activities, such as entering details which is a taxing activity for participants when compared to using a device such as a mobile phone, for example:

INT5	*My laptop is just for purchasing.*
BP1	*Em but purchasing on the laptop has more benefits. It's just easier for entering details and things like that. It's so hard textual entry on phone.*
FINT5	*I often use my laptop more to like buy things, if it's accessible.*
INT7	*Em but purchasing on the laptop has more benefits. It's just easier for entering details and things like that. It's so hard textual entry on phone.*
INT8	*And then my laptop I would associate with the further research and the buying.*

Purchase – Devices – Netbook

Although a limited finding, one participant did employ a netbook for the purchase stage by explaining that the netbook was larger to view and was useful for concentrating when trying to complete a purchase online, as shown:

BP1	*This journey was much easier as I completed the purchasing on my netbook, which is much larger than my phone and holds my concentration better.*

7.5.4.3 Emotions

Participants emotional experiences of the purchase stage were positive, and the following section outlines specific positive emotions experienced during the purchase stage.

Purchase – Emotion – Positive

Feeling positive was an emotion that carried through to the purchase stage since participants described feeling positive when making their purchase. This agrees with literature since emotions can act as a form of motivation and can induce positive approach or avoidance behaviours (Kwortnik Jr. and Ross Jr. , 2007; Penz and Hogg, 2011). The results also agree with Andrade (2005) that the respondents desire to maintain a positive affective state. Examples of positive feelings at the purchase stage are shown, as follows:

INT3	*[…] if I feel like it would suit me then I'll feel positive about buying.*
FINT4	*I think it just makes you feel like em positive in your purchasing choices I guess.*

Purchase – Emotion – Happiness

Happiness at the purchase stage reflected consumers satisfaction for obtaining a good deal on a product and reiterates the omnichannel consumer, as being an empowered consumer. An unanticipated finding was that the purchase point was tied to affordability whereby consumers were happy at their ability to afford products, getting a good deal and at the speed of the purchase. This, therefore, reflects that self-realisation is important for young female fashion consumers, not only regarding acquiring a particular product, but being in a financial position to afford and make a purchase.

INT8	*[…] I was quite happy, and the discount code worked which made me feel so much better because it took it down to like fifteen pound.*
FG3, P17	*Yeah, again it depends on what the app is as well. Say if its Asos, Asos' app is so easy and quick if you've got all your details logged already, you just need to put in your security pin. Which everyone usually knows. So that's dead dead fast, so I'm happy to do that. like I'm happy to do that and I'm pretty sure I have done stood in queue*
INT9	*Happy that you can afford it and you can go and look for it yourself.*

Purchase – Emotion – Gratification

Gratification was an important affective experience within the customer decision-making journey, specifically at the purchase stage. The feeling of gratification was a positive experience at the moment of purchase in line with Faber and Vohs (2004). The emotion was related to consumers experiences of the store channel as the buy the item and receive it immediately which then resulted in feelings of gratification.

FG2, P8	*I think the thing with like going in store, I think I just like the instant gratification. It's done, I've got it. Um … I'm not particularly patient or organised or anything so I just like to have it then and there. I don't know it's weird.*
FG3, P1	*Yeah definitely. Like you were saying the experience is much more like fun and kind of I don't know just better in store, you get like more of an instant gratification. You get like a really nice item.*
FG3, P15	*Yeah definitely. Like you were saying the experience is much more like fun and kind of I don't know just better in store, you get like more of an instant gratification.*
BP4	*High street stores alongside online and other channels. People want the reassurance of trying garments on, and aftersales care. Alongside the immediate gratification of getting a product.*

Gratification as an emotion is supported by Laros and Steenkamp (2005) as an explicitly positive emotion. Besides, gratification is linked to the sense of satisfaction experienced both during and after shopping, as identified by Saraneva and Sääksjärvi (2008). The importance of the store providing gratification agrees with empirical literature, that the online channel lacks the ability to provide immediate gratification unlike that provided by offline stores and a key motivation to choose the physical channel is immediate gratification (Wolfinbarger and Gilly, 2001; Grewal *et al.*, 2004; Rohm and Swaminathan, 2004). From a sample participant standpoint, the results also reinforce the point of Prensky (2001) that digital natives are driven to seek instant gratification. Hence the decision to choose a channel for purchase in the decision-making journey can be determined the influence of immediacy and links to time as a situational moderator. This also reinforces the importance of delivery speed when purchasing in the online channel because faster delivery because of consumers desire for immediate gratification.

7.5.5   Delivery

The delivery stage of the omnichannel decision-making journey was a new theme that emerged from shoppers' responses. This was in contrast to the proposed theoretical framework in section 5.5. As a result of the delivery stage identification the current study disagrees with the consumer decision process of Blackwell *et al.* (2006) since the next stage of the consumer decision process is marked as consumption. The inclusion of the delivery stage more accurately reflects how shopping behaviour has changed in further response to research objective four. This is because delivery behaviour is normative and highly common behaviour in the omnichannel decision journey for fashion because consumers are ordering from online channels more than ever and consequently, consumers have heightened expectations about their delivery experience.

The indication of the delivery stage was a new finding as a result of the data collection and this stage is identified in the final framework. The findings of the current study diverge from other, more recent, customer journey models such as the application of the ORCA model by Wolny and Charoensuksai (2014) where all post-purchase activities are summarised under one stage called "post-purchase" and does not account for customer delivery or collections. The implication of the delivery stage is that the empirical literature does not reflect the nature of an omnichannel customer decision-making journey whereby contemporary consumers purchase products across remote channels but also place a lot of emphasis on the experience at the delivery stage. Furthermore, the findings reveal that delivery stage is a critical part of high involvement consumers experience, particularly when waiting for an item to arrive, as demonstrated below:

FG3, P17	*Waiting time. It kind of ruins that pleasure entirely until it gets there. And often it will get there and I'm not that bothered, that's really bad. I'll be like hmm ok, seen it.*
INT6	*And like online as well it's less kind of exciting and fun especially. If you have like seen a product and they don't have it so you are like a bit deflated and then you just go online and order it and you have to like wait for it. It's a bit like euh.*
BP1	*[…] am now awaiting the delivery of my two dresses and I'll let you know how my journey continues when I receive them!*
FINT1	*I just would rather, if I can find it elsewhere and avoid having the kind of waiting three days for delivery, things like that.*
FG1, P4	*Yeah, you've bought a few things are waiting for it and then the buzz is gone by the time you get it. It's just not the same feeling*
FG1, P2	*Well I paid for it to be there by 1pm the next day and the only way I could do that was to have it delivered to a store and not to me and they were supposed to email me when it was ready to collect, and they didn't.*
INT4	*I only use the website I trust. Like I really trust ASOS that it's going to come on time and going to be able to return it and get the money back quickly.*

Participants would try to avoid waiting for an item wherever possible. The results illustrated that waiting for an item took the pleasure away from actually purchasing because it delayed consumers gratification. However, this was balanced with participants highlighting that those brands which do deliver on time perpetuates trust between the consumer and the brand. The idea of waiting and timeliness of customer orders agrees with Aubrey Judge (2012) and Fairchild (2014) that consumers are now calling for their omnichannel orders to be fulfilled quickly. Fairchild (2014)

explains that innovative delivery options are critically important for the customer who expects everything to be readily available. Hence the findings of the current study demonstrate a relationship between the to the expectations of a seamless omnichannel decision-making journey and the delivery stage.

The delivery stage also encompassed instances where customers would use store click and collect facilities. This evidences risk reduction strategies at play whereby consumers want to make their decision journey and purchase via remote channels as efficient as possible in order and avoid wasting time. Hence the delivery stage can also serve as a form of temporal risk reduction. In the final framework, the delivery stage is therefore shaded to reflect the risk reduction strategies used by the consumer at this stage. This further strengthens the omnichannel consumers expectations in the final framework since consumers desire a seamless experience. For example:

FG2, P11	*And their delivery is so quick as well. You can order Saturday delivery. So, you can order it Friday night up until 9pm and you can get it on Saturday and still wear it out on Saturday night. It's good.*
FINT5	*See it was more to collect it and to browse as well.*
INT8	*I did em, click and collect so you get free delivery to the store.*
FG1, P2	*Well I paid for it to be there by 1pm the next day and the only way I could do that was to have it delivered to a store and not to me and they were supposed to email me when it was ready to collect, and they didn't.*
INT7	*It's just because I don't like paying for anything and it's just easier to get it delivered to the store, so I can go and pick it up rather than hanging around and waiting for it.*

One facet which participants discussed about delivery was communications. Delivery was a significant problem in multichannel retailing (Carvalho and Campomar, 2014). In recounting their omnichannel shopping experiences, participants identified that regular communications about delivery were helpful during the lag between ordering and receiving the item:

FG1, P4	*Yeah. I think something that actually helped me feel like I was getting a normal experience from an online retailer is when you can track it because you pay for it and then there is a gap between getting it but at least when you track it you can see it coming to you a bit and it gives you that excitement.*
INT8	*But I think, I just think that they're always just sending emails to keep you updated with your order as well. It's quite reassuring to know that like they care about their customers […]*
INT2	*Yeah, em so quite a bit of excitement especially with the coats that I had delivered when I was in uni I got like the email from the depot saying your order has been dispatched and I'm like, oh yay.*
BP7	*Upon placing my order, I received an email first to say thank you for my order, then a second about an hour later confirming that my order was due for delivery today.*

The finding corresponds with McCormick *et al.* (2014) that consumers now have higher service expectations. The value of delivery communications is that it enables consumers to remain informed about their product, helps to maintain a positive mood e.g. excitement and enables the consumer to feel reassured about the brand and this is also valuable incentive to retailers. Brands have to consider if the delivery communications they provide meet the high expectations that are associated with their brand, as the brand experience could be impacted negatively if this is not achieved.

7.5.5.1 Channels
The use of channels at the delivery stage was limited. The physical store was the channel which supported the delivery experience.

Delivery – Channels – Store
At delivery, the results concluded that for some individuals the store channel enabled participants to click and collect fashion purchases, as shown in the findings which follow this paragraph. The click and collect option to a physical store was chosen, so that customers could avoid delivery charges and waiting for delivery to their home further highlighting use of risk reduction strategies

in terms of time loss. The finding demonstrates that omnichannel fashion retailers have removed barriers between channels and supports literature that click and collect symbolises the removal of barriers specifically in providing omnichannel services (Piotrowicz and Cuthbertson, 2014). Furthermore, click and collect is mutually beneficial as consumers will browse for other product while in store.

INT1	*I know I have been em in store before and they haven't had the dress in my size and I've sat with the sales assistant and just quickly gone on the app with her and just ordered it online. You can get it ordered into the store, so you can actually collect it from the store.*
INT8	*I went onto their online website. Em then went into the store to collect and then had to go back onto their website to say that I was returning it and then back into the store to return that, collect the other one.*
FG4, P22	*Cause they do in-store collect because not every retailer has free delivery and usually I would go free delivery but if they don't have that option they can go in-store and pick it up and then you can return it back in-store and it doesn't cost you anything.*
INT7	*Em, it's just the free delivery. That's the only thing. It's just because I don't like paying for anything and it's just easier to get it delivered to the store, so I can go and pick it up rather than hanging around and waiting for it.*

7.5.5.2 Devices

When recounting delivery experiences, similar to channels, participants said there was little device usage compared with other stages in the decision-making journey. In instances where devices were used mobile phones were suited to this particular phase in the decision-making journey.

Delivery – Devices – Mobile

The mobile phone device enabled users to track their delivery and receive notifications. The findings revealed the emphasised the importance of being able to stay connected to the retailer. The results link to the omnichannel dimension of the connected consumer, as discussed in section 3.9, where customers want to be in control of their customer journey (Aubrey and Judge, 2012). An implication of the findings is that high involvement consumers want to be connected with the retailer even at post-purchase during the delivery process. Delivery communications is still an area for development amongst retailers as not all brands are offering delivery communications this. For example, only 35% of mobile customers receive delivery notifications currently (KPMG, 2016). Retailers should ensure that delivery notifications and communication are implemented to support the customer and brand experience.

FG2, P7	*Because I have got an iPhone now I do far more internet shopping because it's got things like buy now with one-click on it and right it says its being sent to your address right now. It's a dangerous relationship because I look and oh now I've bought it.*
BP7	*Shortly after this email came through, I received another email that told me my parcel is going to be delivered between 10.17am and 11.17am; I was very impressed with this as it means that I don't have to wait in all day for my package […]*
FG3, P14	*Yeah, I use mobile phones to track my package.*
BP7	*I woke up to an email on my phone from ASOS to tell me that my order was on its way to me and gave me the option of tracking my order online […]*

7.5.5.3 Emotions

The delivery stage was filled with mixed emotions. Initially, participants recounted positive emotions such as feeling happy, however feelings of happiness were attributed to the evaluation of the product rather than the delivery itself. Likewise, participants also explained that they were excited. Yet as shoppers received their goods, they expressed more negative feelings, such as annoyance and frustration with the delivery experience. Thus, for retailers the delivery experience is an area where the customer experience could be improved, furthermore it is within the control of the retailer. Each emotion is discussed below:

Delivery – Emotion – Happiness

Feelings of happiness, although limited, were described as participants being satisfied with the item they received. Happiness as a positive emotion concurs with Laros and Steenakamp (2005). The

emotion is further supported by Saraneva and Sääksjärvi (2008) who report that consumers feel happy as a result of their purchases, for example:

FG2, P6	*So, I literally just added them to my basket and checked out and waited for them to arrive and I was happy with all of them.*
FG3, P14	*I was definitely happy. I purchased online, which is like really odd for me, to do a whole purchase online, like big risk Like how its going to fit me and whether its going to fit so then when it came it fitted perfectly I couldn't have asked for a better product.*

Delivery – Emotion – Excitement

The most dominant feeling at the delivery stage was excitement. Excitement encapsulated the anticipation of receiving the delivery and through the ability to also track it. Thus, the findings further reinforced the importance of tracking communication from the retailer. Tracking a delivery was a way for the consumer to maintain a positive emotional state in the lag between purchasing and receiving a fashion product. The feeling of excitement was also incurred in anticipation of being able to try the item on. The findings agree with Laros and Steenkamp (2005) that excitement is a positive emotion. Meanwhile, Saraneva and Sääksjärvi (2008) recognise excitement but highlight the emotion occurring prior to shopping. Consequently, the current study provides a new contribution firstly by identifying emotions at the delivery stage but further demonstrating that the delivery stage adds another layer of emotions, namely excitement as shown below:

FG4, P18	*I get excited when something gets delivered […]*
FG1, P4	*Yeah. I think something that actually helped me feel like I was getting a normal experience from an online retailer is when you can track it because you pay for it and then there is a gap between getting it but at least when you track it you can see it coming to you a bit and it gives you that excitement.*
INT2	*Yeah, em so quite a bit of excitement especially with the coats that I had delivered when I was in uni I got like the email from the depot saying your order has been despatched and I'm like, oh yay. It's coming today so that's quite a big thing.*
INT3	*Well on saying that I do get excited about things coming in the post.*
FG2, P6	*I don't know. I get excited when I have ordered something online. Like has the postman arrived and like even if it doesn't fit I know that it is a bit of a like, you get deflated don't you. But I don't know there is still that excitement in the process with online that you would still get in the store.*

The findings agree with literature on gender. Female consumers of the omnichannel customer decision-making journey experienced excitement and this concurs with literature that states that females tend to seek hedonic benefits such as excitement in their shopping activities (Seock and Bailey, 2008; Goldsmith *et al.,* 1991). Additionally, the study asserts that high involvement consumers experience excitement during an omnichannel customer decision-making journey. This is further supported by since Park *et al.* (2006) as high involvement consumers are more likely to experience excitement during shopping. Excitement is an important affective experience within the omnichannel customer decision-making journey because it influences consumers to take action and to progress with their journey.

Delivery – Emotion – Anticipation

The finding of excitement closely links to anticipation where participants were eager to try purchases on. This finding was also recognised by Saraneva and Sääksjärvi (2008) which described consumers eagerness to try out new purchases.

INT2	*I think eh yeah kind of disappointment with one the one I ordered online from Missguided because it was really nice but the quality for the price was just not worth it so that was kind of really frustrating as if the quality had been slightly better I would have kept it.*
BP2	*However, when I tried the item on instore I was really disappointed with the fit and this for me reinforces the reasons why I always try on garments instore rather than ordering online.*

Delivery – Emotions – Annoyed

Annoyance was exhibited at the delivery stage due to late deliveries, delivery charges or when something was wrong with the item. The findings further reinforce consumers expectations of

deliveries, as discussed earlier in the chapter, since participants highlighted that their expectations had heightened towards delivery experiences compared when compared with in the past. At the delivery stage, the findings also correspond with Dubé *et al.* (1991) that intense affective experiences can occur as a result of delays however these findings were from a service delivery perspective rather than a product perspective. However, the finding provides a link between the omnichannel journey and service delivery literature.

FG1, P2	*If you want something really badly and you've gone on every single channel that the retailer has to offer, and you still can't get it or it hasn't arrived on time or there is something wrong with it. You'll really be annoyed whereas a couple of years ago you'd be like uh it's sold out, can't get hold of it.*
FG1, P1	*You just get annoyed if it came and it was damaged, and you're just be like, "Oh I should've just shopped in the store." Like they're trying to overcome that and be like no shop online because it's better and it feels so […]*
FG4, P18	*it's just annoying in that they didn't come and that made me frustrated with their returns policy. It is quite an easy website. It is a good website.*
INT8	*[…] so, I don't have to pay for delivery because that's always annoying If you don't like the product and you have to return it you don't get the cost of delivery back.*
FG4, P19	*And reliability of the amount of time it's going to take to get to you because some brands are like…H&M sometimes would come within two days, sometimes they come within like two weeks and it's really annoying.*

Delivery - Emotion - Frustration

Customers experienced frustration as a result of their deliveries not arriving on time. The findings concur with Saraneva and Sääksjärvi (2008) that frustration can occur post-purchase, following a shopping process but this was in response to consumers not gaining a bargain. Yet the current study provides a contribution by linking this emotion especially to the delivery experience. This further supports feelings of being annoyed, for example:

INT8	*In one word I would say it's quite frustrating em because obviously I had seen the dress and I had the discount code and I was like right I'm going to buy it. Got into the store on the Wednesday and it was gonna be in and they said oh no it's not arrived yet.*
INT2	*[…] when I am missing deliveries as well. Em and having to wait til the next day. So quite a bit of frustration.*
FG4, P18	*[…] it's just annoying in that they didn't come and that made me frustrated with their returns policy.*

7.5.6 Returns

The returns stage was a further new contribution to the decision journey framework in section 7.8. The returns experience was discussed at length in the interviews and focus groups. The stage depicted instances where consumers would return products due to them not being suitable. The stage had a lot of negative connotations in consumer responses. However, delivering a good returns experience had positive connotations because participants said that a good returns experience would mean that they had trust in the retailer. The following verbatim illustrates high involvement consumer responses to returns:

INT5	*Yeah definitely, especially with ASOS em I don't know I think it's just, that I've not yet had a bad experience with them. I've never had a bad experience returning things, I've always got what I've wanted, and it's always been the right size. So, I've just been very lucky with that. Em and they've got a good array of products, I trust them I think.*
INT4	*I only use the website I trust. Like I really trust ASOS that it's going to come on time and going to be able to return it and get the money back quickly.*
INT2	*So, as I say like returning things is a bit of a hassle. Em, with having to pay for the kind of returned things.*
INT3	*[…] feel a bit wobbly about then I'll buy it and keep in mind that I might have to return it. So, it's whether or not I would go for the effort of returning it to see what it looked like.*
INT8	*[…] so, I don't have to pay for delivery because that's always annoying If you don't like the product and you have to return it you don't get the cost of delivery back.*
FG4, P23	*[…] if I've seen that online if it looks nice I can go into the shop and try it on or I can order it online, try it on at home and send it back.*

FG4, P21	*[…] return easily, that to me would be seamless.*

The verbatim comments evidenced dissonance reduction strategies in that consumers would intentionally over-order items for free delivery and then return items. This again highlights the nature of the product category of fashion and that product-related issues such as size and fit create additional risks for the customer. In such instances participants would also order multiples of the same product to find the correct size, along with over ordering a variety of different items to evaluate them at home and this is illustrated, as follows:

BP7	*However, with online retailers such as ASOS and Missguided, I often find myself ordering two sizes and sending one of them back; this isn't too much trouble as they offer free returns,*
INT3	*Sometimes if I can't be bothered to go in and try lots of things on because i'm not in the mood but i've got a party to plan for or something I might have a look online and check out a few options to order and just return some.*

The findings correspond with industry research on omnichannel environment behaviour where it is reported that consumers are over-ordering recognising that returns are free or at low cost (Financial Times, 2016c). In a survey conducted by JDA and Centiro (2015) 22 percent of respondents had purchased more than one of the same size or colour of a specific fashion item. Furthermore, Bernon *et al.* (2016) suggest that younger, more fashion-conscious consumers are more likely to return than older demographic consumers. This shift in customer behaviour of young high involvement consumers presents a significant impact on omnichannel retail operations. Young female consumers are returning more than ever and hold greater expectations as to delivery and returns and regard these elements as key in delivering a seamless customer experience. This further underpins the relationship between a seamless customer experience and the stages of the customer journey. Retailers need to provide enhanced information on body shape, fit and sizing for customers to help with decision-making. Some retailers are beginning to offer a size selector facility where consumers can identify their size in a brand they currently own to help choose the correct product. Although, this is not a consistent experience across all fashion retailers. From discussions at the expectations section of the results consumers are demanding free delivery therefore targeting those consumers who are willing to purchase a delivery subscription make help absorb some of the operational cost of over-orders.

Other issues in the omnichannel returns process included the speed at which refunds were processed and received. For one consumer, the extent of this evident as they said they would not purchase from a retailer who could not offer an immediate refund by returning to store. Again, this reinforces the importance of the returns policy as a risk reducer. The finding correlates with Griffiths (2012) who explains that refund speed of the online retailer can impact consumers future purchase intentions, however they did not explore omnichannel interactions using a variety of channels and thus differentiates the findings of the present study from empirical literature. The current work provides further supports for the recent and exploratory work by Bernon *et al* (2016) that the processing speed for returns customer credit is a challenge in omnichannel process considerations.

INT2	*Em but also em, a bit of annoyance when things that I ordered I didn't like and having to wait for the refund kind of cuts you down. Although I'm getting the money back it's like a long process.*
FINT4	*Yeah cause I was waiting ages for my refund because they had not confirmed that they had got the package back.*
INT5	*I hate going to the post office queuing up to wait and hand things over and waiting for refunds and things like that.*
FG4, P22	*Sometimes you are like oh why can't I just get a refund for it and they say you have to send it back online. I just find that a little bit annoying […]*
BP4	*I like to be able to purchase online but return to a store, so I can get an immediate refund or exchange. Mango do not offer this therefore I will not purchase online from them.*
BP5	*Even when I have ordered products online from and retailer with a physical store I tend to go into the shop to return the products as I feel more comfortable with the fact the return is processed right there and then in front of me.*
INT7	*Because you just expect it. Like they just didn't confirm the refund for the goods like I sent back*

> *and they were like yeah, it could take up to a month and I thought it was like three to five days but like a month to return the goods. It was all very weird.*

While Bernon *et al.* (2016) is looking at omnichannel returns from a retailer perspective the current study examines this from a consumer perspective and concludes that returns along with delivery are important to the omnichannel brand experience. As an overall finding for this study, the returns and delivery stages, present the biggest challenges for successful omnichannel retailers; through the returns policy affecting purchase decision-making, through to the demand for free delivery and subsequently consumers over-ordering. Therefore, a key contribution of the study is that there is a need for an improved returns and delivery experience by fashion brands. Therefore, fashion retailers must revisit the shopper journey, specifically the delivery and returns processes for their own customers to optimise this experience.

The findings of the returns stage depict a fundamental shift in shopping behaviour. The identification of this stage contrasts the consumer decision model by Blackwell *et al.,* (2006) who identified the consumption stage (following purchase). Furthermore, the role of returns is not reflected in the multichannel customer management model by Neslin *et al.,* (2006) nor in Wolny and Charoensuksai's (2014) application of the ORCA Model. Therefore, the influence of remote digital channels needs to be identified in modern customer decision journey frameworks to reflect how consumers are now shopping. In terms of the current study consumers are committing to purchases much later in the decision process because it is now the norm to over-order multiple items with a view to returning these. The omnichannel decision-journey is consequently, more complex because of the additional factors associated with remote channels that have just been discussed.

What can be deduced is that while the brand experience pervades all of the stages and all of the encounters it is the post-purchase stages of delivery and returns which are the most powerful in shaping consumers view of the brand because this is the point at which expectations are met of not met. This means that brands must consider omnichannel delivery and returns as a key part in the brand experience, retailers need to identify what is the benchmark or standard that needs to be fulfilled in order for the customer to feel that their experience meets their expectations of the brand. More specifically, the stage reinforces the customer expectations of a seamless experience because consumers expect to receive refunds quickly and find the returns process as an overall easy experience. The findings also connect the delivery stage to the overall brand experience since shoppers found this stage to be particularly negative and this reflects on the overall brand.

7.5.6.1 Channels

The store channel was predominantly used for the returns stage. In addition, one participant highlighted that they used the call centre, but this was a limited finding.

Returns – Channels – Store
The data collection found that customers had a strong preference for the store channel when conducting returns, as shown in the verbatim below. The store offered unique benefits for participants including being able to return items for free, to obtain an immediate refund and to deal with more complex returns. The finding demonstrates how consumers blend channels for example, by buying online and returning to store to get a better overall experience. This finding contrasts previous research where retailers took a more siloed approach to consumers to shopping experiences where by consumers would stay with the same channel throughout their shopping encounter (Penz and Hogg, 2011).

INT6	*Return it if it's bad then return it in store.*
FG5, P24	*I think merging it. When you want to return things you can actually go in-store and return it through them. So, if it's merging that way then that's fine.*
FG4, P22	*[…] and usually I would go free delivery but if they don't have that option they can go in-store and pick it up and then you can return it back in-store and it doesn't cost you anything.*
BP4	*I like to be able to purchase online but return to a store so I can get an immediate refund or exchange.*
BP1	*This is hard to explain, but I trust Topshop more than I do Boohoo as they have a store*

	presence which gives greater security if an item is faulty as you can easily return it and not worry about getting to the post office to send a parcel.

The store channel at the returns stage did not singularly encompass the retailer store but also included physical returns locations such as Collect+ points and Post Office stores. Therefore, the physical channel at the returns stage includes fulfilment stores, for example:

INT5	*I hate going to the post office queuing up to wait and hand things over and waiting for refunds and things like that.*
INT10	*It's just like hassle, wrapping it up, going to the post office. Yes.*
BP1	*I found the return process very easy with boohoo as they provide free post stickers (unlike Missguided who only cover part of the postage). As I am always in town I didn't find it a hassle to return the parcel with the post office, but if I was having a busy week I would have returned the item with collect plus as it is more convenient*
BP5	*For example, Missguided allow you to return products via a number of methods such as collect+ drop off points where you are not purchased.*

Returns – Channels – Online Website
On several occasions shoppers had to revisit the online website to find out information about the returns policy and also to notify the retailer that the product was being returned and this is illustrated, as follows:

INT3	*As I said, returns some online websites are still rubbish about returning you have to return it and get a refund and buy it again which is just inconvenient. Those websites that I've been on […]*
INT8	*go back onto their website to say that I was returning it.*
BP2	*[…] the website has important information on returns.*
BP7	*Ark have introduced this and I have used it a few times myself. You have to log on to the website, find your recent order, log that you are to return it and then drop it off in the store - easy!*

Returns – Channels – Call Centre
The call centre channel was also recalled in one participant journey account. However, the participant also highlighted that for themselves this was not a common occurrence. What this finding demonstrates is that it gives clues as to how less popular channels are used. The use of call centres and stores suggest that human interaction during the returns process is important for digital native consumers when they have issues with returning a purchase.

INT7	*I think em, yeah, I had to call them, and I had to email them about my return. So, I'll just put the contact centre up there. That's not normal though, I don't do that unless I really have to.*

7.5.6.2 Devices
For the returns stage, the use of devices was limited. This is because shoppers physically returned the product to store or via post. The main device used was the laptop, followed by the use of a mobile phone.

Returns – Devices – Laptop
Laptops were helpful at the returns stage because the device supported functional tasks. In instances where participants had to complete their returns information online, a laptop was used to access the online website. Laptops were also used to print return postage labels from the retailer.

INT8	*[…] ah because my laptop is hooked up to my printer as well and prints off the label. I guess with my phone you can still send it to the printer but it's a lot easier to use my laptop.*
INT3	*So, I think in terms of laptop over smartphone going on a website.*
INT2	*Online website was then on my laptop.*

Returns – Devices – Mobile
For the returns stage participants used their mobile phone as a way to reach the contact centre channel, for example:

INT7	*I think em, yeah, I had to call them, and I had to email them about my return. So, I'll just put the contact centre up there. That's not normal though, I don't do that unless I really have to.*

7.5.6.3 Emotions

The emotional findings of the returns stage were highly negative, and this stage was the most negative amongst all of the stages of the omnichannel customer decision-making journey. Customers experienced annoyance, stress and for one consumer, even hate. Each emotion is discussed, as follows:

Returns – Emotion – Hate
Hate was an emotion to describe one participant's their dislike of returns. Hate was a negative emotion classified by Laros and Steenkamp (2005) and was not discussed by Saraneva and Sääksjärvi (2008). The study asserts that this is perhaps due to the study being conducted some time ago and thus not in the omnichannel environment which has an array of channels and also because of the fact that omnichannel consumers hold heightened expectations. While the finding was limited it does demonstrate the extent to which negative consumer attitudes towards the omnichannel returns process can occur, as the verbatim shows:

INT5	*Em I think it's just, I hate sending things back and I always try to avoid returning things.*

Returns – Emotion – Annoyed
The most prominent emotion in response to returns was annoyance. Annoyance reflected the effort of packaging-up the product, taking it to a store or post office and also the potential cost of returns if they are not free. Annoyance was also expressed due to the fact that on occasion consumers were annoyed with not being able to return the item to a store. Being annoyed was also triggered, as a result of waiting around for an item to be collected along with the wait between the returns process and receiving the refund. Therefore, the study agrees with and builds upon the with the very latest literature by Bernon *et al.* (2016) and Verhoef and Sese (2016) that omnichannel returns management has yet to fully mature, and as a process, needs to be improved. The present study contributes to this argument identifying how the negative aspects of returns manifest from the perspective of the consumer, for example:

FINT5	*[…] you have to find a post office and wrap it up again and that's just annoying especially if you have paid like £5 for postage as well.*
INT2	*Em but also em, a bit of annoyance when things that I ordered I didn't like and having to wait for the refund kind of cuts you down. Although I'm getting the money back it's like a long process.*
INT7	*And I think that's why I mean Topshop took so long to refund me I was kind of like a bit annoyed.*
INT8	*Em, so now I've got the hassle of taking it back, which is a bit annoying because I really like the style of the dress, but em so now I have got to package it up and I have got fourteen days to take it back to the […]*
INT4	*Zara, I find really annoying cause you have to wait in for someone to come and collect your delivery.*

Returns – Emotion – Stress
The process of returning products was articulated as 'hassle'. Hassle is associated with the emotion of stress and is an emotionally taxing instance of stressful circumstances (Machleit *et al.,* 2005). The finding of stress is also supported as an affective word (Laros and Steenkamp , 2005). Stress is also associated as part of the emotional highs and lows of the shopping process (Saraneva and Sääksjärvi, 2008). The link between hassle and stress is further supported, since one participant identified that hassle of returning makes returning stressful. The main triggers behind the negative emotion was paying for returns and the hassle surrounding returns process itself, as shown below:

INT2	*So, as I say like returning things is a bit of a hassle. Em, with having to pay for the kind of returned things.*

BP2	*Returns is always a hassle [...]*
BP4	*Returns are a massive hassle.*
BP5	*This is purely because the hassle of returning products often stresses me out!*

7.5.7 Show & Share

Another finding from the omnichannel customer decision-making journey was the identification of the show and share stage. While Wolny and Charoensuksai (2014) recognised that telling friends using social media forms part of the post-purchase stage, the current data collection participants recognised the activity as a dedicated and autonomous stage of the omnichannel customer decision-making journey. The current findings further contrast with the multichannel customer management framework (Neslin et al., 2006) which identifies a singular after-sales stage. The show and share stage which is presented in the final framework for this thesis in section 7.8 contrasts the stages of consumption and post-consumption evaluation of the decision process by Blackwell et al. (2006) and the pre-data collection framework because both of these elements had become intertwined as a result of technology. This responds to research objective four which was concerned with understanding how shopping behaviour has changed. The show and stage once again reinforces how shopping behaviour has become a more social experience for high involvement young female consumers of fashion which and reflects a further change in consumers shopping experience providing.

Based upon all participant responses the show and share stage was one of the most consistent and richly defined stages. The *show* component of the stage highlights consumers motivation to "show-off" the new purchases they are wearing when they felt positive about those purchases or felt positive towards themselves as a result of the purchase. This highlights that the show and share stage of the omnichannel decision journey is concerned with reducing high involvement consumer dissonance by the fact that consumers sought to publicly validate their purchases as part of reinforcing to themselves that the right purchasing decision had been made. The *share* component recognises the how consumption is now intertwined with technology and social activity, to acknowledge the need for shoppers to communicate and share information about purchases across social media. This demonstrates this group of high involvement fashion consumers as opinion leaders for example:

INT8	*[…] I would only ever use the social media for em like with the purpose of being inspired or at the end of my shopping journey, showcasing what I've bought.*
INT6	*Like showing off you can't really do that in store […] It was like a nice sunny day so I had my new top on and I tweeted it.*
BP1	*If I were keeping the dresses I would have snapped a picture of my new dress on my phone and sent it to Instagram and Twitter. But alas, my showing off will have to wait till I find the right garment.*
FG3, P15	*I think another stage it could be that say if em you've bought an amazing pair of shoes and you want to show the world you'd take a photo and Instagram it. That's often what you […]*
INT1	*Yeah, I guess I could say I WhatsApp'd to show a picture of the dress.*
INT3	*I Instagram'ed it. I Instagram'ed a picture of me wearing it.*
INT4	*I don't know it's sort of like a showing off stage.*

The extent of show and share was prevalent among this segment of consumers and this interaction reflects the more interactive and socially connected omnichannel environment. The phase therefore embodies the concept of web 2.0 as one which focuses on sharing user-generated content and social networking through uploading photographs, opinions, content tagging and content syndication (Anderson, 2007; Olbrich and Holsing, 2011; Parra-López *et al.*, 2011; Lee, Shi and Cheung, 2011).

From a consumer-retailer relationship perspective, the stage also enabled participants to show their appreciation to brands to facilitate brand engagement and to form bonds. Meanwhile, from a peer-to-peer perspective, the show and share stage highlighted that e-word of mouth is a component of the omnichannel decision-making journey, since consumers were able to recommend a brand to others as well as serving as inspiration for others. These results provide further support for Carvalho and Campomar (2014) whereby consumers who interact within an

omnichannel environment are more disposed to influencing others. The findings reinforce these fashion consumers as opinion leaders as the participants were keen to share their fashion choices as inspiration for others to follow. The findings also agree with gender studies that state high self-monitoring females tend to be fashion opinion leaders and use apparel for social approval (Browne and Kaldenberg, 1997; Auty and Elliott, 1998; Carey et al., 2014). Hence in the final framework in section 7.8 depicts a relationship between the show and share stage closes the loop in the omnichannel journey because one individual's journey can serve as inspirations for another. This highlights the strength of the high involvement fashion consumer as a fashion opinion leader in the omnichannel domain.

INT10	Em, just… I dunno. I want to start like doing blogging stuff, so I want to think that I guess. Em it's kind of like, it kind of links it back to the beginning I guess. You're like you are serving as some kind of inspiration for someone else.
BP7	I felt it was important to tag the retailers from who I had bought my new clothes from to show appreciation and let others know where they could find these great pieces.
INT8	I dunno it's like something like…you're not really promoting it…it's just sort of showing the world what I just bought, like my friends. It's kind of like because you tag the brand in it, it's sort of…it's not really advertising for them but it's sort of. It's almost like thanking them […] this is what I bought I love it kind of thing.
FINT5	So, I feel like I should tag where I have got the product from as like a thank you to them and sort of advertise for them almost.

Consumers expressed their desire for people to approve their fashion purchases which they shared on social media, to reinforce that the purchase was a positive decision and as a reflection of dissonance reduction activities. The finding illustrates examples of consumers receiving social evaluations and validation post-purchase, as shown in the verbatim.

INT8	Because it's nice when you get good comments on it like 'this is really cute.'
INT10	Em I dunno, just makes you feel, I dunno validating you bought something good I suppose. So kind of validating what you are doing.
INT11	By having the approval, it was just kind of like you said just felt worthwhile. Everyone liked it
FINT2	It's almost like confirmation isn't it, in a way that you've got the right… it's extra confirmation that you've done the right thing and made the right decision.
BP7	I received likes on the image and even a comment from a blogger to say that she loved what I'd bought. This made me feel good about my purchases and even happier with them!

The results concur with Wallace et al. (2014) since brands can be used to construct self-identity and the fact that social media provides a unique context for self-expression. This is particularly important about the fashion product category since it is closely connected to an individual's self-concept (see section 3.3.1). The results agree with millennial consumers proclivity with social networking and the fact that they gain social approval via their network (Mink Rath et al., 2015). The findings agree that social approval can be used for decision affirmation and that consumers feel more supported through social approval (Lee and Park, 2014). The findings of this study also respond to the work of Mirsch et al. (2016) who call for more understanding on the role of social media in the omnichannel environment and also builds on the work of Dennis et al. (2010) who argue that fashion online is now a social activity. Hence the results suggest that the omnichannel customer decision-making journey is a specifically a social experience, since the show and share stage, the inspiration and evaluation stages each prominently feature the usage of social media. The show and share stage also links back to the purpose of fashion which was discussed earlier on in this thesis. Fashion is concerned with asserting an individual's self-identity, self-expression and social belonging. The show and share stage epitomises these facets and facilitate this self-actualisation through visually sharing fashion purchases online.

The show and share was the final stage of the omnichannel customer decision-making journey. This therefore digressed from the framework of Blackwell et al's (2006) consumer decision process who cite the divestment stage as final which was also illustrated in the initial framework for this study. The stage of divestment was not added to the shopping journey for fashion because the stage was not mapped by participants but furthermore, it was not extensively discussed during any of the phases of data collection. The finding highlighted that divestment was not a significant

consideration for this consumer sample because items were perceived as throwaway, for example:

FG2, P11	*It is just throwaway fashion. People just wear things for a month and then it's out.*

7.5.7.1 Channels

Social media was the sole channel used for the show and share stage and is discussed in the following paragraph.

Show & Share – Channels – Social Media
Participants explained that they would use social media to show images of a product they had purchased. Participants showed photos on social media when participants felt positive towards a product. Within social media participants identified the use of platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, for example:

FG3, P14	*Kind of like Instagram – to kind of show off what you've bought.*
FINT2	*I would tweet sometimes.*
BP7	*I was so excited I took photos of them; first I sent one to my Mum via Whatsapp to show her and then I put the photo on Instagram to share with my followers.*
FG3, P13	*Like, if I have a really nice outfit I would like definitely take a picture of it and just put it on Instagram and just be like "Ooh new things!"*
FG3, P17	*when I get them, I'll be sticking a photo up straight away on my Instagram and linking it to Twitter and my Facebook […] And also tweet if I have just bought something. Yeah if I just bought something that's really really good. I might tweet about it.*

In demonstrating their appreciation to brands participants would tag these brands as a method of engagement, as per the verbatim below. The findings link to Sashi's (2012) engagement model whereby consumer engagement leads advocacy and also Hansen and Sia (2015) who state that consumers who hashtag in omnichannel environments become strong advocates for the brand. The results also concur with literature that engagement with brands reflects consumer self-concept (Sprott *et al.,* 2009). The findings also link to Chauhan and Pillai (2013) who suggest that liking on a social network is a manifestation of engagement, albeit participants in the current study tagged rather than liked.

BP7	*I felt it was important to tag the retailers from who I had bought my new clothes from to show appreciation and let others know where they could find these great pieces.*
INT8	*I dunno it's like something like…you're not really promoting it…it's just sort of showing the world what I just bought, like my friends. It's kind of like because you tag the brand in it, it's sort of…it's not really advertising for them but it's sort of. It's almost like thanking them … this is what I bought I love it kind of thing.*
FINT5	*So, I feel like I should tag where I have got the product from as like a thank you to them and sort of advertise for them almost.*

7.5.7.2 Devices

Mobile smartphones were a preferred device at the show and share stage.

Show & Share – Devices – Mobile
Participants mapped mobiles for the show and share stage. During this stage, mobile devices were used to take photos and to share these across social media platforms. Instances which were coded to the show and share stage, as shown.

INT4	*Em, yeah but like the end one [social media/showing off] you're taking a photo, so you need the phone.*
BP1	*If I were keeping the dresses I would have snapped a picture of my new dress on my phone and sent it to Instagram and Twitter*
FG3, P15	*Take photos with your phone.*
INT10	*Twitter like I never really use Twitter or Instagram on my laptop it's just on my phone.*

Another feature of the mobile device during the omnichannel customer decision-making journey was that participants discussed the convenience of the device because of it always being accessible and because it can be used on the move, for example:

INT1	*I think a smartphone would have made it a tiny bit more convenient.*
INT5	*It's just convenience as well.*
INT3	*Yeah in terms of documenting things I will take photos and for convenience I will use my smartphone.*
FG3, P15	*They're quite convenient say if you are out and about.*
FG3, P17	*Other than that time laptop would be joyful experience, pleasurable experience, phone would be urgent, utter need for something, convenient thing and then store would be pleasurable, chill out, enjoyment and relaxation.*

7.5.7.3 Emotions

For the show and share stage of the journey participants recognised the stage as one of the most positive. Emotions for the stage included feeling confident, happy, good and to the extent of feeling love.

Show & Share - Emotion – Confidence
The sample group of consumers expressed that they felt confident in their fashion choices and felt confident to post these outfits via social media. The findings of the current study therefore agree that being high involvement with a product can increase consumer confidence as asserted by O'Cass (2004). While confidence is not recognised as an emotion word by Laros and Steenkamp (2005), Barbalet (1996) does recognise confidence as a critical emotion in social life.

INT7	*I mean yeah, I guess you have to be quite confident I guess to post outfits and things like that on Instagram. So yeah I would say I am quite confident.*
FINT1	*Yeah, I do that quite a lot because I'm kind of with my clothes. I am quite confident with what I wear […]*

Show & Share - Emotion - Happiness
Participants described feeling happy with the products which then triggered shoppers to engage with the retailer by endorsing them through social media. Happiness concurred with Laros and Steenkamp (2005) as a positive emotion. The endorsement of brands is further supported by Hansen and Sia (2015) that hash-tagging a brand is a tool for engagement. The findings also agree with Parra-López *et al.* (2011) that user-generated content sharing offers an altruistic incentive among others. Although, the current study suggests that the altruistic incentive is between consumer and brand rather than consumer to consumer.

FINT5	*[…] but even still I am really happy with the products they have given me. So, I feel like I should tag where I have got the product from as like a thank you to them and sort of advertise for them almost.*
BP7	*I don't think I would have felt any less happy if no one had liked it as I knew how much I loved my new shoe.*
BP2	*I tweeted Zara to say how happy I was with my purchase, I'll let you know if they reply!*

Show & Share – Emotion – Love
The finding that the show and share stage is a fundamental part of a consumers omnichannel customer decision-making journey agrees with the definition of omnichannel by (Piotrowicz and Cuthbertson, 2014) that a holistic approach features social networking taking a key role within omnichannel. The emotion of love within the show and share stage was attributed to consumers who loved their items, who were motivated by this feeling to take further action. This included and publicly sharing the item via social networking and publicly thanking the brand which was similar when consumers experienced feelings of happiness.

INT6	*Yeah because I have to have the product and love it to have to put it online and say this is what I have.*
INT8	*I dunno it's like something like…you're not really promoting it…it's just sort of showing the world*

> *what I just bought, like my friends. It's kind of like because you tag the brand in it, it's sort of…it's not really advertising for them but it's sort of. It's almost like thanking them … this is what I bought I love it kind of thing.*

Findings also highlight that social shopping is important within an omnichannel context because of the importance of technology and the need for consumers to share their purchases. Social media interaction highlights that consumers are becoming more deeply engaged with brands. This corresponds with literature which recognises that consumers are taking the initiative for marketing themselves by posting their own advertising for products they liked (Strategic Direction, 2012).

Show & Share – Emotion – Good
Respondents explained that feeling good was an important emotion, triggered at the end of the omnichannel decision-making journey for fashion, specifically at the show and share stage. The emotion of feeling good was tied to social approval as consumers were able to experience feeling good as a result of positive opinions from others regarding their purchases. Furthermore, feeling good is supported by Laros and Steenkamp (2005) as a positive emotion.

The findings provide further support for the assertion that consumers feel safer confirming a purchase decision when there is a social approval (Lee and Park, 2014). As in the instances in the verbatim, social interaction as a method by which to reinforce a purchase choice. From a fashion product category perspective, the study further reinforces that clothing is a means by which to obtain social approval, to help consumers gain a sense of self identity, display status and feel good about themselves. (O'Cass, 2001). The findings provide academic support for the identified in the industry whitepaper by Shaw and Towers (2015) which suggests that consumers are willing to reach out to, and also be influenced by others and using social networks as a medium which to gain approval and validation. However, the current study provides additional insight since the current study focuses on the post-purchase stage in addition to during the evaluation process:

INT6	*Em but then like the social media stage you feel good again 'cause like yeah I love this jumper.*
INT8	*Yeah, I normally get an opinion and and often if people say I like what you are wearing it makes you feel good and I'm like yeah I have made the right decision.*
INT11	*I got the approval that's made me feel good.*
BP7	*I received likes on the image and even a comment from a blogger to say that she loved what I'd bought. This made me feel good about my purchases and even happier with them!*

7.6   Brand Experience

From the literature review chapters, the need for a brand experience underpins the omnichannel concept (Blakeney, 2016; Savastano *et al.,* 2015; Cummins *et al.,* 2016, Picot-Coupey *et al.,* 2016, Hansen and Sia, 2015). This is evidenced in the verbatim below, as consumers describe their omnichannel encounter as an overall brand experience. The finding contributes to research objective five which was to examine the distinct role that brands play in consumer decision-making in an omnichannel fashion retail context. In contrast to the pre-data collection framework in section 5.5, the final framework in section 7.8 illustrates the omnichannel decision-making journey for fashion as a holistic brand experience which encapsulates the stages of the journey the emotional experiences encountered and also the channels and devices together. The study provides a greater understanding as to how the omnichannel journey is perceived from the fashion consumer perspective, in this case as a single and holistic interaction with the brand. Thus the relationship is with the brand rather than distinct channels. The finding provides further support for omnichannel being a distinct concept to multichannel retailing because omnichannel has a specific mandate to focus on the brand experience and this is indicated in the definition dimensions of the omnichannel concept in section 2.5.

FG5, P29	*Is it kind of like the idea of merging all of the channels into one so that they are one overall experience.*
INT5	*[…] but as a general rule I think it's just an overall thing.*
INT11	*I think I view it as more of an overall experience 'cause this would prompt a purchase.*
BP6	*Topshop especially are very good at […] making me feel part of the brand universe.*
INT8	*I'd say it is an overall experience because I don't tend to break it up and think right I need some*

	inspiration, right now I'm going to do some research, it all just sort of flows, it happens.
FINT2	*Em I would say it definitely gives a stronger overall experience and you feel like you are more immersed in the brand.*
FG3, P13	*They like work together, they complement each other so if the stores kind of failed you, the website will bring up new experience or vice versa.*
BP1	*Even though I didn't purchase the product I have enjoyed this shopping journey. As the two channels I used complement each other to create a whole shopping experience.*
FG3, P15	*Normally positive because through all the different channels the chances are you are going to get the final product that you are after. Because even if it is not in store it's often online and so you will end up with what you want in the end.*
INT3	*[…] you feel that if you are part of quite a lot of their channels or something you might get benefits from it which they do.*

The study revealed that participants perceive their interactions across several channels form part of an overall experience, rather than as multiple separate customer engagement encounters. In such instances participants described how channels are complementary to one another and that by combining channels consumers perceived they would gain added summative benefits such as a stronger overall impression of the brand. The finding provides further support for the argument that high involvement consumers are channel agnostic in their perception of omnichannel interactions. The results emphasise that today's high involvement fashion consumers are those who are seeking brand experiences. Participants then went on to explain that they felt part of, and immersed in, the brand through a stronger overall brand experience. This finding agrees with Jones and Runyan (2013) that positive brand experiences intensify the overall attitude towards the brand. This point by participants also links back to social belonging because consumers feel more connected to and part of the brand. This is also supported by McAlexander, Kim and Roberts (2002) because brand community is a customer-centric model, as is also the case for omnichannel according to Peltola *et al.* (2015).

The findings of brand experience also link back to the literature discussion on brand management because brand management is concerned with emphasising a relationship and the importance of marketing in facilitating those brand relationships. This study helps to understand the decision journey for fashion from the consumers point of view as a single overall experience. Through this understanding retailers and marketers are better able to manage the customer relationship and ultimately the overall experience with the brand. Thus, the findings of the current study agree with Frow and Payne (2007) that it is about proactively managing the process to support the customer experience. The findings also concur with Kotler that cross-channel management is key because each interaction has either a positive or negative impact on the brand (Kotler *et al.,* 2013; Carlson and O'Cass, 2009) as this is correlated by the current study's findings on examining the emotional experiences of consumers across the journey for fashion.

7.7   Outcomes
Based upon the proposed framework in section 5.5 the study sought to understand the outcomes of an omnichannel customer decision-making journey for fashion. In the proposed framework, the study suggested that loyalty was the main consequence. Yet, the data collection revealed that in addition to loyalty, satisfaction, an enhanced brand relationship and trust were also outcomes in the final framework in section 7.8.

7.7.1   Satisfaction
Participants explained how they were satisfied with their omnichannel experience knowing that they had seen everything and being satisfied with the product and a seamless experience. The findings correspond with customer experience outcome of satisfaction by Brakus *et al.* (2009). One participant indicated that the failure to deliver a consistent experience would hinder being satisfied and another suggested they were just 'fairly satisfied' from because of the length of returns. The results further reinforce the final framework because satisfaction was based on the fulfilment of heightened consumer expectations. The verbatim comments of participants discuss being satisfied as a result of experiencing a seamless journey and one that is consistent and is indicated as follows:

INT1	Yeah I was really satisfied definitely.
INT8	Overall I would say I was pretty satisfied. Em because everything pretty much ran on time and there were no like major mess-ups. Yeah.
INT10	Yeah satisfied 'cause like I know that I've filtered it down I've looked at a lot of different aspects and yeah. Oh also I just thought of something after you buy something and it stays in store for like a long time after you bought it, and you see it start to pop up after you bought it, you see it. You feel like, oh you've made a good choice.
BP5	This [inconsistency] puts me off shopping with the retailer as I am given a preconceived image of not being satisfied with the shopping experience offered.
INT7	Yeah fairly satisfied I mean the only problem I had was returning and it wasn't that much of a problem it just took a really long time that's all.

7.7.2 Enhanced Brand Relationship

As a result of an omnichannel customer decision-making journey, consumers' relationship with the brand was enhanced. Participants began to view the brand as having human-like qualities, perceiving it as more of a friend than a retailer, which was unanticipated at the start of the study. Shoppers also felt a closer connection to the brand by interacting across a number of channels. The findings demonstrate a connection to the overall brand experience in the final framework. This is due to the fact that consumers have a multitude of interactions with a brand that culminate in the brand experience and that this regular connection and interaction enables the consumer to perceive the brand as more authentic. This is discussed further specifically in terms of humanising the brand and in developing a closer connection.

Humanising the Brand

Anthropomorphism has been previously discussed in marketing in instances where marketers seek to give human like personalities to brands (Fugate, 2007; Aaker , Fournier and Brasel, 2004). This is reinforced in the current findings, since the anthropomorphic quality manifested as a brand having their own individual identity and style and providing consumers with inspiration such as looks. What was particularly interesting was that the omnichannel customer decision-making journey for fashion facilitates the 'humanisation' of brands as participants viewed brands as 'friends' rather than simply as a retailer. For one participant, the human quality of a brand was highly evident as they viewed Topshop, not as a brand, but as the 'Topshop girl' and that the different channels reflected the 'Topshop girl'. This is interesting as Topshop is took the top spot in a survey of UK omnichannel fashion retailers (Kurt Salmon , 2014).

The findings also reinforce the need for brand consistency across channels in order to maintain a clear brand and to support the consumer's understanding a brand's identity and image. The finding also suggests that retailers should be delivering content across platforms not only about their product offering but about the brand lifestyle to support the consumer in perceiving the brand as human and thus further reinforce a strong and clear brand.

FG5, P25	They're just trying to be like a friend instead of just a shop.
INT11	I think so, it makes it like more like human in a way because they'll upload a picture of an outfit choice that they'll have just with different shoes and stuff and you're just kind of like yea, that's quite nice. So, they've created their own kind of style for their brand.
FINT3	Like I said a bit like, not like your friends, but when you see them like constantly, the brands like become like part of you. So, like when you see Topshop you're like oh yeah I am kind of Topshop […] Yeah just cause I am so engaged with it, like we said humanise it, it's more like my friend than H&M cause when I get emails and see ooh what's going on in Topshop […] Like I said a bit like, not like your friends, but when you see them like constantly, the brands like become like part of you. So, like when you see Topshop you're like oh yeah I am kind of Topshop.
FINT1	Yeah, it's almost like there's a person, because especially social media and things like that and Instagram things like that. So, it's kind of more someone you can interact with rather than going in store, buying something and leaving.
FINT6	But then with Topshop I think it's more so that sort of style and inspiration behind it. Like the girl behind it rather than like a logo. […] 'Cause I think there's sort of like a girl that is the Topshop

	girl and she is the girl you want to be. Because like the things on Topshop like the features and stuff are maybe stuff that the Topshop girl would like. And the Instagram accounts are maybe what the Topshop girl would like. […] I think it's about brand, like the Topshop girl. 'Cause I think it's all about the brand […] Oh, that's a thing about the Topshop girl I think. In Topshop the staff are very like the Topshop girl like come to life.
BP1	*I am constantly seeing updates from these retailers on Instagram, Facebook and email so I am very familiar with what they sell and feel like we are 'friends' in a way.*
FG5, P25	*They're just trying to be like a friend instead of just a shop.*
INT10	*I think so, it makes it like more like human in a way because they'll upload a picture of an outfit choice that they'll have just with different shoes and stuff and you're just kind of like yeah, that's quite nice.*

The omnichannel brand is about encouraging consumers to engage with the brand as much as possible. The outcomes provide further justification that technology has a role to play in raising omnichannel consumer engagement (Aubrey and Judge, 2012) and that social media facilitates engagement (Wallace *et al.,* 2014). Social media highlights the socialisation dimension of consumer brand engagement. This ties in with Gambetti *et al.* (2012) where brands disclosure progresses to brand embeddedness whereby brands are embedded in consumers daily lives and are regarded as 'life mates'.

Closer Connection
Following on from the previous paragraph and as a result of an omnichannel customer decision-making journey, participants had felt they had developed closer relationships with focal brands by engaging across an array of channels. This motivated participants to interact, feel more knowledgeable about the focal brand and also view the brand as better, than compared to others. Consequently, the findings agree with Gambetti et al. (2012) and Hollebeek (2011a) who identified that engagement is underpinned by a relationship between consumer and brand. The results also support the fact that omnichannel provides greater opportunities for brand engagement (Peltola *et al.,* 2015). Since omnichannel offers many channels whereby consumers may interact with a brand flexibly, when they want, and how they want, which perpetuates engagement, as illustrated:

BP1	*I definitely feel closer to brands, which I interact with across many channels.*
FINT2	*You build up a relationship because you're interacting with them over a lot of channels.*
BP7	*I feel that interacting with the brand across so many channels such as Apps, Websites, Instore, Email and following them on social media sites such as Twitter and Instagram strengthens my relationship with the brand.*
INT10	*Maybe just feel a bit more connected to the brand if you engage across channels.*
BP3	*However, yesterday I had more interaction with the collection that made me feel persuaded and encouraged to buy. […] I don't really think it changes my view of the brand, but I definitely feel more involved with retailers that have lots of channels like in store magazine and instagram and online.*
FG4, P23	*And like having, if they can, kind of build a bit of a relationship with you, 'cause if you've had a good experience with them and you get emails from them and they build your confidence or whatever. Like I suppose you have a connection to them then that then means that you want to check in with them every week or.*
FINT3	*Like as a better brand. I view Topshop as a better brand than H&M cause I have all the interactions and I don't know why.*
INT8	*I know personally I feel a lot more connected to say like River Island because I follow their PR which sort shows me behind the scenes on their photo shoots and things. So, you feel a lot more in the loop with what is going on.*

7.7.3 Trust
The concept of trust is related both as a consequence (Brodie et al., 2011; Vivek, Beatty and Morgan , 2012) and an antecedent of customer engagement (Bowden, 2009; Van Doorn et al., 2010; Brodie et al., 2011). Trust was an outcome of the omnichannel decision-making journey, and occurred as a result of participants continuously engaging with a brand, across various channels, for example:

BP2	*Constant interaction with the brand develops trust and a relationship.*

INT3	*So that builds my trust and just like seeing them everyday.*
FINT2	*You build up a relationship because you're interacting with them over a lot of channels.*
INT6	*It kind of…where you've got like Topshop in your home it makes it more, how to describe it, you have like more trust for it because you are always with it, if that makes sense.*
BP5	*In addition to this interactions with customer services across various channels increases my trust in a retailer, such as getting fast responses with regards to faulty products via sites such as Twitter.*

Trust occurred as a result of a seamless experience whereby customers could purchase with ease, their information was remembered, receiving a prompt customer service response across channels and if the brand was consistent, as indicated:

INT5	*If I can purchase it quickly and easily and if they remembered my products that I liked then it puts a lot of trust, it gives me a lot of faith in the retailer.*
BP5	*In addition to this interactions with customer services across various channels increases my trust in a retailer, such as getting fast responses with regards to faulty products via sites such as Twitter.*
INT10	*Em I suppose there's higher trust I suppose if it's really consistent between all the channels.*
INT9	*I think if they are all very similar and they are all linked I think that makes me trust them more.*
BP7	*I feel that the stronger the connection between a brands app, website and in-store look, the more likely I am to have confidence in the brand and see it as a trustworthy retailer that has a strong brand identity and really knows how to capture the attention of their target market.*

Trust further helps to understand why consumer expectations in an omnichannel customer decision-making journey are important and reinforces this relationship in the final thesis framework. The finding also highlights the development of trust through perceived risk. Since perceived risk is a necessary antecedent for trust and an outcome of trust building is the reduction of perceived risk on the transaction or relationship (Mitchell, 1999).

7.7.4 Loyalty

Loyalty was a further finding as a result of an omnichannel customer decision-making journey and loyalty is supported by empirical literature since loyalty is an outcome of customer engagement (Brodie et al., 2011; Hollebeek, 2011a; Bowden, 2009; Vivek, Beatty and Morgan, 2012). Furthermore, extant literature has asserted that omnichannel consumers are more loyal than their multichannel counterparts (IDC Retail Insights , 2010). Both seamlessness and consistency were important to stimulate loyalty, and this is outlined in the verbatim. The results revealed that a seamless experience, in terms of the ease of the experience, was important to shoppers. Meanwhile a consistent experience, in terms of the brand providing consistent image across channels, was also key. Furthermore, when channels were not consistent they had the potential to reduce a participant's loyalty. Loyalty was facilitated through participants constantly keeping up to date and interacting with retailers. This was further supported with consumers being able to flexibly interactions both whenever and however they choose.

FG1, P2	*It's all about like buying stuff, you want something and if you get it easily then you'll assume you'll do it again.*
BP4	*I found that the website and the app for ASOS are very easy to use, they communicate well with each other...any items I save into basket on the website or app are remembered which is really helpful. This blurring of channels keeps me a loyal customer.*
FINT4	*So you've got Tumblr, the blog and Twitter and everything and they're really consistent across everything so I guess that would kind of enhance my loyalty towards them.*
BP7	*It's this type of inconsistency that reduces the chances in me staying loyal to a brand.*
BP3	*I think I am more loyal to brands which do have consistent image over the channels because there are so many ways that make me feel part of the brand e.g. Topshop. By reading the magazine and looking online they, all have the same image and it makes me want to be a part of their loyal followers both online and by buying product.*
FG5, P26	*I'd go back because that was easy. Like I'd check this website or go back the store because I really enjoyed that, and it worked last time.*
BP5	*I would say that my loyalty towards my favourite retailers is reasonably high (Topshop, River Island, Missguided) This is mainly due to the fact that I enjoy my shopping experience with them*

	whether it be in store, online or in the mobile app.
BP1	*I am very loyal to Topshop and River Island and trust them greatly due to the many levels of communication I have with them.*
INT3	*If anything, more loyal because you just keep up to date with them a bit more. You kind of know a bit more about the company. A bit more about what's going on.*
INT5	*I think it's increased a lot yeah, […] It has made me more loyal because I can go shopping anywhere and at any point and look at the different products and the way that they look on the app and the way they look on the online website. I find it quite encouraging having these different ways to look at things and if they're well managed by the retailer it's just going to make me more loyal.*

The findings start to answer emerging questions on omnichannel such as, ''*how can omnichannel managers enhance customer loyalty?*'' (Mirsch et al., 2016; Verhoef et al., 2015). Retailers now need to meet customer expectations with regards to seamlessness and consistency. The results confirm earlier findings that omnichannel encounters are better at serving the customer when they want and how they want (Accenture, 2016; Thoughtworks, 2012; Peltola , Vainio and Nieminen, 2015).

7.8   Framework

Figure 36 presents a final framework to examine the stages of consumer decision-making in the omnichannel journey for young high involvement female fashion consumers. The framework in Figure 36 illustrates the findings from the qualitative study and is a revision of the original framework presented earlier in this thesis, in Figure 27. The final framework is designed to respond to research objective 3 of the current study which sought to analyse themes from the data collection to develop a theoretical framework that refines, evaluates and reflects the decision-making journey for fashion consumers in the omnichannel environment. The framework reveals a new and more complex decision journey for the fashion consumer and this is discussed in the paragraphs which follow.

Consumer Characteristics
The original framework identified the consumer characteristics of demographics: namely age and gender, consumer resources, shopping motivation, consumer attitude of involvement and also past experience. Demographics was consistent in both the original and final framework. However, the final framework shows some differences compared to the pre-data collection framework. A key change based on the original framework was that consumer resources in terms of financial resources were identified instead as a lifecycle stage which brings together the factors of income, occupation and education level. This was more reflective of participants experiences because being students denoted the education level of participants but also constrained individuals when shopping for fashion because participants had a limited income. This impacted consumer decision-making for fashion since participants would shopping around to obtain the best value for money along with ending journeys at wishlists and basket curation due to not being able to afford the purchase.

Shopping motivations and the consumer attitude were merged because of the interrelationship between the two factors. High involvement consumers discussed distinct motivations for their shopping journey. Firstly, participants discussed the motivation of fear of missing out. This highlights a high involvement consumer's desire to keep up to date with fashion. Secondly, participants discussed the need for brand engagement and interaction as a shopping motivation. High involvement fashion consumers seek to interact and form relationship with brands and be involved with them. For past experience, high involvement consumers used brands as a heuristic in simplifying decision making and would engage regularly with these brands reinforcing the desire for a brand relationship. Thus, highlighting brand as a risk reduction strategy. Therefore, the influence of brands transcends not only the stages of decision-making but also beforehand.

The revised framework identifies a relationship between the consumer characteristics and channels. This is because these digital native consumers were conversant in using a range of channels as part of their shopping decision journey, as it was their norm. Another interesting finding was that participants felt it necessary to have reached a point of saturation by looking the

array of different channels (exhausting all of the channels) before progressing onto the next stage of the journey.

Situational Moderators

Situational moderators were also evaluated in the final framework. The pre-data collection framework recognised the situational moderators of physical setting, antecedent state, temporal and social situational moderators. Social moderators were removed as these were articulated when consumers discussed the social context of decision making through the of channels such as social media. In the final framework, a relationship was identified between the situational moderators and the choice of channels because of the factors of the time available, the consumers antecedent state and the physical setting.

Expectations of a Seamless Experience and a Consistent Brand

An unanticipated contribution to the final framework was that it recognised that high involvement fashion consumers possess expectations of their shopping journey and ultimately the brand experience. The expectations reflect how the high involvement consumer is accustomed to traversing across the stages of the journey using different channels and devices. As a consequence of this, the high involvement fashion consumer holds expectations as to the consistency of the brand in terms of the brand identity, the brand image, promotional communications, product presentation, product pricing and product stock visibility across channels. In achieving this consistency, it reassures the consumer because this creates a clear brand in the mind of the consumer. Consequently, a relationship was identified in the new framework between the expectations of consistency and channels because consumers expressed the need for promotional and brand elements to be standardised across channels in order to create a strong and clear brand that the consumer was able to identify and understand more easily. The expectations of consistency were also identified as an area of risk reduction; however, these risk reduction factors are ones that retail brand have a lot of control over and can actively manage.

Expectations of a seamless experience highlight that a fashion retailer should deliver an experience across channels and stages without any glitches that would interrupt the flow of the journey. Aspects of a seamless customer experience refer to delivery wait, the expectation of delivery cost in terms of a free delivery or offer of a subscription, the ability to return and refund in the store channel, the expectation that customer details and customer wishlist and basket information would be saved regardless of channel to ensure a smooth transition between channels and finally, the expectation on staff to possess cross-channel knowledge. Thus, for expectations of a seamless customer experience a relationship was identified between seamlessness and channels because of the smooth transition that consumers sought across channels. A further relationship was identified between a seamless experience and the stages of the journey as a seamless experience is about consumers being able to progress through the stages of the journey and some of the heightened expectations consumers held about the customer experience expected at different stages of the journey e.g. delivery.

Recognition of the Brand Experience

In line with the findings of the study, the framework recognises that the stages, the affective experience, the different channels and devices all form part of the consumers overall brand experience. This reflects the consumer perspective whereby interactions are not with a channel but with a brand. As an example of this, consumers at the purchase stage may use one channel to make the purchase but seek to return the garment via another channel and therefore both of these interactions at different stages of the decision journey are part of a single overall encounter with the brand. These encounters also reflect the brand.

The brand experience is represented in the new framework and this is revision to the pre-data collection framework. Within this section of the framework the study contributes to knowledge by identifying the different channels, devices and affective experiences that occur at each stage of the journey to a gap in knowledge. The layout of these is adjusted in the final framework with channels and devices grouped together to more simply articulate their relationship with one another. The affective experience is positioned above the channels and beneath stages to reflect

the relationship between the stages and the affective experience. The new framework is extended by mapping out the distinct emotional experiences across the journey and identify the returns stages as an important and particularly negative part of the journey.

The stages of the omnichannel decision-making journey for fashion has been refined and extended. The inspiration stage identifies the point before consumers recognise the need for a fashion item which contrasts the original framework. Research and comparison reflect the fact that digital channels mean that consumers are able to research and compare simultaneously unlike the original decision process. Evaluation in the final framework is much richer highlighting tactile, social and internal evaluation activities. The inspiration, evaluation and show and share stage highlight the omnichannel journey as a distinctly social experience and also at post-purchase consumers seek to show and share purchases with brands by tagging them. The show and share stage also serves as an inspiration for other consumers on their own journey, therefore this is indicated by the arrow.

The current study extends decision-making further by marking out distinct post-purchase stages to reflect the digital environment and the impact that this has on consumer decision-making and commitment to a purchase. This also emphasises the importance that high involvement consumers place on post-purchase stages of the journey. Across each of the stages consumers demonstrate a preference for specific channels to optimise the decision journey.

Risk
The shaded areas of the framework highlight points in the journey where risk is evident. Within the stages of the journey the influence of risk is across the stages of research and comparison, evaluation, purchase, delivery returns, along with show and share. This recognises, at a granular level, the influence of risk across decision-making. Participants employed an array of risk reduction strategies across each of the aforementioned stages of the journey. For example, at evaluation consumers would consult peers using their mobile prior to making a purchase decision. Therefore, the findings concur with Dowling and Staelin (1994) and Sheth and Venkatesan (1968) that consumers possess a wide range of risk reduction strategies.

Taking a more holistic and less granular view of risk this framework reveals is that the omnichannel decision-making journey is one which is predicted on risk. High involvement consumers perceive a fashion shopping decision as a high stakes decision and risk is highly evident throughout the omnichannel journey. With respect to risk the findings agree with the literature by Cox and Rich (1964) that the intensity of risk is based upon the amount at stake and the feeling of potential gain and loss as a result of the decision. However, the framework also provides a clear understanding of how risk can be managed. For examples consumers hold expectations of a seamless and consistent experience. These are elements of the journey which are in the control of the brand and if executed successfully a seamless and consistent experience can help to reassure consumers from the outset. Consumer characteristics highlights how the consumer uses past experience with a brand as a risk reduction strategy while situational moderators identify handled risks associated with the decision journey e.g. temporal risk can affect channel choice.

Outcomes
The extended framework provides more outcomes compared to the pre-data collection framework. In addition to loyalty, the final framework identified: satisfaction, enhanced brand relationship and also trust. Satisfaction recognises the fulfilment of consumer expectations. An enhanced brand relationship occurred as a result of a closer connection across the variety of channels and the consumer viewing the brand as having human like qualities. Trust was developed through the constant interaction with the brand over the journey.

Figure 36 Theoretical Framework for the Thesis
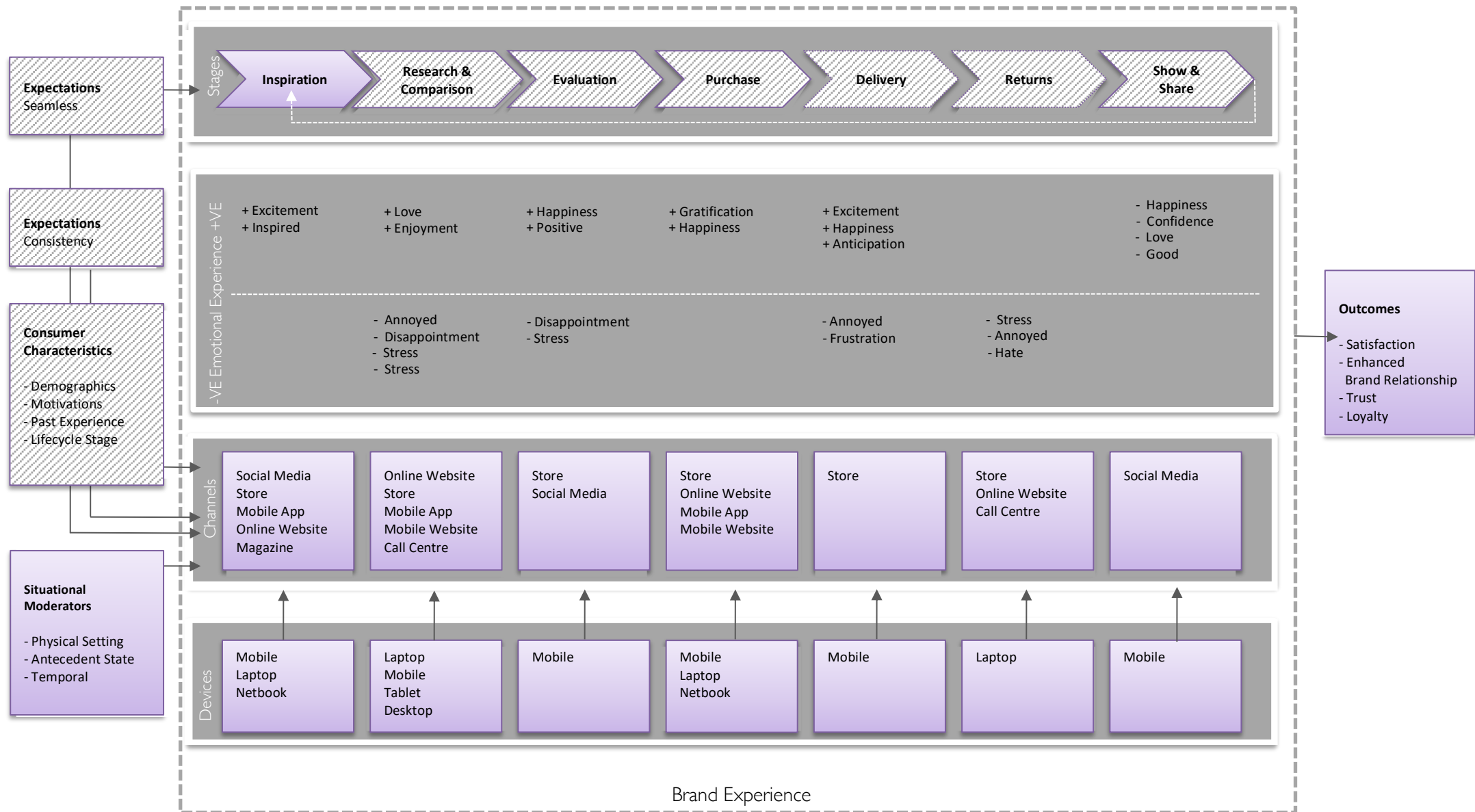
7.9   Using a Multiple Methods Approach

The study benefitted from a multi-method approach to provide rich responses from participants. The benefit of this approach was illustrated by participants who explained that their shopping journey was a subconscious one. Therefore, participants were not consciously aware of all of the steps or the different activities which they participated in. What was also evident during the photo-elicitation interview stage specifically was that while consumers mapped their journey's they did not map all of the stages of their shopping journey in the mapping task and instead ended up discussing additional stages in conversation during the interview, blog and follow-up interview. Therefore, the range of methods was helpful in uncovering the extent of a customer decision-making journey for fashion.

FINT2	*Yeah, it's not a conscious of what I'm doing. But when I break it down I can see that, I can definitely say that I always follow that pattern.*
BP3	*Many of the bloggers I read such as WeWoreWhat (below Instagram photo) styled sweatshirts so i subconsciously started searching for one on the internet and in store.*
INT7	*'Cause I mean I think if I wanted to buy something it doesn't really enter my head that I need to look on Instagram. I just kind of do it.*
INT8	*It's something that I never really think about […] I didn't realise it was this long.*
INT9	*It's quite hard to remember […] It's funny like remembering things. I actually did that as well.*
FINT5	*Yeah, I remember we were like oh no I do that. That sounds like me.*
BP5	*usually don't even realise that the start of a shopping journey has begun.*

7.10 Chapter Summary

The stages of the omnichannel customer decision-making journey for young, high involvement female fashion consumers was explored and discussed in this chapter and the results are based on the qualitative findings of the study. As an output of this research, a framework has been developed to depict the omnichannel customer decision-making journey for young high involvement female fashion consumers with specific attention to brand and risk. The study identified the factors that influence the omnichannel journey, such as: consumer characteristics, situational moderators and expectations. The study also outlines the decision-making stages of the customer journey in detail, reflecting the different channels and devices used, along with the emotional experience. Finally, the framework indicated the outcomes shoppers perceive as a result of a customer decision-making journey for fashion. These findings can be used by retailers and marketers to understand channel and device preferences across the stages of the journey. The primary data pinpoints the expectations held by consumers before commencing an omnichannel customer decision-making journey which has helped to understand the omnichannel concept and how the concept manifests from the perspective of the customer. Furthermore, the weak stages of the journey have been identified which retailers need prioritise for improvement in order to enhance customer experience, namely customer returns. The findings support the research aim and research objectives of the investigation, as outlined in chapter one. Following on from the results and discussion, the final chapter will continue to evaluate the findings in a practical capacity and point forward to future study on omnichannel for the fashion retailing domain.

8   Chapter Eight Conclusion

8.1   Introduction

The aim of this study was to examine the omnichannel concept and the stages of the customer decision-making journey for young high involvement female fashion consumers. There has been widespread industry reporting on omnichannel as a success strategy for future retail (Barnes, 2014). However, omnichannel retailers are still struggling to achieve best practice across all consumer channels (Kurt Salmon, 2012). Through the research process, a literature review was conducted to understand the context of the study and empirical research. The study commenced during 2012, at a time when omnichannel studies were limited. Throughout the duration of the project the literature has been constantly evolving and the concept of omnichannel has been somewhat of a moveable feast.

Primary data was collected in order to answer the aim and objectives set out within the introductory chapter of the study. The methodology employed a multi-phase data collection process and consisted of focus groups, in-depth interviews, shopper blog diaries along with follow-up interviews. This provided a comprehensive in-depth data set which was analysed within the results and discussion chapter. The goal of the conclusion chapter is to therefore consolidate the research inquiry of this thesis. This will be achieved through examining how the research aim and accompanying objectives have been achieved, outlining the impact of the current work for both the academic and practitioner communities and providing directions for future research.

8.2   Revisiting the Research Aim and Objectives

The aim of this thesis was to examine the stages of consumer decision-making in the omnichannel journey for young high involvement female fashion consumers. The study provides fashion retailers with an insight into the channels, devices and consumer affective experience at each stage of a decision-making journey for fashion. The study also examines consumer brand experience and the role of risk. The findings reveal that the omnichannel concept is one borne out of consumers heightened expectations of shopping across channels and that the omnichannel decision-making journey is predicated on risk. The study reflects the fact fashion consumers are now well-accustomed to engaging with brands in a variety of ways. It is therefore intended that this research should act as a basis for future studies on omnichannel fashion retailing. The objectives of research have now been fulfilled and a synopsis of these are indicated as follows:

1. To review the theoretical foundation of consumer decision-making in the omnichannel context based upon literature from omnichannel retailing, fashion consumer behaviour and customer journey, in order to develop a research framework.

Literature for the study was analysed in chapters 2, 3 and 4. Chapter 2 analysed the evolution of retailing from bricks and mortar through to omnichannel, as well as providing an understanding of the definition of the omnichannel concept. The chapter also analysed the key drivers in adopting an omnichannel approach. Chapter 3 analysed fashion consumer behaviour to understand the influence of fashion as a product category and to examine the consumer decision process as a consumer behaviour-based theoretical underpinning for the study. Chapter 4 explored the theme of customer journey to understand how the theme has been previously applied to research studies.

The literature culminated in the presentation of a proposed research framework in chapter 5. Due to the complexity and broad perspectives of omnichannel, the framework was useful for identifying what was in and out of scope of the study. In addition, chapter 5 also featured a discussion on established consumer behaviour-based frameworks to build upon the earlier discussion of Blackwell *et al.'s* (2006) consumer decision process model. By doing so, this helped to reinforce that the consumer decision process was the most appropriate theoretical basis from which to examine the omnichannel customer decision-making journey. The proposed framework in chapter five then served as a basis for the subsequent stages of data collection.

2. To employ a range of qualitative techniques, namely: focus groups, interviews and shopper diaries in order to examine consumer decision-making at an in-depth level in the context of the omnichannel journey for fashion.

Chapter 6 outlined the methodology for this exploratory research study. The choice of techniques was also justified as per sections 6.6.2 and 6.7. The data collection approach encompassed focus groups, interviews and shopper blog diaries. Follow-up interviews were also added to provide an additional opportunity to ask participants about their shopper diary responses. The sample of the study consisted of young, high involvement female fashion aged between 18-24 years.

3. To analyse themes from the data collection to develop a theoretical framework that refines, evaluates and reflects the decision-making journey for fashion consumers in the omnichannel environment.

Chapter 7 set out the results and discussion following the data collection. The specific findings of section 7.5 outlined the stages of the omnichannel decision-making journey for fashion, responding to the aim of this study. Further findings emerged from the work, including the identification of the emotional experiences of consumers as they progress through their journey and an identification of the channels and devices engaged with at each stage. The study also revealed the situational and consumer moderators affecting an omnichannel customer decision-making journey, along with the expectations held by consumers from the outset of their encounter. Finally, the outcomes as a result of an omnichannel decision-making journey, were also depicted. The data collection and resultant themes then culminated in a final theoretical model of the omnichannel customer decision-making journey for high involvement female fashion consumers, which is presented in section 7.8.

4. To analyse how the shopping behaviour of young high involvement female fashion consumers has changed and the impact this has on decision-making, specifically in terms of perceived risk in the context of an omnichannel shopping journey.

Section 3.7 sought to examine the literature relating to perceived risk. The literature found that risk pervades the stages of decision-making and therefore presented a granular view of risk. The fashion product category provides a unique lens through which risk can be examined because apparel is a product category that is reflective of the self and the consequences of getting such a purchase wrong can present consequences for the individual such as negatively affecting self-esteem. This understanding of the product category demonstrates that fashion is a high-risk product category and a high stakes decision situation for a consumer that is highly involved in fashion. Compounding this risk is the rise of remote channels that has presented new risks both in the shopping process such as security, and also for fashion, by not being able to physically interact with the product. The results and discussion indicated throughout chapter 7 reveal that high involvement fashion consumers employ distinct risk reduction strategies across the stages omnichannel journey and have high expectations of the journey which need to be met in order to provide the consumer with reassurance. At a holistic level, the study draws the conclusion that the omnichannel decision journey for high involvement consumers is one that is predicated on risk.

5. To examine the distinct role that brands play in consumer decision-making in an omnichannel fashion retail context.

Within the literature, section 3.6 was dedicated to examining the role of brand and fashion consumer decision-making. Within this section links between brand and omnichannel were also discussed. The literature was focused upon analysing the role and importance of brand from a brand management perspective to ensure that customer expectations are fulfilled and also the unique importance of brand for the fashion consumer perspective. From the literature, there was a need to explore how brand management must now transcend channels. The findings of the data collection in section 7.4 explored the expectations that consumers hold with regard to omnichannel brands while section 7.6 took a holistic view of the relationship between brand and

omnichannel, emphasising the importance of brand experience in the omnichannel decision journey. Brand was also discussed across the decision stages in section 7.5.

8.3   Contribution to Knowledge

Dholakia *et al.* (2010) argues that the growing profusion of multiple retail channels offers significant opportunities to develop both basic and disciplinary knowledge and generate managerial implications. Alongside this, calls for further research have suggested that studies on omnichannel fashion retail marketing are likely to be valued by practitioners (Barnes, 2014). The purpose of this thesis was to provide a contribution to knowledge that transcends both the theoretical and commercial perspective, these are outlined as follows

8.3.1   Theoretical Contribution

The purpose of this research was to examine the omnichannel customer decision-making journey of young high involvement female fashion consumers. The need for this research is to theoretically document what is presently occurring within fashion retailing, whereby customers are interacting and engaging with a variety of different channels as part of the overall journey and experience and to present a framework mapping these interactions. The importance of the research is embedded in the fact that retailers are yet to achieve best practice in adopting an omnichannel approach and this, combined with a tougher retail trading climate, means that retailers need to optimise their omnichannel strategy by viewing it from the perspective of the customer. Customers do not view different channel interactions in isolation of one another, but instead, view their experience as a holistic interaction with a brand. The contributions to theoretical knowledge include:

A New Model for Contemporary Consumer Shopping Journeys
Retailing has evolved, with high involvement consumers now being accustomed to engaging with an array of channels. Despite such developments, the intrinsic nature of the customer decision process has remained largely unchanged since its original development pre-internet and there is a need to provide an enhanced view of consumers interactions. As an example, the Blackwell *et al.* (2006) model of consumer decision process does not reflect shoppers' interactions with technology.

In parallel to consumer decision process model, the concept of the customer decision-making journey has emerged as a new concept which is designed to present a richer view of consumers interactions. Such models are still emerging and applications of them are somewhat limited. Wolny and Charoensuksai's (2014) application of Molenaar's (2012) ORCA model identified stages of the shopping journey and channels used but the model derives from practitioner rather than empirical literature and therefore the stages are not as comprehensive as the consumer decision process. Furthermore, the post-purchase stage of the customer journey by Wolny and Charoensuksai (2014) is simply one stage unlike the numerous stages used to signify pre-purchase, in the same model. As an alternative customer journey model the Crosier Handford (2012) map identifies the need to explore consumers positive and negative experiences and whilst this useful it lacks the detail of Wolny and Charoensuksai's (2014) study and is not focused on retail. Lastly, the multichannel customer management framework by Neslin et al. (2006) reflects consumers channel interactions but only presents a simplistic view of journey stages. Hence, what this research has attempted is to bring together these frameworks together in a revised format.

The new framework contributes to knowledge by providing a consumer behaviour-based journey model which extends the original consumer decision process. The model brings together numerous clusters of research which have been discussed in the literature review to present a richer picture of high involvement consumers' decision-making journey for fashion. Principally the framework highlights an enhanced range of stages, focuses on the key channels and devices used at each given stage, as well as showing the emotional experience of high involvement consumers throughout the journey. The contribution is that the consumer decision process should not be discarded but revised and updated to reflect the influence of technology and consumer preferences for shopping across channels, using a variety of devices.

New Stages of The Omnichannel Customer Decision-Making Journey
The output of the research identified new stages in the omnichannel customer decision-making journey. These stages are depicted in section 7.5 and in the final framework of this thesis in section 7.8. The inspiration stage was discussed in section 7.5.1 and the stage illustrated instances where high involvement consumers would browse to gain new inspiration and ideas. The finding contributes to knowledge, as it is the first stage when shopping specifically for fashion. Although Wolny and Charoensuksai (2014) identified a similar stage called orientation; the study was focused on cosmetics purchases. The evaluation stage in section 7.5.3 further contributes by demonstrating the extent to which social media technology influences decision-making with the customer decision-making journey for fashion. High involvement shoppers would actively seek the opinions of others before purchase, by sharing links and images. The strength of social media was evident as individuals explained that while they may have liked an item following their own evaluation they would then disregard the product following negative evaluations from peers on social media. The evaluation stage also highlighted the digital aspects of using wishlists and basket functions as a way for high involvement consumers to collate potential items for purchase and to serve as an end-point in the fashion shopping journey when users did not or were not able to purchase fashion products.

Delivery was also recognised as a new stage within the omnichannel customer decision-making journey, as shown in section 7.5.5. The delivery stage contributes to knowledge since the traditional consumer decision process does not explore how a customer obtains a product but instead considers purchase and then moves straight to consumption. The customer decision-making journey model offered by Wolny and Charoensuksai (2014) encapsulates all post-purchase activity as one stage post-purchase. It is necessary for the delivery stage to be stated as an independent stage. The stage provoked a plethora of emotions, often negative emotions. In a similar vein, a returns stage also formed part of the journey. The inclusion of this stage reflected high involvement consumer behaviours, in line with section 3.9.5, where these high involvement shoppers would increasingly make returns due to free returns facilities they would over order items.

Lastly, the show and share stage discussed in section 7.5.7 described instances where high involvement consumers took pictures and shared these via social media. However, what was most interesting was that participants would tag retailers in these posts. The stage highlighted the importance of brand engagement and the importance of fashion in reinforcing self-concept for these young, high involvement consumers.

Risk within High Involvement Decision-Making
The work of this thesis contributes to knowledge on risk within decision-making specifically for the omnichannel context. This study concludes that the omnichannel journey for fashion is one which is predicated on risk and that young high involvement female fashion consumers will utilise specific strategies in order to reduce the risk associated with fashion consumer decision-making. Risk in the omnichannel journey manifests itself in several different ways.

At a holistic level, the findings reveal that the degree and intensity of risk for high involvement consumers is significant in an omnichannel decision making journey for fashion because these consumers are highly involved in the product category. Consequently, the omnichannel decision journey is about avoiding making a wrong purchase decision. The stakes of getting a fashion purchase wrong are high for this particular group of shoppers because it could present negative consequences for the individual e.g. affecting self-esteem. Consequently, these high involvement consumers are more sensitive to risk and dissonance. This risk is also compounded by the fact that the retail environment is now highly complex and customer decision-making transcends both physical and digital channels.

At a granular level the study contributes to existing knowledge of risk across the decision process. This study identifies that high involvement consumers will employ specific risk reduction strategies in order to mitigate the effects of risk. At the research and comparison stage the high involvement consumer will utilise an array of channels to research a product and until they reach a point of

saturation across these channels in order to feel that they are not missing out on anything. At the evaluation stage, high involvement consumers will reduce risk by utilising wishlists and baskets to curate and contemplate items and the use of the social media channel to seek opinions on potential purchases from friends. The omnichannel environment therefore makes high involvement consumers more vulnerable because of the extensive amount information available to consumers and because of the fact that an omnichannel decision-journey for fashion is a more social experience. Furthermore, this consumer group still place high value on the store channel as part of their risk reduction strategy because of issues with fashion garment fit and sizing. At the purchase stage, high involvement consumers utilise channels to reduce risk. For instance, financial loss is minimised by shoppers seeking discount codes across channels and reviewing returns policies. As the study identified new stages of the shopping journey for fashion, delivery was shown to be another important stage where high involvement consumers would seek to reduce time loss by using facilities such as click and collect for speed. At the returns stage, high involvement consumers show the full extent of their risk and specifically dissonance reduction by extensive returning of products as a result of over-ordering garments in order to reduce the potential of missing out on a desired item. At the show and share stage high involvement consumers would share images of their products through social networks to further validate their purchase and showcase what they have bought which highlights further evidence of a dissonance reduction strategy.

The findings revealed that consumer characteristics highlight evidence of risk reduction strategies in use at the outset of the journey. In this case brands serve as an important decision heuristic in the omnichannel journey whereby customers would rely on their own past experience with brands to aid them in their decision journey. A further finding was that the expectations (section 7.4) that consumers possess of their omnichannel journey highlights ways in which consumers are actively seeking reassurance from fashion brands. Brands therefore need to be proactive in managing the risks associated with the omnichannel journey.

The Role of Brand
The study asserts that the role of the brand in an omnichannel decision-making journey is about delivering a brand experience. Today, channels are combined and integrated through technology and the findings reveal that high involvement consumers are engaging in elaborate journeys for fashion. Consequently, the brand experience becomes very powerful in the omnichannel journey because it transcends the array of channels, devices and decision-making stages. High involvement fashion consumers perceive that interactions lie not with each individual channel but are instead contribute to cumulative interactions that create the brand experience and that form an overall impression of the brand in the consumer's mind. Therefore, what distinguishes omnichannel from multichannel is that omnichannel has a specific mandate to manage the brand experience.

The importance of the brand experience presents a specific implication for brand management theory in that the brand experience now needs to be managed proactively across channels and brand managers need to have an awareness that that every interaction, regardless of channel or stage of the journey, affects how the brand is perceived. The role of brand also provides a lens to better understand high involvement consumer decision-making for fashion. Consumers now hold heightened expectations for the decision journey. In terms seeking a brand that is consistent across channels. High involvement fashion consumers seek a strong brand that is clear in who it is trying to target. Therefore, the delivery of a consistent omnichannel brand serves as a means by which to provide reassurance for the consumer that they have made the right choice. This is particularly important for high involvement fashion consumers who choose brands to communicate their identity both for themselves and to others. For example, the need to receive social validation and the importance of achieving this was also fostered towards the end of the omnichannel decision-making journey, whereby participants would show and share purchases. Ultimately, brand management in the omnichannel environment is about projecting a strong and clear brand. By doing so this reduces risk for high involvement consumers making.

This study asserts that high involvement consumers are characterised by those who seek a brand experience. In the omnichannel environment high involvement shoppers for fashion are now able

to access the brand experience whenever and however they choose and using ubiquitous devices consumers have access to the brand in their pocket. Omnichannel enables the brand experience and therefore facilitates high involvement behaviour among consumers enabling them to feed their high involvement need for information seeking as much as they wish and by providing opportunities to continuously engage with brands. Even at post-purchase these high involvement consumers were seeking to engage with fashion brands post-transaction and used social media to tag the brands most recently purchased. Over time, this relationship between the high involvement consumer and the omnichannel brand experience creates the foundation for a deeper relationship between the consumer and the brand.

Emotional Experience as part of the Customer Decision-Making Journey
The omnichannel customer journey seeks to illustrate how consumers are affected as a result of their experience at different stages of their journey. The results and discussion chapter suggested that consumers experience an emotional roller coaster of highs and lows across the omnichannel customer decision-making journey. The findings of this research provide a detailed map of these emotional experiences throughout the journey and is one of the earliest omnichannel studies to do so.

Channel and Device Usage at Each Stage of the Journey
The study provides a holistic view of channel and device usage across the stages of the journey for fashion, as can be found within section 7.5. The findings respond to the call for research by Lemon and Verhoef (2016) who suggest there is a need to understand the customer perspectives of the purchase journey and to identify the specific touchpoints/channels that occur throughout their journey, as well as trigger points within it. Whilst there is a significant body of research on omnichannel a key strength of this work is that it has taken a holistic approach in identifying where the various channels and devices fit into the overall journey. This is important in order to deepen knowledge as to how channels are used in context and more specifically, explain why they are used at specific stages, rather than focusing on channels isolation of one another. This is because omnichannel encompasses, "the full spectrum of channels" and it is about the consumer experiencing the brand rather than its channels (Bhalla, 2014). The social media channel was employed during the inspiration, evaluation and show and share stages and this illustrates the omnichannel customer decision-making journey as a highly social experience. Meanwhile the use of the store channel was necessary for more challenging activities during the journey, such as at evaluation, purchase along with dealing with deliveries and returns. The results revealed that consumers engaged in simultaneous channel usage, for example using mobile and store channels together. Simultaneous channel usage is an activity which therefore distinguishes omnichannel as opposed to multichannel usage and consumers are engaging in multiple channels to enhance their overall experience. For devices, the preference for mobile phone usage was key and consequently, retailers need to prioritise the mobile channel for delivering an optimum customer experience for young fashion consumers. The usage of mobile phones also suggest that these consumers are also engaging in a customer decision-making journey for fashion more ubiquitously.

Expectations of Omnichannel Encounters
A fundamental contribution to the understanding of the omnichannel concept was that omnichannel retail is a strategy borne out of high involvement consumers heightened expectations of shopping across an array of channels. This distinguishes omnichannel from the integrated multichannel retailing. Within section 7.4 of the study participants discussed their expectations these included recognition of a seamless and consistent experience. These findings not only contributed to distinguishing omnichannel from multichannel, but the responses of participants also contributed in a further way because consumers explained how, for example a seamless experience, actually manifests in the eyes of the consumer. This aids in providing greater detail to the omnichannel definitional elements for example by explaining what exactly a seamless experience means. This also connects to the brand experience in terms of understanding what high involvement consumers expect from an omnichannel journey. Also, by brands ensuring that they deliver both a seamless and consistent experience this means that the brands are able to reduce risk in the mind of the consumer and act as a source of reassurance as well.

Methodological Contribution
From the outset, this research was positioned as a study on the depth of decision-making. By using the same participants across the four distinct phases of qualitative data collection the study was able to probe deeper into consumers to develop a richer view of the decision-making journey in the omnichannel fashion context. The research itself became a journey and through the process of delving deeper and deeper and this helped to demonstrate the robustness of the findings as each phase helped to reinforce the findings of the other phases to ultimately deliver a comprehensive and robust framework. Due to the phases of data collection the participant the was also able to become more and more involved. The study also demonstrated the value of the researcher as a participant in the journey responding through building a relationship with the respondents and as demonstrated at the digital shopper diaries. During shopping diary data collection, further questions were asked of participants via the online blog and responses were received in real time thus facilitating engagement between the researcher and the participant. Participants were able to date stamp their diaries, and upload a variety of media such as text, share images and links to provide richer diary accounts. Using the Google Blogger app proved to be convenient since these millennial females could download the app on their phone and upload from wherever and whenever they choose to edit and amend, rather than being restricted to traditional paper diaries.

8.3.2   Commercial Contribution

Taking a practitioner perspective, the study finds that there are a number of practical implications for retailers and marketers to take away from this study, to better understand and optimise customer decision-making journeys effectively. Each of the commercial contributions are detailed, as follows:

Customer Journey Mapping as a Tool for Strategy
The findings of this study assert that customer journey mapping is a tool which is helpful when developing an overall marketing strategy. Customer journey mapping enables practitioners to view the overall experience through the eyes of the customer. It forms a blueprint of the key stages that a consumer will go through when shopping for fashion and shows how channels and devices are used at different points. By using the customer decision journey approach, it enables managers to understand what the priorities are for the brand in delivering a better overall experience and the tool is a convenient way to disseminate these priorities across business functions.

The customer decision-making journey tool is also practical aid to enable brands to re-evaluate their existing strategy. Practitioners can use the tool as a method to fault-find issues by looking at consumers emotional experiences over the course of a journey to close the gap between the ideal and actual brand experience. An organisation is only as good as the weakest point of its customer decision-making journey. By identifying negative emotional experiences retail marketers and managers can conduct further research to understand the key challenges with a particular journey stage and aim to improve these areas by exploring what customers value during their encounter. As an example, this could lead to improvements in logistics, channel experience or marketing communications. For example, in the present study delivery stage it proved to be a key source of negative emotions and general frustration. These journey maps and emotional maps, in particular, may also provide justification as to why the business performance may be poorer than expected for a brand.

Omnichannel Journey Expectations
The results of the study reveal that consumers hold expectations for an omnichannel shopping journey related to the seamlessness and consistency of the experience. This reflects how consumers have now become so accustomed to shopping across multiple channels that they now hold benchmarks about how retailers should perform.

Consumers expect that an omnichannel customer decision-making journey should be seamless and this manifests through the journey being a smooth, positive experience throughout without any problems. From the outset of the journey, shoppers expected the delivery wait for a product to be kept to a minimum and the option of a free delivery, in order to proceed to purchase. This

puts pressure on operational resources to deliver both of these aspects and without these consumers may abandon purchases. The sample participants did, however, express that they were open to paying for delivery subscriptions. Therefore, fashion retailers need to offer this as an option as it is mutually beneficial for the brand, by absorbing at least some of the cost of fulfilment, and in-turn it provides convenience to the shopper. Furthermore, this option may delineate a group of consumers as being particularly loyal since they may choose to shop at a brand more because of signing up to the subscription. Another seamless expectation that participants held in relation to returns was that shoppers should be able to return items across all of the brands channels and particularly the store, where at present this is not always the case. Shoppers also expect that their information should be saved across channels and that they should not have to re-enter this when switching channels. Again, this finding could aid in minimising abandonment of shopping journeys simply by reducing the effort for the consumer to complete the decision. There were also specific seamless implications related to the use of customer wishlists and baskets. Customers stated that the information they store on wishlists and baskets should be available regardless of the channel used therefore retailers need to develop systems to support a single view of the customer not only for the brand but because it is beneficial to the customers themselves. Finally, consumers expected store staff to have cross-channel knowledge. Shoppers are realistic and know that staff cannot know everything but there is a need for brands to brief store teams on updates occurring in other channels so that staff can confidently respond to consumers queries more efficiently.

Omnichannel fashion shoppers also possess expectations about the consistency of the brand which manifests as the consistency of the promotional mix across channels. Retailers need to ensure that the brand identity such as fonts, social media filters, artwork, logos and messages are of a consistent style regardless of the channel used. This is important since consumers seek to render a clear brand image in their own mind and brand elements which are inconsistent could make an individual question the brand. The ideal modus operandi is for marketing managers to have cross-channel responsibility in order to protect the brand across channels. However, in instances where this does not occur the brand guidelines for a fashion retailer should clearly identify the cross-channel brand management including the management of brand identity elements which should remain consistent across channels. The brand guidelines should also have sections that focus on the brands key channels and also explain how the brand should be represented. For example, a social media should talk about the use of filters, artwork selection and brand tone of voice. Promotional marketing communications must also be consistent across channels in terms of offer and discount redemptions being valid regardless of the channel used. Moreover, promotions should be visible across channels so imagery on an online campaign should also be visible to some extent when the consumer walks into store. For product, retailers must ensure that products online must accurately represent the physical garment so more images and consistent imagery across channels for each product could help reduce product returns further. Likewise, retailers need to ensure stock is consistent across channels and as the reality may be that not all items are available in one channel, so marketing communications need to clearly identify if a product is a channel exclusive, even if that is a store rather than online exclusive. This would be particularly useful in store if an item is not available online and may help consumers make a purchase decision more quickly. For pricing, retailers need to ensure that the pricing for a product is consistent across channels to avoid confusion.

Optimising the Delivery and Returns Stages
Based upon the results of this study, it is the deliveries and returns stages of the shopping journey that fashion retailers must prioritise. The delivery stage was an area filled with emotional highs and lows. Alongside expectations from the outset of the journey towards delivery, participants felt there was a lag between purchasing the product and receiving it. The purchase of products digitally did not provide the immediate gratification that this particular segment of consumers craves. To resolve this, marketing communications must notify consumers of each stage of the delivery process to maintain customers' initial excitement about the product. The experience could be further enhanced by communicating user-generated content to shoppers showing how other consumers styled a product in a bid to reduce second thoughts about the item once it is received or by explaining the popularity of the product to reinforce that the product was a good

choice and reduce post-purchase dissonance. The returns stage was particularly negative. Participants found the process of returns was negative due to the delay in speed of refund as a key issue. Therefore, retailers need to make operational improvements to shorten the time between returns and refund.

Improvement in Marketing Automation
From a marketing automation point of view through the use of customer decision-making journey maps marketers can develop automated campaign strategies more effectively. Although automation is already used within marketing what is interesting is that there is a lack of discussion of how cross-channel marketing automation could be beneficial for the store environment. As an example, the use of iBeacons could be used to trigger a notification on a shoppers' phones to remind shoppers of their omnichannel wishlist and basket items as they enter the store.

Channel and Devices Usage
The findings of this work identify the points at which particular channels and devices are used during the journey. This will enable companies to understand what stage the consumer is at when engaging with particular mediums, e.g. social media is used at both the start and end of the fashion shopping journey, whereas store is used for the more challenging and functional tasks such as evaluating, purchasing, and returns. The use of online websites and mobile apps were particularly interesting for brands as they are both used for hedonic inspiration and utilitarian research activities when shopping for fashion. Therefore, fashion retailers with online channels could consider offering two 'faces' to their website where the consumer could select between an inspirational and editorial style content view, to look through the site or app, or a more traditional style for the purposes of searching, refining and filtering. By doing so this may better meet consumers' needs at the inspiration and research stages of the journey. For millennial high involvement females, the study identifies that the mobile device is the most prominently used device throughout the omnichannel customer decision-making journey.

8.4   Research Limitations

Research limitations are an observable part of any research project and are especially important for the study of an emerging subject area which is constantly evolving. The limitations mentioned in this section are not recognised to undermine the value of the study but instead these seek to assert what is currently known on the subject of omnichannel and identify ways in which research could be improved upon for the future. The limitations are addressed, as follows:

The findings of the study may not be generalised to the whole population of fashion consumers because of the sampling employed. The study featured a limited sample size of participants and reached a point of saturation with rich findings. The study sought to investigate a new area of emerging research and the findings are designed to stimulate debate and provide a starting framework for further development and refinement through future studies.

The study concentrated on the perspective of female fashion consumers, thus findings of the study may not be applicable to male omnichannel fashion consumers. Likewise, the research focuses on millennial consumers. Therefore, the study may not apply to other age groups and further research will be necessary to test if the insights from the current study would apply to other age categories. Finally, the study examined high involvement consumers and thus the study may not be applicable to other consumer types. Further studies would be useful to compare the differences between high involvement consumers and other consumer types.

8.5   Future Research Recommendations

Following the completion of this study the subject of omnichannel in fashion retail presents a rich area for future investigation. The study suggests potential areas of future investigation and these are outlined below:

Due to the small scale and inductive nature of this study, it would be useful for quantitative research to be conducted. Such studies would be useful to further test the propositions and framework of this study in order to generalise the findings to a large-scale population of young,

high involvement female fashion consumers. The results of the study are confined to the geographic location of the UK. Therefore, the study is unable to explain the shopping habits and journeys of consumers whose experiences take place outside of the UK. The UK has one of the most advanced omnichannel retailing economies in Europe and so, consumers experiences could show significant differences. Studies examining omnichannel consumers from outwith the UK would enrich knowledge and help understand the different challenges faced by omnichannel retailers, who are operating across borders.

The use of technology, namely devices and channels, is fundamental to the omnichannel customer decision-making journey. However, technology still has significant potential to enhance the experience in the store channel. Further studies should explore how technology could be further be used within the store channel to integrate this experience with that of the digital channels. As the current study has identified the mobile phone device is synonymous with female fashion consumers during their omnichannel decision-making journey. Therefore, as an example, it would be useful how technology such as iBeacons and apps could be used to support the omnichannel shopping journey in store, such as reminding consumers about products they recently viewed online or providing personalised offers in store.

Further research which maps the omnichannel customer decision-making journey for consumers of luxury fashion would provide a valuable contribution to understand the distinctions between a luxury omnichannel and fast-fashion experience and also to explore what expectations luxury consumers have when commencing an omnichannel customer decision-making journey. Luxury retailing is synonymous also with service, therefore it would be useful to examine the challenges faced by staff and brand experience managers when trying to deliver a luxurious and personal experience across digital and physical channels.

8.6   Chapter Summary and Thesis Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to examine the stages of decision-making in the omnichannel shopping journey for young high involvement female fashion consumers. Drawing from the earlier work on multichannel customer management (Neslin et al., 2006), customer journey (Wolny and Charoensuksai, 2014; Crosier and Handford, 2012), emotional experiences (Laros and Steenkamp, 2005; Saraneva and Sääksjärvi, 2008), fashion consumer behaviour (Cardoso et al., 2010; Solomon and Rabolt, 2009) the consumer decision process (Blackwell et al., 2006), brand management (Rosenbaum et al., 2015; Kwon and Lennon, 2009; Varley, 2014; Doyle et al., 2008; McGoldrick, 2002; Moore & Birtwistle, 2004), risk (Park and Stoel, 2005; Lilijander et al., 2009) a new omnichannel framework was presented.

Based upon primary data collection consumers go through seven distinct stages during the omnichannel customer decision-making journey, these are: inspiration, research and comparison, evaluation, purchase, delivery, returns and then show and share. The framework provides a more comprehensive view of the omnichannel customer interactions by identifying channel and device usage at each stage of the journey and also consumers emotional experiences. The framework also considered consumer characteristics, situational moderators and expectations that influence the journey.

At a holistic level, the findings reveal that an omnichannel journey is one that is predicated upon risk. High involvement consumers perceive a shopping journey as high risk because the consequences of getting such a purchase wrong could present a significant effect on an individual. High involvement consumers will seek to employ a range of risk reduction strategies as part of their decision-making journey for fashion. While the omnichannel journey can heighten risks for example through being a more social journey it can also aid consumers in reassuring them, for example, through the provision of a consistent and seamless experience. This connects to the fact that high involvement consumers are used to traversing across channels as part of a decision-making journey for fashion. An omnichannel retailing strategy occurs as a result of consumers heightened expectations of shopping across channels and is borne out of the desire for a brand experience. This is a significant finding because it aids in distinguishing omnichannel from earlier strategies such as integrated multichannel retailing. To this end, high involvement fashion

consumers expectations were identified at the start of the model and these expectations aid in articulating how the omnichannel manifests from the perspective of the consumer thus providing greater understanding on the meaning of omnichannel. The framework offered in this thesis identifies outcomes as a result of an omnichannel shopping journey such as an enhanced brand relationship.

The results of the study provide a contribution to existing knowledge on the emerging subject of omnichannel by providing a holistic view of the overall journey drawing together several research streams into one comprehensive framework. The retailing modus operandi of omnichannel has been practiced by UK retailers and represents a new shift in retailing's evolution. Academic knowledge of this area, although evolving, is still limited. Likewise, research on the customer decision-making journey has also been limited and where studies do exist these have not been focused on the category of fashion.

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10 Appendices

10.1 Participant Recruitment

Participate in research and you could win vouchers for

SELFRIDGES&C⁰

Simply book your place at one of our upcoming focus group sessions by following the link to http://doodle.com/k9rskgab77f4tdrf

To qualify as a participant
- Female
- Aged between 18-24 years of age
- Student at the University of Manchester or Manchester Metropolitan University
- Be able to attend a focus group session at the University of Manchester (Sackville Street Building)

About the study
The way in which we shop for fashion has fundamentally changed with the rise of channels such as mobile and social media. Here at UoM we want to take a closer look at how the current generation of digital consumers likes to shop

As the first research of its kind, this study will provide fundamental insights for fashion retailers when it comes to managing different retail channels. The research involves a 90minute group discussion on how you use multiple channels when buying fashion. There will be a number of these group discussions taking place throughout selected dates. Student participants will be then entered into a prize draw for £40 of Selfridges vouchers.

10.2 Research Consent Form

Name of Researcher (to be completed by the researcher)
Miss Samantha Lynch
Name of Supervisor (to be completed by the researcher)
Dr Elizabeth Barnes
Contact Details of Researcher (to be completed by the researcher)
Postgraduate Research Office Room F5b, The University of Manchester, Sackville Street Building, Granby Row, Manchester, M13 9PL Email: samantha.lynch@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk
Title of study (to be completed by the researcher)
Exploring the omnichannel concept and the stages of the customer decision-making journey for young female fashion consumers.

Please read and complete this form carefully. If you are willing to participate in this study, circle the appropriate responses and sign and date the declaration at the end. Information regarding each of the points listed can be found in the "Guidance for Participants" document attached. If you require further information, please use the contact details above.

1. I have been informed of and understand the purposes of the study. YES / NO
2. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions. YES / NO
3. I understand what the research involves. YES / NO
4. I understand that I may withdraw from this study at any time without having to give an explanation. YES / NO
5. I agree to the interview being recorded. YES / NO
6. I agree to anonymous quotes in publications. YES / NO
7. I understand that all information about me will be treated in strict confidence and that I will not be named in any written, digitally recorded or published work arising from this study. YES / NO
8. I understand that any written, digitally recorded or published responses from me will be used solely for research purposes and will only be stored by the University of Manchester for research integrity purposes. YES / NO
9. I understand that you will be discussing the progress of your research with others named as Dr Elizabeth Barnes (supervisor) Prof Gary Warnaby (co-supervisor) at the University of Manchester, along with faculty and departmental academics at the University of Manchester who will adhere to the conditions of this research set out above. YES / NO

I freely give my consent to participate in this research study and have been given a copy of this form for my own records.

Name of Participant
………………………………………………………………………………………………
Signature of Participant
………………………………………………………………………………………
Date………………………………………………………………………………………………

You will find some short questions about your fashion shopping habits, these are attached overleaf. Please answer the questions honestly, with as much detail as possible. Once completed, please email this to samantha.lynch@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk or drop the form off.

Thank you.

1. Full Name

2. Your Age & Date of Birth

3. Gender

4. Main Occupation

5. Email Address

6. Mobile Phone Number

Your Shopping Behaviour & Involvement

7. Is fashion apparel a product category that is important to you? (Please explain your answer)

8. Are you interested in purchasing clothes? (Please explain your answer)

9. Do you get enjoyment from shopping for fashion? (Please explain your answer)

10. Do you see yourself as a confident shopper when choosing fashion clothing? (Please explain your answer)

11. Is it a big deal if you get a fashion purchase wrong? (Please explain your answer)

12. How often do you purchase fashion clothing?

13. What level of fashion apparel do you mainly purchase budget/high street/designer?

14. Have you actively engaged in a shopping journey for high street fashion apparel in the past 1 month that has involved at least two shopping channels?

10.3 Focus Group Guide Customer Decision-Making Journey

Sections in the Focus Group Discussion	Introductory Questions - Product Type as a SL of Journey	Brand Experience	Customer Decision-Making Journey	Channel Usage	Channel Value
	How does product type of fashion affect your shopping journey and channels used as opposed to when you shop for another type of product?	Do you think of your shopping journey as stages/brand experience/or as an overall process	What are the stages of your shopping journey?	How do you perceive those channels in relation to the shopping journey?	Do you get the same level of benefits from each of the different channel you encounter?
	What about the level fashion that you buy so high street, value, and designer how would that impact your shopping journey?		Which channel do you start your shopping journey in?	When shopping for fashion does your journey consist of you going through channels consecutively or will you switch back and forth between channels?	If you think about your last shopping journey or a current one. Did those channels meet your needs at those stages of your journey
Questions asked:				If you think of a particular stage in your journey such as research do you combine more than one channel in that stage?	In your shopping journey do you perceive different channels play different roles or functions
					How do you engage with indirect channels such as social media-Facebook, Pinterest, consumer review sites, reviews or blogs as part of your shopping journey?
					In your view as a fashion consumer what is your the role of the store?

Sections in the Focus Group Discussion	Customer Experience	Channel Motivations	Device Motivations	Shopper Confidence	Marketing Communications	Situational Variables
Questions asked:	Is your omnichannel fashion-shopping journey (so a journey that involves lots of shopping channels) normally a positive or negative experience?	Why do you use different channels as a fashion consumer?	Which devices such as mobile or tablet do you use when shopping for fashion?	How do you reassure yourself in making the right purchase decision?	Tell me about the marketing communications that you encounter during a shopping journey involving many channels?	What factors affect your shopping journey?
	Is your shopping experience different dependent upon the channels that you use?	Do you use more than one channel because you need to rather than because you choose to?	How does different technological devices play a role in your shopping journey for fashion			
		What motivates you to move between different retail channels during your fashion-shopping journey?	Do you use different devices for different stages of your journey?			
		How easy is it to move between different fashion shopping channels?				

10.4 Focus Group Guide Omnichannel

Sections in the Focus Group Discussion	Channel Selection	Consumer Empowerment	Customer-centric	Holistic	Brand Experience / Cross-Channel Behaviour	Omnichannel Behaviour
	What channels do you use when shopping for fashion?	In terms of shopping channels, do you Feel more empowered as a fashion consumer today.	When thinking of shopping across channels for fashion what does the phrase customer-centric retailing mean to you?	When thinking about your fashion shopping journey with different channels do you view it as one big experience or lots of individual encounters?	In general, what are your expectations of a retailer that has multiple channels?	If you have a bad experience in one channel how does that affect your perception of other channels of a retailer?
	Are there any channels that you do not use or are yet to use?			Do you perceive different types channels as functioning independently of one another, as part of the same brand or do you not perceive the channels at all?	Think of your favourite high street fashion retailer. Do the channels of that retailer live up to your perceptions you have about that brand?	If you have a bad experience in one channel how does that affect your perception of a new channels of a retailer so one you haven't been in before?
Questions asked:	Does the level of fashion that you are purchasing such as high street or designer affect the channels you use?				How accurately do certain channels reflect the brand	How do you perceive fashion retail channels, are they of equal quality?
					How do the channels that you shop from reinforce the brand?	Are you confident that instructions in one channel will transfer to another e.g. click and collect?

Sections in the Focus Group Discussion	Channel Blurring	Channel Value	Seamless Experience & Consistency	Perceived Confidence of Omnichannel	Synergistic Effects	Simultaneous Usage
Questions asked:	Do you think all the different retail channels that are available to you as a fashion consumer are merging or becoming blurred?	Do you get the same level of value and benefits from the different retail channels that you use when fashion shopping?	Do you find each shopping channel you use is consistent in terms of things such as information, personalisation, branding, imagery, customer service?	Does your confidence with shopping fashion affect which channels you use?	Are there any combinations of fashion retail channels that you think work well together when purchasing clothes?	Do you use channels simultaneously? For example, using a mobile in-store
	Would you like to see channels become even more blurred or merged together when you shop for fashion?		What is your understanding of a seamless fashion shopping experience?		How does that combination of channels meet that stage of your shopping journey so purchase/research/return?	
	How might high street fashion retailers be able to blur or merge channels even more?		How does a seamless retail experience create value to you?		Have you gained any overall benefits of from using a combination of channels? i.e. the whole is greater than the sum of its parts	

Sections in the Focus Group Discussion	Connected Consumer	Ubiquitous Usage
Questions asked:	The term *connected-consumer* is widely mentioned within omni retailing, As a fashion consumer what does the term connected consumer mean to you?	Which channels and devices do you shop for fashion when you are on the move?
	Being able to access channels 24/7 what does that mean to you?	

10.5 Focus Group Transcripts

Focus Group 1 (Pilot – Omnichannel)

SL: So first of all, can you tell me what channels do you use when shopping for fashion? So channels I mean like Facebook, Instagram, mobile, online, in-store - that's what I mean by channels.

P1: I use Instagram quite a lot, the Topshop one, that's the only one I use it for.

SL: Do you buy from Instagram?

P1: No, I don't think you can buy from Instagram.

P2: You can buy from Instagram?

SL: Oh my student just told me this last week.

P2: I didn't know you could buy from Instagram it's like a whole new world.

All: [Laughs]

P3: I tend to use apps I think. I've got different apps up like Topshop, H&M whatever so I'll just go on them quickly on my iPhone.

P2: I use the eBay app, but like...

P3: Like I've got Topshop on there, like H&M and Zara.

P1: Yeah Zara's one is quite good.

P3: And it's just cheaper than going on the Internet and going through that process. You should download it, it's well good.

P2: I'm going to.

P4: I only really buy things from stores I'd say.

SL: Oh right, okay.

P2: It depends where I am. Like in Reading we don't have a very big town centre and there's always someone in at my house 'cause it's like my home and I have got a decent size letterbox. So I order things online more when I'm at home, but in Manchester like I don't have a letterbox. I have to go down to like the office to collect my post, which is a pain in the bum. So if I wanted to order anything I would have to see the man in the office and I don't like doing that. Manchester has everything in the town centre, so I just shop in the shops.

SL: Are there any channels that you do not use currently or ones that you know about but maybe you are yet to use them?

P4: Instagram probably. I haven't got a clue how you even go about buying anything.

P2: I don't.

P3: I wouldn't either.

SL: What about Facebook?

P2: I didn't know you could ever buy anything on Facebook.

P1: I'd never buy anything off Facebook.

P3: Twitter no.

P2: You can buy things on Twitter?

P3: Mm hmm.

P2: What?

P1: I think it's everything now.

P2: I need to check, I knew you could view a lot of things on Twitter but I didn't know you could buy everything.

SL: Does the level of fashion that you are purchasing, so I mean high street, value, designer does that affect your choice of shopping channel?

P1: I don't really shop at designer [laughs].

P2: Like if you were going to make a fancy purchase…

P1: You would rather go in the store and hand over the money.

P2: You would rather go into the shop and be like yeah here is my money, get the bag.

P1: If it was like Selfridges, I would never order something from Selfridges because I wanna go and like experience it.

P4: You want to experience it. Like if you walked into a designer shop and they really look after you, so that's part of what you're paying for when you pay for the label. You're paying for the fact that you have gone and had this experience whilst you bought it. So why would you order it online and instead spending the same amount of money to just get it through the post.

P1: Yeah.

P4: And then you're also risking somebody else taking it or messing with it or... Whereas you go in, you get it; it goes straight from the store into your own hands.

P1: And you know it fits and…

P3: Same with you're not going to order anything off Primark or somewhere like that, like a really value retailer. Would ya? Like Matalan.

P4: You don't want to wait for the post, you just want to go in and grab it.

SL: What about kind of high street stuff, do you choose specific channels when you are just buying high street clothes?

P2: It depends, like if I'm looking for something in particular like if I need it like today, like for going out tonight, I'll go and actually go to a shop but if I've just been like browsing on the internet then I can wait.

P4: It depends whether like some places like ASOS, they only have online. You can only order things online. Like I've ordered from ASOS and Missguided but generally when it's somewhere like Topshop I wanna try it because nine times out of ten if I order something from ASOS or Missguided I send it back and it's a pain. So I'd rather just get something, I check online, see what I want, see what they've got, see what it goes with and then maybe go to the store and order it.

P3: See like me I'm dead fussy the only thing I'd order online from like ASOS or like one of them online retailers is maybe like shoes or jewellery - something I know that's going to fit and know I like it so.

SL: P5 what about you?

P5: I forgot. [Laughs]

SL: No, it's ok.

SL: Does the level of fashion that you're purchasing eh, so if its high street, designer, value. Does that affect which shopping channels you use?

P5: Not really I just tend to shop in-store generally anyway.

SL: In terms of shopping channels do you Feel more empowered as a fashion consumer today? So I mean empowered today as opposed to even a couple of years ago?

P4: Yeah I think we have more power like I said because em it's not just editors of magazines that get to make the decisions. The consumer has an influence in the industry and I think there's a far much bigger focus on the consumer because part of what they are doing is what I think is advertising clothes and the consumer influences that part of it as well. Em… so we have more power and we can shop around more easily. We can shop at home and in like an hour have looked at a loads of shops that maybe wouldn't be available to us. Like especially if you live in a small town where they don't have all the stores.

SL: So like P2 was saying with Reading.

P4: Yeah. You can check. And even if you've only got a small store and they don't have all the stuff you want you can check and see what else they've got so.

SL: In general what are your expectations of a retailer, so one retailer that has lots of different channels - so if you think of your favourite retail brand what are your expectations of that retailer and those multiple channels?

P3: Just got expectations over everything the delivery, the shipping and like I want it to arrive on time, I want the garment to be of a high quality, if I know that the retailer has got the reputation for it. I don't expect any faults with that, I sound like such a snob but it's true. I just expect it to be maintained and on top of it's game really for a multichannel retailer.

P1: You just get annoyed if it came and it was damaged and you're just be like, "Oh I should've just shopped in the store." Like they're trying to overcome that and be like no shop online because it's better and it Feels so…

P3: You just get a bit confused and be like why is this not up to the standards?

P1: Especially if it was Topshop or something you expect it to be like.

P2: I think it links back to the last question which is that we feel so empowered that we've got maybe a bit complacent like why can't I get hold of this? If you want something really badly and you've gone on every single channel that the retailer has to offer and you still can't get it or it hasn't arrived on time or there is something wrong with it. You'll really be annoyed whereas a couple of years ago you'd be like uh it's sold out, can't get hold of it.

P3: Yeah that's it type of thing.

P2: We like expect that we can just have whatever we want, when we want it, we want it to be perfect, we want it to be at this price.

P4: I think the Internet just makes it so like there literally is nothing you can't get hold of anytime ever. It's so easy you can just press a few buttons.

P3: Even in-store there is so much competition on the high street that you know that you can get it from anywhere really.

SL: When thinking of shopping across channels for fashion what does the phrase customer-centric retailing mean to you?

P4: When the customer is at the focus.

P2: Yeah like going back to what P4 said earlier.

P4: The whole aim of like the company rather than to like make a profit or to do this means it's all focused on the customer and the feedback. I think that happens more now with things like Twitter and stuff people can post stuff and people have more power in the industry like the consumer does. So in that way it makes

it more important what the consumer thinks because you only need a few bad reviews to wreck something but they're out there and everyone can find them.

SL: Anyone else? What does the phrase customer-centric retailing mean?

P3: I just think it's like when the customer is just the sole focus really. I mean even like online retailers with the likes of ASOS they still are trying to have that customer connection when like for instance you click on a garment and you can see them walking down the catwalk so engaged with the consumer but I think all retailers are trying to do that as well.

SL: P5 what do you think it might mean?

P5: Em, just accommodating each customer's needs I guess, certainly individually.

SL: When thinking about your fashion-shopping journey with different channels do you view it as one big experience or one big journey or lots of little individual encounters with different channels?

P1: I suppose different sites work differently then it's going to be different. Like Instagram obviously, that's not like the same as ordering like on the Facebook or Twitter because we don't even know how to do that obviously yet.

SL: Would you do it potentially?

P1: Yeah definitely, uh huh.

SL: So do you view your fashion-shopping journey as a journey with different channels, do you see it as one big experience or lots of little encounters?

P2: Like I see it as I'm buying this top and I'll just shop for it online, that will be one thing. Or I'll go and shop for this I'll do a trip to town in-store. I don't see them as… even if I bought from the same brand I don't think of it as: that was a Topshop shopping experience I just think of it as I've just had an online sesh and just had a going to town sesh.

SL: So you see them quite separately in some ways.

P2: Yeah.

P4: I see them as sort of together. I like to research it a little bit. So if I know I'm going to go shopping the night before I'll just spend hours looking through lots of different stores and see what's going on, but I rarely buy things online anyway. Then I'll look at blogs and see how people are wearing things and get an idea of what I am looking for and then go into town. Because half the time I go into town I don't know, there are things that I pick up and I don't know what to put them with. So I'll look see what's going on and what people are selling them with and how people are wearing things and them as one big experience.

P3: Yeah

P1: Yeah like plan your outfit.

P2: If in doubt cast it out.

P4: You don't know if you've got reasonable…

P2: But I don't think I'm good at that. I think I'm a bit of a spendaholic, that's maybe why.

SL: And what about you P3, you said you agreed with P4?

P3: Yeah I agree with P4. Like I think of the retailer as a whole like it's one big brand an everything it's like interlinked but I think your next question was if there's like an issue with the garment and you bought it online would you think it is the problem of the head of the online office or whatever, I think it would, I wouldn't be like angry with the company.

P1: I think I would be angry with the person whose.

P3: Yeah whoever it is. But yeah I think it is still all interlinked and that it's all connected.

SL: The next question is do you perceive different types of channels as functioning independently of one another or as part of the same brand or do you not perceive the channels at all? What the question is trying to say is do you see the channels as functioning independently. So P5 you said you like to shop in-store mostly so how do you view the other channels like online.

P5: I think they all are interlinked its just you go with a brand and it's values over its separate channels.

SL: So what do you think makes you prefer the store for example versus other channels?

P5: Just convenience, I don't think I have actually bought an item of clothing in over a year. I don't shop that often really so it's just whenever I need something that I go into town.

P1: I just shop in-store I think I hardly ever online unless it's Missguided just because I like to Feel it and try it on, most of the time I think it's a waste of time. I've never sent anything back and wouldn't know the first thing to do to send it back.

SL: So you wouldn't shop on ASOS or anything like that?

P1: No Missguided, I've ordered a few things off that. Em but I've ordered a dress off Topshop just because I couldn't get it in-store, so that's the only way I would go for something online.

P3: And like the stores location as well. If it is like online retailer or it's like an out of town retailer, so not on your normal high street so you would order it online but if you not its got the convenience of having loads of shops around it that are really similar to that retailer you you're more inclined to go into store.

SL: So obviously in terms of it's down to a number of factors that affect your journey. Would you say as a group would you shop in more than one channel because you have to because for example you said you couldn't get stock like you said P1 or is it because you choose to? Is it more borne out of a need?

P2: I think it's a need.

P3: Yeah

P4: I only buy online if I actually have to. I look online to see what is available but I don't actually buy anything. If I see something on the Topshop website and I love it I'll go into store and get it I will never order it online. Like unless I've already tried it on in-store and then gone back home and it's not there.

P1: Or if it's not got your size or something.

P4: No cause even then I wouldn't buy it. If it was from Topshop I would just give up if it wasn't in my size or something like I would want to try it on, if I knew I could I would want to. Whereas with Missguided you just can't. But like I'd just wait 'til it was in-store and I would just buy it. But if I tried it on and then knew that I liked it, I would think about it and I would order it but I would want to like to have felt it and tried it on first.

SL: Em next question is if you had a bad experience in one channel how does that affect your perception of other channels of that retailer? So how does a bad experience in one channel affect your experience in another channel, does it even have an effect?

P2: I don't think so.

P1: It wouldn't affect.

P2: Say if I ordered something online and it didn't arrive, it was late or something those issues wouldn't be the same if you went into the store. You couldn't have the same issues. I would still probably go and buy it.

P1: I wouldn't not shop at the store.

P2: It's not a big deal I would just go and buy another one.

P3: I don't think it's the brand's fault its just whoever is head of that department.

SL: If you have a bad experience in one channel how does that affect your perception of a new channel of that retailer? So if they launched a new channel and you had a bad experience in the first channel would that have an effect?

P4: It depends what the bad experience is first I think. Like if you've ordered something from somewhere and it was bad quality if it was the product, but if it was the experience with the channel like. I think if it was general like customer service then maybe it would put me off but if it was just like something that could have been that bit more of a one-off then I don't think it would change that.

SL: Anyone else? If you had a bad experience in one channel how would that affect you in a retailer's new channel?

P2: I think it depends on the channel you have had the bad experience on and the new channel.

SL: So why?

P2: Saying again like its an interlinked thingy, like you were shopping online and they brought out an app, a mobile app we might be wary of using that just because you would Feel the problems would be the same. But if it was a bad experience in the store and then they had a flashy new website, I'd probably give it a go say it was a moody shopping assistant that wouldn't be a problem on the website so.

P3: I think I would be the opposite like. I found one time where the online channel failed, where it didn't work or had a fault or something I'd instantly just go into store. I wouldn't try any other device. I would just give up and go to the shop.

SL: Do you think that all the different channels that are available to you as a fashion consumer are they merging or becoming blurred in anyway? Now it's whatever you think that means.

P2: Could you say that again?

SL: So, do you think that all the different channels that are available to you as a fashion consumer now are they merging or becoming blurred in anyway?

P2: I think retailers are trying to like with all this new technology in-store you can shop online while you are actually in the store but I don't think it's, they're still not the same. They're still completely different ways of shopping.

P1: I don't think it will ever like, ever like reduce customers going into store or anything all these, all the different channels I don't think it will reduce like footfall in the store or anything like, because I still think people will. I don't think it will eventually just be like everyone will just be shopping online, I think everyone still loves going out just like a shopping day and you're shopping, you can go for like drinks that's like a big experience.

SL: Would you like to see channels become more blurred or merged in the future? It's whatever you think blurred or merged means, would you like to see them more closely interconnected or related to one another?

P1: What like shopping like you said in the store?

P2: Like click and collect.

P1: Like click and collect in the store.

P2: I think it will happen as long as it doesn't have an effect on my ability to spend I don't really mind [laughs].

P3: In some ways it limits your availability in some sense, like you are saying with click and collect so it goes to the store. Like if it's interlinked in that sense it's like so where do I go from now, do you know what I mean?

SL: Tell me a little bit more?

P3: I am not really explaining this well.

P4: You've got more options as it is now so if you can't do one thing you can do another kind of thing.

P3: I don't know if it just merges all these online channels together so like Instagram and Facebook or whatever where are all merged where would you go next.

P2: You can like over complicate things. Like I said I have just ordered it online but I have to actually go to the shop to pick it up. Like why can't I just get it one way or the other.

P3: Exactly so it limits your options to get it in-store.

SL: How do you perceive fashion retail channels are they of equal quality? So is the store and online of equal quality for example in terms of the channels and what they bring to you or is one more important?

P3: In-store is more important but I think they are trying keep it at the same level in the sense that they are trying to keep it all uniform, all interlinked with the same like brand logo and whatever and background.

SL: P5 because you obviously said you shop in-store. How do you perceive the other channels like online and Facebook?

P5: How I perceive them?

SL: Do you see them as equal to the store?

P5: Yeah, they all seem to mirror quality wise to each other.

SL: So why do you have a preference for the store?

P5: Em, it's just easier to get to. Like if I realised I need something and I'm already out then I can do it.

P1: There and then.

P5: I'll still look online and if I want to get something for someone or I'll have a browse because it has a wider variety. But I just go in-store.

SL: How might fashion retailers blur or merge their channels even more?

P3: Apparently I just heard this thing that when you go to a Tesco store visual merchandising window display you can use an app and if you point it at the garment then… Am I just chatting now [laughs]?

SL: No.

P3: You can then buy it straight away you know just with pointing it and then it comes straight to your house.

SL: Would you like to be able to do that?

P2: Yeah.

SL: If you walked past a Topshop window?

P2: Yes, but it's really dangerous.

P1: I think you can already do that in Marks and Spencer that's why they have got that big iPod.

P2: Yeah big iPod.

P1: I think you select the area where it is and then that knows where all their merchandise is allocated and then say it was a pink top at the front of the store like.

P2: Yeah.

P1: They know where it is.

SL: So like RFID tagging?

P1: That's all in Zara just now they do all that, it's all on the one tag, that tag knows the size the colour everything.

P3: And if it's located in another store as well.

P4: I read about this thing where they were thinking of bringing body scanners where you could scan yourself.

P2: They did it in New Look they trialled it for a bit.

P4: They fully body scan you then they have your image online and then you could see how the clothes could drape on your body so it's like you're actually trying it on in front of the mirror from the comfort of your own home.

P2: And H&M have a, you can like try, like they have virtual fitting rooms. I don't know if they still do but they did have a thing online where you could try it on.

P4: They did have a thing online where you could pick the models and the outfits but you don't look like them and you don't have the same figure as them. So it really didn't mean anything.

P1: That's all too technical for me.

P3: I know.

P1: I like to go in-store and just try it on.

P5: Yeah same.

P1: I just think that's more time consuming like thingy-ing about.

P3: It's just complicated to try things on that's why I buy stuff that I never wear. Like if you could have like a little you or a computerised you that could try on stuff for you that would be awesome or like give you a genuine body double.

P1: Body double.

P4: You'd be able to look at it more.

P2: Like from all sides.

SL: I think I have already asked this question again I might have already asked it but just because of the list I have got. How do you perceive fashion retail channels are they of equal quality? So you gave some mixed responses. I just want to know a little bit more about that.

P3: About if it's of equal quality?

SL: Uh huh.

P3: I think in-store it's so much more luxurious you can see like the store layout, you can see the different stands and lighting they use. I remember when I first went in the new Zara store but I think it's just so impressive and everyone commented on it and it was that whole store experience whereas online you don't really get all of that. There is a lot more options and variety but you don't get that store experience. It's just not the same.

SL: Anyone else do you think the channels are of equal quality?

P4: I don't think that they really can be?

SL: Why P4?

P4: I just think being there and touching the clothes you just can't get anything close to that online, really.

P3: You're still at home.

P4: You can make it look the same, you can have great variety, you could have customer service but you can't actually touch them, Feel them and have them with you within seconds. You still can't have that. You still get that buzz from handing that card over and getting the bag back and you don't get that I think online it's hard.

P1: You don't have it for a few days.

P4: Yeah you've bought a few things are waiting for it and then the buzz is gone by the time you get it. It's just not the same Feeling.

SL: This is just repeating another question but just to get another angle on it. Do you get the same level of value and benefits from the different channels that you use when shop for fashion? Are the benefits different from different channels?

P4: In certain retailers because they don't have stores are cheaper like Missguided and Boohoo are insanely cheap and that's the main reason I shop at Missguided I can get a dress from Missguided that will cost £40 in Topshop like for that, you may as well give it a go but that's the only reason I would give it a go really. If it was the same price I wouldn't bother ordering it.

P2: I think you get more discounts online as well. Like Unidays and things like that. I know you can redeem them in-store but they're a bit of a faff to do that. Like American Apparel sent me a new email with a deal once a week but it's only redeemable online.

P4: They do, I get that actually.

P2: If you sign up to their mailing list you get offers but most of them are redeemable online only.

P4: Yeah I just got an email from Missguided saying, "Hey P4 do you fancy 10% off today."

P3: I think you Feel slightly harassed online sometimes you know when you sign up to things you get all these emails. You know in-store you just go in there to pick up the garment and you're not going to get harassed.

P2: But if someone sends me an email saying you can get £10 off your next order and they show me pictures of pretty things. I'll just go straight to the website and go ooh you can get £10 off. I think I'm a real sucker for these things.

P4: I think you are.

P2: It's this impulse, addictive.

P4: I don't think it works on me but I'm really tight with my money.

P3: It depends if you need to try it on like I just need to do that.

SL: Do you find each shopping channel you use is consistent in terms of things such as information, personalisation, branding, imagery and customer service. Is each channel consistent in those areas or any other areas that you can think of?

P3: Em it depends on the retailer for like for instance, Topshop I think it is all interlinked. But with the likes of Zara online its just not the same as in-store at all. I don't get excited online but in-store I'm like I have gotta have it. I'm not sure what it is or whether it's down to the models or the way they have designed the webpage and the layout or whatever, but it just doesn't really get me excited.

P1: It's very plain on their website isn't it.

SL: Do you find that the channels are consistent? As in similar? [Pause] So think of your favourite retailer are they consistent in the different channels?

P1: I think the best retailer like you said is Topshop. I Feel it all interlinks, I Feel like in-store and online everything is just the same. It does Feel like they're one of the first ones that done it, like obviously they probably weren't but they're just so known for online.

P3: I think River Island is good online as well and in-store.

P1: I've actually ordered stuff like summer stuff from them.

SL: This is quite an open question just what kind of answer comes into your head. What is your understanding of a seamless fashion shopping experience?

P2: Something that runs really smoothly from start to finish. Like good customer service, a nice like browsing experience, easy to pay and like if you're ordering online arrives quickly and like hassle free or…

P4: Yeah. I think something that actually helped me Feel like I was getting a normal experience from an online retailer is when you can track it because you pay for it and then there is a gap between getting it but at least when you track it you can see it coming to you a bit and it gives you that excitement.

P2: It's like a Domino's coming ha ha.

P4: Yeah it's so.

P2: You just stare at the screen for like for forty minutes [laughs].

SL: P5 what is your understanding of a seamless fashion shopping experience?

P5: Just with ease, just em being able to get it quickly, get what you want and pay for it without having to deal with any problems.

SL: So avoiding the problems. How does a seamless retail experience how does that create value to you? Why is it worth having a seamless experience?

P1: Suppose it makes you wanna go back.

P4: Convenience.

P2: It's all about like buying stuff, you want something and if you get it easily then you'll assume you'll do it again.

P4: Whereas if it's difficult, you don't have the energy, it's going to be like you just can't be bothered to do it. You don't want something that's enjoyable to be difficult.

P3: But I think I quite like the challenge. As funny as it sounds when I get something ordered online and it comes to my house I just don't get as excited as when I've got it. I don't know there's something about me doing it.

P1: I'm the same yeah.

P3: It just has that affect like it sounds weird but even when my mum will buy me a food shop it just doesn't Feel as good as when I have gone out and done it myself. I don't know if it's independence or what it is.

P4: I don't like people buying me clothes for my birthday; I'd rather have the vouchers.

P3: Even if it's gorgeous.

P4: It's just not the same and you don't know what I like and how I like it and I've not picked it, I've not had the excitement of picking it and wearing it.

P3: I have to think about it and keep saying like what would that go with? What shoes would that go with?

P4: Yeah, it's the whole thing. Like don't pick something for me because you've just taken away all the fun and gave the end product without any of the actual fun bit that comes before it.

SL: So do you see shopping as almost like a prize at the end of it?

P4: I guess at the end of it. If I come home with something. Because I can go shopping and spend the whole day in town and come away with nothing and Feel a bit down.

P3: The one thing about my shopping experience as well is when I buy one thing I feel like I am on a roll then to buy about six or seven things.

P2: But I Feel guilty after I have done that.

P3: If I buy nothing and its ok then I won't do it.

P4: But if I come home with lots of bags I Feel on top of the world.

P1: I hate like when you're in like in-store, like when I'm in Zara and say have you got this in a small? And we say you can get it online. I am just like eugh I'm just not interested to hear it's online, I just don't like shopping online at all. I love going to shop, getting it in my hand, trying it on you know if I like it then fair enough.

P3: I don't Feel like it's an inconvenience to go into town, even though it probably is.

P1: I don't think so too.

P3: It's something I wanna do.

P4: Depends if its like oh I've bought this really nice top and realised that I need to get a vest top to put under it I can't be bothered to do that. But if it's like to get something like a dress for a night out then I love it.

SL: So now I want you to think about your favourite high street fashion retailer ok. Do the channels of that retailer live up to the perceptions that you have about the retailer's brand? So I'll just repeat it again, think of your favourite high street fashion retailer and do the channels of that retailer live up to the perceptions you have about the brand?

P4: My favourite retailer I have only ever shopped on in-store but I've used their Twitter, their Instagram, their Facebook and their website to look for things.

SL: What about Tumblr, do you use that?

P4: I don't use Tumblr but I would probably use theirs if I used Tumblr. I think it's just that I don't use but em I use everything to search for things and I regularly check it but I don't actually buy anything from other than their store because when I have bought things from the store before, half of the time things fit me and half of the time things don't and it's Topshop. They're not that cheap for a student they are cheap compared to other brands but compared to other brands that are on that level they are not the cheapest and so I don't want to risk getting something wrong because I never know what it's going to look like.

SL: So see how you mentioned when you do your shopping journey do you start with lots of different channels and eventually narrow them down as you go through the journey when you get closer to finding you item would you go to any channel to begin with?

P4: Yeah. Like I went looking on for something or when I am looking for an outfit or like how I might wear something. I might start, I'd probably start on like things like Missguided and Boohoo I find they have the best Facebook pages and em, Instagram things and things like that because they are more consumer focused they take a lot of things from their blogs, it's less about what they think and more about what their customer thinks and how people are wearing different things. And I also think like Topshop seems to be selling a look whereas Missguided because they are a cheaper brand kind of they have this thing of making a new a look out of things that you've already got as well and not quite as, next season move on. I kind of start there looking at blogs then I look through their blogs and then I probably have to look through high street retailers and go into store next day like New Look and Topshop, Miss Selfridge and places like that then I wouldn't buy anything from them, I'd get a few ideas of what I want and maybe jot down the names of them sometimes if I really really like then I just go to the store.

P1: It's like Topshop were saying this is how you should be wearing but like ASOS and everything are saying this is how our customers are wearing it to try it out.

P4: And sometimes they will have things from last season with things from this season.

P1: Because that's reality because you need to use things.

P4: I think Topshop are like this is next season but that top is £40 those jeans are £40 and those shoes are ninety, I can't afford that outfit for one day. Like em, whereas Missguided it's like there's last seasons shoes with this £20 dress.

P1: Yeah.

P4: I could do that.

SL: Ok I'll just ask the earlier question as well to the rest of you. So do the channels of your favourite high street retailer live up to your perceptions that you have about their brand?

P2: I think Topshop has gone a bit downhill recently like I dunno, like the Reading store is rubbish there's like nothing in it and because it is the only shop we have in Reading, there is nowhere else to buy clothes from so you'd expect their store to be… they'd do well out of that store because literally every girl in Reading, the only place they have to buy clothes from in Reading is Topshop. And their store is a bit naff. I think their Manchester store is good but like even like Oxford Street at their flagship one I hate going there because it's so busy, it's always a mess and like I don't think things are laid out like clearly enough and well. On their website like it used to be much easier to navigate you could get inspiration from the look book and they don't have that anymore. And like recently when I've been on it the page doesn't even load properly. Like I think they've got to big for their boots their neglecting us slightly.

P4: Yeah they're sort of the young woman's favourite brand and they've kind of got cocky.

P2: Yeah that's what I think.

SL: So do you almost Feel that the stores are becoming worse than the other channels, or is that taking it a bit too far.

P2: I don't know if they just, I reckon they used to be better because that was the only channel they had to focus on maybe but like I think they've always been, I don't know maybe. I think recently I just have noticed that they're just not great. I like the Arndale one but like that's about it.

P4: They've just opened a huge one in Leeds and it's just like better than the other ones I've been in like I don't know. I never used to shop in anywhere other than Topshop but now I shop around a bit so there must be something going wrong because I have never ever diverted away from them before.

SL: Changing things. How accurately, again this is just to get another angle on that answer, how accurately do channels reflect the fashion retailer's brand in general.

P3: Well relating back to the other question, which kind of relates back to this one. My favourite retailer before I went to uni used to be River Island but since coming to uni that's completely changed because the Manchester store is "naff" basically and they don't update the trends as regularly as they did with the Liverpool store. Even down to the VM [visual merchandising] it's just not as good at all. So with that being considered like I just don't go on the River Island website at all like I used to have faith in the brand and I used to go in-store, find something I like, come out with two or three bags go home and then I could even go on the internet and look at the River Island page but just that store experience makes you lose faith when it's not as good.

SL: So do you think that the channels aren't accurately reflecting the brand or what's changed?

P3: Em in-store, I don't know I think it's just in-store and then you lose faith in them altogether in the other channels.

SL: So would you say in-store has a much greater effect on you than the other channels?

P3: Definitely, one hundred percent because that's like their main focus. Like when I go into Zara and I've tried something on I like on and know it doesn't fit but maybe it will have my size in it next week when I go back I'm not going to instantly go online.

P1: I think a lot of it is like websites and on their Instagram if they make it evident that something looks good like a skirt. Like Topshop Instagram they'll have a wee pink "pastel" skirt but it will be in… there'll be

flowers all around it to make it look like more interesting. I think that's what they are trying to do to make things and then, but when you go in-store you'll see that skirt and there'll be like a flower board behind it or something behind it relating to it. I think Topshop are really good for that.

P3: Yep. It's really good online and social media.

P1: Showing pictures and stuff. Like just like things…

P3: They just interlink don't they and it's all connected.

SL: Ok, so just adding on to what you were saying there how do you view the channels that you shop from reinforce the brand personality? How do you know when you go on to Topshop or Zara that it still Feels like Zara and Topshop.

P1: I think when you go on like the Zara website there's models on their look book but when you look at images of their actual garments there's not a model or anything it's like a white background and when you go in the store all their clothes are against like a white or like a chrome background it's all so plain but like I said with Topshop it's like their skirts will be against like flowers and they'll try and make the clothes become alive if you know what I mean.

P2: In Zara as well, I know that it's Zara if like you looked on that website and it didn't have the name above it but you know that it's Zara but it is really true to like the store. But that doesn't give you a nice enough experience.

P1: Very sort of sophisticated I think they try and say like that white top or that orange skirt against that white background that skirt should do enough for you to like it rather than adding in a fancy model or someone to make it look good.

P3: That's the thing like in-store it's all about the jewellery connected with the handbag, and with the shoes and the way they lay it all out it's all interconnected but online like they'll just keep the jewellery separate and the shoes separate, do you know what I mean.

P4: Its different to do it any other way because it would be hard to navigate I think maybe with Zara they layout even if it is close enough presented by the store and in a website things that work in-store just doesn't work on the website even if it's quite closely tied together. It's just not something, like sometimes if you want to represent the store in a website you can do it but it doesn't work in both. Whereas Topshop is quite in your face so it kind of works both ways.

SL: Does your confidence with shopping for fashion affect the channels that you use? Some of you might be confident some of you might not be as confident, does that have an effect on the channels you use.

P4: I think if people are more confident shopping they are more likely to use the Internet and if they are less, as they want to know before they buy.

SL: Would you say you are a confident shopper?

P4: Like I'm reasonably. Like I know what suits me and what doesn't and I can see on the hanger but I know also that I also have an awkward figure for like most shops' standard sizes so I know that I can take ten things into the changing room and I know that they might not fit me very well in the waist and hips and I know it might fit me in the waist not the bust. It's just difficult shopping with me isn't easy I don't think I don't tend to shop online but someone who is maybe more proportionate might choose to shop online more because it's no more convenient.

SL: Does anyone in the group maybe not Feel as confident when they're shopping for fashion?

P1: I quite like knowing what I'm going for.

SL: Right.

P1: Like I'm very like I don't think I would go to the shops just for having a shopping day like I'd kinda like go for something rather than looking for it or know what I'm gonna buy.

SL: Would you say you are confident P2 as a shopper?

P2: I think so and I think that you just have to be. Like that question on your questionnaire how do you Feel if you get something wrong? Like I Feel like these days you can go out dressed like anything and everything is so accepted that you could look like anybody and people wouldn't even bat and eyelid. As long as you're working it and Feel good and then everyone knows what they like or what they Feel confident in and what they look good in and you. Like if you don't Feel happy in yourself you just don't wear it out. Even if it is mental and you like it and Feel good in it then just go out with it.

SL: P5 are you a confident shopper for fashion?

P5: No, that's why I prefer going in-store just so that I know what I'm going to get.

SL: Are there any reasons why you prefer the store in relation to your confidence? How does your level of confidence affect the channels you use?

P5: I just think if you're not very confident you go in and know what you are going to get so it alleviates that pressure. Em online you also have the stress of not knowing, you lose a bit of control shopping online so it's not nice to have that.

P1: You get some inspiration in-store as well like models walking about and seeing like what the staff are wearing and things like that but you just don't get that online.

SL: And what about you P3?

P3: Em, I think I am quite a confident shopper to be honest although you know P1 and P5 were saying they go in looking for something, I like just looking more to see what the trend is, see what's like came out or

whatever. Yeah like I am quite decisive to be honest but I do have the tendency to take in like ten things and maybe come out with one just cause I know like.

SL: Are you confident that instructions in one channel will transfer through to another? And by I mean giving instructions: things like click and collect so you're giving instructions in one channel and expecting the product to appear in another are you confident that that works?

P2: I haven't used it very much I think.

P4: No I have never.

P2: Actually I had something from Topshop which I picked up in-store and actually it didn't work they were supposed to send me an email to say that it was in and they didn't and I just had to go in-store and hope it was there and I did pay specially for it to be there like the next day and they never let me know.

P1: Was that free?

P2: No I paid for it.

P1: Ordering in the store? I would never do that.

P2: Well I paid for it to be there by 1pm the next day and the only way I could do that was to have it delivered to a store and not to me and they were supposed to email me when it was ready to collect and they didn't.

P1: I would never order something online if I was to pay for it. To go to the store that is ridiculous. Because it would just come in on a delivery anyway.

SL: Are there any combinations of fashion retail channels that you think work well together when you are purchasing fashion clothing? Is there a few channels that you like to use together when you're shopping for fashion.

P1: I think em Pinterest is quite good but I have never really used it em cause people make like boards and things and it's quite similar as opposed to like em Instagram and things. It's all about images really.

P4: Yeah.

P1: Because it's all about images really.

P3: I don't Feel it's like even looking at different retailers Pinterest it's just like looking at different things. Like you could look at whatever but you wouldn't get a board of River Island it's just not that type of things. I'd be more inclined to get a board of where you want to go on holiday.

SL: But are there any combinations of channels that you think work well together when you are purchasing clothes?

P4: I think that they kind of all work. Like if I am going to purchase something from a store then I look at Instagram, Facebook and like maybe a blog together. Em but I might choose sometimes not to look like sometimes I think like Instagram and their Facebook page were better with their store because I think like their store and their website is more similar level and their Facebook page and Instagram page is more for inspiration rather than to buy, so like I see that as a step before. So I wouldn't necessarily, I might look at their Facebook and their Instagram and see something and I might not look at their website, I might just go to store and be like I really like that look,

SL: Ok.

P2: I think I am still like not down with mobile shopping yet. Like I Feel like having a little picture on your phone screen like isn't enough but I like browse on my phone and then I wait til I get home to buy it online because I'd rather…but I think in that sense it does, they work well together but maybe mobile banking isn't working that well by itself.

SL: Do you mean mobile shopping?

P2: Shopping that's what I mean yeah. [Laughs] Mobile banking, that's for a different focus group

SL: Em are there any… what are the key combinations of channels that you will use when you are shopping for fashion?

P3: Just on the Internet

SL: Just on the Internet or is that Internet or Internet and store or?

P3: Just store and if you can't get it on the Internet I really don't have faith in technology I don't know why.

P4: I need to speak to a person.

P1: Me too.

P4: I can't just. If an email comes through and it's a proper confirmation that's fine but if you just get like a thank you for your order and I'm like has that gone through, has the money came out of my account? I just can't.

P3: I know I just can't.

P4: Whereas if you had over your card and get a receipt then I'm happy with that, that makes me Feel like.

P5: I'm the same.

SL: So if you think about that combination the individual combinations that you think work well together, how does that combination of channels meet your needs at that stage in your shopping journey? So if you said a particular combination works for you em, P2 and if a particular combination works for you P4 how do you think that combination - whatever it may be – how does that meet that stage of your shopping journey.

P4: I think for me it's just getting that inspiration and actually making the purchase I like to be informed before I spend money. Especially as a student I don't think like I've got – I know students are supposed to have more disposable income but I don't Feel like I've got that much.

P1: Apparently.

P4: We get told that we do but I don't really Feel like we do. I don't know I don't Feel like I can just go out and just spend like a couple of hundred pounds. That means I can't eat for three weeks. But em so I just like to be informed that what I'm buying is worth buying and that I'm not going to buy it once and it's just going to sit in my cupboard.

SL: So we are talking about how it works well that combination of channels so do you mean social media?

P4: Yeah social media channels and occasionally the website and things and when I'm making that purchase and things and when I'm buying it I'm well informed.

SL: Are there any particular combinations with yourselves that you think help you meet that stage in your shopping journey well. Do you use a particular combination for a particular purchase or purpose?

P1: I'll only shop online if the retailer is just online. I think really like Missguided aren't in-store so I'll only shop on it if it's online.

SL: Are there any combinations of channels that you use with store-based retailers or would you rather just go to the store?

P1: I'd rather just go to the store.

SL: Ok, next question is have you gained any overall benefits from using a combination of shopping channels. So what I mean by that is that you get a benefit from using the combination of channels than a benefit from just using one channel? Any sort of benefits you think you might experience.

P3: Yeah I think you can get like P23dback from other people like I mean if you go on the likes of Facebook or whatever you tend to get reviews from people from previous consumers who may have bought that item or like directing it to the brand so in that sense and then you can see any faults or whatever else.

SL: Ok any other benefits?

P2: I think like with convenience. This Topshop think that I ordered it wasn't in stock it was selling out online I wanted it that weekend and by ordering it online and collecting it in-store I had it. Like although there was a bit of a glitch I still got what I wanted and I think it can be convenient. That's what I think

SL: Any other benefits at all? Does it make you like the brand more do you become more loyal in anyway?

P4: I don't think it changes much for me.

P2: I think there is so much these days like you're easily led. I don't think anyone has that much brand loyalty to anyone these days. Someone like doesn't do something you just go somewhere else.

P3: Especially like high street all the time, when you move cities the brand just completely changes for you as well.

SL: Do you use any channels simultaneously so using two channels at the same time? So an example might be you are in a store and you are using your mobile shopping online. Do you ever do anything like that or have lots of tabs up open on the computer.

P3: I think if you can't find something in-store you'll go online on a shop system.

SL: What was that?

P2: We were trying to get the discount code off our online thing whilst we were in the shop.

P4: You had to go on to Unidays and you had to login on Unidays through to your Moodle and then back to Unidays to give your code to the people behind the till in the store got through and gave you discount.

SL: The term connected-consumer is widely mentioned within omnichannel retailing as a fashion consumer what does the term connected consumer mean to you? What do you think that means?

P1: Say it again?

SL: So what does the term connected consumer mean to you as a fashion consumer? What do you think that term means?

P1: For me it's like how when you go in the staff are like, again I just really like shop in-store, em how the staff are with you in the store like if they say like hi if you need any help give me a shout, not like hi what are you looking for on your back but at least you know you've got that there you Feel connected with someone if you get approached and you walk in the store and you know that helps like there.

SL: Any other meanings?

P2: Like Primark had their "Primania" thing so you would like buy something and upload yourself wearing it and there is like a million other girls who have uploaded what they have just bought from Primark. So like my Jeffrey Campbell's came through the other day and I put them straight on Instagram like, here are my shoes.

All: [laughs]

P2: You're sharing everything with everybody else and taking inspiration from not just like blogs and magazines.

SL: So you're adding back to the inspiration pot so to speak.

P2: But from regular consumers, just your average.

P4: You can search a hashtag as well.

P2: Like a girl that you'll never meet is just like the same as you has just bought this and you have seen it randomly on a social media site and you're like ooh.

SL: What do you think connected consumer means P3?

P3: Em, yeah I think just when it's just connected to the brand and whether like all different types of channels are all interlinked and whether you've got. Em…I've got to think about this question.

SL: That's all right.

P3: But the opportunity to connect with them, and all about interlinking really.

SL: Being able to access channels 24/7 what does that mean to you as a fashion consumer.

P4: I think that means you can't sleep and you're bored it means you can cause some serious damage to your bank account. I think sometimes I have a bit more of a *well* kind of attitude when I am tired and I can occasionally buy things, that's that few times it's been like late at night. There was a point where my bank card didn't work online and my verified by Visa thing kept changing itself no matter how many times I changed it back em and I just avoided changing it back because I kept finding myself at three in the morning half asleep on various different retailers and I kind of knew I didn't want to buy things online because I don't find things online so I just didn't fix it for ages because it's just to dangerous.

P2: You go out and you wake up the next morning and your debit card is by your bed.

P4: You have occasionally gone out drinking and ordered online. Like P2 will go out and then ring us the next morning to tell us all the things she may have bought. It's a twisted idea but there is actually a lot of sales going through drunk…especially with students. The retailers like Topshop that are into students how man of their customers as students are going out three times a week getting wasted and then logging onto Topshop ordering a few tops whilst they don't care. Because these are the same people that end up paying for drinks on their bank card and stop caring about how much they are spending and they're going to come back and their not going to care that's £30 they don't need to spend their just going to do it.

P3: I think it's just all too much like it's all too available for us. Like all retailers are so sensitive and need to slow down. Like you know you are going to go into a store and get great customer service no matter what, everyone is out competing with each other and I just think this twenty four hour service is unnecessary maybe it should finish at twelve o'clock but to keep going it's so.

P4: If they become more like iTunes, see if you go onto iTunes and you log in you can just press buy buy buy buy and it just does avoid, you just don't have to do anything. Like there was this em discussion that was going on and I know it's not fashion but it could go the same way I went to my aunts birthday dinner and they gave a kid a step son gave his kid an iPad just for kids games and stuff on it just for his Christmas present and as soon as they are logged in or know the password they are just buying everything. It was like a dragon game or something and you could buy queens for it. He was spending three pounds a day on it on coins because he can cause all you have got to press is one button. But if shopping becomes like that people spend so much money because they don't have to think about it. They don't hand over their card and have to type in their pin, and getting a receipt back and it's not a transaction it's just a button.

P2: I hate waiting for things. Like if you rang me at ten o'clock and was like by the way we are going out tomorrow night I would be like aaah I need something to wear. Like I could buy something and have it delivered for the next day so I think that's like good.

P4: I think there's pros and cons and I think there is definitely pros for the retailer. It's convenient. Like if you had a dress for an occasion and it tore last minute you could just do it.

SL: And the final question is which channels and devices eh do you shop for fashion when you are on the move, is it a tablet is it an iPhone, a laptop.

P1: iPhone

P4: iPhone

P2: iPhone.

P3: iPhone through the apps and the Internet

SL: Through apps and Internet.

P4: And through emails. Yeah Instagram is a big one when I am on the move.

P2: I'll like spend the whole train journey looking on my phone at stuff but I won't buy anything 'til I get in.

SL: So when you access Instagram is that through your phone.

P4: Yeah I don't buy anything off it.

SL: And is that the app.

P4: Yeah, Instagram app and I use that like a lot if something pops up from Topshop I'll click and just scroll through their pages and the same for like Missguided and it's just yeah.

P3: Actually there is another one you know like these Groupon type things if one comes through for a retailer then I will get a voucher. So all like these discount websites.

P2: And emails that sort of thing.

P4: If there is nice pictures and things then I'm gone.

P2: Or if there is sales and oh you can get this with ten percent off and it's still a million pounds.

SL: So obviously the discount and things is that something you seem to get more of online.

P2: Yeah, I think so. You have to sign up to register but like when you buy online but sometimes you can have a guest account but you get signed up to their mailing list and they send you all these things through after that.

P3: This thing with vouchers at the moment I just got 15% off by following it in Moda in Pelle so I went to the store and showed the lady and she was like it's fine. I wouldn't go to store if the discount wasn't there. But I know its enticing me to go.

P2: Yeah I buy things that I wouldn't have bought just because they are on offer. Like if someone says you can have money off I'm like that's a great deal but it's something that I really don't need or didn't like.

SL: That's all my questions.

--Ends-

Focus Group 2 (Pilot – Customer Decision-Making Journey)

SL: Ok, so the first question I'm going to ask about in terms of customer journey is how does the product type of fashion affect your shopping journey and the channels that you use, as opposed to when you shop for a different type of product? What makes that journey different for fashion?

P6: There's probably a lifestyle attribute associated to it. So fashion you kind of know what kind of lifestyle area you want to go into whereas if you are buying like another product like toiletries, you're just going to go for whatever one you like or the cheapest or…. But with fashion your kind of drawn to a brand, a certain brand and you want to go through that brands, what that brand stands for basically, so the lifestyle element.

SL: Ok, so anything else? How does it affect the type of channels that you choose to use?

P7: I think things like, I'm trying to think about the way I shop and I know that something like shoes, I'll always go into store and buy shoes cause I've got that ingrained in my head, that's my mum that I've got to try them on. You've got to walk round and make sure that they fit. Whereas something like a dress that I want for a night out in two weeks time, I'm just going to buy online or if I Feel like I need something quickly for a specific occasion then I might buy it online but pay more for delivery and things like that so. I kind of, think, that the type of product and the reason for my purchasing it will take dictate way that I purchase it.

SL: So the way the channels you use to shop in potentially as well?

P7: Yeah, yeah.

P8: I only use online shopping if I can't find what I want in-store. I prefer to look round and actually like try things on and touch the clothes and see what they look like, not in pictures.

P9: I think as well when it comes to research I know for a technical product like an ipad or a phone or something you want to do your research online, you want to look at all the prices, you want to look at the product reccomendations but when it comes to fashion you might look for pricing online but then you're more likely to go into store to try on the fit of the clothing and see if it suits you or not.

SL: Eh, what about the level of fashion that you buy, so when I talk about level I mean, high street, value, designer, how does that impact your shopping journey? So obviously if you're spending more or less, what affect would that have?

P10: If I was going to spend more, I would definitely want to go into store.

SL: Why?

P10: Cause, say if you are gonna spend see, well a lot of money for me because I'm a student, will probably be over £100 whereas for some people it might just be £500, £1000. But if I'm gonna spend that kind of money, that's a substantial amount of money to me, I want to know its definitely gonna fit and if it doesn't fit, I can definitely bring it back if there is a problem with it. I need that reassurance. Whereas if it's high street, it's only £5 I'm not, I'm not as fussed but if it's something that's more expensive I would definitely go into store and I would expect that service.

P7: Yeah you want that experience.

P10: I want someone to fawn over me and be like "Oh that looks nice and here's something else" and…

P7: I want the nice packaging as well.

P10: Yeah. You want a nice bag.

P7: I want to walk down the street.

P10: Yeah I want the big bag so everybody knows where I've been.

P7: And then you can use it again.

P10, P7: [Laughs]

P6: I think though with it being a higher price I would definitely go in-store, but that would be my last option. I'd prefer to go online first to see what other retailers are offering it at. So I would definitely shop around for price. Em, and see if there is like any cheaper alternative.

P7: And the thing with online is you've got places like the Outnet and Cocosa where you can buy designer stuff so much cheaper.

P6, P10, P9: [Agrees] mmhmm.

SL: So what about with high street, what are the channels you prefer to use there?

P11: I think with high street – especially lower priced products I don't normally necessarily go out looking for something, it's like if I'm in town and I'm shopping and I see something that's like £10/£20 then maybe I'll pick it up. So I think a lot of the time the only, I only really go online if I'm looking for something in particular.

SL: Ok, in terms of thinking of your shopping journey do you see that journey as an overall process, do you see it as stages or as a brand experience or as a way to achieve a goal? How do you view the whole shopping journey?

P9: Personally, for me it's definitely a process because I think of the amount of high street brands that are offered and how often they bring new clothes in-store I want to keep up to date with that online so I'll always check Topshop new in or River Island I'll be like "*Right I like that*" then I compare it with River Island or New Look to see if they are offering a better product at a lower price and then once I have kind of made a decision I'll go in-store and try that outfit on and then buy it. Because I think being a student you

need to know that you are getting your money's worth and that you are not going to have to go instore and take it back and deal with all the hassle.

P7: I'm similar, I like - it's a process but I've got a bit of a habit where if I'm bored I will sit and internet shop. So it's a thing where I'm thinking, "Well I'm bored, what can I do, I'll go see what's happening online what I can find?"

P11: See what's new.

P7: Yeah.

SL: So just to recap on that question again, do you view your shopping journey as stages or as an overall journey. So you've [P9] said stages. Would anyone disagree.

P6: Yeah, I would probably say it's just a journey. I don't normally set out on a stage mission to be like I need to have to buy a certain item. So I would just normally kind of browse online when I'm at home during the day, em and I, I, actually do buy quite a lot online compared to actually going in-store. So it was, just for me it would be a journey see if I like it, if I don't but I wouldn't really see it as a stage process.

P8: I wouldn't either. No.

SL: Ok so tell me a bit more…

P8: Em. If I am just general shopping I just do it like for fun really. Em but if I'm looking for something I will walk round my usual shops to look and see and if I can't find anything there I might branch out and try and see if I can see something in somwhere I wouldn't usually go. But it's not thinking about it too much and kind of ambling about.

SL: So you see it as an overall process as well. Ok, anyone else? No. Ok so for the next question em… for those of you that do see shopping as a journey of stages, what stages do you have in that journey?

P9: I identify the product that I want to buy so the event that I want it for. So if I'm going on a night out I might want to look specifically for a playsuit or a certain type of dress. Then I'll go online and compare the different high street stores em, see what their prices are, see what they've got then I will normally have a couple of products in mind when I actually head into town. It just shortens my search journey, I find it like a more efficient process when I'm in town and not rummaging around to get on with exactly whatever I want.

P10: That is exactly the same thing that I would do.

All: Yeah. [Laughs]

P10: Identify the need for the product and think eugh I don't want to have to walk around for ages, it's going to be busy, it's going to be cold. Just find what you want, find a few different things, go in, know it's going to have what you want, try them on, probably nothing will fit.

All: Yeah [Laughs]

P9: It doesn't mean that you are only going to go in and purchase that product. Something else might catch your eye and you might impulse buy. Like it's not to say that only what you are going to go in for and buy but it just means that you have something in mind.

SL: So thinking of whether you regard your journey as an overall experience or as individual stages I just want you to think which channel do you start your shopping journey in?

P11, P6, P7, P10: Online

P8: I go, store

P12: Store.

P11: Online, definitely I think now especially with social networking, like big things like Instagram, all of the online stores like ASOS, Missguided. Missguided post like their 10 new items everyday or whatever it is, its and I just kind of just scan through things then if I see something that I might like, I log on and just check the new in pages and things. That's my first port of call really.

SL: Ok. And obviously you [P8] said that you start in-store.

P8: Yeah. Em I don't know why [laughs]. I don't know why I guess if I am looking for a dress for a night out or something I won't think about it until the day then obviously I don't have time to order it and I'm kind of not particularly organised and I just like wandering around. It's something to do. Especially when I don't have much work on at the minute I get really bored.

P12: I think it depends on what I am shopping for. I do like going to town and having a look round. But not when I have got any time pressure or specific thing to shop for. Because if I do have something specific to shop for, like I have got a wedding to go for I'm not going to, I don't wanna wander around town and not buy anything. I need to look, I need to find something. So I'll look online first but yeah if I'm just having a nice afternoon or I haven't got much to do. Then I like going. I'll go to town, because it's so much nicer going in a shop than going online.

P11: I can't stand shopping in shops I get too stressed.

P10: Especially in Manchester the bus takes over an hour to get you there and when you are there it's like.

All: Yeah

P6: Like Manchester I don't really like going into town to shop for rather than like.

P11: It's so cold outside.

P12: What about the Trafford Centre?

P7: I hate Trafford Centre.

P9: I like it but I can't get there easy.

P6: You have to get two buses and you have to have a full day there as well.

P9: To make it worth it.

P11: It's so much easier to just go online now. Everything is online anyway.

P7: The only place I go in town is TK Maxx and that's just because I like a rummage. Otherwise I have to have a reason to go in. I have to go in knowing that I'm getting this. And I have to be like "I'm going in, I'm getting it and then I'm leaving."

P9: You don't want to spend any more money.

P10: Sometimes when you go into store they look so much nicer than online.

P12: Like H&M, I find H&M.

[interjects] P7, P10, P9: I hate their website, hate it. Yeah.

P12: But then I instore and think "Oh this is nice." Like the Conscious collection and the other collections they have and I think oh that's really good.

P10: They don't photograph good as well.

P7: They order bad.

P12: Their what?

P7: Their online delivery. It takes ages.

P10: And you have to pay by invoice as well. You don't pay at the checkout you get sent an invoice to pay like a month later.

P12: Like a next catalogue.

P10: Yeah.

P12: That's strange.

P10: Yeah I think because they are trying to like trick you into spending more and paying it like Very and Littlewoods, they do that. They trick you into getting like a credit card with them and stuff.

P7: And then they send you like loads of stuff in the post.

P12: Yeah like those magazines. I think that's quite useful for me.

SL: So obviously you start your journey for the majority of you said online and some in-store. Where would you go to next?

P11: I guess really it depends, if it was something that I had seen online that I really wanted and it was an online only retailer then I would just order it straight away. But if it was something that I thought was really on trend and that I was likely to find somewhere in town for a lower price. Like being a student it's so easy to find like cheaper alternatives, like Primark and things like that. It is just throwaway fashion. People just wear things for a month and then it's out. So it's easy to look for something online then just go and find alternatives.

SL: Anyone else?

P6: I think that I would just continue online.

SL: Would you?

P6: Yeah, I just try and spend as little time as possible going into town.

SL: Have you always done that though? Or has your shopping changed over the years?

P6: It's probably like something like kind of where I have grown up. So was like literally growing up on a really rural farm, my nearest shopping town is like 30 miles away and so you would go like once a month and that didn't even have like that great shops and like the nearest city was like 80 miles away yeah. So I have never really been like oh I have to buy something like every week or every other week. Like I can go without it. So I don't Feel the need that I have to constantly need to go into town. And then because I don't really like Manchester city centre, I try and avoid it.

P9: I think its em different with your job as well. Because I know when we were on placement last year and were earning a wage we would just go and browse round, we had money to spend, we could afford to go look round the shops and go if I want that then I can afford to buy it. Now you have to be much more frugal and careful with your money.

P12: I think for me, when we were younger we used to have a like a whole days shopping. I used to work in French Connection in town and then in Selfridges and now I'm like I don't really like enjoy it as much walking around. Like will and I do still enjoy it if I have time to spend but its not my first place to go because for me it's like work and I have spent so many hours standing on a shopfloor.

P7: I end up Feeling guilty like I should be doing something else.

SL: In terms of when shopping for fashion does your journey consist of you going through channels consecutively, so one after the other, or will you switch back and forth so for example going online then going into the store then back online again.

P10: It depends how quickly.

P11: I kind of switch back and forth a bit. Especially with things like apps like that. If I'm in town and I see something then I will check a fashion app to see if I could find something online, like an alternative. I am constantly checking. I'm a bit of a bargain hunter.

P12: So when you are in town would you look on your phone to see prices and stuff?

P11: Yeah I guess. If it was something in particular which I knew I was going to buy, so not just something I was looking at but I wanted and I had seen an alternative previously online, I would look to see which one I preferred.

P7: I am quite strict about the way I do it. Like I always start online and if its there I just buy it. If its not then… and if it's something I really wanted then like a couple of weeks ago there was a pair of boots I really wanted I ended up ringing John Lewis to see if they had it.

P12: Did they reserve it?

P7: No they didn't have it. It was an absolute nightmare. So then I had to ring Dune and they didn't have it, then I had to go into store and see if they had it and then I went to Selfridges to see if they had it. I leave store to the last minute. I will do everything in my power to either get it online or find it somewhere else. Look at, go on Amazon to see if someone else has got it and I can buy it from there instead.

P6: Or eBay.

P12: eBay, that's true.

P7: Yeah. That's kind of a last resort as well. It's almost after shops for me.

P12: I like eBay.

P6: Yeah.

SL: So where would you place eBay is that before or after?

P7: I think it would be Internet, phone, shop, desperate eBay or Amazon.

P6: I've been like online, like the shop and then eBay because obviously a lot of people literally just buy it and then like two weeks later they just put it up. Em so yeah eBay, I would definitely put eBay higher up on my list.

SL: Do you say you use eBay more now?

P6: Yeah, definitely being a student as well.

P12: Like I was looking for a coat and I thought this looks really nice on the Topshop website then I would have a look to see if its on eBay. It was but it was the wrong size, but if that had been there then I would have bought it.

P11: You can often find alternatives, so not necessarily the brand you're originally looking for. You can find such similar alternatives on there. Like from outside the UK people just.

P10: Like China and stuff.

P11: Yeah, it takes like four weeks for delivery.

SL: In terms of the channels that you all use, now this is quite an open question, how do you perceive those channels in relation to your shopping journey? Are they useful, a hindrance, do you enjoy using them, do you not like using them.

P9: Online is the most useful.

P6, P7, P11: Yeah

P9: But I don't find it particularly exciting. If I wanted to find some interactivity or excitement with the brand I would go through social media to get more of a brand experience. But em, I just find online the most efficient but probably not the most fun way to, you have to keep browsing around.

SL: So see with social media do you find that important now in terms of your shopping journey?

P9: I think personally because, I haven't had a phone for like the past 9 months, I broke it. Em, I find it really hard to go on social media if I am just on my laptop. But I think if when you have an iPhone or a blackberry it's so much more interactive and integrative. Like every part of your life is on there. You can just go on twitter, oh someone posted something new on Instagram so I'll go and see what it is and it just links you across social media and brands. But I think when I am on my laptop I wouldn't necessarily go, ooh whats on Topshop doing on their blog today because I don't really find it that exciting.

P12: Yeah, its not as linked is it?

SL: What do you mean not as linked?

P12: Even so, you [P9] were saying that Twitter, links in to Facebook and into this and into this. Whereas actually on your computer it is quite separate and even with Pinterest, if you've go the app the Pinterest app is so easy to use you just hold it down and move. But comparing it like on the computer it's so hard, it's a bit more manual it's not a flowing thought process.

P9, P7: Yeah.

P9: You have to actively search on the computer, whereas it's all provided for you on social media and linked in.

P7: I've bought far more since having an iPhone.

P11, P10: Yeah

P7: Because I have got an iPhone now I do far more internet shopping because its got things like buy now with one-click on it and right it says its being sent to your address right now. It's a dangerous relationship because I look and oh now I've bought it.

P8: I hardly ever use apps.

P7: I didn't until recently and now it's addictive.

P11: I'm always scrolling through Topshop and ASOS.

P12: It's a bit like too small.

P7: Hmm.

P6: But it depends on the actual app like I really like Zara's app but Topshop I really don't like.

P11: Topshop is very limited I find sometimes.

P6: And I don't like the Asos app either as it's just all crammed in.

P12: It's like you could go scrolling forever. But because it's an even smaller design you find yourself having to scroll for even longer. Because Asos you are on this massive catalogue to get to the bottom of.

P6: Yep.

SL: In terms of your shopping journey obviously you use online but social media seems to be quite a massive factor in some ways. In some ways thinking for you all.

P7, P11: Yeah.

P12: I don't really use Facebook and Twitter but Pinterest and Instagram.

P11: It often just shows you the products style and there is so much about with like bloggers and things at the minute and like Instagram like featuring different bloggers with different companies that it's so easy to see yourself wearing a certain product as soon as they are posted. Someone is the same like students, student fashion bloggers are the same sort of age group and you scroll through and you see it so simply and you think "hmm I could see myself in that".

P12: It's more useful than just having a white background with a clothing item on it.

P10: I like Tumblr as well for that. Like following brands on Tumblr, some of them are a bit rubbish. But some of them actually have some really good stuff on it that you can scroll through and that if you follow fashion bloggers on it they do have some really good stuff that they post and its more interesting. Especially when it says just been to Topshop and just got it right now.

SL: So if you think of a particular stage in your shopping journey, so that might be research, purchase or even after purchase. Is there any point at which you would combine more than one channel at that stage?

P11: Yeah I think I do combine like online and instore. If I am looking for a certain product I'll have a look online first then go in-store and have a look. But if I can't find what I necessarily want in-store then I will go back to online and say right, well I may as well order it there.

P12: Do you mean at the same time [to moderator]?

SL: Yes, even that at well.

P12, P11: Yeah I do that quite often, yeah I do.

P10: If I see something instore that I like and my size isn't in-store I will check online.

P12: I like talking to people. I would like talk to them.

P10: Yeah I check that first, then if not I would kind of look online.

SL: So would you say for different stages of your journey you would use lots of different channels for each stage.

P11: I would personally yeah.

P9: No I would stick to my structure. I'm such an organisational freak. So online then…

P7: I am the same, I don't spend a lot unless its something that I really really want. Unless its something really really expensive or if you have spent a lot of time looking at it. I stick to my plan.

SL: So opinion is half and half amongst the group.

P8: I almost don't think to go online. I think I am quite old fashioned in how I shop. Like I go in shops and I don't see something, like sometimes I won't even think to go online. I almost Feel like for some weird reason I Feel like its more effort to go online. Even though it isn't.

P12: Growing up you spend so much time wasted like just trawling.

P8: I think I just find it a bit, like I just end up spending hours and Feel a bit cross-eyed after going through loads of stuff. Em, I think like just because when we were growing up we were not very offay with technologies, we never seemed to buy anything online and then I just sort of got into that way of shopping. It's weird.

SL: Do you think that because you have grown up around technology do you think that affects how you use it?

P10: Definitely

P8: Yeah.

P12: I think because we are at uni studying it, in that area as well.

P6: Even comparing it to like em my sister who is seven or eight years older and obviously because we were the first generation to really get into it she like hates going online. She finds it as a chore. Though, well I know obviously, she is going on thirty so it's not really that old. But there is a difference even there. Em so she is not really used to it where as we are just completely that was what we know.

P11: Yeah we were brought up with that.

P12: And even like my cousins who are all younger than me. One of them is probably like 10 or 11 and she is constantly on Instagram reposting and like "Oh mum, I really want this for Christmas". So she is like even more involved in it and I think when she grows up it will be like that one click thing she will be like that.

P10: I don't know how you can be so into social networking at 11.

P6: When I think back to like 11 or 12 and we used MSN Messenger and Bebo, My Space you would like try and find other social networking site to join. I didn't have any streets to hang around on. You would

literally spend all day with your friends in school and run home and literally run home to get on MSN [messenger] to chat to them and then like Bebo to chat to like other friends in different schools.

P9: It's just evolved now, there are like more ways to do it.

P6: So if that was us at 11 or 12 and like it wasn't really that advanced back then. Now the children that are like 11 or 12 they are just gonna be so into it.

SL: So you think for your generation it's had quite a big effect?

P7, P9: Definitely yeah.

SL: So thinking of another product like grocery shopping would you do all of that online?

P6: Definitely, I would definitely do it.

P10: You save money as well.

P7: Free delivery, you save like £10 off.

P11: I only started after Christmas but I've been doing it at different places. It's like they all do it, so if you spend on your first shop you get £10 off so I just do it like that.

P6: I just don't want to be carrying bags back from Sainsbury's.

P10: I always find Sainsbury's too expensive anyway.

SL: We are digressing a little so going back to what we were discussing. If you think about the channels that you use and this is at any stage in your shopping journey would you say that you get the same level of benefits from each of those channels? Are they of equal quality?

P7: No

P9: No

P12: Mobile supported sites, not apps on your phone are rubbish they are so frustrating. Even like eBay its just really annoying like.

P11: I like it on the app.

P12: The app is good but the mobile is really confusing. You have to zoom out and zoom in.

P9: The thing for me is that it beats going in-store, trying it on, finding it fits perfectly and going to buy it. It's the best Feeling because like online you have got to wait for the gratification.

P10: Then if it does come and it doesn't fit then you have to send it back. And then it's just like …

P6: I don't know. I get excited when I have ordered something online. Like has the postman arrived and like even if it doesn't fit I know that it is a bit of a like, you get deflated don't you. But I don't know there is still that excitement in the process with online that you would still get in the store.

SL: What about the store does the store compare differently to other channels? Do you get the same level of benefit and value.

P8: I think the thing with like going in-store, I think I just like the instant gratification. It's done, I've got it. Um … I'm not particularly patient or organised or anything so I just like to have it then and there. I don't know it's weird.

SL: It is hard to think about it consciously.

P8: It is and I am hearing here that everyone shops online and uses social media I never use social media for fashion at all.

SL: Do you think you might do now?

P8: No. I've got Facebook but I don't have Instagram or anything like that. It's just not my thing.

P10: It's not mine though either, I would never use facebook for fashion.

P11: My first port of call, as soon as I wake up in the morning, is getting up in the morning and checking all of my social networking.

P10: I never want to become addicted to it like that.

P11: I am a real phone addict though. Especially like coming to uni and doing fashion I am constantly checking so many different blogs that I follow and things like that, both their actual blog and on Instagram. I am a constantly checking people's things for inspiration.

P9: I think certain social media channels are better than others for fashion.

SL: Such as?

P9: Well I did the EComm module last semester and we learned more about them and you know that through Facebook the click through rates are awful. I wouldn't actually click through Facebook to actually carry on. But then things like Instagram or Pinterest because you can share visual content, you can have like much more interaction with the product. It's shown in a much better way than someone who has just posted it on Facebook. Because you don't associate Facebook with that.

P6: And you can build like your brand around it can't you. There is a brand story to go with it rather than Facebook being all a bit disjointed.

P10: I find it a bit "cold" Facebook there is no emotion there.

P12: I remember back when I first got Facebook like I wondered "why can't I change the background" you know. So it's all white background and all the same.

P9: Like Twitter facilitates conversation with a brand. So people are like if you have a complaint you are going to tweet them aren't you or if you have like just bought something then you'll be all "woo hoo". So that makes you Feel more part of the brand experience.

SL: If you think about your last shopping journey for a fashion product did the channels that you use did they meet your needs?

P6: I bought a few items in the sale from Zara off the Zara app and I was really happy with it because sometimes you go into the Zara store at sale time and its just like Primark so the app is just so easy to use I think, em and basically you could see like how they had styled it, what it looked like on and the price was really good. So I literally just added them to my basket and checked out and waited for them to arrive and I was happy with all of them.

SL: Anything else?

P10: I would say no. The last thing I wanted to get was a dress for a wedding that I am going to soon. It was in H&M I didn't go in looking for that specific dress I just saw it and they didn't have my size so I was annoyed and then it was new in stock and it was not on the website so I can't order it so I am going in now to see if I can get it. But they had it in my friend's size so she bought it.

P12: So are you still going to buy it?

P10: She's not coming to this wedding so we won't both be wearing it. [laughs]

P9: I was definitely happy. I purchased online, which is like really odd for me, to do a whole purchase online, like big risk. I ordered this jumpsuit off misguided for a night out and em I found it really helpful because I have got long legs so jumpsuits and playsuits I normally need to get the next size up or something, but they tell you the height of the model and the size that she is wearing so it makes it so much easier to compare for me. Like how its going to fit me and whether its going to fit so then when it came it fitted perfectly I couldn't have asked for a better product.

P11: They [Misguided] are so good as well with student discount through Unidays.

P9: Yeah they are brilliant.

P11: Like free delivery and stuff like that. They always have so many offers on.

P9: And their delivery is so quick as well. You can order Saturday delivery. So you can order it Friday night up until 9pm and you can get it on Saturday and still wear it out on Saturday night. It's good.

P6: I keep hearing about Missguided coming up but I've never shopped with them.

P10: Is their quality good?

P9: Yeah.

P10: The one at Boohoo is awful.

P9: It's [Missguided] not like a Topshop is it. It's never going to be a Topshop. It's like a range down. I'm big on quality and I am more than happy with it. For the price you pay.

P6: So would it be like a New Look level? What kinda price?

P9: Yeah, so a little bit yeah. So I paid £27 for my jumpsuit but it was like, it was lovely wasn't it.

P6: Yeah.

P9: It was different. I would not expect to see anyone else in it, which is what I quite like.

P10: Because it's not on the high street, it's a bit different. It's not like Topshop where everyone is in the same Topshop dress and then its like.

P12: Can you repeat the question again?

SL: So in your shopping journey, if you think about your last shopping journey for a fashion product did the channels that you use meet your needs?

P12: Oh, yeah. So, I went shopping to the Trafford Centre which I actually hate but it was a last resort and em, because I had a voucher. I went to Topshop and they were so helpful. It was for an interview and they were… last time actually the experience I had of looking around Topshop had just been like really rude and quite pushy. The staff as well of the customers are like that. But in this one the girl was like so helpful. I was talking to her about my budget and what I am going to do and she was really helpful and then I went into the changing room and tried some stuff on and I was like "Girls can you help me?" They were just really honest and really helpful and I was really overwhelmed by that. Topshop for me is I like the clothes but the whole atmosphere and the attitude I don't like at all so actually they were really good and I came out and thought wow this is great I got a whole outfit, but they really listened to what I needed and what I wanted.

SL: So do you Feel you would get the same online from Topshop, like the advice you received?

P12: No. Because they don't have a live chat thing do they on Topshop? Like…is it Asos?

P11: Yeah.

SL: Have you used that?

P11: I haven't used it.

P12: I think if they had something like that, but then you still can't…they can't see you, they can't. One of the girls brought this cream dress and I was like no, no way because I just cant pull that off and online if they can't see you so how are they going to know that. They'll be like wear this yellow dress and I'll be like no!

P9: It links to products so that's how they do that. So you tell them what you are looking for and give them your measurements.

P6: You might be a size 10 but like there could be three different women who have size 10 with different body shapes.

P9: You give them the information and they are like "well here are some suggestions".

P12: So is it like waist and hips sizes?

P9: No its just like a size 8 or just something general. Oh so like I am going to a wedding, I am a size 8, I am looking for something floral and I want it knee length and they will be like there link, link, link, link. So it cuts out another part of the journey.

SL: So have you used it before?

P9: I have used it once, I tried it out for our EComm module to see what it as like and I wanted to mention it in my exam and it was fine yeah. Personally, it's not for me I like to do my own thing but I can see how it cuts out another chunk out of a shopping journey and makes it more efficient.

P11: I think for me I could sit and scroll through but some people are kind of swamped by it there is so much. I think that is a really good tool for them.

SL: So moving on to my next question. In your shopping journey for fashion, obviously we are continuing to think about high street fashion here, do you perceive that different channels play different roles, functions or do they have different purposes?

P12: Yeah, I think online is more 'researchy'. Like I would never look for a specific item and go round town, looking in every shop for that specific thing. It would take too long. It's like you cut out the 10minute walk between shops. So like in the Arndale it take 10minutes.

SL: So it's for the convenience. Ok, so what were you going to say?

P9: Social media is more about getting the brand experience across isn't it? It's like seeing their new products, seeing their new ranges, seeing them in a different light, getting inspiration rather than like going there for a purchase. Do you know what I mean? It's more about getting part of the brand experience.

SL: Ok. What about the role of the store? Because if you are such digital natives, doing everything online, what purpose does the store serve to you?

P12: It kind of gives you like a sense of trust and like you kind of get to know them a bit better but not just like this kind of strange portal on the internet.

P11: It's about getting a Feel for a product. Online is great for seeing a product but you can't get a Feel for it like everything fits differently. You may be a size 8 on the bottom and 10 on the top like you don't know until you are in-store I think.

P12: And the colours are always different.

P10: Yeah.

P12: The fabrics are always different.

P7: Yeah. See I think I see store as a backup. If it's not available online then I can go to store. Its there as a, just in case kind of.

P6: The role of the store like has changed isn't it. The store is going to have to be there like it's still going to be needed. But in terms of the like the role of it, it's definitely going to decrease and as you say more people are going to see it as a backup.

SL: So what role do you think it [store] will play?

P6: Em, I think its probably going to be there for people as not everyone is going to like the same channels are they?

All: Yeah

P6: So it'll probably be half and half. So it still will be there for the showing-off who they are and the clothes and to be able to get that message across.

P10: I think it's very different for different generations. Like my mum and dad they would probably go into town most weekends to just have a "mooch" about the shops. Whereas I would only necessarily go into town and buy if I was looking for something.

P12: I can't imagine my grandparents looking online for something.

P11: Exactly.

P12: But they love Amazon but I don't think they would go on M&S to…

P11: Yeah

P12: Look for, I dunno for socks or a new jacket.

P11: It's like going out and stopping for coffee and like…

P12: My grandad love M&S and loves like… when he came to this one he said, "This is amazing." We had like a cup of coffee and a bacon sandwich and then went round and then it was like old-fashioned shopping.

P9: It's completely different. It gives you an important type of contact with the product before you buy it because like quality and fit are two of the most important factors aren't they and the barriers to why people don't shop online. So I think the store will always have to be there fore people to be able to fully get to grips with products. Because no matter what new technology you bring in, you are never going to actually be able to Feel the product and see exactly how it fits on your body. So the stores' always going to be necessary.

P7: And if you think of more premium brands like Chanel and like you going really high-end I don't think they are ever going to go online really. They're never going to have the whole transaction online.

P6: They're always going to have their flagships aren't, that is there for the…

All: Yeah

P10: If I was intending to buy something that full price. Like I wanted to get a Mulberry bag or something like that you want to go to the shop.

P12: It's because you want to have the experience. You want to have yourself like pampered, "Here's the bag Madam."

All: [Laughs]

SL: Em, so that's already answered another question that I had for you. The other thing I was going to talk about was those indirect channels so your social media such as you Pinterest, your Polyvore, Facebook. Eh do you use any consumer review sites or blogs as well as part of your journey?

All: No.

P9: Only on certain sites so like eBay and Amazon obviously you would always leave feedback or reviews and stuff. I think like reviews and stuff especially online are becoming a more important part of peoples purchasing process. Like eBay a good review you'll get a bit of interest and an order from them whereas if someone has got zero feedback or lots of negative reviews you'll steer well clear don't you.

SL: Ok, what were you going to say as well?

P11: I can't even remember.

SL: So we were talking about about blogs and Pinterest and consumer review sites.

P11: Oh, I use blogs quite a lot. Um…

SL: What do you use them for?

P11: Inspiration, I guess. I look at a lot of peoples outfit posts and if there is something particular that I like the often have links to the products online. Em, I don't know I use it if I have got a specific item in mind that I like, I see how other people have styled it or how I could see myself wearing it. If I wasn't necessarily sure.

P12: I use blogs but not really for fashion but for interiors and like craft ideas. I'm like always on them.

SL: So you are using them but not necessarily for fashion.

P12: Not for like fashion.

SL: Apparel?

P12: Yeah. I use different ones for different things so like, like an extension of Pinterest with a kind of craft and tutorials but on blogs. Like I bought a table and sanded it and repainted it and I looked on line and it I was like "oh whats the best paint to use". So I looked on blogs, so I didn't want to go on B&Q and look at the reviews on there as I was like hmm. People who have already done something similar so I guess with similar styling you'd go for that so looking at what they had done.

SL: And in terms of, just to ask really a new question, is do you Feel that the blogs and the Facebooks and the brand and the store and the online website – do you Feel that they are all connected together? Do you get the Feeling that there are some traits that go through them all?

P6: Sometimes they aren't but they should be em.

SL: Tell me more about that.

P6: Well its em…we're doing our main project on New Look. Em their store, their Facebook, their Instagram, they're Pinterest are all completely different.

P12: That's so bad.

P6: And their website is just awful so.

SL: So how are they different?

P6: Like Instagram they portray themselves actually really well, em so they are like showing new collections and new items coming in and the way they could style it and their website is just a complete jumble.

P9: Tacky.

P6: Like so you compare their website to their Instagram, like the homepage has got nothing on there that is on their Instagram pages. And then you go in-store that's just another element that's obviously really mismatched.

P9: Yeah, we kind of said that they don't have one clear message and that confuses customers because you don't understand what you're getting.

P10: It puts them off doesn't it.

P9: Of course it does, because when you buy into a brand you want to know exactly what you are buying into which is why they have got to be the same across all the channels. I think anyway.

SL: Any other comments on that?

P12: So was it Fashion Strategy?

P9: Yeah.

P12: We did the same but we are doing Gap and that's really similar. They did actually relaunch a new website but it wasn't that great, it was quite American in what they were doing. And like I dunno for the American market it would be totally fine because they don't seem to be as bothered by high fashion they like comfort and casual but compared with like their Pinterest account is really good. Like if you look on their Gap Pinterest its like wow it's amazing this is like what… I want to be wearing things like this. This kind of like inspirational but actually compared with like their Facebook and their website it's just rubbish and their store is so messy. They're not really consistent. Like the images are all different.

P9: So the product they pick out to sell or to make them look more premium you can't actually find. So like the Next adverts, Next were doing loads of like advertising, magazine advertising we looked at one of the dresses didn't we and were like, "Oh my God, that dress looks amazing on this girl. It's styled incredibly, the price is wicked."

P7: Did you find it?

P9: Went to look at it in-store and it was awful wasn't it.

P6: Yeah.

P9: We looked online, it looked awful and then Jo the lecturer went into store and she said it just looked awful.

P12: No.

P9: So it's a completely mixed message, why would you waste your time doing that.

P6: And it wasn't even… it was the main advertisement that was being spread across all of these newspapers for weeks and like even Jo was saying that she went in-store to find it. It was hidden behind some like coats or whatever. It should have been in the window and at the front of the store.

P12: That's such a surprise. It's like the Gap in the shop they had like this lovely like cashmere display. At the beginning I went to Trafford and one at home and one in town and it was right at the front. You'd go on the Internet and it's like, "Where's the cashmere?" because they make such a big deal of it in their shop but actually it's no where.

SL: So it's almost hidden away.

P12: Yeah.

P11: It's a big thing especially maybe like with the older generation stores. Places that started up just being in-store, they're not necessarily being able to understand the online market as well.

P9: Yeah.

P7: Uh huh.

P6: They're probably not investing in it. They're probably not investing in teams who fully integrate all operations so that like. But in-store, online and social media should all be sitting down like once a week and saying whats going to be the main thing.

P12: Cause surely its not too hard.

P6: Well. It shouldn't be. In the long term it will benefit them.

P10: I always find that problem with Marks & Spencer's. Like sometimes when I walk past the huge one in town the window display always looks really nice and some of the mannequins look really trendy. Like they've got ankle boots on, a little skirt, a nice cardigan and a jacket. You think that looks really nice. If you go in you know those products are going to be nowhere near each other and it's going to look awful and it's the same online. When it comes up straight away their front page at the minute is really trendy. It looks really like fashion forward but if you were to click on say skirts or something its just completely….

P11: You can't find the actual skirt.

P10: It's completely different like. It's so like mixed messages. Like they've got that em Rosie lingerie collection and it looks gorgeous but then if you go into the store and go to the lingerie collection it is just… they haven't… it doesn't look… trendy. They've somehow made it look really old and it looks frumpy. Like they don't merchandise their stores very well. Like I know someone that did their placement at Marks & Spencer's and she told me that it's completely like that. Their head office nobody wants to talk to each other, nobody talks to each other, nobody cares what anybody else is doing. Nobody wants to be the person to say oh you know this is great, so it's just a complete mess.

P12: Like different stores are like from where I am from in Coventry it's like you are walking into the nineties again. It's just really so outdated and horrible and you're like oh this looks like my Gran would shop here.

SL: So it's not really reflecting the other channels.

P12: No.

P11: It is definitely like in those older store like M&S. I know because I had to look at Zara for assessment centre and everything for them, from my perspective, joined up so well. When I into store I just had to look at menswear for example and I was looking at denim and all of their denim they've got a number of different ranges but it was all product placed in complete styled outfits so there was like perspex shelving, then the jumpers then the jeans then the shoes and I thought, "I wonder if they do it online?" When you go online, say I clicked on a pair of jeans, underneath they have got a thing called look plus where they link to every other item in the image and it gives the consumer complete inspiration it's like a whole outfit styled for them and they were just really well connected both online, on the app, instore but I just think in the store a lot of kind of older…

P12: More traditional.

P11: …More traditional they've never kind of used it really.

SL: What I'm going to do is just going to move on to the next question as I am just conscious of time. Would you say, if you think about an omnichannel fashion shopping journey using lots of different channels – just generally, do you find your shopping journey across several channels normally a positive or normally a negative experience?

P9: At the moment negative but only because we've had the sales and we're kind of in-between seasons. Like I'm still waiting for the retailers to bring all their new haul in-stores but then when it's the new season it's really positive because you've got all the new stuff in, it's really excisting, you Feel really inspired.

SL: Anything else?

P7: I would say mine's has been positive in the sense that I've got what I wanted. But in the sense of having to go into town, the sales on, it's really busy, it's a jumble, it's a mess, waiting for things to arrive it's really negative.

P11: Yeah I would say quite negative I have had a couple of instances, especially Urban Outfitters at the minute. They don't kind of control their website really well. Their sale, if you go on to the womens sale page, there's some really really nice pieces, then when you click on them the image goes and says it's sold out rather than removing the item anyway. Because you get me excited and then I get on there and it says it's sold out. So it's kind of really…

P10: Shame it doesn't offer you some kind of alternative like, we've got this.

P11: Yeah.

SL: So see because you mentioned that it's sale time, do you different channels at different times of year then?

P12: So go online then, yeah.

P9: I still think going online is just as bad as you're still trawling through a load of tat to be honest.

P11: I find the sale is easier in-store.

P9: As sales have gone on in-store like obviously there's more discounts year round now and retailers bring in stock specifically for sales that we as fashion students recognise. So I just think…I just tend to avoid the sales altogether. Everythings discounted all the time, or as you said you can find a different brand selling an alternative cheaper kind of product at a cheaper price.

P12: When I was in French Connection they had these dresses which are like skater dresses with like a waist and high neck and em they brought them in a few weeks before their sale and we were like these are the sales dresses but we are selling them at full price and then they went into the sale and its like bringing in stock and I don't want to buy this because its not … you're just buying it in because its in the sale. John Lewis do that as well as they have a special buy and special buy section that they bring in which I think for John Lewis is a bit more exclusive but they were just bringing in tat to fill the shop. It's not like an actual sale where you are reducing things. You are just bringing in things.

SL: So just to move on to the next question sorry to stop you there. Is your shopping experience different dependent upon the channels that you use? We're not talking about your shopping journey now we're talking about the experience of the journey.

P11: More stressful in-store, but I think there's pro's and con's to both. In-store I find it more stressful but it is nicer in terms of tryings on, you can get advice from other people.

P7: You get that immediate gratification; you've got the outfit.

P9: You can make a day of it as well. Like go for lunch, and then have a break…

P6: It really depends though on like, I think, on my mood and the weather.

P12: Oh weather! If it was a bad day I would not go shopping.

P6: Little things like that really depend on like whether it's going to be a really good experience or not.

SL: Anything else that makes it really good or really bad?

P11: I think employees is a big thing for me in-store, customer service in-store. Online you don't obviously get that really yet. I mean other than the Asos stylist chat. But really in-store that customer service is just politeness, I really appreciate politeness when I'm in-store.

P8: There's just no need for it. I've worked in enough customer service jobs and even if you are having a really awful day you've got to be nice to people. I hate when you go in and someone is really off with you.

P11: I think that's the thing, sometimes people can be really nice and sometimes people can be really ignorant.

SL: And would that have an effect on things?

P11: If someone is really rude to me I will just not go back. I do get really wound up by it because it's not hard to just be like, "Thank you have a nice day." Two seconds, that's it and it really winds me up. So I'd probably choose not to go back to certain places.

P7: With online I think it's having to spend a certain amount as well. If you have to spend a certain amount and I only want one thing and it's less than that amount then I'm just going to be like, "I'm just going to leave it."

P11: Oh see like that makes me buy more. I did it the other day and I a bought a pair of jeans for £25 online and it was free delivery if you spend £40. So I was like, "I might as well."

P6: I would Feel really bad.

All: [Laughs]

SL: Would you do that more so online?

P11: Yeah.

SL: In terms of the fact that in your shopping journeys you've all mentioned that you use lots of different channels within that journey. What motivates to use more than one channel?

P7: Price, availability.

P9: Efficiency

SL: Is it more because you have to use that channel rather than because you choose to use it?

P7: Em…

P10: It depends on availability and things like that.

P9: And like price you would use online just to get a better selection you choose to do that but then you might be forced to go online due to efficiency so you want to cut out how much time you are searching in your search journey.

SL: So that answers my second questions because that was whether you use more than one channel because you need to rather than you choose to. So would you say for example, P7 if you shop online a lot before you go to store. Is it because you choose to do that or is it just down to the fact that you have to just because you can't get the item?

P7: No because I choose to. I choose to shop online but then I have to go into store, that's the way I look at it.

SL: So it's more driven out of convenience perhaps.

P7: Yep.

SL: Just on that subject as well, I want to look at what motivates you to move between different retail channels? So, you mentioned a few factors there such as price, availability, efficiency, that might encourage you to move from online to the store or vice versa. Is there anything else that motivates you to move between channels?

P11: Discounts.

P10: Fit, I constantly worry that if I buy something online that it's not going to fit because…depending on… there's no standard or standardisation between brands. Like I can go to one shop and I have to maybe buy a size 10-12 and I go to another shop and I have to buy a size 6-8, so you just never know.

SL: Would you say it's easy to move between different fashion channels? Is your information carried through to the next channels.

P9: I'd say easier on your phone, a hundred percent with the social media and online aand the apps and stuff. Not necessarily when I'm just using the laptop.

P11: I think it's sometimes difficult to find things. Like if I see something in-store and then try and look for it online - say they didn't have my size in-store I'll think, "Oh yeah I'll order it online." Which is sometimes different to buying the product. Sometimes not everything is featured in both.

P12: Especially like in Zara you'll see it in the shop and it won't be online which you kind of think it should be the other way around.

SL: So you would almost want to see the same stock in both?

P12/P7: Yeah.

P11: I think there should be consistency

P12: Either see it in both, or just online as an exclusive with more availability rather than the other way round.

P9: Yeah, you want the option don't you so you can see it in-store and it's not your size you want to be able to get it online because otherwise what's the point in having it?

P7: Frustrating

P6: Although Zara is a bit different though, they do that purposely so that like you have to go into store.

P12: Yeah.

P6: They're constantly changing so if its not going to be online you know you might actually find it in-store and you might also find something else that's not online.

SL: So it's about the consistency that you mentioned, yeah.

P11: Yep.

SL: It's about knowing being able to get equal quality of what you see in each channel. Ok. Which devices do you use to do your fashion shopping?

P11: I normally use my laptop if I'm… well it depends. Particular sites like the Asos app and things like that. I'll have a look through the app but if I'm actually going to buy something I'll check it out online first because you just can't get a proper Feel for anything on your phone.

P10: I would use my laptop just because if I'm going to shop online I'll probably have about ten different….

P6: Stores open…

P10: Like on different tabs so it's just much easier to flick between them.

SL: Are there any other devices or things that you use?

P6: Well TV is coming up isn't it? Like the little Apple TV and they connect to the internet and like now you watch a video, say like em… for example New Look puts a promotional video out and then you can actually click on the video and it'll bring you to the items and the website and stuff.

P7: Oh, I see.

SL: Have you seen that?

P6: No, but I've read about it and it was New Look. It was like a new innovative thing come out.

SL: Have you ever used any in-store kiosks?

P12: Oh yea M&S they have the big like fake tablet thing. Like it looks like…

P7: Yeah

P12: …A big iPad and you can do that. Yeah I was a bit disappointed with that because I asked the lady, do you have any luggage and she said, "Oh just let me check on this." And I was like I could have done that. Like I really expected her to know and she didn't.

SL: So staff knowledge.

P12: It's hard because as a customer you expect the sales assistant to know everything but as a sales assistant you just can't, you don't know everything so that's fair enough but yeah I just though, eugh. I've seen people using them though.

P10: Yeah when I worked at Monsoon we had a number of tablets in-store for customers because so many people used to come in and say, "Oh have you got this in a size 12?" And if you didn't have it, I mean we can ring other stores and things but they brought in to a number of different stores iPads that were just connected to the app solely that was it and you could just order it straight away. The consumer could pay there and then in-store and eh and have that delivered for free. That was it.

P12: And they get it delivered for free?

P10: Yeah for free.

P12: That's good.

P10: They come into store and they pay there so the didn't even have to enter their details so it was done connected with the tills. It was just… it made things so much easier rather than a lot of people saying, "If it's not in-store and you can't order it here I'll go and get the next best alternative." It was really easy for them to say, "oh actually if you can order it there and then in two minutes for me, that's brilliant." Which was really good.

SL: How does different technological devices play a role in your shopping journey? It's a very broad question just to see what your interpretation of it is.

P12: Em…so I… I'm going to talk about eBay because that's just how I use my phone. But like when I'm on the bus I'll look on there and it's kind of like in between time. Whereas…it's just really convenient. Oh I wouldn't do lots of research on my phone, but to like… so because I sell quite a lot of stuff on eBay in my spare time so actually to process things it's really good and yeah I dunno.

SL: Do you have an iPad?

P12: Do I? No. I just have my iPhone

SL: Does anyone have an iPad?

P7: I do yeah. It plays a big part in my shopping, yeah.

SL: So how does that. What role does that play in your fashion shopping journey?

P7: It's so easy… like if I'm sitting watching the TV then I'll have it there because then I'll be like doing my emails or something and then you just have to do like one little.

P6: It's actually enjoyable isn't it.

P7: You do one little swipe with your hand.

P12: Yeah

P7: And then you are in a different bit of your iPad and it's like, "Oh look there's ASOS."

All: [Laughs]

P12: You can do different hand gestures.

P7: It's so portable you just take it with you and I kind of try and keep my laptop for studious things.

P9: It's better to view the product on personally.

P7: Yeah.

P9: Like I was browsing off my flatmates one last night and it's just the same as browsing on a laptop.

P7: Yeah

P9: But again it's portable.

P7: It's quick and simple.

P9: It's better than a mobile.

P12: Do you use apps on yout iPad or do you just go on the site?

P7: Yeah, for shopping. I like have my apps are all like work based and I can take it to uni with all my books on it and stuff.

SL: Do you use different devices for different stages of your shopping journey, like your research phase, your purchase phase and even post purchase?

P11: Research is on my phone or on my laptop.

P12: Normally laptop for research.

SL: What about the purchase stage or the after-sales – what devices do you use there? For example if you are going on Twitter to post a massive complaint.

P6: I've done that. It was Topshop and it was because of the quality of the jeans. It's my favourite pair of Lee jeans and I had them for a good year. I wore them like constantly, like favourite jeans. Then it came to the time I'd wore them that much that a hole had started to appear so it was like time for a new one. And so I went in to buy the exact same pair and I was trying them on and thought they felt a little bit different but I was like ok, yeah. I bought them because they were my favourite pair of and literally within two days they got like so saggy around the knee and everything and you could just Feel that the quality was lowered. So then like I tweeted them just to be like just so disappointed and they private messaged me to say get in

contact with us and we'll pass the message on the buyers or go in-store and see what they can say. But I was like there's no point because you've obviously done it, the buyers have lowered the quality of the spec.

SL: So how did you Tweet, did you do that on your mobile?

P6: On my mobile. But they came back to me straight away which was really good.

P12: That happened to me ages ago. I bought a cardigan ages ago from River Island actually I was in first year so it wasn't that long ago. It shrunk in the wash and I'd like taken care of it better than it said on the label. So it said like put it in the washing machine and lie it flat. I like handwashed it and then lay it flat and it shrunk and the sleeves kept getting shorter. So I took it into the shop and they were like, "No, sorry." blah blah blah and I was like "Really?" So I got like the card and emailed them and they sent back a thing saying can you like post it to us and describe whats happened. So I posted it to them and they sent me a refund and a voucher. So I was really impressed and didn't even think to use Twitter or anything. I really like talking to people and I'm able to kind of wangle things better and persuade people. Like, "Can I talk to the manager please?"

P10: Like being able to to show people, like actually taking it in to say this has happened and you can physically see the problem.

P8: I did that with a pair of boots I bought from Clarks in September and I bought them because I knew they would be good quality and then the zip like came away. Then I went to get them fixed and the cobbler just went, "This is a manufacturing fault I can tell from the soles that you haven't worn them much. This is the stores fault, you need to take these back."

P12: It's good he said that.

P8: Yeah exactly. So I took them back with proof that I bought it.

SL: So you went into store to do that?

P8: Yeah and eh they just went, "Yeah we'll just give you another pair."

P11: That's really good.

P8: Yeah, like the new equivalent of them, £130 boots for free basically and they were nicer.

P10: So you didn't pay that much?

P8: Well £130 is a lot for me but you know I thought, "I've paid that and I expected good quality."

P12: So you just got an exchange?

P8: Yeah.

P10: That's good.

SL: So when you are making a fashion purchase how do you reassure yourself that you are making the right purchase decision?

P9: Only by trying it on.

P12: Comparing with other places. So like seeing the differences between them and usually it's based on price.

SL: So would you do that online, compare it?

P12: Comparing the price and what it looks like online but I think in order to compare the quality I'd go into the shop. I'm a bit of a fabric snob. Having studied it I literally go round H&M and go, "I need a jumper." And its acrylic and I go like oh I don't want that.

P10: And because it's knitwear eugh.

P12: Come on cotton, we want cotton. So like yeah I'd compare like the quality

SL: Anyone else? How do you reassure yourself?

P6: It may sound weird but if I am in-store trying something on I will try and take a picture on my phone.

P7: Yeah.

SL: Will you send that to you friends?

P7: I've done that before.

P6: Yeah I'd normally send it to my sister or a friend if I know they are on What's app. Em but eh I'll normally take a few angles because we know the mirrors can be deceiving. Em and obviously you look completely different in a picture don't you?

P10: Yeah I think outfits look so much different in the picture than you envision them when you look in the mirror.

P7: I actually, for the first time, a couple of weeks ago I was trying to buy a hat. It's not the first time I've tried to buy a hat but the first time that I used SnapChat to get a whole load of friends opinions on this hat.

P12: Oh cool.

P7: So I was in the middle of the shop and thought I would do a sneaky little SnapChat and send it to 20 people to see if it was a good idea and it wasn't a good idea so I didn't buy it.

P12: That's such a good idea.

P11: So at least they are honest.

P7: Yeah. It was such a quick response and they have to make a snap decision because they can only see the picture for like 10 seconds or whatever.

All: Wow

P10: I didn't get this SnapChat ha ha.

P8: I always ask my boyfriend what he thinks because he is really honest and he has got really good taste.

P6: I would never ask my boyfriend.

P12: I always ask the sales assistants.

P9: I can't trust them as I think they are going to sell it to you.

P12: You can't trust them?

P9: Yeah because they are trying to make a sale.

P12: I pull the card out of, "I've always been a sales assistant so can you talk really honestly to me please?" Cause they know all the products, they know everything or at least they should do and I am like, "Please be honest with me, I don't want you to lie and persuade me." When I say that to them they are like, "Right, ok." Like just be honest, you can put such a front on when you are a sales assistant I've done it.

SL: So just going back to your shopping journey in general, em what factors affect your shopping journey overall? This could be any factor and it could be something random.

P7: Tim.

P8: Mood.

P12: Whether you are with your friends or not?

P7: Yeah mood is a big one.

P12: Yeah mood is.

P9: Weather.

P6: Weather.

P7: How rich you are Feeling.

P9: What time of the day.

P7: If you are having a fat day?

P9: If it's a fat day don't go anywhere.

P8: Whether it's pay day or not.

P11: Time

P7: Any events that are coming up, is there any occasion.

P6: Yeah.

P12: What season it is. In summer its so much better than winter to go shopping.

P11: And your priorities as well. I'm not good with my priorities. If I've got work to do then I will probably shop online than going into town and I know that I shouldn't be spending hours trawling around shops.

SL: Anything else?

P9: You can use online as a revision break. As I kept doing.

P6: Yeah that's what I do.

P9: Like if I do this I can go on Asos.

P11: 10 minutes reading then half an hour on Asos.

P9: I'm always really bad during the revision period I always wear a onesie. So I just ordered myself a new Jack Wills onesie in the sale. But it will come on this day, the day after my exam so it will motivate me to keep going.

SL: Anything else?

P12: Whether you are with your friends, especially when you are out shopping and how many friends are there. I can't shop with too many people.

P8: Yeah.

P11: I went out shopping with my boyfriend last week and I actually said I am going to leave here, I am going home. I just couldn't. Every time I wanted to go in somewhere men are just like "Mew mew mew". I'll be like, "I'll order it online, shut up! I've had enough."

All: [Laughs]

P8: My boyfriend likes shopping; he doesn't mind. I'll just be like can I pop in here and he's like, "Yeah, can I go in the lego shop." As if he is five.

P10: I don't know what it is about grown men and that they don't shop.

P8: I bought a Christmas present from there and they were like, "It's so cool" and I will be like, "Yes, its for my 25 year old boyfriend."

P12: Just before you move on. What friends you go shopping with. So I went shopping with some of my housemates and they are not like the most fashionable people. Which sounds really horrible but like they're just more casual and I was like I really need this opinion for what I am going to wear for this interview and I'm like – it Feels so horrible because I really love them, they are really great – but I just needed someone with a bit more of an eye and someone a bit more like critical with an understanding. So I think it depends on who you go with definitely.

P7: Yeah I have certain friends for certain occasions; it sounds so mean but yeah.

SL: The very last question I've got is tell me about the marketing communications and messages you come across during your fashion shopping journey across lots of different channels?

P11: Online

P7: Emails, its always emails.

P9: If anything, what marketing communications you come across influences how much stress or how much you will follow it up. Whereas with emails everyone just deletes them don't they. Like how often does someone look at those emails?

P11: I don't

P6: I don't read them.

P9: That never happens, then something like a more sort of advertisement through a blogger. So say a company has paid a blogger to wear a jumper you look at it and go, oh that looks wicked and click-through and buy that. That's something you trust a lot more or because its put on Instagram and styled nicely and go, "Oh that looks nice. I'm going to click through and buy that." But with email you would never click-through.

P10: Unless it said like 20 percent off.

P7: Yeah

P11: Yeah because that's like ridiculous.

P10: Even free delivery.

P6: Even at that I am just like no. My inbox or my junk on Hotmail literally all of it goes to there and I have 3000 messages.

P12: Get rid. I've started unsubscribing today because I was really bored.

SL: Anything else?

P11: I think with apps as well there is a big thing like where Topshop send like push notifications so it like pops up on your phone, doesn't it and I….

P12: Is that like when they have got new things in?

P11: Yeah, I kept getting them over Christmas sale period and they kept popping up saying new sale items added, which then does actually encourage me to have a look. Then I'm like oh if there's new bits added then there's likely to be quite a few different sizes and things em that's quite a big one that.

P7: We had amazon sent one of our lecturers some vouchers for the NSS survey. And I did it because I wanted the vouchers.

P12: Did you win?

P7: Yeah I did.

P12: That's good.

P7: Otherwise I'm not that interested in doing a survey. But if they are going to give me something then I can use it. There is not really anything I want or need on Amazon but I will find something.

SL: Well that is the end of the focus group. You had some really good input so thanks for that. It's quite nice to see that you recognise some aspects of omni channel shopping without realising it. So thank you very much.

--Ends—

Focus Group 3 (Customer Decision-Making Journey)

SL: So what we are going to look at today is really to discuss your customer journey in terms of the different channels that you use. So I am going to ask some questions. If anything is too long or you need me to repeat something just let me know. The first question that I would like to ask is how does the product type of fashion affect your shopping journey as opposed to say when you are shopping for another product such as groceries?

P13: When I'm like kind of shopping, like for clothes I don't really know I want something. So if I'm going like food shopping I'll have a list and know what I'm doing but just if I am going clothes shopping I'm just like, ah I like that so I'll buy it. So I'll just like buy it and usually go home with like ten tops or something.

P14: [Laughs]

P13: So not very economical in my shopping, it's more of like just whatever comes out like.

SL: So anyone else? What makes it different?

P14: I look around a bit more. Like I look online, see how much things are, see whats available. I don't look at how much apples are online I just go and buy them in the shop. Whereas I'll like look what's out there first before going shopping.

SL: Ok, anything else.

P15: Like compare shops as well, so I don't buy something in the first shop I go to and have a look around before I go back to it.

P16: When I go shopping I like to see it directly at the shop and if I really fancy it I will buy it without any hesitation.

SL: So it's just straight, you will buy it straight out.

P16: If it is really expensive I will compare online or whatever the choice.

SL: So you've mentioned channels like online. Em…. obviously when you are shopping for fashion which channels do you use? Would it be different for fashion as opposed to say shopping for other products?

P13: I like bought loads of jewellery off from like Instagram the other day and it sends you like a Paypal invoice on email. You just buy it that way and it's quite like good and em a bit like…. As well shopping em… like I definitely shop on my mobile for fashion but I'd never like do my Tesco shop on my phone, I don't know why but it'd be more complicated.

SL: Ok, anyone else, which channels do you use?

P15: I use apps on my phone quite a lot cause they're all free. Em but often I still use my laptop as well to go on the website because you can get a clearer image and I dunno. I sometimes find it quite difficult to see things on my phone.

P14: I don't really like doing things on my phone.

P15: No.

P14: I like to go on the Internet. But then I like end up going on there for hours.

SL: Ok, P16?

P16: I might Google it and find the most popular website on this item.

SL: Ok, cool. Em what about the level of fashion that you buy… so high street, value, designer – how does that impact your fashion shopping journey.

P14: I think if I was going to buy something designer then I would definitely look around because like you can buy a Mulberry handbag somewhere like way cheaper than where you could get it straight out of Selfridges. Like if I was actually going to buy something like that but I don't really. With high street I would more go and buy, go in-store even.

SL: Why would you do that?

P14: I only really shop at Asos online cause I know I can get free returns and free delivery and I'm not paying extra. Whereas say Topshop I think is like £4 so I'd rather go in and just have a look….

P13: It's quite a hassle isn't it?

P14:… And buy it there. Because I don't want it to get here and I don't like it and I've paid an extra £4. I'd rather it be free. Yeah.

P15: I only buy online and you get free online delivery or say 20% off.

SL: So there's got to be a perk.

P15: Yeah, I Feel like that compensates for the postage and packaging if you get the 20% off.

P14: Yeah.

P17: A lot of places as well they do the free delivery if you spend over £75 or £100…

P14: Yeah I do that sometimes.

P17: …So I often buy bulk to get free delivery and then I'll take it back.

SL: Right ok and then what about say if you were buying something designer?

P17: Em, for me if I'm going to buy something designer I will usually be inspired by things like Instagram or Tumblr first of all – to find the kind of thing I want. Then I will go online and look at their website about more information and em then I'll sort of do a Google search, look through images, get inspired, get encouraged to buy it and then I will always… if it's a designer piece then…. I'll always go into the store to buy it. So if it's Harvey Nicks or Selfridges or the actual retail store. I'll always go in.

SL: Why would you do it, why would you go in?

P17: Just because then you can check the product over yourself. Say if it's a handbag you can check that all the hardware hasn't been scratched and stuff like that. If it's a pair or shoes you wanna make sure they fit you perfection, you know that kind of thing. Like I did that the other week like actually Saturday. I went into Harvey Nicks trying on a pair of Louboutins because I wouldn't wanna buy them not knowing that they would not fit perfect, that they were scratched, that they were not perfect.

SL: Because of the value of the item.

P17: But I also like the assistants. I like to be able to go in and chat with someone and ask them about it and ask them like what do you think of this and then get the entire experience and then also take the bag away with you and it's just nice.

SL: Do you think of your shopping journey, I've got a few different options here but just tell me what you think– do you see it as stages like a process, do you see it as a brand experience or do you just view it as an overall shopping journey to achieve a goal? How do you see it?

[Pause]

SL: It's quite hard as you are consciously trying to think about it.

P13: I would probably say it's like the whole journey but like within it, say if you go into like a store that has a really good brand experience, that definitely kind of helps the whole journey in like. Even when you kinda go into Topshop you know like if they don't have the item they have got like iPads and they help you all that way.

SL: Have you used them?

P13: Em, no I haven't but I've seen other people use them. I would be too scared to go and ask. Yeah em and then if you go to Primark that kind of like lowers the journey. But I Feel like … I don't know… like at end of it you kind of like take all the experiences and use it as positive.

P14: I think stages… cause I was trying to think maybe a journey but I think I like routine and I always go shopping on my own and then I always walk through Primark just so I know it's warm and then sometimes I'll pick up something on the way and then I'll look around all the shops first and then go back if I have seen everything that I like and I'll try them on and I'll usually like try them downstairs as well as upstairs so it doesn't look like I've been trying on a lot of clothes so I think I do like the stages in the shopping process. Then ultimately after I have done all of that they'll be a few things that I like, like more than anything else and that'll be what I buy.

SL: And then obviously what about the stages when you come to purchase and after purchase, do you have any stages there or any particular things that you always do?

P14: I definitely try them on again at home. Sometimes I'll send them back then cause things look completely different when I go home. Em pre-purchase is just like try them on really.

SL: Ok, anyone else?

P15: Em, mines is normally in stages it'll start by looking on the internet to see what's around and then I normally go in for one specific thing. Em I saw a jumper on the River Island website the other day, well actually I saw it on the app because I was browsing whilst I was watching television, then saw it on the website, went in, bought it, it's now at home in my wardrobe but I've changed my mind and that's going back. I thought this doesn't go with anything that I actually own but it just because I liked the look of it on the website and how they styled it.

P14: Actually post-purchase I never take the tag off until I wear it out in public.

P15 & P13: Yeah.

P14: Cause otherwise I don't think I'll wear it. So first time I wear it, I wear it with the tag. Then when I get home I take the tag off. Because it's got to be a successful public trip.

All: [laughs]

SL: So you trial the products out on the street?

P14: Yeah. You don't try it properly in your room cause you just like look in the mirror.

P15: True.

SL: So what, if you're trialing it out in public what sort of things would imply to you yep, I've made a good decision?

P14: Eh I guess if someone commented on it or just if I Feel comfortable in it and not like conscious of myself like or my arms out here or this looks weird or too big here like. Just Feel comfortable.

P16: It's like me buying shoes. I usually wear new shoes when I go home. Eh I would really appreciate the reviews on the website I see the customers writing comments on the products and I can get some ideas especially from the worst comments.

SL: And do you see shopping as an overall journey or do you see it as stages or process.

P16: Overall process.

SL: Can you tell me why?

P16: Because I think that shopping is a Feeling that I would really appreciate the clothes, and if I like it then, I just try it on and buy it or return it.

SL: And in terms of it being an overall process - is it to achieve a goal or?

P16: Eh I don't think so.

SL: Anything else? Now you can talk and interact with each other if you want to butt-in with a point Feel free to do that as well. Em what are the stages of your shopping journey? Because P15 and P14 you both mentioned that. Can you just talk me through what the stages are, what you would call them?

P15: It starts at home using…

P14: Online…

P15: Yeah online, it might be perhaps I see a friend wearing a dress on Facebook or something and I think, "Oh I really like the look of that." And say, "Where did you get that from." Or even just do my own research and find it em and then find it on the website, read the reviews em and price check and everything. And then em the next stage its go to the shop and try it on. If I think…if I like it I'll bring it home, try it on again normally for my housemates or whoever is in the house at the time, get an opinion on it, put together an outfit em and try and think of different things I can wear it to and then em that's it really, wear it out.

SL: Ok anyone else?

P13: I like when I shop because I don't like to look for anything in particular so I usually like go round. Like the other day I had a voucher for Selfridges so I had a look around Selfridges and there was nothing I liked and em. It sounds silly, but like I really wanted a really nice t-shirt, so I looked everywhere and couldn't find anything. I went down, had a coffee, Found like a nice t-shirt on the Selfridges website and then did their click and collect thing so sort of just like keep shopping. So instead of spending money somewhere else I like used that, went home, then after uni came back, used the vouchers and got it. Which is like nice because, I don't know you didn't have to spend ages going around the shops and then you could just go in, get the item and it was like paid for easily.

P14: I like using click and collect but I only use in Manchester because when I go home I have to drive to the shops. Whereas here you can like walk from lectures or just get on the bus. It seems a lot easier than at home. At home I'd rather just go shopping.

SL: P17?

P17: I don't know. I don't know how I would describe my shopping process really.

SL: Or is it a process?

P17: I don't know if it's stages or if it's a journey because quite often with me, because I blog I am on a lot of blogs so I often get inspired by peoples blogs. So I'll see something and think, that looks really good, I'd quite like one. So from there I will look at the website they've talked about, have a look at it and maybe kind of search for other websites that might also sell it and then I'll either buy it. So I suppose in a way that's kind of where I'm kind of fulfilling a goal because I want that item or say if its from Topshop or… It depends on the retailer, say if it's Zara for example or H&M I'll go in the shop but if it is Topshop or an online retailer I'll buy it online because I find it easier. But if it's H&M or Zara I'd rather go the store because H&M's delivery is just ridiculous.

P13: It's terrible.

P15: Their website isn't that great either. It doesn't show half the stuff that's in their store.

P13: But I did a Zara delivery over Christmas and it was like gorgeous. It came like earlier than all my others and em it came in like a big cardboard box with like tissue paper so it was so nice.

P17: Did it?

P13: Yeah, all delicately nice and everything.

P17: No way.

P17: H&M?

P13: No Zara.

P17: Oh Zara, oh right, right.

P13: I'd never do H&M again. But Zara I was really surprised.

P17: Zara is actually ok for delivery just it can take a little bit longer sometimes. I do like the Zara shopping experience so I do like going in Zara. Whereas like Topshop I can give or take it but I like their clothing.

P13: It gets too busy in-store.

P17: Yeah, yeah. It does.

SL: So some of the questions I might be repeating myself in some ways but it's just to get different angles on your answer. This open to everyone. Which channel do you start your shopping journey in?

P14: Online, yeah.

P17: Yeah.

P14: But I forgot, actually before my online I have a list. I always have a list of what I want. So like then I can just pick up things so I don't really go out searching for inspiration but the inspiration comes to me. So say if I see someone wearing a camel coat I would want a camel coat, which I really want at the moment. But like I can't find a camel coat so then I look online after I have got my list, so online's first.

P13: I'm definitely opposite. Like I go instore and then like they'll never have my size and stuff. Then if I want that item so then I'll go home, get it online, definitely look around see if I can get it cheaper.

SL: Anyone else?

P15: I'd say I agree with both of them. Sometimes I'd go into the store. It changes sometimes I would go into the store to get something and if they don't have my size I will go on their website. If it's something like

a completely spontaneous shopping trip, which often happens. Em but yeah if its something that I really want, something that I have wanted I would search for it on the internet first and then perhaps go into the store and buy it.

SL: After your first channel, which channel do you go to next?

P14: Em, in the shop.

P16: Online, opposite.

SL: So which channel do you start in?

P16: Start with stores.

SL: And then online.

P16: Like yeah.

SL: Ok, yeah. And what about yourself?

P13: Yeah I start in-store and then I go online, yeah so compare the prices.

SL: So price. Ok. Now if you want to say anything else you don't have to wait for me to ask ok.

P15: I think another stage it could be that say if em you've bought an amazing pair of shoes and you want to show the world you'd take a photo and Instagram it. That's often what you…

P14: Oh yeah, post-purchase phase

SL: So have you done that before?

P15: Em yeah, or Twitter or something like that. I'm sure I've done it on Twitter before.

P16: Pinterest.

P17: Yeah I do that with pretty much everything I buy.

SL: So what do you use?

P17: Generally like I said I'll start with blogs and You Tube, that's where I'll get the inspiration for buying things and then I'll generally just buy them online. But now and again if I have time I will go in-store and buy them. But then, I generally will wear them or photograph them in some way. But that, that's because of my blog really that I do that and that I put them through Instagram, Twitter or Facebook. But if I didn't have a blog I don't think I would be that bothered about, being as social as I have to be.

P13: Like, if I have a really nice outfit I would like definitely take a picture of it and just put it on Instagram and just be like, "Ooh new things!"

All: [laughs]

SL: And the next question I have now this is a really broad question, so whatever your interpretation is of the question that's fine. How do you perceive the channels that you use in relation to your shopping journey for fashion?

P15: In relation to your shopping journey?

SL: So how do you perceive the channels that you use in relation to your shopping journey for fashion.

P13: I Feel like when you're online even though they try you don't really get the same kind of brand experience of when you like go in-store so…

SL: Can you tell me more about that?

P14: I think in-store is the most fulfilling stage.

P13: Yeah, because you've got everything around you as well.

P14: It's just the most enjoyment. I Feel like online is like process.

P13: Yeah, sometimes like a chore as well.

P14: You look on this and you look on this, and what's this. Whereas in-store you're not really thinking about it you're just wandering around and just having a good time.

SL: And what were you saying before [to P13] you didn't Feel it was the same.

P13: Yeah like online if you're like ok I'll go look for a t-shirt you go through all the t-shirts and it just gets really repetitive whereas like you say when you are in-store you kind of… like even if you want to look for a t-shirt you'll kind look at everything else as well subconsciously probably and you'll think oh that could go with my new t-shirt that I may buy today. So you'll pick up new things and where you've got like everyone in-store encouraging you, just the music and the whole like environment definitely Feels like better and more fulfilling than just sitting at home.

P14: I Feel like what people say really influences me. Cause I bought this jumpsuit from Topshop the other day and she said, "I've got this and it's my favourite" and I was like, "Ooh that's really good." Cause they're really cool in Topshop.

P13: And as well when you get like people that work there and they've got a really good outfit on sometimes that like influences me and I'll be like ooh. Like I never even thought of putting those two things together and you go buy it cause they've got it on.

SL: So you see it as a very different experience online?

P13: Yeah it's quite boring online, it's like a grid of dresses whereas instore they normally have their ranges together although they do have online, like their range pages but its still in a good format but not as exciting. You can change it to only do your size and only your price range. Although that's like good for speed shopping.

P14: Yeah.

P15: You miss out on loads of like nice things.

P14/P17: Yeah

P15: So like it's completely different to store shopping.

P14: I think when it is good is when you have like the online magazines's like Net-A-Porter like I love going on there even although I can't affort anything. But if I could afford anything I'd like to look on the magazine and click on what I want to buy rather than like I want a dress. Cause that's actually browsing and you don't really browse online. You say you want a skirt and you go in the skirts section then having the online magazine is a form of browsing I guess.

P15: Even like Asos' magazine like even if I am not thinking of ASOS and it comes through the door you just kind of have a flick through.

P14: You go on ASOS

P15: Yeah, you go, "I really like that skirt," and buy it.

SL: And what about obviously you mentioned apps for example P15, what about these kind of elements, how do you perceive them within your journey.

P15: They're [apps] quite convenient say if you are out and about. Normally if i'm on the bus and I'm on my way back from uni or something and I'm bored I'll just have a browse on those and em but yeah, it's just so easy to buy something off of them.

SL: And have you done that before?

P15: Em, I think I have because as sad as it is I can remember my card details without having to get my card out, the sixteen digit number. So it's really easy for me on my phone if you are just on the bus.

P13: And even for me if I see an advert for like BooHoo and I'm just sitting watching a boring show I'll go on my phone during the adverts and just have a flick through [app] and usually there's something that you want.

P14: Yeah I think that's the only time I do use my phone is actually when I see something and I want to google it. Whether that is in the street or watching TV or in the shop I don't know. Just when I see something and it signals "Google this".

P13: I've had that before watching Made in Chelsea and Rosy had a really nice hairband on and I was like, oh my gosh I need that. I went online onto her blog and the she had a link of it and I went onto the website on my phone and it was like a few hundred pounds so I didn't buy it.

SL: Another question that I want to ask is going back to how you view your journey. Em when shopping for fashion does your journey consist of you going through channels consecutively so one after the other e.g. online and then store or will you switch back and forth between channels? So e.g. will you go online to the store then back to online, onto Pinterest, Facebook to tell your friends.

P14: I'd say consecutively. I don't really go back. It's like online store, buy it, then instagram maybe and that's it – end of process.

P13: I kind of like going around. Cause sometimes like I'm in a shop and there are some shoes I'm not sure of and I'll like Instagram direct it to my sister or something and be like, "What do you think about this?" And I'll kind of keep shopping and if she's like yeah, they're nice I'll go back and get them.

SL: So would you say you switch back and forth?

P13: Yeah.

SL: Ok.

P16: Sometimes I think that eh, I'm supposed to spend less time online shopping but instead I spend more time online shopping. Em like forward and backward so yes.

SL: Ok so if you forward and backward, between which channels do you do that?

P16: Between online shopping, store shopping and some other sms?

SL: SMS?

P16: Social media.

SL: Ok, anyone else?

P17: Yeah eh I'm probably quite consecutive I suppose. Em it generally does start with an inspiration channel, like social media then it'll just be online, generally. And again, it depends on the retailer but if it is a retailer that I'd rather go to store then I will then go to store and buy it. If it's not stopped at that point already, so I will either go online and buy it but if it's something where I would like to see a little bit more detail I'd then go to store. But that's generally the cut-off. The mobile thing I will use mobile generally for like price comparison or just product comparison, when I am out and about generally or if my laptop has died and I'm too lazy I'll just go on my phone, that's really bad.

P15: Depends on how sure I am of the product as well. Like if I'm really sure of it I'll see it online and either buy it there and then or if I'm not quite sure see it in the store and buy it or again keep going back. I do flick between the two, until I'm like I do really like this or like see it in the thing and read some reviews and then perhaps go.

SL: If you think about a particular stage in your shopping journey. Now this can be any stage. It can be post-purchase, research, do you combine multiple channels within a stage?

P14: I think like inspiration is kind of two channels cause it's not just online it's like seeing people in the street, even though that's not like a channel really. But like, I think seeing someone in the street like physically there is a lot more influential than just a picture online.

P13: Even like seeing celebrities in magazines wearing like a similar thing to what you have seen online and you're like, "Oh." Like if you've seen it first and think that's oh yeah that's ok, I'm not sure if it'll work this season or whatever and then you see like a celebrity wearing it and think it might be "big" and you think I'll get it and see what it looks like kinda thing.

SL: So do you use multiple channels within shopping stages?

P13: I do like go shopping and try and look for something get exhausted and go for a coffee, sit on my phone, find it anywhere and if its like too much, I'll just like order it online but I'll try and go to the store but I've done it before where I've been shopping for six hours and I just kind of need to go home so if I can find it online I'll just think yeah I'll have that.

SL: So when you are out and about shopping on your phone.

P13: Yeah.

SL: Ok, anything else?

P17: I have bought things when I have been out about on my phone, like I'm happy to do that and I'm pretty sure I have done stood in queue. Like Primark, in a long queue buying other things from other stores before. If that's what you mean?

SL: Yes.

P17: I can imagine I have done that a lot. Yeah, again it depends on what the app is as well. Say if its Asos, Asos' app is so easy and quick if you've got all your details logged already, you just need to put in your security pin. Which everyone usually knows. So that's dead dead fast, so I'm happy to do that.

P14: Yeah I like Asos' save for later. I always have like one hundred and fifty items saved for later.

Rhona/P15: Yeah.

P14: Because I like going back and just looking at them, even if I've not bought them. I guess it's like an online wardrobe.

P17: Yeah.

P14: I just… everything I like I save for later.

P17: Yeah I do love that as cause well because then when you go into sale and you look back it says it's reduced item and then you'll buy it. I know I'm the same with that it's really good.

SL: Do you think you get the same level of benefits and value from each of the different channels you encounter or use? Do you think they are all equal?

P13: No as well cause like she said shopping online you usually get discounts and promotions and things so like you get kind of like the buzz of that whereas shopping in-store it's like fun but you don't kind of get the benefit that way.

P15: But the benefit by actually seeing the product, getting to Feel it and try it on. Which you can't really do when it's online.

P17: Yeah I think you do get a post-purchase buzz from buying it in-store because you've got it in your hand, it's enjoyable, if you're with friends you can show them, you can keep looking at it, you've got it in your hand. Whereas I do Feel with online, it's like a temporary high that you get. Ooh it's exciting buying it, because it's not with you can have guilt set in, doubt set in.

P15: Waiting for it is the worst.

P17: ….Waiting time. It kind of ruins that pleasure entirely until it gets there. And often it will get there and I'm not that bothered, that's really bad. I'll be like hmm ok, seen it.

SL: It's not the same sort of high from it.

P13: True yeah.

P17: Yeah, it's not as pleasurable.

SL: So in terms of the channels do you see them as equal?

All: No

SL: Definitely not. What about yourself P16?

P16: If there any student discount but when you shop online it's much difficult to get student discount the shops.

P17: Sometimes it is, yeah you're right.

SL: So do you see the channels that you use in your shopping journey are they of equal quality?

P16: I think the quality is the same, this is from the same stores and it's just another channel.

SL: But does the channels offer you the same level of benefits.

P16: No, sometimes if I get some promotional code online, there are further reductions.

SL: So there is a price aspect to it. Ok. If you think about your last shopping journey or even one that you are in the middle of now. Did those channels meet your needs during the journey or are they meeting your needs during your shopping journey?

P13: Yeah.

SL: Ok, so tell me more about that.

P13: That was my click and collect one. So I guess the store kind of failed me because they didn't have like what I wanted but the website kind of fulfilled that and made it better and going back in-store that was like a good experience because they have the nice presentation around the click and collect area. So that was good.

SL: Yeah.

P14: I am actually having a very unfulfilling journey at the moment. I only just thought but since Christmas cause I gots lots of Topshop vouchers. So I thought I will get a spring coat cause that's what I really wanted for this season and that's a lot of money but every time I go in Topshop or everytime I go on the website, there is never one that I like. And then I Feel like not finding one on Topshop makes me like everyone else's which is really annoying. So that journey's no.

SL: So are the channels meeting your needs then?

P14: Em? Yes but I look online first, cause I always look at the new in section so I know what's coming in and stuff and then I'll go and try it on in-store. If I do like it but then I guess online I guess saves me a bit of time cause if there is nothing there then I just won't go in.

P17: Yeah I'm quite unfulfilled as well with my shopping journey. For this pair of boots that I want these Louboutins Harvey Nicks have them in-store but not online which means you have to go in-store to find out anything about them and the price. So you can't see anything online which is really annoying and then on the Louboutin website it's totally rubbish and again there are just no prices. So my journey so far for those has been: be inspired, go on the website, be out of luck, go out in the store, try them on, the sales assistant wasn't amazing so then I went away because obviously it's a lot of money and I had to think about it, so I went away, then I went back to the store again, just try them on again, try and push myself into the making the decision of do I need these and em then I probably will go in again before I buy them obviously.

SL: Because that's a designer item.

P17: Well yeah exactly, that's because it's designer. Whereas if it was high street it would just be… I've actually forgotten the question.

SL: So in your shopping journey did those channels meet your needs?

P17: I do generally Feel fulfilled most times, especially high street stuff, I am generally quite fulfilled by either online or instore. Even moreso by instore it's just more pleasurable, you get the entire experience and things. You see fabrics, you can see the merchandising and stories and you can get inspired by a whole collection by that.

SL: On that journey you have just mentioned you said that online didn't have the information that you needed?

P17: Yeah online failed me on this occasion.

P14: I do Feel with luxury it's nice to see the price online cause if I buy a luxury item because usually I've been given birthday or Christmas money so I don't want to go in and look like a fool because it's £1000 and you only have £200.

SL: P16is there anything that you have to add.

P16: I think everything is fine to me as I have only arrived in Manchester for no more than half a year. So I have had experience of shopping in-store and shopping online and that's it.

SL: In your shopping journey do you perceive that different channels play different roles and functions? Do you think certain channels do certain things for you?

P14: Online is for information.

P13: Yeah.

P14: And then shopping in-store is your enjoyment and I guess like getting the brand experience. Like you say going into Topshop it's like the cool brands, you see people looking cool, you want to be cool, you don't see that like on the website, it's just for information.

P15: Cause someone can gain inspiration from actually being in-store. Like pick up something that you don't think… like you might of seen it on the website and thought oh no that is horrible but then actually you go into store and see it and it's nice to try it on or you might see someone else wearing it in the store.

SL: In terms of indirect channels so how do you engage with them? So I'm talking about social media, Pinterest, Facebook, blogs, what do they do in your shopping journey? Like you mentioned inspiration, do they perform any other functions?

P13: Like I said, I had bought stuff of Instagram, which is like very different but still like enjoyable. It's like, kind of better than shopping online because it was like a kind of surprise purchase. Like you just go on and say that necklace is so nice and you go oh my gosh I can buy it like now. You just kind of like do it out of impulse.

SL: Is that the first time you have done that through Instagram?

P13: Yeah, but I'd definitely do it again yeah. It was really quick and easy.

P17: How did it work? Did you just comment with your email address.

P13: Yeah, just comment with your email address and that's it.

P17: Oh wow.

P13: And you can write on your message, can I have like a blue one with a gold trim and things. You can like personalise it.

SL: What was the item, it's a necklace with like a gemstone thing and they have like different styles, different colour stones and things.

P17: Which brand was it?

P13: It's called Delilah Dust.

P17: Delilah Dust yeah I follow them.

P13: I thought oh I'll have a look and I thought. They're so gorgeous.

P17: Yeah they are lovely.

SL: And have you received the item?

P13: Yeah the postage took a bit longer than I thought so I was getting a bit worried, so like buying in a different way so I was like pleased and happy. So that was good.

SL: In your view as a fashion consumer what do you perceive as the role of the store?

P14: It is like the brand thing I think. It's like being part of a gang. Like if you go in Selfridges you're like the sophisticated woman, you're rich, your're wealthy, you come out with your bag Feeling great but if you go into Primark you Feel a bit like a scrog. Yeah.

P13: It's kind of like entertainment kind of. Because I love looking at window displays just yeah just like being entertained when you shop. Online, it's just boring it's not fun. But you go in-store and you're like "Yay".

P14: And like putting stuff together, because I think you do buy more in-store because you're thinking that top, that skirt rather than online they don't really. Actually, I suppose they do online. Asos they do like outfits and like get the look and stuff but.

P15: I find those just pair boring stuff that you already kind of have in your wardrobe.

P14: Yeah.

P15: You've got the staff to kind of give you an opinion and help you as well. Well they should but it depends what store you go into. Like primark assistants probably don't know what they have got in their store. Like if you went into Topshop and said, "Have you got this dress." They'd probably take you straight to it." And actually help you try and style.

P17: I know that, I mean I do like online shopping but I have found shopping recently, this past month or so, I am starting to get even more bored of online now. I mean like this weekend I spent both days actually shopping and remembered just how much I enjoyed it going into shops, finding these collections that are all placed together, and you can see things that go together. Whereas with the online site, unless they are in like a story or a collection merchandise together which I often find I will buy more of anyway. If it's merchandise in a collection or a trend then i'll have to buy it. But say if it's looking for a top I won't then think I'll look at skirts as well and compare those. It's hard, it's harder to see it whereas if you are in-store you get that sort of pleasurable environment, it's fun, it's exciting. You get the buzz and you want to buy more.

P15: You can try them all on and put outfits together in the store. I often end up buying jewellery as well to go with it.

P13: Yeah

P15: The other day I bought a shirt and then went into Superdrug next door to buy a nail varnish that went with it.

P17: Oh.

P15: That was an impulse buy as well.

P16: I think stores are a way to display the brand or the company's designs and give an impression on customers and online shopping is like giving you words to describe the clothes or something, it's all in words. You cannot touch it and you cannot see it directly.

P17: Hmm.

SL: Online it's more kind of rigid whats there. Whereas in-store you've got all the other brands.

P16: Like for example if you are searching for a coat or t-shirt and before that you have not got any inspiration about this coat or the t-shirt. But you can only search on with words but maybe I don't know what colour I should buy?

P15: It always looks different on the website to the store as well.

P13: I guess Asos try and make it like, show how it moves and stuff with the catwalk thing but still like you're not going to walk down a catwalk and you can't really tell what it's actually like.

P14: Can I say a negative of the store thing?

SL: Yes.

P14: I think a negative of the store is to rip you off.

P15: Yeah.

P14: Because say, I Feel like, I guess cause I'm doing this course you know a bit more about what they are doing. So the stuff by the til I never buy because they want me to buy it and I'm not buying it. The store puts it together because they want you to buy it because it is there.

P17: Yeah, more encouraging, more persuasive.

SL: In your omnichannel fashion shopping journey, so a journey that involves lots of different channels. Is your journey normally a positive experience or normally a negative experience?

P15: Normally positive because through all the different channels the chances are you are going to get the final product that you are after. Because even if it is not in-store it's often online and so you will end up with what you want in the end.

P13: They like work together, they complement each other so if the stores kind of failed you, the website will bring up new experience or vice versa.

P15: Often the store, they'll order it there and then for you. I can't think of where I was the other day? Oh it's River Island when I really wanted a pair of boots but they didn't have my size and they said, "right we'll order it in for you." You've just got to come and pick it up in two days.

SL: And you paid for it there and then?

P15: Yeah, there and then as if it was online and then just took my receipt back and collected it.

SL: And was it on a till or iPad you did that?

P15: Yeah it was on a till.

SL: On a till. Ok anyone else?

P16: I think all of the channels are giving you different aspects of information and that's how you choose it.

SL: Anything else you want to add to that, that's really interesting?

P16: I think if you are really precise about what to buy eh, you can get more information, with much more channels online or blogs. But if you don't need that more you can just one or two channels and get the thing you want.

SL: So it's information that's a key thing. What motivates you to use different channels as a fashion consumer?

P17: I think it's stuff like convenience, time, because obviously – quite personal – but because of my blog and I am working I don't have as much time to go in-store and do generally do it online just because of that factor. Generally for me.

P14: I think inspiration is one I think because I am doing fashion and I want to look a bit different to other people or better than other people. But like…so… I dunno inspiration is a motivator cause if someone looks really good I want to look just as good and wear something just as good.

SL: So does that motivate you to use different channels, say go store and then online?

P14: I think online is just information, so if I need information I will just go online. And then the store sometimes is just enjoyment if I have just got spare time go shopping.

SL: Something to do.

P13: I only online shop if i'm at home and bored because I can't think of something to do so I'll go online and see what's there. Whereas this shopping trip where I like plan it for a big weekend kind of thing, go out and splash all the cash.

SL: So why do you use different channels as a fashion consumer? What motivates you to use them?

P15: I wanna make sure that I'm getting the best product out there em that's on trend or coming up or going to be on trend the next season but also something that suits me as well.

P13: The time is definitely like a big one I don't need time but I need a new dress to go out, I will definitely go online to get it.

P15: You won't have time to go to the shops.

P17: Price as well because you can get more promotion online. So things are cheaper prices, you can price compare, you can check that you're … because I mean you can get quite a lot of these online stores they buy from the same wholesalers so they've got the exact same product as slightly different prices. So it's quite nice to sort of research and get the right one.

P16: I think shopping in-store you can get apparel which suits you best, it suits me.

SL: Is that in terms of the fit or?

P16: Uh huh, like the style or colour that suits me well.

SL: Is your shopping experience different dependent upon the channels that you use?

P13: Yeah definitely. Like you were saying the experience is much more like fun and kind of I don't know just better in-store, you get like more of an instant gratification. You get like a really nice item. Yeah like online I do Feel it's like really monotonous and the parcel comes through and you try it on so it's just not the same.

SL: Then what about the Instagram shopping experience?

P13: That was fun. It was like fun buying it and then the wait I was like, "Oh no is it going to come? Will it be the right kind of thing."

SL: Why was it fun buying it?

P13: Cause it was like a bit kind of daring. From that I had never done it before and it was really impulse because I have been looking through a lot of their products thinking oh which one do I go for and this one was like 20% off and I was like, "Oh my gosh I am going to ge this one." It was like I really like it that I have to do it now. So as well like thinking of they might have a limited stock and you see all these emails in the comments and you're thinking ooh, I'll do it. I'll get it before it goes kind of thing.

P17: That's a good idea.

SL: This question is about your channel usage again, do you use more than one channel because you choose to because you need to use another channel?

P15: More of a choice thing I think. Em. Made a point now I have to back it up haha. It's more of a choice for me personally. Em you can sort of see the product in different media's and different lights and I think not everyone is as bothered as say myself and other fashion students em in terms of what the product is. A lot of other people will just go onto the store and think that's nice and not be bothered if that is in fashion. You find out if it's in fashion by going online and looking at say blogs or Instagram and things like that.

SL: So does that almost help you to justify your purchase?

P15: Yeah often. But also, yeah, sorry I don't remember much ha ha.

SL: That's ok, that's fine. Anyone else?

P17: What was the question again choice or ….?

SL: Do you use more than one channel because you need to or because you choose to?

P14: I think its choice most of the time for me cause I don't really have a full time job or anything restricting my time or and I'm not one of these funny people that says they need to wait in for the parcel all day, which my parents do.

All: [Laughs]

P14: So I just like, I'm not really bothered so I just choose what I want went I fancy it. But say if exams are on I won't go shopping. I Feel I need to just do online. If I was going to shop but… I think it's just time. If I had more time it's my choice what I use.

P13: I don't do the whole research then go to the shop thing I prefer just going to the shop or just researching so it's kind of out of need that I haveto do both. Cause I Feel like if I had gone to the stores there's no point going home and being on the computer for another hour if I have just spent the whole day out and if I have just spent the whole day on Pinterest or something getting some inspiration I would rather just go to the store and be inspired that way kinda thing.

SL: So if you couldn't get stock or something would those kind of areas make you go to another channel?

P13: Yeah. It would be a bit disappointing having to go home and go online.

SL: So a bit like the consolation prize.

P13: Yeah.

SL: P17?

P17: Em, I suppose. In the case of these Louboutins I needed to go in-store to buy them as I couldn't get them online but generally yeah, because I do like being online to get inspired like you said being about seeing it maybe on a celeb, seeing it on a blogger, thinking I can wear it this way. I do like to see different people wearing it in a different way. For example when I bought an Acne jumper two months ago. I remember going to every site that sold it just so that I could see different models wearing it. Different body types, different styles, so I could get more of an insight into what I would look like wearing it. So that was the need to do that. Otherwise I suppose it's more of a choice if I go from online to the store. I'm choosing to do that really just to get… see it more and get that experience at the store. It's that a need to do that.

SL: That is the question haha?

P17: Don't know haha.

SL: What motivates you to move between different retail channels during your shopping journey?

P13: Like frustration. Say you can't find an item anywhere in a store in my size so like I said I would go for a cofP23, go on my phone and kind of like flick through and hopefully find it like that or just be rested and go out again.

P14: It is like having it in stock like because they don't have as much in the store obviously but say if the sales assistant was really nice and they were asking if you like something but you needed it in a different size or something and they didn't have it in then that would be when I swap to getting it online cause they can order it in for you can't they.

SL: Anyone else? What motivates you to move between different channels.

P17: Just different channels?

SL: Yeah.

P17: Again it's just about finding more inspiration and just doing more research, seeing it in different ways and em things like promotions for example. For example for the Body Shop you can go instore and know that there are no promotions on but I'll know that I have had an email earlier that day saying that if you buy online you can get everything like half price and stuff. So often, say if I am walking past Body Shop I'll go in and have a look I need that, that, that – get a bit of a list then I'll go home and buy it. I'm motivated by the price, the products being easy to get and things like that.

SL: How easy is it when you do move between the channels? When you change which channel you are moving.

P13: Like if you are instore and then online it kind of depends on the ease of the website. So like sometimes if you know the product code you can just type it in and you'll get what you want up but if its like awkward website and you don't know the codes then it can be really frustrating again just trying to find the item.

P14: I think most places it is easy but if it is frustrating I just would stop and I would just not get it.

P13: Yeah true.

SL: So ease is important to you?

P14: Yeah definitely.

P17: I remember once I was actually in Topshop and I got some products and I took them into the changing room to try them on and this particular item I picked up in a size bigger than my size in it. So I tried it on and then I love it but I was then like it would look better if it was slightly more fitted so then I kind of then

stood in the changing room on my phone bought it as I was in the changing room because was in a bit of a panic, I wanted to buy it, I need to get this product now so I remember I did that once.

SL: And that is an example of you using two channels at the same time. Using your mobile in the changing room.

P17: Yeah.

SL: This brings me quite well onto the next question which devices do you use when shopping for fashion? When I mean devices I mean things like phones etc. So which devices do you use?

P14: I like using my laptop. I don't really like using apps I just find them too fiddly. You've got to be sat down.

P13: But like on the phone apps, like iPads, the Asos app on the iPad is like really good. But I find it's too small on my phone.

P15: It depends on what's like available to you as well.

P14: I like to do it on a laptop because I like to do it on open tab.

P13: Yeah true.

P14: And open all the tabs out and see different shops.

SL: And flick between them.

P17: Yeah I do that I have like 30 tabs open and move between them.

SL: So any other devices that you use?

All: No.

P17: Would things like a magazine count?

SL: Yeah.

P17: I've done that before I have literally got the Asos catalogue next to my laptop, flicked through it, gone straight on, found the code. I've done the same on my phone as well I have like found the Asos magazine, type in the code on the app and bought it when I have been going to and frow and stuff.

SL: How do these different devices play a role in your shopping journey for fashion? Do the devices have different roles as well?

P13: The mobile will be like when you are sitting and watching telly, just like a really impulse search. If you're actually like needing something then I'll always get my laptop out and like have a good browse and say open all the tabs and compare everything.

P17: If there's time to look at something it will be sort of laptop for the time and convenience for getting it delivered. But as I said sort of then when I was in the changing room. I need the product and panicked, I desperately wanted the product and it was selling out fast. Eh I think I had seen it earlier that day online actually and I had seen it online and it had said low in stock. So I gone in-store, tried it on in the wrong size and was a bit like yeah, defo, I definitely want it then bought it on my phone. Eh what was my point.

SL: So how the technology plays different roles.

P17: So that's what I was saying. Yeah but if there is an urgent reason why I need something I will buy it off my phone at that time. Other than that time laptop would be joyful experience, pleasurable experience, phone would be urgent, utter need for something, convenient thing and then store would be pleasurable, chill out, enjoyment and relaxation.

SL: Anyone else? How does the different devices play a role in your shopping journey for fashion?

P14: It's maybe more impulse inspiration like on the phone as well. Cause where I was on the laptop you'd be like reading blogs properly on Instagram you might just see a picture and just buy something instantly, rather than reading about it, seeing it on several people.

SL: And would you say, do you use different devices – so like those things that you have mentioned – for different stages of your shopping journey.

P15: Normally it starts with my phone. Just out of boredom if I am looking on the app and then it would move on to my laptop if I was really interested. If I want to see it bigger and in a bit more detail. Cause I often find it difficult and then finally the store and then home finally.

P16: I think I would start with the laptop, it shows bigger images and all the information is on one website.

P14: I don't think devices are necessarily in a stage, there's none before or after each other with the devices cause. But maybe if I am on my laptop but then I am on Instagram everyday having a look yeah so there isn't really an order.

SL: With those different devices and the different stages do you use different devices post-purchase? For any activities once you have bought the item?

P16: Yeah I use mobile phones to track my package.

All: Yeah, true, yeah.

P16: Also to make some comments.

SL: Anything else?

P13: Kind of like Instagram – to kind of show off what you've bought.

P15: Take photos with your phone.

SL: So would you use Instagram with your phone.

P13: Yeah.

P15: Yeah

SL: So you both would.

P13: And maybe like link it to Twitter.

P17: And also tweet if I have just bought something. Yeah if I just bought something that's really really good. I might tweet about it. For example I bought some eh a pair of Jeffrey Campbell's that I have been after for six months, that finally came back in stock.

SL: Is this a designer item again?

P17: It's kind of sub designer, its not in the designer price category.

P15: It's like high end high street.

P17: …and these came back in stock and I was dead excited about them and I Tweeted previously saying I really need these shoes does anyone know where I can get them. So finally when I ordered them from this American website I finally got my shoes so I Tweeted about that. And then as soon as I get get them, but they are on pre-order until May. May! So when I get them I'll be sticking a photo up straight away on my Instagram and linking it to Twitter and my Facebook.

SL: And when you are Tweeting are you just tweeting your followers or are you tagging.

P17: I do a bit of both, just in case Jeffrey Campbell want to see it.

P13: I Feel like if I got a designer item I'd like @Mulberry or something if I buy a bag, "look how gorgeous it is."

SL: In terms of your fashion shopping, how do you reassure yourself that you are making the right purchase decision? What do you do to make yourself Feel that it's a good decision.

P15: I have to check with other people other honest people. If I am in the changing room of the shop I'll ask the shop assistant, "What do you think of this? Is it popular?" Em cause that's often a good indication as to whether gonna be…

P17: But I never know if they are lying as well?

P15: Often they just wanna sell you it.

P17: I asked that with these Louboutins and I said to the woman, "Are these quite a popular item?" and she was like, "Yes they're really popular, we get these in every season." I was like I've asked you that question, I shouldn't, I don't know why because I don't actually believe you anyway because you would say that to sell a pair of shoes.

P13: I always just think as long as I Feel comfortable in it and I'm one hundred percent sure I love it and it will go with my wardrobe, that's all like, that I kind of need. Like I don't want to even ask someone else in case they are like, "Oh I hate it." and if I love it I'll just be like, "Oh."

P17: It depends if it's a risky purchase. If it's extremely expensive or a little bit far out there in terms of trends and you are not notorious for being an innovator in terms of trends and you are kind of stepping out your box a bit then ask friends and sales assistants and things. But like I said as well before. That's why I often look at other websites, look at different models wearing it. I will go on Instagram, look at hashtags and Tumblr and see different people wearing it with different outfits. Things like that, just to kind of Feel like… just so I can definitely picture myself in this item and know that I look good in it, that I Feel comfortable in it and it will be worth that price.

P14: And the thing I am assured by the number of outfits I can wear it with. By looking at those things you can say I can wear it with jeans, I can wear it with a skirt and you can wear it with a lot of things, reassures me that it's a good purchase.

P13: And even like you were saying, you were like reviews. Like on American Apparel it's cause of the reviews I find the materials a bit weird. So if they are all positive i'm like ok I can like buy this.

P17: Yeah I definitely read reviews.

P15: Probably I Feel like it's more important to ask someone who is a bit more fashion conscious. Because if you are asking someone who doesn't really care about fashion and say it's a bit out there like, they might think it's completely hideous. Whereas someone who is really fashionable so I'd often go to my more fashionable friends.

P14: That's like my friends off my course to give me oppinions rather than my housemates. I Feel like it's more, like a better standard.

SL: A better standard of oppinion?

P14: Yeah.

P15: Yeah you'd think they know.

SL: Can you tell me about the marketing communications and messages that you encounter during your shopping journey, involving lots of these different channels?

P14: Em, emails.

P17: Yeah.

P15: Do you mean like promotional emails?

SL: It could be anything, any sort of communication for example.

P15: If you sign up to say Urban Outfitters, Topshop I get so many everyday. I wake up to like 7 emails just for different promotions like. They've got a new summer range or 20% off or spend £40. It's all like their different promotions that make you want to, they link you straight to their website then you end up buying something just because.

P14: Yeah I think that it depends on the place though. Cause if I don't like it straight away. I'll always have that edit button ready to delete, delete, delete and leave the ones that I just want to open.

P15: Yeah I get so many.

P14: Like if they have a good tagline that's the main thing cause if it says like fifty percent off yeah I'll be clicking on that.

P15: But it's like I get so many from Missguided like literally every day and it's always 50% off, 20% off, free delivery and that kind of like puts me off.

Rhona/P16: Yeah

P15: Why do you need to do that.

P13: Too much discount yeah like.

P16: Sometimes the website has memorised what you bought before and recommends things you really like which motivates you to buy.

P15: True.

P14: Yeah you get those little pop ups online.

P15: Facebook

P14: Once you've looked at something, but that doesn't make me want to look at it anymore it makes me think oh, they're following me.

P13: Yeah it just annoys me and I'm like yeah I don't want to go on Topshop if you are going to push it in my face.

SL: And are there any other communications you would come across?

P17: Social things, Facebook updates, Instagram. Instagram is probably my biggest one because I am always on it.

P16: Oh and YouTube ads.

P17: YouTube ads yeah yeah.

SL: This is quite a general question again just to see what you think is important to you personally. What factors affect your shopping journey for fashion? It can be anything.

P13: I guess just like you know we were saying about promotional things. If I see like a really nice window display I'll go in-store and see more about what they have in there. So it affects what stores I go in. So like usually I wouldn't go in like Dorothy Perkins but the other day they had a really nice dress on a mannequin like really styled well so we just had a look.

P14: And I always think if a sales assistant is standing at the door I don't go in, I don't like it. So that makes me not go in.

P17: What was the question again?

SL: So what factors affect your shopping journey for fashion?

P15: If you've got motivation to actually need to purchase a product as well quite often that sort of pushes me to begin a shopping journey. Say if I've got an event coming up and I need a dress then the research begins. Then the whole journey begins from there.

P14: Or if like say I have some money and I want to have something with that money that's when it does start, you just start researching and buying. If I don't have any money I won't partake in a journey because I know I can't afford anything.

SL: so obviously your ability to spend is important as well. Ok, so that's all of the questions that I have for you today so thank you very much for all of your help.

--Ends--

Focus Group 4 (Omnichannel)

SL: Can you tell me which channels do you use when shopping for fashion.
P18: In-store or online I guess.
SL: Ok
P18: I don't use my mobile to buy stuff.
P19: I am the same.
P20: Same yeah.
P21: I do use my mobile to shop to buy clothes and click and collect and in-store and online, so everything I think and I've used, I have bought through Facebook before once.
SL: Oh have you?
P21: Yeah, through ASOS, yeah.
SL: Have you ever bought through Instagram?
P21: No.
P18: I've bought through Instagram actually – I bought a jumper from Manner which was a brand that I wasn't aware of before and it came up on my Instagram and I didn't buy direct through Instagram but I got the contact through Instagram. It was an unusual website that I hadn't seen before.
SL: Right, ok, excellent.
P19: I am finding that too. I'm finding more and more brands I've never heard of but I am hearing more and more of them on Instagram. And then obviously you can't buy it on Instagram but you go on to their site.
SL: Ok.
P18: You go on the link to their site from Instagram.
SL: Are there any channels that you do not use or are yet to use when shopping for fashion?
P22: I think for me just mobile because I use online and I guess tablets as well because I don't have one yet so, so its probably one of the channels I would use, once I get one.
P20: TV channels maybe?
SL: Do you want to tell me more about that?
P20: I don't shop like on TV's at all. I don't use my phone but I can say I use my phone to see new websites for fashion and then I go to the link in the website and then decide.
P18: I do make up through TV because I wear Bare Minerals and QVC always does really good deals so I sometimes buy Bare Minerals from them.
SL: And is that through the TV or just going online?
P18: Just from the TV.
SL: Does the level of fashion that you are purchasing? So we're talking about clothes obviously for the purpose of the discussion. So whether it's high street or designer. Does that affect the channels that you would use, the level of fashion?
P19: Yeah I think if it's like cheap high street. If its something cheap I probably I wouldn't mind buying it on an app or quickly buying it online. So if I've got my details already set up on Asos, if it's something cheap I'll probably just quickly click and do it really quick and fast, if it's designer I'll always go into the store and have a look at it properly and quickly try it on. I wouldn't ever… 'cause mobile and online is normally like quicker decisions but I wouldn't because wouldn't be if it was designer. I'd have to look at it in-store.
SL: Yep.
P20: Yeah.
SL: Same?
P18: Mine's it depends how much money I have at the moment I guess. The current situation for money. Because eh when I seem to have some then I go online. I went on Missguided and Motel Rocks in the summer when I was buying summer stuff and I spent a lot at once and then lots of garments came through which was you know, good. But if I went to a shop I wouldn't expect to buy five garments for a hundred quid I would probably stop at you know one or two. Whereas online, because I had the money I just kind of clicked and just kind of ordered it all. I was on holiday and I was waiting to come home and I just had it there.
P22: But it also feels like when you are online it's not really like your spending money
P18: No.
P22: Whereas in-store you actually have to give them the money.
P18: Yeah.
SL: And you mentioned P19 just about your data. So do you like to have your details already…?
P19: Em stores, I am doing it more and more now, stores that I'm going to be using like Asos and I think I have got Topshop. My Topshop app has got my details saved in it. Em like if you're buying something that is pretty basic. It just makes it all quicker. 'cause obviously you can save your details on to the website. But a site that I'm not going to be using a lot because it's like a one-off purchase I probably wouldn't create an account or I won't save my details because I probably don't need to go back there again.
SL: Does it make things easier?
P19: Yeah.

SL: It does, in what way?

P19: Amazon isn't fashion but everything is saved and it's like buy with one-click and that's really easy.

SL: And you kind of enjoy that kind of process where you can?

P19: I enjoy it because it's easy but it's really bad 'cause you can buy really easily, like Amazon really easiy which is very dangerous.

SL: Ok, em in terms of shopping channels do you feel more empowered as a fashion consumer today? What does that mean to you?

P21: I think so, because I think with the Internet we have more access to information so we can get good prices and deals and things like that. So definitely more empowered as a customer.

P19: Yeah, because we are the ones driving the prices down 'cause we are the ones that are creating the demand.

P18: For shoes as well, especially when I have been looking at trainers or something and you can compare them from three websites. Like office, actual adidas website and stuff and you can get the cheapest prices.

P21: Because most of the time there is deals online that wouldn't be in-store.

P18: Yeah so like Asos do twenty percent off.

SL: Does that annoy you?

P19: Yeah certainly.

P21: Em, no because I tend to shop online more anyway, so I will always look and see if there is any deals. Especially for shoes like Office always have offers online.

P18: And when ASOS send round an email and say it's twenty percent off everything you know that's the branded stuff as well. So I would always look for things, that I would have wanted that is branded.

P22: The thing is with Asos you like know that they will have discounts sometimes. Don't you?

P19: Always, they always have something.

P22: You think I'll wait, it's going to be soon because there was one last month so there should be one this month.

SL: Ok so just going back to the question in terms of empowerment, you do feel empowerment because you have got more options in terms of price and comparing prices online as well. Em, just going back to that thing with the offers would you like to see those offers in the stores for those brands that you shop online with?

P20: Yeah, I think so.

P19: Yeah it would be nice to keep it consistent because it's quite annoying sometimes you are in the shop and you go on the website three days later and you see that you could have got it half price, that's really annoying. But then again, when you see that happen. I always think they are only doing that to make us like turn to online retailing. Because obviously do they want to get more people online than in-store. Because you can get a lot more sales can't you?

SL: Ok.

P18: I quite like the loyalty factor of it though. If you get an email to say, and then you know that not everyone else knows about this sale and you can get on to it quite quickly. But twenty percent off like student discount like when Topshop do those days.

P21: Like Asos

P18: My mates will just go straight into town and go.

P20: Also if they have the same price, you have the chance of trying it on so you don't have to say ok I am going to buy off the Internet just because it's cheaper but you have the chance to try it on.

SL: Ok and in general what are your expectations of a fashion retailer that has multiple channels? What do you expect of a retailer that has that.

P21: You expect to be able to find everything online if you've seen it in-store, like it's so annoying when you have seen it and you have tried it in the shop and you go online it's not there.

P18: Maybe more online as well. Like more online.

P19: Yeah, I was going to say I would expect more to be online than instore. Because like where I live at home, not in Manchester, at home home stores are quite small because it's only quite a small shopping centre so there's just a limited selection. So Topshop, there's just a tiny Topshop. So I know that there is nothing in-store I can go online and I know there will probably be something there.

P23: I always think I expect it to be a lot easier online as well. I really hate it when I can't do under a tenner and just only my size, you know what I mean and just be really specific. Like websites that don't give me loads of choice I judge badly.

P18: That's true.

P19: That's true you just have to do a lot of scrolling through.

SL: And do you have any other expectations of retailers that have multiple channels? If not that's ok too.

P22: I think for me like most recently, sometimes when you buy online and you wanted to return the products back. Returning it back to store and they can't give you a full refund, it will be on a gift card or you can exchange it. Sometimes you are like oh why can't I just get a refund for it and they say you have to send it back online. I just find that a little bit annoying sometimes which.

P21: Yeah that is just a bit of a hassle sending it back online.

P22: Yeah.

P21: 'cause it's easier to buy online but easier to return in town I find. Rather than going to the Post Office.

P22: Yeah.

P18: Em, Missguided I bought a pair of Dungarees from in the summer and I returned it because it was the wrong size and I still wanted it and they had a funny return policy so that they wouldn't exchange it, although I had written on the piece of paper, oh I would like another size, they didn't give you an option to do so. So I was kind of expecting that they'd send me one. Then I looked back through my emails and they said you have been refunded for it because their department where they get eh returns isn't the same as like their dispatching department, so…which was strange 'cause I would have definitely bought them and then I just got the money back and they missed out and it was really frustrating actually because I was kept on waiting for them to come because I wasn't aware and then I read the terms and conditions when I came back and it said something about their returns policy that you can't just exchange you have to go back and then buy again or something.

SL: In terms of that have you had em any other instances where retailers have not really met your expectations across the channels if you have had a crosschannel shopping experience? Are there any times where it has went horrible wrong?

P18: I think sometimes when you expect a garment to look one way or fit one way and it doesn't. The nice thing about ASOS is that they have got the catwalk so you can see how it looks when people are moving. Which is why I like shopping there as you can see what it would look like and you kind of picture what it would like on you. But eh sometimes the quality is a bit different and it's annoying.

P23: Yeah Boohoo do the catwalk thing.

P19: More retailers….

P20: I would say the colour difference that you see online is different.

P19: Yeah that has happened a few times to me.

SL: Now this is a really general question and it's just dependent upon what your interpretation of the question is, so there is no, you can just say whatever comes to mind. When thinking shopping across channels for fashion what does the phrase customer-centric retailing mean when you're shopping for fashion? If you want to take a couple of minutes to think about it that's ok too.

P23: Maybe just that it's all aimed at you and aimed at making it as easy for you as possible and one thing with like the catwalk thing if there were people of different shapes wearing it also would be quite useful. Not everyone has the same fit obviously but it looks great on a six foot tall size eight model. I don't think it would look great on me.

SL: Ok anything else, what does the phrase customer-centric retailing mean?

P19: Just that it's based all around the customer so they're trying to make it as easy as possible and as accessible as possible, like making apps and stuff. Em.

P21: And I think 'cause now customers are now so demanding, like they just expect to shop when they want where they want. It's really important that the retailer can provide the product when and where they want and get it from any channel.

P23: Getting it really quickly.

P19: Yeah, fast delivery as well.

P22: Maybe something like personalising you know like emails or I guess you know like with accounts like you said being able to recognise you and give you recommendations maybe on the site, on the website or something.

SL: And that phrase customer-centric retailing, in your retail experiences that you have had when buying fashion. Do you feel that your experience has been quite customer centred.

P19: I think it is online that it's centred because of the emails like that you get. I think like Asos do it, if you buy a dress they will send you offers for dresses kind of thing. They'll put it into your stuff

SL: And how do you feel about that?

P19: Sometimes it's annoying if you are getting loads of emails it becomes a bit annoying, but then if it's a good deal it's good for you to know because not everyone else is going to know because you are getting the emails first. Yeah.

SL: Do you feel your experience when shopping for fashion is quite customer-centric at the moment?

P23: Not if it's like a really crowded shop and you're waiting in a queue for the fitting room, then for the till and it's just like eugh.

P18: But even Zara the queues for the till and the fitting rooms in Zara are just as bad.

P21: So like I actually know a friend in Zara who was actually queueing in Zara and just bought what she was going to buy on her phone in the end. Because she was like the queue was too long. So she bought it on her phone, got it delivered instead.

SL: When thinking about your fashion-shopping journey with different channels, do you view it as one big experience or one journey or lots of little different encounters or stages or a process? How do you view your shopping journey?

P22: I kind of see them separately the search stage is searching, then buying it online its completely different to if I was going into store to pick it up. I see them as small little parts.

P21: Especially if you are going to search online for something and then go to the store to see how it actually fits, I agree it's a small part.

P19: And sometimes you would search not online, you would search in-store, you would walk around shops and then go home and buy it online too. I wouldn't really look and browse and then go just to buy that one product. If you found that one product online you would buy it online I think.

P18: I could sit for like hours online as well and end up not buying anything.

P23: Yeah pile up a massive basket and then go, "Oh I don't have any money."

P18: Then you have to cut it down.

SL: Does anyone see it as an overall experience or overall journey?

P20: I think I do see it as an overall thing because when I go like in-store I usually have to buy a lot of things. So I just like pick a day and say ok go on shopping for everything I need while when I'm shopping on the internet it's just like ok I'm looking at the website and be, "Oh I like this one and I'll just get that."

SL: Would anyone else say that in the store it's an overall journey?

P18: I make it a trip, like I'll assign a day I make a day of it going into town.

P19: I actually have a goal and know I will come out with something spending a whole day shopping. If you're just browsing online whilst on Facebook and whilst doing work you're not definitely going to buy something, you're just scrolling through, creating a basket which you don't necessarily buy.

SL: That's what you were saying.

P18: You can be procrastinating online during revision.

SL: 10 minutes of revision half an hour on ASOS. Do you perceive different types of channels so such as mobile, store, Facebook as functioning independently of one another or as part of the same brand, do you see them working together?

P21: I think they should work together, some brands channels work together and some don't.

P19: Some do.

P21: But I think from a consumer point of view they should all really work together.

P19: Definitely should

P22: Yeah

SL: So can you give me some examples of ones that do?

P21: I am trying to think of some examples of ones that do. I would say Topshop, because they have their blog, they have their tumblr.

P18: Facebook.

P21: Yeah they are quite active on Facebook as well. Like their Instagram – it's all like interlinked quite well together.

SL: And what do you mean by interlinked, what sort of examples?

P21: The same fashion product, targeting the consumer and its not, say for example on Instagram like it's not all just pictures of product it's things that the consumer is interested in as well. So they've kind of targeted the consumer really well through every single channel.

SL: And what about the ones that maybe don't do it so good?

P21: I can't really think of any off the top of my head.

P23: I never thought H&M's online shop was very good.

P21: That is true yeah.

P22: Yeah.

P23: But it's quite a good shop to go into if you just need like basics.

P18: Do they have an app?

P23: I don't know.

P18: I don't think I would even go into online for H&M. Like I would go instore.

P23: No

P18: I think if I go into H&M I might find something that's quite kind of a good buy that I feel like it's nothing to put in the basket. But online I don't think I would take the time to look through the…there's too much stuff.

P19: Yeah, I don't know why, it stresses me out, but it does.

P18: Maybe when you are online you maybe look for a bit more of a one-off or something that's a bit more different like a nice top or something.

P19: Yeah and I see H&M as a basics brand.

All: Yeah.

P19: Even although they do do those things I don't really go there for those things.

P18: I get excited when something gets delivered and when it's from H&M I might buy a hoodie and I wouldn't be I so as excited when it comes through.

P19: As opposed to a cardi or something.

P18: Then you know you get something from Topshop, like a top that you can go out with.

SL: Ok, are there any other companies that do it quite well, that make their channels work together well?

P22: No.

P18: Urban outfitters they do a good job.

SL: And how do they do that?

P18: I think that like their mode of marketing it's similar like. Who they target, their image is very…you're very sure of what you are getting which is quite comforting for a consumer.

P21: Yeah even in their promotional emails it's all quite consistent.

P18: It would go along with the theme of the store, which is quite good.

P23: Yeah I think with some of them, they trying a bit too much to be everything to everyone. Whereas Urban Outfitters is like a very specific em brand isn't it?

P19: Topshop is good in the way that it does everything. But sometimes it's like there is so much Topshop. You go on Instagram, you go on Facebook and the app as well. It's just so much Topshop.

P18: And the app, there is just so much Topshop as well. Zara is not very developed in terms of their website it came out a lot later than the rest of them. I can't remember how many years but it was a lot later, yeah, two, three years. Whereas other websites would have been up for quite a while. So it's still something….

P21: Because they're not on Instagram are they?

P18: No. They're not very present.

P19: I always see it as just a store.

P18: I do.

P19: I mean like I know they have a website but when I think of Zara I always think about actually going into store in Zara.

P18: Normally I only look at the Zara website if I've been in-store and I want a specific size and it's not instore rather than going on to kind of find stuff.

P19: You wouldn't just browse.

P18: I always go instore.

P21: See I'm the opposite I always browse on Zara to see what's new in every week, because I love looking and seeing what's new and then I'll go into the shop and see if I can find it. But yeah they're not on any of them like Instagram, or social networks are they? They're a bit slow.

SL: Would you expect them to be on there.

P18: Yeah I would.

P21: Yeah I would actually, in a classy way.

P18: I think you would in terms of the moving terms of fashion everything is going in that direction but Zara has been quite unique and had their own business model for like quite a while. It's a bit different, it doesn't seem to. When I think of like Topshop and River Island and all of them Zara always seems to stand alone although it fits with most of them.

P21: Yeah.

SL: If you have a bad experience in one channel how does that affect your perception of other channels of that retailer.

P23: It makes me feel annoyed in general.

P19: Yeah, it's sort of the brand that you would get annoyed at.

P21: Yeah 'cause I mean if your delivery is delayed, I know H&M are really bad at delivery. Like if it doesn't turn up or something you're just going to be angry with the store as well and probably not going to want to go in there for a while.

SL: Anything else on that point?

P22: I kind of feel, if I've had a bad experience online for example then it will take a very long time for me to recover that, trusting them to buy online again. But I probably won't mind going instore just to check out, see if they have anything instore because obviously you can get it there and then. Like H&M for example I have had experiences where delivery took like about a week and a half for it to arrive and I thought they had forgotten about me. But I wouldn't mind going in-store to H&M to buy things but then you know, whether to buy on line again that would be something I'll have to think about it in the future.

SL: And would you say your experience in one channel will affect your experience in other channels, say new channels that you go into that you have never used before?

P22: I think for example with H&M if online is bad then I probably won't go mobile.

P21: Yeah.

P19: I wouldn't get their app because it's just the same. If there delivery is bad online it's going to be the same department just doing deliveries for the app.

SL: I'm just going to repeat that question again for all of you and see what else comes out of it. If you have a bad experience in one channel how does that affect your perception of a new channel of that retailer that you have not been in before? What impact does a bad experience have on going into new channels of that retailer, do you carry that with you or are you like oh that's separate?

P19: I think that once you have then had a good experience with a brand, then say you did order something and it came really quickly you would sort of forget about the bad thing that happened earlier and carry on as normal.

P18: I think Missguided like I was saying about the dungarees, 'cause I don't think I have shopped with them since. Because it was such a difficult returns policy. If I didn't like it, it didn't give me very much confidence

that I would go through the "faf" of having to go to the post office and packeting it up and sending it off again. I don't think I would have confidence in their Instagram or any other apps or Facebook they did.

P19: It puts you off probably without realising that you are being put off. Like you probably go and look somewhere else without realising that you're doing it because you don't like Missguided anymore.

P18: But I just think that the "faff" of the returns policy I wouldn't want to go through again. So unless I knew something looked like it was really going to fit or something I wouldn't choose to buy it. Like on Topshop it's very easy I think to return something, they have a really good returns policy but if, it's a difficult one then because if it doesn't look like it will really fit then the convenience of going in-store takes over to be honest. I won't do it online.

SL: It's quite interesting that you say that because Missguided has been mentioned in the previous focus groups and everyone's been raving about them but they have not bought from it yet. Whereas you have so...

P18: I think online it's great. It's quite cheap you can get some outfits that you can wear for one night and you can just get them to your door, go out and it's fine. But I think and em, I think they have got quite a variety of fun things. It's not like Topshop you go walking down the street and everyone will be wearing the same thing. It's nice but because it was such a "faff" and I did really want the dungarees, they were good value and I wanted them for a festival which was couple of weeks later or something so its just annoying in that they didn't come and that made me frustrated with their returns policy. It is quite an easy website. It is a good website.

SL: Do you think that all the different retail channels that are available to you as a fashion consumer are they merging or becoming blurred in any way? Whatever your interpretation of that question is, that's fine there's no specific answer.

P22: I think retailers are trying to blur them together but it's not quite there yet.

SL: So tell me more about that?

P22: I just feel like just in-store and online is just one example. Sometimes like, you know we've said for not being able to find some of the items in either of the channels and then I guess now retailers are bringing in social media, bringing in Instagram so they are trying to make them come together but not quite yeah.

P21: It might be a bit blurred because I think for me I don't want loads of different ways to buy something. I know that online works and I know that in-store works and I think actually you know Instagram and Facebook is all good but I wouldn't choose to go shop there and I wouldn't think the shopping experience would be any better there.

P22: Yeah 'cause like the social media ones are really different in terms of what they're trying to get to you as consumers. They're just trying to promote whereas I guess online and in-store want to sell.

P21: Yeah. I think retailers like Instagram and Social media to promote and not to sell to you. That's quite good.

P19: Yeah, I like that. That's good.

P21: Topshop is quite good because they do show you pictures of product but they are not really pushing to sell which is good.

P19: They don't put the link like buy this here now.

P21: They just literally show you a picture.

P19: It's just marketing.

P21: So that's good because they are not pushing.

SL: But you have bought through Facebook haven't you.

P21: Yeah but that was out of choice. I think 'cause I was just in a lecture haha. No I think I was just em in a lecture and then… I don't even know why I did. I think because it was just new. Like I have always shopped online even with ASOS. I have always shopped online so I am not really worried about the risks associated with it. So I just thought I would try to shop through Facebook, like see what happened.

SL: Would you do it again?

P21: Yeah, I think, if there, I did search for it. It wasn't something they advertised to me so it was something specific that I wanted. There's no reason why I wouldn't in the future.

SL: Do you think you would use other types of channels. Other social media channels?

P21: Em probably not through Instagram like, that's not what I go on Instagram for.

P18: It's to look at photos. I like the fact that they market because it's like magazines looking at adverts and stuff. But I don't think I would like choose to go on Instagram to buy and I quite like the process of I'm going to sit down, go on the net and go and do some shopping.

P21: Like on your phone as well it's like awkward.

P19: Like when I go shopping I sort out a set out a time, like a day to go shopping or like I do shopping online. I don't like to be scrolling through Instagram, like maybe on the bus going to lectures and maybe going through my friends photos and if a randomn photo from Topshop comes up I would keep scrolling like, it won't make me stop and buy it there and then because it's not like, I am not in a shopping kind of zone if you know what I mean. I am not in the mind-set to start shopping. I like to do everything once and compare at the same time.

P21: But if there is something that I see on Instagram that I really love or ASOS especially I will then go and search for it on my computer I won't go straight through Instagram, I'll go and find it.

P18: And if they're a one-off maybe, like Liberty Air Max or something.

SL: So just going back to that question I just want to probe a little bit further. Do you think different retail channels for fashion retailers are they becoming more blurred, more linked in together, are they merging more or would you still say no?

P19: Some more than others, some are really trying, em.

SL: Are they failing at it?

P19: I don't know. I think if Zara started to do it I don't think they would fail but they would take a while to get people to switch channels because they have got such a strong sort of customer base in-store. It's not an instant thing. Like it has taken people a while to change from Topshop to the Topshop app kind of thing. But I think in like ten years time every successful brand will have everything.

SL: How would they do that? What sort of expectations would you have, in ten years time what would it be like?

P19: Em, I dunno . It'll be, you won't even be an online person or an instore person, everyone will be both I think.

P22: I think with that, my experience with Dorothy Perkins for example, I think their channels are very consistent through their… I shop online with them sometimes and then if you go in-store you see the product and they have the same things, they have online but maybe not as many and just the return policy is there, ordering online and getting it delivered. 'Cause they do in-store collect because not every retailer has free delivery and usually I would go free delivery but if they don't have that option they can go in-store and pick it up and then you can return it back in-store and it doesn't cost you anything. So I think that is really good. Whereas some retailers ASOS do free delivery and free returns but some places they do free delivery but then the returns you have to pay for it yourself.

P19: Yeah that's really annoying.

P22: It's bad because it's costing me.

P21: Yeah, it puts me off from buying if I have to pay for returns.

P18: Yeah

P20: Yeah

P19: Retailers that have free delivery, the more and more the ones with free delivery will be the successful ones.

P21: Like integrating their channels like you said, like so if you do go on and do click and collect in-store and you can just return it in-store.

P18: Being able to return it anywhere or in-store.

SL: How many of you use click and collect?

P18: I do.

P21: I do for free delivery mainly.

P22: Yeah.

P20: No.

P23: I've not used it.

P19: Yeah.

P18: Zara, I used to work in Zara and we had so many complaints about the fact the online website was actually separate to the in-store their not meant to be like different. They are really funny about returns and we would have so many complaints all the time. Their online is actually separate to their in-store so they haven't blurred at all, which I think actually is a bit frustrating.

P21: If you are a customer yeah.

P18: The key of all of it is if you have a website and in-store, those should definitely be connected. I'm not really that bothered about Facebook and Twitter and that.

P22: Yeah

P18: I think social media is more connecting friends and stuff.

SL: What about mobiles where do you think that fits?

P18: Yeah I think if you were to buy something on a mobile app which is kind of like…cause mobile app I kind of see as online websites but on your phone so it's kind of just an easier way to look at it so I think that should still be counted as online. You need signal, you go on it anyway so I think that still counts as like your being online. Whereas Facebook and Twitter and Instagram I would never go on those things to buy anything so I wouldn't expect that connection if you were to buy something on Instagram that something would happen in-store. I think they are a bit separate.

P19: I don't see really see online as on my laptop and mobile as different things. I sort of if I'm going to go on the internet it doesn't matter if it's on my laptop or on my phone.

P21: The company might see it as different things.

P19: Exactly, yeah. They see it as different things I don't see it as different things I see it as one. It just…like when I go on my phone it just looks slightly different 'cause they have created a mobile site for it. But in my head it's exactly the same thing.

SL: So do you all see channels as the same thing? Do you know like you were saying the retailer's they see them all as different things whereas you see as all the same.

P19: Yeah, I see online and mobiles as the same thing because wherever I go, I expect it and I am always on Internet on my phone.

SL: What about the rest of you?

P23: I think I see it all as the same thing or like all part of the same package, which is back to the earlier question of if I had had a bad experience in one place would make me.

SL: What about you P22? Would you see it as the same or?

P22: I just see them as separate.

P21: I think like because I study fashion I know that they are separate because I study it em but I think as a regular consumer you just expect that they are all the same. Like if you didn't study it.

P18: I just think, well… I think the online website and app are like the same thing because technically if I was online on my laptop I would expect to see everything online on my laptop pretty much. Even my Manchester Uni blackboard I can still do it all on my phone. The Internet on my phone is the same as the internet online.

SL: Are you the same as well P20?

P20: Yes.

P22: I just thought because we study fashion and I do obviously see them as two separate things maybe because I study fashion. I also think from a consumers point of view I guess they would see it as the same thing because I work at [retailer name anonymised] sometimes as well and even as staff there I see the store and the website as two separate things. Because sometimes I'll be approached by customers who ask me, "I've seen something online, you sell it in-store but why are the prices different?" and that's something I'll be like I don't really know [laughs].

P21: Oh I think they should never be different, that's bad.

P19: And as a sales assistant you don't know what to say to them because you can't get trained to work in-store and you can't get trained on everything that is on the website when people come and talk to you about the website its like, "Oh I'm really sorry. I have no idea whats going on."

P21: But consumers do expect you to know.

P19: They expect you to know when they say, "Why is it twenty quid cheaper." I feel like there always must be a deal online which we are not aware of.

SL: So would you like to see all the channels more blurred and merged in the future?

P21: I think so yeah.

P18: I think it would make it easier to start with.

P19: Staff need to know what's going on online as well.

P18: The good thing about Topshop is like… I went in the other day and I was looking for a jumper and they didn't have my size and then she just whips out the iPad, goes along to get it and checks it has the size and tells me.

P22: Oh wow.

P18: That was in the one in… No in fact I think that was in the one from my hometown. The fact that she has the iPod [sic] shows that it was connected and that instore knew about online and even if they didn't it took her about two minutes to check and then ok I went home and bought it online, do you know what I mean. It was much easier. I thought it was quite impressive that they.

P20: I kind of had the same experience buying shoes. I went into the store, they didn't have my size for the shoes that I wanted so I just tried another pair of shoes just to check for the size and the girl just ordered online and sent it to my place.

SL: Oh ok, and you paid for them there and everything?

P20: No I didn't pay anything extra. I just like, they didn't have it in-store and she was like ok if you can wait two days we can just send it at home for you.

P19: That's an expectation, I expect that to happen.

P20: Yeah it was really good.

P18: In a few years it should be online and instore so you can be like "Ok so can you order it instore?" Loads of people in Zara used to complain that if we said go online though they would always be like…

P19: Yeah they would be like

P18: …."Could you order it here?" but you can't.

P19: Saying to a customer that you can go online at home and do it is so so bad. You should always be able to say, "We'll order it online for you here now here now." … and that way we've done it.

P21: Sealed the deal as well.

P19: … And you can walk out of the shop knowing it's going to arrive at your house when people say to customers…. I've had sales assistants say it to customers go home and go online and do it. It's just like what? You should be doing it for me. You expect a shop to do it for you it's their fault it's not in their store.

P21: Maybe in future years.

P20: It was also really good because I was getting emails like… your item has been dispatched and stuff like that.

SL: What company was that?

P20: It was Schuh.

SL: Right ok. Em how might high street fashion retailers be able to blur or merge channels? So you've said as an example, or both of you, like iPads in the store where you can order. Is there any other ways you think that retailers could make the channels more closely blurred or merged together.

P21: I think the returns policy. Definitely.

P22: Yeah.

P21: Like just being able to return whatever you have bought online and return to the store. Because it's so annoying if you can't and then you have to go to the Post Office. That is actually more of a "faff" than going into town and going to the shops, than going to the Post Office.

P19: Because you have to like package it up and you have to do the address label.

SL: And what about staff as well, should they be any different?

P19: They should know online as well. I know that it's hard as there are so many ideals and like you can't …they're changing all the time and it's hard to keep staff members that work once a week at the weekend it's hard to keep them up to date with it but I don't know. The way to get over that is to have all the deals the same consistent across store and online, so you wouldn't have customers complaining that it's different.

P18: I think maybe if the staff… maybe… you couldn't really expect staff to know everything that is online. But if they had access easily to the website, then they would do the searching for you and that would then seem like they were, you know, helpful.

P19: I saw that Tesco, I know Tesco isn't fashion but parts of it is. That they're trying to get areas within-stores of iPads. So you can walk into Tesco's do you shop on an iPad and click and collect.

SL: Have any of you done that in a store for fashion? You know sometimes they have the in-store kiosks and things.

P21: Well I was going to say I haven't done it, but I used to work in Debenhams so I used to do it for customers. The interesting thing with Debenhams as well is you can go to the main website which the customer can see, but from a staff point of view you can also use their like internal system to see if they have got it in-store in another store. So if they can't order it if it's not available the customer can order it online, you can order it from another store and get that delivered to home. So their channels are really interlinked which is good. Because then you can kind of see the stock availability everywhere.

SL: And in terms of different fashion retail channels, do you perceive them all to be of equal quality? So, do you think online is as good as the store, mobile is as good of the app or the online site. Do you see them all equally, that they deliver equal value?

P19: I see retail always as a tiny bit more purely because you can go talk to a person and get your problem sorted.

SL: In the store?

P19: Yeah so say like it's an issue with returns if you're doing it all purely online all you're dealing with is emails and the automatic system. If you're in-store and you can talk to a person.

SL: Anyone else?

P18: I think talking to the manager or if it was something, it's annoying having to talk to someone over the phone and you might be able to really express how you feel in person.

P19: And it can get sorted quicker.

SL: So what about the other channels? Are they equal?

P22: I think with online with customer service, like social media. I had an experience… I bought something from Boohoo and em the product that they sent the collar was supposed to have beads on the collar on either side and when the product came it only had beads on one collar so I was thinking I'm sure its not like that on the website. I sent a picture through Twitter and they instantly just sent out a new one for me because it was like a manufacturing fault. So I thought that was really good because I didn't have to like wait around for anything and I just sent the other one back.

P18: In the past… this is to do with food so it's not clothing.

SL: That's ok.

P18: But when you've ordered something… I did an online Asda shop and they sent me something like I wanted eh beetroot and they sent me like raw beetroot rather than cooked beetroot already. So I was like they…

P21: Substituted it.

P18: Yeah and if they ever did that they should get in contact with you and say something.

P19: It's alright for food but not for clothes. This top is sort of like it, no!

P18: It's not what you wanted.

SL: So another question which is on a very similar… it's just asking it in a different way. Just to get different angles on your answer. Do you get the same level of value and benefits from the different retail channels that you use when shopping for fashion?

P23: I think the difference in benefit is value online but then actually seeing if you definitely want it in-store so if you've tried it on and you know it looks how you want it to, your not taking a gamble.

P19: You're saving time if you get to try it on you don't have to go through all the returns policy.

SL: Anyone else?

P18: I kind of find in-store stressful sometimes, especially Manchester on a Saturday.

P23: Oh it's awful.

P23: Oh it's horrible.

P21: I'd just rather look at everything online that's much more pleasant.

P18: And changing room fitting room…Topshop changing room the lighting in there is so horrible. My friend and I went in there the other day with 12 items and walked out with nothing and I was literally like I hate changing rooms.

P19: In River Island they have redone the changing rooms and they have made it into you queue and it looks like a VIP area they've made it really really classy and they've got massive nice curtains that looks really nice inside. But because they have made everything so spacious there is less changing rooms so you are queueing for longer but they are making you have a nicer experience and everything. But places like Primark there is ten of you shoved into a tiny area, every cubicles is tiny.

SL: So do you get the same level of value and benefits from all of the different channels that you use. You have said that stores offers some different benefits. What about the other channels?

P21: I think online for me is just more convenient because I don't like to trying things on in fitting rooms the lighting is not very nice whereas if you order online you can try it on at your leisure at home and you can try it on with different shoes and different accessories blah blah blah but when you're in the store you can't.

P20: You don't have to queue.

SL: Yes and queueing. So what about social media I'm just interested because you mentioned you bought something through Facebook you said to me earlier when you arrived at the focus group. But em is that equal to just the normal online website of a retailer? How do you see it?

P21: Em I don't think many people would buy through Facebook so in terms of actual like actual commerce I think they're quite different. 'cause I see like Facebook and Twitter is really just for promotion. Yeah so it just kind of like improved your perception of a brand or retailer but it's not equal to the online commerce.

P19: I would never buy from them.

SL: Do you find that each shopping channel that you use is consistent with the other channels that retailer offers?

P21: I think some retailers yes and some no.

P18: Some have a much stronger brand image and you can see that they all kind of coincide with each other. But some not so much.

SL: So you mentioned Urban Outfitters earlier.

P18: Yeah I think like their emails, they look… you can tell what brand it is by the way the have laid it out and the look of it. That's good you want a strong brand image.

P21: Like I actually find the ASOS app really annoying. I don't think it's as good as the website, like the search function doesn't really work the refine options aren't as good on ASOS but it's annoying because their website is amazing. But the app is not very good.

P19: Yeah that is really annoying. The website has so many options you can refine which because ASOS has so much stuff on it you need it. But the app for some reason doesn't have all those options which is annoying and I expect it to be the same.

SL: So in terms of your fashion shopping experience, this is another really broad question what is your understanding of a seamless shopping experience for fashion? Now it's just to see what your understanding of that is. So whatever comes into your head.

P21: I think just being able to order easily, like get it delivered when and where you want and return easily, that to me would be seamless.

P18: Well I guess getting it delivered where you want like I could go home or in Manchester and if I was going home this weekend I could pick it up at home and you know you can get it ordered to wherever you are still using the same bank account which is good.

P19: And reliability of the amount of time it's going to take to get to you because some brands are like…H&M sometimes would come within two days, sometimes they come within like two weeks and it's really annoying.

SL: So what about the seamless element? What do you think seamless means in a fashion shopping experience?

P21: Maybe, I dunno, maybe just using multiple channels and it being an enjoyable sort of experience for the customer.

P23: There's no glitches between, so if I've seen that online if it looks nice I can go into the shop and try it on or I can order it online, try it on at home and send it back. So having that sort of …

P19: Freedom to do whichever you want.

SL: Ok cool, anything else? [Pause] No. Ok how does a seamless experience how would that create value to you? So for example you said no glitches and making it more enjoyable. Is there anything else if it was all seamless?

P23: Because there is so much choice if you had a particularly good experience with one place you would be loyal to it I think.

P21: Yeah brand loyalty.

P19: Yeah

P23: And if they had a sale on you would have a big old nosey.

All: [laughs]

SL: Anything else, any other points there on how does a seamless retail experience create value?

P22: It will just save you a lot more time like going back and forth different channels, like going to the post office, go back instore and then online. If I can just get it all in one go that would be best.

P23: It's probably confidence as well so like knowing that you've got the best value, nicest looking thing that you could of.

P22: So I guess like going instore and realising you could have bought it cheaper online you're like, "what the hell."

SL: Think of your favourite high street fashion retailer do the channels of that retailer live up to your perceptions you have about the brand? Are they what you want them to be?

P19: I think that one of the things that make it your favourite retailer is knowing that it is a good brand which will deliver on time and that you have had good experiences with it to make it your favourite brand.

SL: So do the channels of your favourite retailer live up to your brand perceptions?

P19: Em yes, because I am more a kind of shopping instore kind of person they do em, and I know that their online, I can't think of one specific place, but I know that online is as successful yeah so I would say yes.

SL: Anyone else?

P23: I think the Urban Outfitters one is a good example.

P18: Urban Outfitters is my favourite store so I would say yeah.

P21: I'd say my favourite store is Topshop so I would say yes.

P23: My favourite store is online so doesn't have a shop.

P22: I think…I don't have like a favourite store but like I kinda think some of them yes and some of them no. So like Dorothy Perkins and New Look for example, those experiences between online and in-store are good because they seem to be seamless throughout. But I think retailers like H&M I don't know I don't really like they way they do their online shopping and in-store.

SL: You're agreeing there P23? [participant nods in response to P22]

P23: Yeah, it's just rubbish [laughs].

P18: I think brand loyalty is a big thing for me because I, I don't know why I got put off brands, but when I was younger. Like for New Look I walk past it all the time and it might have had some really nice stuff in their or a one off thing but I wouldn't choose not to shop in their and I wouldn't choose not to look online in their anymore and I don't know why but because I think I really trust Topshop and Urban Outfitters and a few others stores or Zara when you go in-store, I trust those ones so then they're the ones I sort of go into more.

SL: Again this is another question just for a different angle on that answer. How accurately do certain channels reflect the brand? So you've said Urban Outfitters so with other stores that you like how accurately do they reflect the brand?

P21: I think Topshop like I said earlier because the have their Tumblr and their blog and everything…they're always representing London Fashion Week which is quite good for the Topshop consumer to get inspiration and things like that. And obviously on Instagram it's all like inspiration and products so like they're good.

P23: I think it's harder for shops em like Debenhams who have lots of … what's it called when they've got lots of little….

P22: Concessions?

P23: Concessions inside. Because like something like Urban Outfitters it is really targeted and focused towards like a type of, you know, young people basically. But like Debenhams because it's so… everything for everyone. I think it's hard to get a strong sort of online image.

P18: I'd expect like their window display or their advertisement or marketing to be similar throughout though. Like you know when you can see consistent that is all, you could tell that it's that brand is a good thing and like if you could tell from, you know, you know from the banner on the first page would also be like an advert in the shop or something

P23: Yeah

P18: That consistency shows that it's got strong.

P19: For places like Debenhams it's hard to… like say you go to their website the main homepage of say Topshop and there will be marketing campaign that's on at the moment with the same kind of models and stuff that you see on the advert. But Debenhams because there are so many different areas, there's menswear, there's womenswear, there's childrenswear and there's like the homewear you can't have the marketing campaign for everything on the homepage. So you might go on to the Debenhams homepage and the thing that's scrolling across the top at the time is like homewear so it's not going to draw you in like it would be. It's not like Topshop there will always be a girl wearing something that you like em.

SL: Ok.

P19: But that's just something they have to have overcome because they've got so many different departments.

SL: So just moving on to the next question, does your confidence with shopping for fashion, so how confident you are at fashion shopping. Does that affect the channels that you will use?

P21: I think if I know what I want I will go where I want to get it. So like…

SL: Would you say you are a confident shopper?

P21: I think so, yeah. Most of the time I go with the intention of buying a specific product and I know exactly what I want and if I can't find that online then I'll go instore like vice versa if I can't find it in-store then I will search online like throughout all the stores so like Zara, Topshop, H&M I will like look everywhere to find what I want.

SL: Is anyone maybe not so confident?

P23: I think I am quite flaky so I think sometimes I'm like confident and other times not that's why I really like online because you don't have to do the whole struggle through the store. I think it's a lot more convenient.

SL: So you kind of prefer the online element more?

P23: Yeah.

SL: Ok, cool.

P18: Online you would have to be in a good mood yeah.

P22: Yeah.

P19: Yeah.

P23: Yeah, in a good mood.

P19: Then if you go into a shop and you don't find something you come out feeling a bit eugh and that's a waste and then you go to the next shop.

P23: Yeah like you've wasted time or something.

SL: Are you confident that instructions you give in one channel will transfer into another effectively? So that I am kind of talking about click and collect, does it all work the way it's meant to?

P22: Yeah I think so. I've not had any problems…

P18: Issues.

P22: Yeah with like returning or. Sometimes it's just general, well click and collect's fine it's just deliveries and returns sometimes you have to carefully read the terms policy before I buy something. If it's from a retailer who I've never bought from before especially…

P18: Yeah.

P22: … I would always spend some time to read what type of policies they have for returns. Because if I can't return it in-store or it's going to cost me to return it then I will probably have second thoughts whether to buy it or not.

P18: I think like a well-known brand like Topshop, ASOS and stuff you kind of don't really pay that as much attention when...

P22: Yeah 'cause you kind of know straight away.

P19: You expect them to have good returns policies.

P18: I'd quite happily do it.

SL: So do you expect things to run smoothly between the channels.

P18: I do from those sort of brands but not from independents so much.

P19: Then if they don't, then you get put off.

P18: Because I do shop from like independents as well online but then I'll pay a lot more attention to kind of like how and where's it going and returns policy and stuff. Em yeah and whether or not…cause also my Mum has just set up an online website and when they have something taken out of their store they have to straight away do it online they haven't paid yet to have that connection. So sometimes with independents you don't know necessarily it's always in stock straight away. Online you've got to look for it a little bit more, pay a little bit more attention to their return policies.

SL: Are there any combinations of fashion retail channels that you think work well together when you purchase fashion. Some of you have maybe mentioned things already but I just need to ask you the question outright?

P21: I think click and collect is the best one, like order online and pick up in-store.

SL: Is that online - mobile or is that just online online?

P19: Both.

P21: Em, I'd say both but more for me online online. I just find it easier to see like all the products on a big screen rather than just on a small mobile face.

SL: Any other combinations of channels?

P19: Obviously online and in-store like so you can actually go if you see something online that you like you can go try it on in-store and then buy it the same day kind of thing.

SL: Ok, that's the main combination that you use at this stage?

P21: Yeah.

SL: That's fine. Eh. How does that combination of channels, so those combinations that you have just mentioned how do they meet your needs during the shopping journey?

P18: The app. If I was on a bus I'd look at an app but I don't think I would choose to look at an app to buy it then and there that would be my reason. And maybe instagram maybe if I saw something and went like oh that is from Topshop I would then take it online or take it instore but I wouldn't choose to buy it or do anything. It's kind of when you're moving or when you are doing something else.

P19: When you're bored and on the go you sort of… I always research before I buy and then so some channels for me is like the research channels then in-store and online are the actual purchasing channels.

SL: Ok so when you think about using a combination of channels have you gained any overall benefits from using a combination of channels? Now what I mean by that is do you get benefits overall from using the channels individually rather than just by using a combination. And what I mean is a good experience across channels means I like the brand more because it is not directed at just the one channel it is directed at your overall experience with the retailer. Have you got any of those kind of overall benefits because you have combined some channels?

P18: Convenience, maybe.

P21: Saving money, because I hate paying for delivery. So if I can get it delivered into store for free, I would much rather go in and that's also more convenient for me.

SL: You mentioned things like loyalty earlier, would that maybe be something?

P21: Yeah definitely.

P19 & P18: Yeah.

P18: I think that, I think you expect the name Topshop or something, the name to be consistent throughout and if Topshop has got a good reputation in-store then you'd expect it to have a good reputation on the other you know...

P21: Yeah, I think I would be more inclined to cross channels because you know the brand is good…

P19: Yeah

P21: …You know they're going to be reliable.

P18: But definitely big names the ones that are in magazines and stuff you should feel confident with them.

SL: And is there any other benefits that come to mind?

P19: Sort of you don't waste time.

SL: So we've got convenience yes. Cool so that's fine. This is quite an interesting one do you use any channels simultaneously for example what I mean is using two at the same time so being in a store and then shopping on your mobile. Do you use any channels together at the same time?

P18: No.

P21: No.

P23: You maybe would be tempted to though if you had bought something and found it cheaper before. Do you know what I mean? Like if you had that experience in a shop you'd maybe check on your phone before you paid for it in-store but that would just be like a one-off.

P19: Sometimes I scroll through Instagram and you see something and you go through the website but that's not really simultaneous?

SL: But would you have two tabs open up on you computer?

P19: Yeah, em but the second tab would only be opened if I saw something like the Topshop tab would only be opened if I saw something on Topshop's Instagram that I like.

SL: Ok. What were you going to say there?

P21: I think I have done that before like you said if they haven't got your size and you can check online. Like the girl did for you in Topshop. Like I can just check that on my phone and see if they have got it online.

SL: And have you done that online before?

P21: Yeah I think I have probably have.

P18: In-store I kinda expect them to do it though. I don't know if I would do if I would sit there and order it online.

P19: Yeah, if you go to a retailer and order it online they should do it for you on their till system.

P22: I think instore would be on the app, on your mobile just searching for.

P21: It's easy to then if you are in the store and you have got the product code or the product name you can just put it on the app quickly. Rather than like going home and just being like what were the jeans called, I can't remember than having to search through like every single pair of jeans.

P18: I document everything by taking photos of the label of something so that you can just quickly search it in.

SL: Is that something you would all do frequently?

P18: Ah all the time.

P21: If the size isn't there then yeah.

P18: On Zara they have got the code and then you type it in the code online and so it comes up with the thing, so I just take a photo.

SL: Would you type that into Google or would you type it into Zara?

P18: Onto Zara.

SL: Onto Zara website?

P18: Yeah.

SL: P23 do you use any channels together?

P23: Eh no not really, I think I would have been tempted to if I thought I needed to check something online before I bought it.

SL: So probably more borne out of need rather than choosing to?

P23: Yeah.

P18: Yeah.

P21: It's not really necessary to like stand in the shop and do it on an app.

P19: No because if you're already going to the shops you don't need to go on an app.

SL: What about you P20?

P20: I think I do the same thing take a picture of the label and just check at home, 'cause like when I'm in-store I kind of concentrating on buying so I don't really use my phone there.

P18: I wouldn't like to buy something if I was in-store. If I was trying on shoes and sitting down then they didn't have my size I don't think I would like to buy something sitting in a store. I would probably feel a bit like I'm in town, I should go look around and if I still like it when I get home I'll go online and I'll buy it. But I don't know if I would click and be like want these shoes unless I really did.

SL: What if you really did?

P18: Oh, if they told me that they will sell out then yeah I really would. But yeah, if they told me they were going to sell out and then I would… This is a bit different, I was in a shoe shop and they told me that they were going to sell out and that they only had one size seven left and they weren't getting any more because they are limited edition. I went straight to my bank to get the money, came back and did it and went like you've got one size left I need to get it. So if they were like ok there's not many left and these are really high demand then yeah potentially. But Ideally I'd probably just look round town and see what else they have to offer, then go home and see how much I really wanted them I guess.

SL: And see how you mentioned with the stock do you want to be able to see the stock across all the different channels?

P18: I do, yes.

P19: It would be better but you can understand when a small shop can't fit the entire contents of a website in a store.

P21: I think it's quite nice though when you know when make a trip to London or something and going and being like oh this is huge, it's got so much more stuff in the main Topshop. I live in Cambridge which has got really quite a small one then everyone is wearing the same top because everyone has got it from there.

P18: Yeah

P21: It's nice that you still love Topshop and can go into Topshop in London and you can get to choose something a little bit different.

P18: I think it's quite nice.

SL: Do you want to see the stock across all the different channels as well or do you want it just online?

P18: It wouldn't mind the store if there was more in some stores and different stuff 'cause I know it's different stuff in the sales in different areas. But I think online you would expect to see everything.

P19: I expect everything online to be on the mobile.

P18: Yeah.

P21: Yeah, that's what the problem is with ASOS that they're not the same.

SL: They're not?

P22: They're not the same.

P21: Just 'cause I have searched before just for something really generic like black boots and it barely gave me any options and I was like that can't be right. Then I went online and they had like hundreds. So…

P19: Yeah. It's really weird why do they that, they must have capacity on your phone.

P21: I don't know why they don't have the capacity on your phone to hold that much data.

P19: They do.

P21: I don't know what it is 'cause it's ASOS and you would expect them

P19: 'cause mobile is one of their biggest sort of or second biggest channel because they obviously haven't got a store so their mobile should be pretty good.

P18: On point.

SL: Em, so just moving on to the next question – the term ''connected-consumer'' is widely mentioned within omnichannel retailing. So omnichannel retailing is shopping across lots of different channels. As a fashion consumer what does the term ''connected-consumer'' mean to you? It can mean anything.

P21: I think being in touch with all the channels like following brands on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook.

SL: Ok, Anything else?

P18: Keeping a bit more up to date with it because of Instagram, Facebook and things. Like you don't always go into town but because you've got it all online you can check and keep up to date with the store. As you said looking at new Zara or whatever new things that come in and you kind of keep up to date with what's coming in and then you make the effort to go.

P19: But they're the ones that keep you connected, their the ones that keep posting on Instagram and stuff.

P23: And like having, if they can kind of build a bit of a relationship with you, 'cause if you've had a good experience with them and you get emails from them and they build your confidence or whatever. Like I suppose you have a connection to them then that then means that you want to check in with them every week or.

P22: I think probably like emails is probably the key thing being connected to retailers. I mean I do have like, you know there's social media Facebook, Twitter but it's not like I am going to be always checking because you know I could be busy whereas I'm always checking emails anyway. That's something that I feel.

P19: ASOS always.

P22: Yeah.

P23: To be honest I only open an email if I think it's going to be a discount [laughs]

P19: Yeah if it's in the subject.

P18: I mean I check my emails every morning then look and if I have got five or something check. So I'd probably if it said something like twenty percent off then I'd go and look at it. If not, they're just straight away delete.

P23: Yeah, yeah.

P18: Unless it says something to do with a deal or a sale.

P19: Because they send so many

P21: Too many, especially Missguided

P19: Yeah. It's annoying.

P21: It's just all the time.

SL: And then with marketing communications do you find them to be consistent between the channels? What sort of communications do you use? So we've mentioned emails, what else, anything else?

P22: No.

P20: Some of them might send texts.

P21: I am just thinking about like print-based and whether that's consistent with like online advertising which I think it probably is, because they're just like conveying brand message.

P22: Like ASOS they did have their ASOS magazine like I registered for that and sometimes I do receive it.

P21: Yeah.

P18: Yeah. I've got that before.

P22: I don't know if they do that anymore though. They went premium with that magazine and I never signed up for the premium to pay for it.

P21: But I used to get it and I didn't even sign up I think just 'cause I was a regular customer they send it.

P19: Yeah, they send it.

SL: So they were charge you for the magazine?

P22: I don't know the send it for free but then there was something online about it saying join our VIP scheme or something and I thought oh.

SL: Net–A–Porter is doing that now. So, being able to access channels all the time so twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week what does that mean to you as a fashion consumer? It's a really open question, so again just say what springs to mind.

P23: Just that you can dip into it you don't have to make an event of going shopping you can just procrastinate doing it.

P19: Yeah

P21: Like when you are on the bus just like we already mentioned you can just have a quick flick through the app and for some research.

P19: Yeah, that means you can look online like say you're trawling through Instagram at like two in the morning if you can't sleep you can go online and look as well at the same time. If you can't obviously go in-store at two in the morning you can always go online.

SL: And which channels and devices, so device I mean like technology like a mobile mobile tablet, do you use when shopping for fashion on the move? Is it an iPad and the online website? Is it a mobile and app or mobile and online.

P21: I prefer to use mobile and apps because sometimes online sites are not made for a mobile.

P22: Yeah.

P21: You have to zoom in.

P22: Sometimes they take longer to load as well as the actual website.

P21: Yeah mobile optimised, that's the word I'm looking for. So if it's not mobile optimised then I'll use the app, which is annoying.

P19: Apps are easier, but then sometimes I probably would go on for Asos I would go on the actual online instead of the mobile site because I know it's going to have a lot more.

P18: It does automatically direct you sometimes which is a bit annoying.

P19: Yes.

P18: Or I at least want the option to change between the two. It says sometimes on the app go to the website and I quite often do to to be honest.

P19: I sometimes do.

P21: It's just like the thing of like zooming in and out.

P19: I know.

P21: It's just really annoying.

SL: Just a general question, it wasn't actually on my list but in the past say twelve to eighteen months, how has your fashion shopping journey changed compared to before?

P21: A lot. Since I got an iPhone and got apps.

P20: I used not to buy anything online I was always going to the shops and stuff like that. But I discovered this new world [laughs], which is really bad, especially for my credit card but yeah I just realised how convenient it is. I'm not usually getting into the mood of just going shopping 'cause I don't like queuing and fitting rooms and stuff and it's just like more comfortable. Once you get a good experience it just makes it easier.

SL: Anyone else?

P23: I think I got more into online, like I definitely have. I have also got more particular. Like because I think there is just so much choice online I think I've narrowed it down to the sort of handful of sites that I like to use and that I know are good.

P19: I think since I've got an iPhone last year I have discovered apps. I used to have a Blackberry so you couldn't do anything on that. I've discovered apps and I'm now having, going, 'cause on a Blackberry you could get the mobile site but it was tiny, on the iPhone everything is like bigger so you can do everything so much easier.

P21: I think for me like it hasn't really changed because I have been shopping online for a while I just know I've just become much more demanding of free delivery, delivery times and if something goes wrong I'm quite keen to let them know on Twitter or Facebook that they've messed up.

All: [Laughs]

P21: I think like that's generally now consumers are becoming much more aware and demanding and you kind of expect that service so for me I have just become, like I have higher expectations now.

P23: And you know that if you complain on Facebook and Twitter, it's out there.

P21: They'll respond.

P19: They will apologise, because it will look bad especially on Twitter.

P18: I like that as a form of communicating with the brand though.

P21: Yeah I do.

P18: I don't mind that.

P21: Especially ASOS as well they're really good.

P19: Yeah. If you ring the customer service number you will have to click one and three and four like it will take you ages to get through to someone. If you tweet them they'll reply instantly.

SL: Ok I think that's all of my questions for now. Oh can I ask another question? In terms of omni-channel retailing how important is the brand in all of it in terms of all these different channels and the experience that you have?

P20: It means a lot for me. If I know it's a good brand then I trust buying on the Internet like something that I don't know. Even if it's cheap I would say no.

P23: Yeah say if you like bought something…

P20: Like I bought something?

P23: Like if you know its good quality because you tried it on instore then you'd be more likely to buy it online. Whereas like you are making something cheap look nice online.

P20: Yeah or it might become faulty or…

SL: So brands are quite important then?

P21: I think when you think about luxury then brands are really important then because you're buying an expensive product you expect online to be completely flawless, you don't want to have any problems at all. So I think the brand is important.

P23: One little thing I found out recently is that Whistles donate their factory seconds to Oxfam online and it made me think really highly of them so it's not really like a channel but a nice thing that they do.

P22: My brother is a charity worker at Oxfam and he does see some retailers like Flannels as well.

P23: Yeah, you can get some really good Whistles dresses for like…

P21: Ted Baker do it too. I went on to Oxfam online and I got some brand new Ted baker stuff there.

P19: They take it and sell it online so they can get more for it.

--Ends--

Focus Group 5 (Omnichannel)

SL: So the first question I want to ask is: what channels do you use when you're shopping for fashion? So channels I mean things like store, online, mobile etc.
P26: Go to the store.
P25: It's a mixture of everything really isn't it?
SL: Mmhmm.
P24: Online
P26: I've never bought on a mobile before but some people do.
P24: I've done like maybe on mobile but not clothing kind of things but.
SL: Other products. What other products?
P27: Umm I use them as well.
P24: Like tickets for events and stuff, yeah.
P25: Train tickets and stuff.
SL: Would you use like in-store kiosks, do you know like these iPads in-store and stuff?
P28: The massive ones in Marks and Spencers, not like the tiny iPads, they've got huge computer screens. I've used them.
P24: I've never seen them.
P26: Yeah, I've never seen them.
P25: I've seen them in All Saints but I don't think I'd ever buy something from them.
P29: Like you may as well go home and order online.
SL: Do it yourself.
P26: If I'm in the shop I want to try on the clothes like I'll try it on and buy it there, rather than like trying it on an iPad, I dunno.
SL: Ok, em are there any channels, obviously you've mentioned you haven't used in-store kiosks. Are there any other channels that you do not use or that you are yet to use, have you shopped on Facebook or Instagram, or anything like that before?
P30: Can you do that can you?
P28: Do you mean like buy from Instagram or do you mean you see something on Instagram and then you buy it?
SL: Eh, buy it through Instagram or Facebook?
P27: How do you do that?
SL: I can tell you about that later.
P27: [Laughs]
SL: Is there any other channels that you have used?
P25: I've not used Instagram to buy anything. I've not used mobile.
P26: Mobile.
SL: You've not used mobile - is that mobile apps or mobile
P26: Like mobile apps.
SL: Does the level of fashion that you are purchasing, whether it's high street or designer? Does that affect the shopping channels that you would use?
P28: Yes.
P25: Yes, the more expensive it is the more you want to try it on.
P28: If like I want a dress for like twenty pound for a night out on Friday I'll just go on an online retailer and like order it. But if I was going to buy like a designer purse I would want to go into the shop, go into Selfridges, have it wrapped, have it handed to me and have a yellow bag and.
SL: Does everyone else agree with that?
All: Yeah
SL: And with high street obviously you mention that you would do that slightly differently. Ok, so in general what are your expectations of a retailer that has multiple channels, do you have any expectations of them if they've got all these channels? Do you expect the same brand to look the same?
P26: Like a really good website.
SL: It's just whatever comes to mind.
P26: Like an easy to use website and I dunno?
SL: What about the look, the feel, the experience?
P24: There needs to be like coherence with the whole brand and the whole brand image.
P30: Like urban outfitters has a new website, it used to be cooler before and arty and stuff and now it's just kind of like standard black and white. Apparently it's trying to be more like the American one but I think it was better before it was more quirky like.
SL: And which company was that sorry?
P30: Urban Outfitters.

SL: So the next question that i'm going to ask is really broad but it's just to see what you would respond to it. Eh when thinking of shopping across channels for fashion what does the phrase *customer-centric retailing* mean to you?

P25: What?

SL: What does the phrase *customer-centric-retailing* means when you're shopping for fashion?

P28: Customer-centric?

SL: Or if you say no that's fine as well, just to see if you have any answers to it.

P28: Can you repeat the start of the question?

SL: What does the phrase *customer-centric* retailing mean to you?

P26: Based around what the customer wants?

P25: Or like, marketing from every angle.

P28: Oh is it like that they try and approach you from so many different directions, so they try to get you on your phone, on your email, in the street, on telly. Like all, I dunno.

SL: So it's all at you.

P28: Yeah.

SL: Anything else? No. Again, this is another broad question: when thinking about your fashion shopping journey with different channels do you view it as one big experience, all these interactions or do you view it as individual encounters with each channel or do you see it just as an overall journey?

P27: Individual.

SL: Ok so tell me a wee bit more about that?

P27: I feel like in Topshop when I go in-store I just get really overwhelmed and like I don't see anything I want 'cause like there is so many people and I wanna get out of there. But then when I go online it feels different I see all these things and I'm like oh!

SL: Ok, yeah.

P29: It's based upon your mood as well. Like sometimes you feel like online shopping sometimes you feel like going to the actual shop. Yeah.

P30: I feel like I always prefer like in shop. Like going like inside website and seeing what I like and sometimes I'll take a picture of it and I'll be like ok I'm gonna go find this in-store because I like prefer to like feel it and it'll be like different. I look at the prices online like lowest high and be like ok what I can afford.

SL: So do you see it as individual stages or do you see it as an overall journey. Because some of you said individual?

P30: I feel like overall, so I could like start at home you know, like looking online, trying to find a dress and stuff.

SL: So anyone else agree with, sorry what is your name P30. Does anyone else agree with P30?

P25: I agree with P30.

SL: P25, yeah. P26, would you say lots of different interactions or just one overall journey?

P26: What when I buy something?

SL: Yeah.

P26: Eh I guess, like yeah I guess all one thing. But I do get times when I just can't be bothered to go to store and then I dunno and it's just different.

SL: It's hard when you think about it as well. Em, do you perceive different types of channels as functioning independently or as part of the same brand? Do you see them as operating on their own, so it's very stand-alone, kind of similar to the brand or do you see it as part of the brand or do you not perceive the channels at all?

P26: Part of the brand

P24: Part of the brand, yeah.

SL: If you have a bad experience in one channel how does that affect your perception of other channels of the same retailer? So if you had a bad experience in one does that have an impact?

P28: Marks and Spencer has just updated their website and it's an absolute nightmare to navigate round. I'm trying to look for stuff like for Mother's Day and it's just horrible. Then in store there's like a whole designated section and it's right as you walk in for Mother's day and that's really confusing. Like you'd a thought there would be a link on their website like as soon as you go on to Mother's Day, like there is in the store, and there's not. So it puts me off ordering online with them but in-store I'd purchase with them.

SL: So do you see them as functioning quite independently?

P28: Yeah.

SL: And how many said brand? So six of you saying that [hands raised]. Cool. If you had a bad experience in one channel how does that affect your perception of a new channel of the same retailer? So a new channel that you have not been to before?

P24: Well if the website wasn't very good and they brought out an app then they wouldn't be that great. I guess.

SL: Anything else?

P24: Look into it and actually see if it's good or not. But, yeah.

SL: Yeah.

P24: They would have to do a good marketing around it if they wanted to make it like better than what they did before.

P27: Kinda depends on like the em channel as well, like if I shopped online and I got a bad quality product I wouldn't wanna go to the shop but if it was to solve a puzzle online like retailers or something I might go to the store because it's different.

SL: And just going back to my question before, so that one I did earlier: If you had a bad experience in one channel how does that affect your perception of the retailers other channels? Does it colour your judgement a bit when you look at the other ones?

P24: Not necessarily, I would have to like…It depends how bad a bad experience.

P27: Yeah it depends on the experience

SL: So what would be a bad experience?

Essii : Like it fell apart completely or something like that.

SL: Ok. Again this is quite a broad question because it is a new concept – do you think all the different retail channels that are available to you are merging or becoming blurred in anyway? So are they becoming more interlinked, are they merging?

P25: Yeah I think so just cause like you said you can order stuff in-store like online thin or whatever and it's just everywhere.

SL: So there is a noticeable difference say now as to how you would shop say as to opposed to a few years ago.

P25: Yeah, cause like P30 said, you sit at home and look at what you want and then go and go get it. Like instead of you just go to the shop and get inspired when you're there.

SL: Ok, anything else – do you think the channels are becoming merged or blurred?

P29: Merged because 'cause you used to not be able to buy things on apps and now you can. You can mobile shop now.

SL: And would you pick it up in the store then or would you get it delivered to your home?

P29: Eh it depends on how quick I wanted it.

SL: Depends how desperate. Ok.

P30: Like when you go on ASOS when you can see like the people walking on it. That's kind of like merging with real-life sort of thing.

P28: When you can what?

P25: When you can like watch them on the catwalk.

P30: When I buy from ASOS I don't feel the need to try it on because I can see what it's like, that's quite good.

SL: Do you feel a bit more confident then?

P25: You found that when you got a dress from BooHoo didn't you?

P28: Yeah. Hmm… oh don't get me started on BooHoo.

SL: What happened?

P28: I ordered a dress that looked absolutely gorgeous on this model and it had like a bit of a slit, like a deep V. But I thought it would be sort of appropriate because on her it actually looked all right. But it didn't come down there enough so it just looked like I was trying to try too hard, it just looked dreadful and the material was really like tacky.

P25: Like wetsuit kind of.

P28: Like really shiny and it just wasn't very nice, but it did look really nice on her.

P24: Yeah that has happened to me as well with BooHoo.

P26: I've had that with a skirt from Missguided

P28: I know so many people that it has happened to with Missguided or BooHoo. They've like ordered stuff and it has just been completely different.

SL: And what about yourself, did you have a similar experience?

P24: Yeah I bought a dress for something and then the colour was a bit odd. I had like this, was going along like this

SL: Asymetric?

P24: Yeah. Then it didn't show on the thing that it had elastic and the elastic was really bad and made my shape look really, it clings to everything and it just didn't look great.

P28: That's because they've never had an instore presence that you've never. Like I think you'd probably have a better judgement if you'd seen stuff in the shop.

SL: Would you trust them more?

P28: Yeah, like I think I would of… If I had seen all of their clothes in store I don't think I'd shopped there.

P25: Like that Glitz one that's in town.

P28: I think it would have a really tacky vibe around it, if it had a shop.

SL: So it might be perceived differently.

P28: Yeah.

SL: Would you, just going back to the question, would you like to see channels becoming more blurred and merged in the future? And even more integrated and more kind connected together?

P24: I don't really go to the store to go and use iPads and stuff. I don't go there for that. So I mean in my head I wouldn't be merged I go there for that reason and not for anything else.

SL: So do you have different purposes for the different channels that you use?

P24: Yeah.

SL: I'm going to ask this question but if you have not got a response that's fine. So how might high street fashion retailers blur or merge their channels even more? So a way of blurring at the moment is say click and collect so you can order online and pick up instore. Is there anything else you think they could do to make it a better experience that's more connected?

P28: At home Tesco have opened a click and collect point at one of the biggest secondary schools. So now when you pick your kids up you can pick your Tesco stuff up.

SL: So would you like to be able to pick up your fashion purchases at Uni?

P25: Or in a night out, on the night out. [laughs].

P30: Tesco has those click and collect things, you can go to like petrol stations.

SL: Collect plus?

P26: But you can go to tube stations in London.

Sheffield But this is like, Tesco made like a little hut, and you can have like your click and collect sent to this hut. There is someone in the hut to give you.

P30: What that is so random.

SL: Ok, when thinking about fashion retail channels, do you perceive the channels that they are of equal quality? Do you think mobile is just as good as the store or do you give them all the same?

P25: I prefer the store, I just prefer to be out of the house.

SL: So do you value the store as the main.

P28: That just hits the most people as well.

P30: And then websites and then apps like lower. I feel like it was downloadable then why did I download it?

SL: What about like Facebook and eBay, would that be beneath those ones?

P29: Yeah, I don't check on eBay.

P26: If I am looking on Ebay or on Facebook or something it will be because I am just looking for something really random, store that you wouldn't find in a normal, in like Topshop or whatever. It would be just like not branded. Something that you would find in a random vintage store.

SL: Something more unique.

P24: Like for ASOS and companies that are just online I wouldn't, I mean I kind of like that. Because I've got premier on ASOS and I don't use it all, obviously ASOS has got its uses. Em, I dunno I find it like that kind of thing and you can have your… it's only ten pounds a year and you can get your like clothes delivered next day and you can have the option of like when you want it. They give you a time period and then you can oh say actually I want it to be delivered the next day or the day after.

P27: It definitely makes me shop more.

P24: And they have all these deals and stuff like just for you.

P29: You get updates on like sales as well don't they.

SL: So you feel special?

P29: Yeah.

P24: And if it's cheap and also its easy I dunno, you can buy things online and suddenly take it back.

SL: So does that increase the quality of this channel because you've got like this VIP.

P27: Yeah definitely.

SL: Im going to ask a question again that's similar but you might say something different. Do you get the same level of value and benefits from the different retail channels that you use? Do you get the same benefits from online as you would get in the store?

P26: Em, no I would just say if I am shopping online it's because I'm feeling lazy. Like we're in Manchester it's cause I couldn't be bothered to go into the centre of town that would be the benefit of like shopping online at home. Em yeah so I dunno, I can't remember the question now.

SL: So the question was do you get the same level of value and benefits from all the different retail channels that you use?

P30: No I would say that they have different advantages and benefits.

P28: I tend to use online when I've no money, because its easy to browse through their sales online than try and sift through it in a shop. But if I'm going to pay full price. Say if I was looking for a birthday dress for like my 21st I would probably go into the shop and spend all day looking for one than trying to find a cheap outfit for like a festival or anything like that.

P27: And you can get help from the sales assistant if you are in-store. Like if you were buying something special like a birthday dress, you want people to like.

P25: You want an opinion don't you.

SL: And would you trust them with what they say?

P27: It depends.

P25: More than I would than like when I am with you.

P28: I wouldn't but it's because of how much I used to – I'm not going to say the word – like yeah. There is a word for it to customers for three years to make them buy something. So I like know all the tricks.

P30: I like seeing like what the sales assistants in Topshop are like wearing or the mannequins like when they, because it's always changing. I like to see like what clothes go with what, so that's why I like it instore.

SL: Next, do you find each shopping channel that you use is consistent and when I mean consistent, in terms of things such as the information about the products, the personalisation say if you got a personalised email, the branding, any visual images and the customer service. Do you find each channel is consistent? So if you go from mobile Topshop will you get the same experience on there? Is it allconsistent to what the store looks and feels like.

P25: No. I feel like, this is just I dunno em… if you got an email from Topshop it would be like, "hey P25, how's it going and stuff." And then if you went into store they'd all be like [negative facial expression].

SL: Just looking at you.

P28: A lot of their staff are really miserable yet they are so enthusiastic. But I think like on the website, I don't know if it's still like this because I've not been on it for ages it's quite like white and my Topshop at home is really white and airy inside but the one in the Arndale, is quite, because there are a lot of floors compressed it's quite dark and like it's completely different.

P25: I think on the Topshop website as well they are trying to be like quite high end fashion and they try and make it look like it's really catwalky and stuff and then when you go in store it's more studenty and colourful.

SL: A different kind of feeling. And then what about Instagram, Tumblr, Facebook versus store and mobile - do they kind of look and feel the same, is there branding the same way?

P28: Topshop like uploading pictures of catwalk shows and its videos of … I dunno that's not really, that's not what they're selling in their shop.

P30: There's lots of personality, like pictures, like stuff on Pinterest… I don't know where I am going with this.

SL: It's fine, don't worry.

P30: Like in store they wouldn't have like pictures of I dunno people on the beach but its different lifestyle kind of thing that they're trying to do.

SL: What about the information and customer service –is that the same? Is it consistent across the channels?

P28: I think so.

P26: I'm not sure I just like speaking to a person than like emailing them.

P25: I like just speaking to them, just like returning things is just such an effort if you have got it online.

P30: Oh my gosh yeah.

SL: Next question, again it's a really broad one. What is your understanding of a seamless fashion shopping experience? What do you think that means?

P24: No faults.

P25: Hassle free, straight-forward, just smooth, plain-sailing.

SL: Anything else?

P28: Something that doesn't actually exist.

P29: Is it kind of like the idea of merging all of the channels into one so that they are one overall experience.

SL: Would you like it to be that way?

P29: I don't think it really matters, ultimately you're just going to shop however you want shop.

P28: I think for us it's different. Like we got my grandma and iPad for Christmas and she has been like looking online at different stuff. She can go on Marks and Spencers, Next like BHS like all that kind of thing and she likes now looking at what they've got, whats new in. Then she likes to see whats is online exclusives as well cause she wasn't able to access that before whereas I've been able to access that like for ever, I don't know any different. But there's certain things that they only sell online and now she can like have it.

SL: So you feel there is a difference depending on your age?

Sheff: Yeah.

SL: Ok.

P24: I think merging it. When you want to return things you can actually go in-store and return it through them. So if it's merging that way then that's fine.

P27: Yeah

SL: So that's good, more convenient for you. Ok. If you think about a seamless retail shopping experience – whatever you think that might mean – how would it create value to you? So you said returns would be good because that would be smoother. How else would it create value? Would it make you more loyal? Would it make you more trusting or … ?

P26: I'd go back because that was easy. Like I'd check this website or go back the store because I really enjoyed that and it worked last time.

SL: So if it works you'd do it again obviously.

P24: You don't have to make that trip to the town you can just em like if you forget something you can just look online.

P29: I work in the Bodyshop and we always have problems with that because online is completely different compared to instore and people try and return things to us a lot and we cannot take them because we don't know how much they've paid for their products online. So that's not seamless and then you get disgruntled customers then and it just kind of puts a downer on the whole business because then they're not going to come back.

SL: And then if you were a customer in their shoes. Would you feel the same way?

P29: No because it looks like we're being unhelpful but we're not because we can't actually do anything about it. All we can do is give them the customer service number. I know myself I hate ringing up any sort of company I hate dealing with that.

SL: Like call centres and stuff.

P29: Yeah.

SL: Ok. Em now what I want you to think about is: think of your favourite high street retailer, and I want you to think do the channels of that retailer, do they live up to your perceptions you have about that brand? So whatever you think of that brand do those channels live up to that? Nodding?

P30: Yeah I think they do but I don't know who my favourite is,

SL: So if you think they do then like why do you think that? So the question is think of your favourite retailer do the channels of that retailer live up to your perceptions about the brand that you have?

P30: So you have stuff in store but what you think about Topshop like why is it like trendy and stuff? Like in the shop it's just like clothes just like ever other shop. But like online they have links to likes blogs and stuff and what you think about it is true because what you see online there's all these other things.

SL: Ok does anyone disagree? Do you think it's not quite?

P25: I don't follow Zara on anything but they're my favourite.

SL: Retailer?

P25: Mm, Yeah.

SL: Ok, so do you just not follow them because you choose not to?

P27: I think their website is a little bit confusing compared to like Topshop.

P30: It's like really fashiony, it's a bit hard.

SL: What about H&M and companies like that? Is there any other?

P28: I think H&M's website is really easy.

SL: Yeah?

P28: I've orderd quite a lot of stuff for my sister for them before. But, yeah?

SL: So do you think those channels live up to your perceptions you have about the retailer hm?

P24: I don't know why but I wouldn't shop online from H&M

P27: I think their website looks…

P28: It's really simple that, it's not anything special. I can't remember there being any videos or stuff.

P29: It's like what you see is what you get isn't it.

P28: But it's really good for basics like holiday stuff. If you're ordering that, like tops, shorts.

SL: Ok, I'm going to ask you another question quite similar, how accurately do the channels eh that you shop for, for fashion, how accurately do they reflect the brand? When you look at a website, a Facebook page or an Instagram, do you instantly think of that brand? Do you think yeah that looks like Topshop or no it doesn't?

P26: Most of the time yeah.

SL: Most of the time yep. Have you had any instances where it has not maybe worked out?

P28: Lipsy they do their Instagram with like Kardashian collection like they em, it's constantly about going out dresses and it's always girls dressed up and glamorous, think they get it right. I'm trying to think of anyone.

SL: Does anyone not get it so right? Do they maybe not reflect the brand?

P25: I don't really follow shops on anything other than like different ones that you can't find on the high street.

SL: The more unique ones you'd look to online. Why do you do that? Is it just to find something more unique or…?

P25: I just don't care what Topshop have to tell me. Like everywhere else I dunno.

SL: More individual?

P25: It's overwhelming sometimes how much marketing there actually is everywhere so I just can't really be bothered with it.

SL: What sort of marketing particularly?

P25: Well, like pictures and stuff, Instagram and Twitter and just everything and Facebook and I just eugh.

SL: Is there anyway they could try and not get round that and be so in your face?

P25: Maybe they could do it like in a less obviously trying to sell you something way, but I suppose they're doing that through their Instagram. So they're just trying to inspire you, just cause you you know at the end of the day they're trying to sell you something all the time. It's just too much.

P24: They're well-established anyway, like people do go and go shopping there anyway they don't really need to do that.

P25: They're just trying to be like a friend instead of just a shop.

P24: ASOS but sometimes they send me like three emails a day and I just was getting like really bored [sigh].

P26: I just delete them straight away.

P28: I don't read retailer emails, I just mark as read.

P27: They send the same ones multiple times sometimes.

P25: I've had to unsubscribe to so many just cause they just send them like everyweek with new styles like.

P26: What is really annoying is when you click unsubscribe and like you still get them, do you ever get that?

P25: Yeah. You get that with so many.

P30: Do you ever get pop ups when I cant get them off but even on ASOS they'll just come up these pop-ups on the side. Not even ASOS or anything just a random thing where it just says suggestions of other brands that you can go on. I can't get rid of it. I don't know.

P28: I used to have that for like searching for dresses, it used to come up with like a green dress from Debenhams.

P25: And then you search for something and it comes up in the subtext, and I'm like how did you know that?

P24: It's like so annoying.

P30: It kinda came up in the survey can you tell us about our service and I was like I don't want your service and it said like about unsubscribing, so I clicked on that and it just came up on to this information page about the company and I was like how do I unsubscribe I can't do it.

P27: And if you shop like online once somehow the same coats show up on my facebook and its just forcing me like, I did not want that.

SL: Do you feel like you don't want that? Like you were saying, just bit like overwhelming.

P27: If I wanna see the clothes I don't want to see them when I'm on Facebook.

P24: Or they could change the product, cause it's always the same products online.

P30: You can have on ad-block can't you.

P24: I've done that and still one of the pop up things is still on there.

SL: Em, next question how do the channels that you shop from reinforce the brand personality? What do you think makes that channel feel like Topshop or feel like ASOS or feel like H&M? What is it? Is it how it looks or is it what they say?

P30: Like I was saying with Urban Outfitters before, the website before was like ok, I can't remember what the title was like but feel it was kind of like patchwork, kind of colourful, kind of like the stuff they sell like their staff.

SL: Like their store?

P30: Yeah and em I quite like, like I've looked at their blog before which I don't look at the blogs normally but I quite like they just integrate the music they play in store, they like tell you a few things about gigs and stuff and just kind of makes, I feel like they know what their customer is interested in.

SL: So you think they're good.

P30: I do like their website so its hard to feel.

SL: What's different about it?

P30: It's literally just like black and white writing. I mean it looks like BHS trying to be like, whatever. You know when the website is trying to copy Topshop which is like really black and white, whatever, I feel like that's what they look like now. They don't really have much personality compared to what they had before.

SL: Not as much, ok. What about mobile apps and things like that, how do they reflect the brand personality?

P26: I've not really downloaded a mobile app. Because I don't really see the point of it because I don't buy things that much online anyway and if I would I wouldn't be looking on my mobile really tiny screen.

SL: A really tiny screen.

P27: They tend to be the same on the website don't they. I've only got the ASOS app.

P26: Why don't you just go online. I'm not that desperate.

SL: Cool customer.

P29: I think all mobile apps look exactly the same, doesn't matter which shop it's for it all looks the same.

SL: Right.

P29: They just all have a list in the corner like mens, womens and you'll search for dresses or whatever and you can just swipe through them.

SL: So it doesn't show the brand personality.

P28: No.

P24: Sometimes I don't like how it's like so, I dunno they, like on a website its much more spread out and you can click on things and it is much more explained. On a mobile it's kind of like compressed.

P28: It takes ages like say if you are looking for dresses and they sell like two hundred because your screen is only that big you're going through it like two at a time and you have to keep going.

SL: And you've got to keep scrolling.

P28: Yeah.

P25: It's good to show friends what you've bought though.

P28: It is:

P25: Like how I got stressed the other day and be like.

SL: So what would you do?

Sheffeld: All the time.

SL: Would you post it to Facebook, Snapchat.

P25: I'd probably be like, just load it up and be like "hi guys"…

SL: How would you load it up? Would you load it up like via What'sApp or something?

P25: I wouldn't do it through an app but I'd go on the website on my phone.

P28: Like P30, coming to the lecture this morning she'd be like have you got a dress for tomorrow night and I'd be like yeah. She'd be like, "have you got a picture?" If I hadn't taken a picture of it then I would've used the website to get a picture up. I've also sent through What'sApp quite a lot too, I've just realised that.

P24: I've sent it through Facebook. If you're flicking… if your with your friends on Facebook and stuff and you're looking for a different outfit or something

SL: Is this Facebook chat you would be on?

P24: Yeah, Facebook chat.

P28: I wouldn't ever post anything on status or anything like that.

P27: Even if I was shopping on like my laptop and I seen something on like and I'd see what my friend thinks I'd take a Snapchat.

P25: Yeah.

P29: Yeah.

P28: Or I'll copy and paste like the website this one or this one.

P30: I do like the link on Facebook because I would like screen-shot it.

SL: So them help you to choose sort of thing.

P30: Yeah.

SL: Ok, em again this is a bit of a complicated question but just bear with me. Are you confident that instructions in one channel will transfer to another? Now what I mean by that is – if you place an order online or on a mobile and you use a click and collect to the store are you confident that that will happen.

P26: Yeah.

SL: Yeah, have you ever been let down with a click and collect?

P28: Yes, Tesco.

SL: So what happened?

P28: I ordered something for Christmas for my Dad like a hamper and em, yeah I didn't come and I did click and collect because it was quite expensive for postage and packaging so it was quite big, it was like seven pounds. So I click and collected to a store, to a superstore that was like a mile away and it didn't come in time for Christmas.

P26: Really?

P28: Yeah and I like ordered it a week and a half in advance. But it was because it was from a third party, like it wasn't direct from Tesco but they should obviously have that sorted.

SL: What about that for fashion have you had any instances where that has let you down, say a click and collect?

P26: I don't really do click and collect.

P28: I did it for Topshop.

P24: I went once to ASOS because I was like in halls last year and because you can't like choose, it only had certain floors and so you can't like choose so I did it for that and it was fine. Just had to walk for a bit, couldn't find the place but it was fine.

P28: I did it in Topshop in the Arndale and it was really good.

SL: Are there any combinations of fashion retail channels that you think work well together? If you think about your most recent shopping journeys is there any kind of, do you always do the same thing – do you go online and then go to the store or.

P28: I like Instagram.

SL: So would you combine Instagram with say…

P28: I've bought stuff on Instagram and then I've ordered it.

SL: Do you mean you have seen something from Instagram and then you've ordered it from the retailer's website?

P28: They started like putting em like a collage together, so you'll have picture of someone from like TOWIE in a dress and then they'll have that and where it's from next to, it if it's from them. Like I saw a jumper and one of them was wearing it and I'd seen it on telly the week before and I ordered it literally there and then.

SL: So you went through to the retailer's site?

P28: Yeah.

SL: Any other kind of combinations that work well? Think online and store do they work well?

P29: Yeah, it's like P24 said before you look online and if you see something that you like you go into the store and you buy it.

P27: Especially if it is a bit more expensive and you want to see it in person.

SL: So price would affect the channels that you use?

P27: Yeah.

SL: If you think about that combination so if it's online or instore or whatever it may be em, does that combination of channels meet that stage in your shopping journey? Would you ever use two channels at one time?

P24: I would only go on my computer whenever like, I dunno, you wouldn't be in store and…

P30: I do take screen shots of what I have seen on websites, I've got some on my phone now. I'll just be like see if I…

SL: And what would you do with those screen shots?

P30: Just so it's easier to find in shop. 'Cause when you're like in a shop you forget everything that you have like seen online. You know like online everything is on its own so, but then I go in a shop and sometimes you can't even see what you've seen online. But if it looks so good online then why isn't it up at the front.

SL: So does it help you almost get ready for store shopping?

P30: I don't do it all the time but occasionally.

SL: So you're more prepared. Ok, have you gained any overall benefits from using a combination of channels? So overall benefits I mean benefits as a result of using that combination rather than just a benefit from a channel.

P25: I went into, I don't know what shop it was but they didn't have the dress 'cause I had looked online and went to go in-store to see if they had it.

SL: Yep.

P25: And em, when I went in they didn't have it in stock but I could show them like, like I could show the lady the one I was looking fo because I had a picture and then she got her iPod thing out, iPad. Then like ordered it into store.

SL: So you were able to use the image that you used then.

P25: I showed her a picture of what I was looking for and then she ordered it on her ipad thing.

SL: Any other benefits? Cool. Eh, have you ever used any channels simultaneously? So what I mean by that is at the same time? So have you ever stood in a store to use your mobile to search for something?

P28: Yeah at Christmas when everything is out of stock I've done that. When you're trying to track stuff down and gone back into the store to get this today and it's gone, straight on my phone to order it in time and I did it. Yeah.

P27: Or if you see like it's out of stock you might want to see if it's in stock online.

P28: Cause I feel like If it's out of stock online as well you know to just forget it and go look for something else.

P27: Yeah.

SL: Ok, any other channels? Have you ever used any online channels simultaneously? So like Facebook or Instagram and Topshop website or Facebook and Topshop's website, have you done that before?

P24: Yeah

P25: Yeah.

SL: So do you have like lots of tabs open

P25: I will look on Pinterest and look at online retailers and stuff.

SL: So you'll maybe keep a social media channel whilst you look at the retailers?

P25: Yeah.

SL: Oh that's interesting. Em, next question, again really broad so if you have an answer great it can be anything, if you don't have an answer that can be ok too. The term *connected consumer*, what does that mean to you as a fashion consumer? It can mean anything, I just want to see what you think it means.

P24: Em someone who is really brand loyal and they like keep up to date on everything and they know what's happening with brands and stuff.

SL: Ok, yeah. Anything else – connected consumer?

P29: Does it mean connected as in like through social media and things like that. Say like when you're on line now.

SL: Ok, yeah could mean that. Anything else?

P30: Do you mean like connected like remember when you were saying like they send you special things? Like if you feel more connected with the brand.

P27: I don't feel connected with ASOS.

SL: Do you access channels twenty-four seven, twenty four hours a day? Will you come in after a night out and start shopping from your phone or anything like that?

P25: No.

P28: I'd sometimes sit and look through Instagram before I go to bed or like if I'm on the bus or if I can't sleep. On the train I don't know.

P25: When you're not on Tinder [laughs].

SL: So see like being connected to channels 24/7 what does that mean to you as a fashion consumer, does that mean that it's useful or no, it doesn't bother you because you don't use it.

P28: I don't think I'd ever shop like late at night.

P30: No, I'm not ever even that focused when I'm shopping I'm like doing something else like I'm watch TV and just be like scrolling Instagram. I'll have loads of like, I won't ever just have one open like Topshop I'll have like loads of…

SL: Different retailers

P24: Yeah.

SL: And will you use like Google to find things initially?

P30: Sometimes I will but it's only like specific things.

P28: Like I wanted a specific pair of shoes and there was a name for them but I couldn't remember what it was but Google helped me out and it listed all the retailers that sold them.

P24: I only shop online like really late at night if I saw something I really wanted and then I was like I don't know if I really want it and then I decide like, ok, I'm gonna get it and then I'd like, ok I need to get it today and go on late at night.

P30: I find shopping online I really restrict what I buy, like instead of like in-store I feel like I always buy loads but like online, I'm like searching for the best deals and then I order a bag and I'm like oh my gosh I can't spend that much. Then I'm what do I need. I was on ASOS like that the other day and like oooh and I got it down to like one thing and I had like then to start off with.

SL: Where in the store, are you more inspired in the store or?

P25: Yeah, when you want to buy a look instead of just buying like a piece.

SL: So you can get looks better in store.

P27: Well you can't really like… well you obviously can calculate the price but you obviously don't see it like when you look at your shopping basket online and go like oh my it's like £70.

P25: When it's like in your hands and you're holding it, when you're like…

P27: You go to the till and there's nothing you can do anymore [laughs].

SL: That's it you've crossed that line. And see like to get inspired as a fashion consumer, how do you go about doing that before you begin your shopping? Do you have like an inspiration stage where you're just looking around to get ideas and things.

P25: Yeah.

SL: Is that your first shopping journey stage.

P26: Yeah.

P25: I just pick up on what everyone else is wearing and what looks nice on everyone else.

SL: So like pick out the bits.

P30: Bloggers are good that way.

P26: Sometimes I just like don't want to really go shopping there's nothing I really want but then after a couple of weeks I really need to go shopping. You know when you've like seen things you really want and you go shopping sometimes and you have a shopping spree and you're like I can't do anything for a while now. So then it builds up over time, the next time I can go.

SL: Little bursts of madness. Ok and which devices do you use when you are shopping for fashion, so devices I could mean like a smartphone, ipad, computer desktop, netbook. What ones?

P26: Laptop.

SL: So you use a laptop.

P28: I don't trust my phone to like hand my card details on. I'd only like use it like emergency yeah.

P24: I don't have an iPad but my friend does and em I don't think they've changed it but sometimes with an ipad you have to like scroll down and like putting your card details, and trying to put your…the numbers in you have to scroll and sometimes you can't.

SL: So it's really fiddly?

P24: Yeah.

SL: And do you use mobiles? Is it more for browsing?

P25: Mobiles I use more for inspiration.

P29: Yeah.

P30: I use just laptop. I feel like I would only use mobiles for looking at stuff if I'm like on the bus waiting, I wouldn't sit and just be like… that's just pointless.

P28: I feel like I couldn't be say just waiting for the bus and just stand with my card like typing [laughs].

P24: I wouldn't do it for buying i'd just be like looking at stufif. Plus I don't like saving my details on my mobile in case it got stolen or I got hacked.

SL: Have you ever used a call centre to make a fashion purchase?

All: No.

SL: That's fine. Have you ever used a netbook, do you know like the little laptops.

P24: Oh I have.

SL: Have you made a fashion purchase with one?

P24: Yeah it was my computer for like so long and I do like the size but not for my main computer.

10.6 Interview Guide

Sections in the Discussion	Introduction – Channel Adoption Motivations	Perceived Confidence of Omnichannel	STAGE ONE Journey Mapping	Channel Motivation	Channel Usage	Channel preference
Questions asked:	What drives you to use many channels during your fashion-shopping journey?	Are you confident in your ability to use such an array of channels for purchasing high street fashion?	Think of your most shopping journey for high street fashion apparel.	What was your motivation to use these channels for this particular journey?	Why did you combine multiple channels at certain point in your journey?	Do you associate certain channels with certain purposes in the shopping journey?
			What triggered you to begin that shopping journey?			
			At the end of the fashion journey what was the outcome?			
			Tell me about the sequence of shopping channels you used: Select and arrange the channel cards in the order that you used the channels.			

Sections in the Discussion	STAGE TWO Omnichannel Shopper Journey - Stage Identification	Channel Category Association	Channel Alignment	STAGE THREE Device Elicitation	Customer Experience	Customer Decision-Making Journey
Questions asked:	Group the channels that you used together, each of these groupings should identify a stage in your shopping journey. (Use the post-it's to give the stage a name.)	So, do you associate certain channels with certain stages of the shopping process?	Overall how well do the channels align with the various steps in your fashion-shopping journey?	Which devices did you use to access each of the channels you have selected? (Place the device card below the corresponding channel.)	Tell me about your overall experience of that shopping journey?	Tell me about your shopping journey in terms of your –emotional responses during that journey.
				Do you associate different devices with different purposes when shopping for fashion.	How satisfied were you with this omnichannel fashion shopping experience?	Do you view your shopping journey as stages or as an overall journey?

Sections in the Discussion	Simultaneous Usage	STAGE FOUR Channel Transition	Channel Value	Synergistic Effects of Omnichannel Usage	Channel Blurring	Seamless Experience
Questions asked:	Does your journey consist of you going through channels consecutively or will you switch back and forth between channels?	What motivates you to move between channels?	Do you get the same level of benefits from each channel you use?	By mixing and matching channels do you gain any overall collective benefits/negatives that you would not have encountered by using channels individually?	How do you think that all the different retail channels that are available to you are merging or becoming blurred?	In your opinion what represents a seamless fashion shopping experience.
	In any of the journeys you mentioned did you use any channels simultaneously? For example using a mobile in-store.			Are there any combinations of channels that you think that do or do not work well together for fashion?		
				Has your experience in one		

				channel ever affected your experience or use of another channel - new		

Sections in the Discussion	Consistency	Decision Confidence	Omnichannel Trust	Omnichannel Loyalty	Connected Consumer	
	Was your impression of the brand consistent across all channels?	How do you reassure yourself in making the right purchase decision?	How does an omnichannel shopping journey affect your trust with the retailer?	How is your loyalty affected by an omnichannel shopping journey?	As a fashion consumer what does the term connected consumer mean to you?	
Questions asked:	Do you find different shopping channels of the same retailer are consistent?					

10.7 Interview Transcripts

Interview 1- Caroline INT1

SL: So this is interview one with Caroline and this is examining omni-channel in greater detail. So Caroline, thanks for coming obviously what I have got today is I have got a selection of cards that identify different shopping channels and I have got devices just to prompt you in terms of the devices you might access those channels with. For this discussion I want you to consider high street fashion apparel purchases and obviously if you have got any questions or you need me to repeat something just let me know alright. So first of all, can you tell me what drives you to use many channels during your fashion shopping journey for high street fashion.

INT1: Ok em the first one would probably be to find the best price, so I can compare easily over a number of websites from different retailers. Second would probably be just the greater variety so especially online I can access a wider range of brands quicker than if I was nipping in and out of different stores.

SL: Anything else?

INT1: No, think that's about it.

SL: Ok, is there any other reason that drives you to use lots of channels rather than just one?

INT1: Eh convenience as well I guess. So it depends on where I am and at what time. If it's got to be quick and I need to search for something quickly I can look online and go into store store if I see something I like.

SL: Right to make your journey more efficient.

INT1: Mmhmm.

SL: Ok, are you confident in your ability to use such an array of channels for fashion shopping?

INT1: Yeah, I definitely think so. I think because we've sort of grown up with a lot of technology and em the use of smartphones and apps, that makes it a lot easier. The only problem I sometimes find is with mobile sites I think they can sometimes be quite difficult to access on a mobile just because of the size if a retailer hasn't adapted their site for the smartphone I find it quite difficult.

SL: So it needs to really be to fit for that smartphone.

INT1: Yeah because you want it to be as convenient as possible.

SL: Is that why you would use a smartphone? Is that out of convenience?

INT1: Just convenience because I'd always prefer to see the product in person.

SL: Ok. So now I want you to think in your mind of your most recent fashion-shopping journey again, high street fashion. It doesn't matter whether you bought the item or not. That's not an issue at all.

INT1: Ok.

SL: Can you just tell me what triggered you to begin that journey?

INT1: It was actually getting my dress for the ball which I got this weekend. So I had an event in mind that I was looking for and I think I spent months looking in magazines and online - em loads of different retailers, looking at selections. Then I saw a dress on Mango that I went into store and then tried on.

SL: Yeah.

INT1: And I got that in the end.

SL: So you made a purchase in the end?

INT1: Yeah.

SL: So thinking about that journey again I want you to tell me about the sequence of shopping channels that you used. So to do this I have provided cards and what I want you to do is arrange the cards in the order that you used them. So you don't need to use all of them so for example at the start of your journey you said you were looking at magazines and we'll just lay the cards out.

INT1: Yeah.

SL: Are you ok to do that?

INT1: Yeah, that's fine.

SL: If you want you can lay them out on the floor or the desk, whatever is easiest.

INT1: Ok. So I'll put that one over here.

SL: If you do them lengthways.

INT1: Then also in store. Ok there you go.

SL: Does that cover everything yeah?

INT1: Uh huh.

SL: Now what about post purchase did you use any channels there after your purchase?

INT1: Eh…no.

SL: You didn't at all.

INT1: No.

SL: Ok, so you've got four cards there: women's magazine, then online website, then retailer fashion magazine, then store. Now what I would say about those cards I've just given you some examples of

retailers on each card but not specific to that. So what was your motivation to use these channels for that particular journey.

INT1: Em I think the magazine was more inspiration.

SL: Ok.

INT1: So to look at what kind of styles retailers are going after. And then the website was to get more information to look at what all the different retailers had in store em and the options they had available and again I went back to…I actually used ASOS's fashion magazine again just for some more inspiration and then once I had a few dresses that I had in mind I then went to the stores to look at them and try them on.

SL: Did you use any channels of the same retailer at any point?

INT1: Yeah, I definetly went on Asos's website. They have a greater variety of brands. So again, that made it more convenient, so I could look at lots of brands in the same place and obviously I used their online magazine as well just to have a look at some stuff.

SL: And just going back so I can recap. So you used the ASOS website, did you use any other websites?

INT1: Yeah loads, like Mango.

SL: So you used Mango and bought in store eventually?

INT1: Yeah I originally saw the dress on ASOS, because they stock Mango but em, what else… Mango, Zara, Topshop, Warehouse loads everywhere.

SL: Ok and obviously the store that you eventually purchased in that was Mango. Is that right?

INT1: Yes.

SL: So what I am going to do is I am going to get you some post-its and I want you just to list the different stores and sites that you went to.

INT1: Ok, that's fine.

SL: So I'll just get them. So just put as many as you can, the ones you can think of.

INT1: Yeah, that's fine. [Writes]

SL: Ok.

INT1: Do you want me to put the stores I looked in as well.

SL: Yeah that's fine and obviously put your eventual store choice.

INT1: Yeah.

SL: Now the next thing I want to ask you is… do you associate certain channels with certain purposes in the shopping journey.

INT1: Yeah definitely.

SL: Ok, can you tell me a little bit more?

INT1: Sure, so like I said before I probably used magazines more for inspiration. So stuff like Vogue, you can start at the top end and look at all the high fashion, something that really inspires you like a look that takes your idea and then you can almost compare it to the high street magazines like Look or Grazia which are say a bit more down a level or online websites to try and find the look again that you have obviously seen or a look that's inspired you. Em, so then obviously, the website is more for comparison so looking at all the ranges and the prices and stuff like that.

SL: So that's when you're getting to the realistic stage of…

INT1: Yeah.

SL:…of what you can purchase rather than your kind of designer dream. Ok.

INT1: Em and then again sometimes, like I said, I go back to stuff like ASOS has like fashion features or like their online magazine and then Topshop has little style features and sometimes it's a good idea to look in those categories to get a bit more of an idea at a high street level and that might lead me to then going back online.

SL: So you'll switch back and forth.

INT1: So I'll switch backward and forwards until I have a few dresses in mind. Then I can go to the store which is the complete practical side of it. Like trying it on.

SL: And obviously you made your final purchase in Mango?

INT1: Mmhmm. I think just how it made me feel when I put the dress on. I just knew that I felt really comfortable in it and it was a really nice fit and I was really happy with it and I was just like that's what I'm looking for.

SL: Now I want you to group the channels that you used together. I want you to give each of the groups of channels a stage so a name or a theme for that grouping. So I want to understand the key stages of your shopping journey and what they are called. If you used the channels individually that's fine too, you can give them separate stages or if you used two at a particular stage that's fine again. Now because you said you used online websites you said after you had been there [on the retailer fashion magazine] I will just put another card there just to signify that you did that. So what I want you to do again with the post-its is give each of the stages a name.

INT1: That's fine. Can I move them.

SL: So if you want to move them I will just take a picture of where they are at the moment.

INT1: Ok.

SL: So I can see from there that you almost have a double stage of inspiration.

INT1: Yeah definitely. For the [inspiration magazines] I put from designer to high street.

SL: So you're moving the ASOS card back to the start. [this is inspiration as well]

INT1: Yeah I definitely consider them [women's magazine and retailer magazine] the same purpose.

SL: Ok so you have got three different stages you've got your inspiration stage. Is that stage important to you?

INT1: Yes definitely. Style information yeah.

SL: Then you have got the comparison stage with price information there and what does each retailer offer style wise. So is that when you are getting to more of a realistic and practical about it. Then you have got your final practical stage where you are trying on the dresses and identifying your eventual choice.

INT1: Yep.

SL: In terms of post-purchase you didn't use any channels or anything post-purchase? You didn't Instagram or WhatsApp etc to show them what you have bought or tell anyone?

INT1: Yeah I guess I could say I Whats App'd to show a picture of the dress.

SL: Oh right, ok. And did you send that Whats App to your friends?

INT1: To my sister as well.

SL: So you did that with a phone. Did you do anything else like that?

INT1: No I didn't put anything on social media because it was a ball dress but if it had been something different then I might have used social media to put it on. Like if it had been a really cool pair of trainers and I really liked them.

SL: Is it because it's a ball and you don't want anyone to obviously have the same dress.

INT1: Yeah definitely.

SL: With the online website you said you used that after the ASOS magazine when you came to think about it. So you do switch back and forth?

INT1: Yeah definitely.

SL: Is it just really with websites that you do that or would you do that with any other channels?

INT1: Yeah. I just don't use apps at the moment because of my phone. So I never go on the apps but I'm sure if I had a smartphone it'd be different.

SL: So we've got the stages now I want to ask do you associate certain channels with certain stages of the shopping journey?

INT1: Yeah definitely.

SL: Can you just tell me a little bit more?

INT1: Yeah. So again stuff like magazines and em like social media as well I'd probably say. If you look on Instagram or retailers Twitter feeds or something that could also go into the inspiration stage.

SL: Did you do any of that? Did you use any social media?

INT1: I didn't this time but sometimes I do use it. Not for this particular journey but definitely Instagram and stuff or even just Facebook if they've got something featured. Em and then again fashion magazines or style advice and stuff. Again the website is more comparison and more practical like narrowing it down, em convenience.

SL: Ok convenience as well. And after the purchase you said you used kind of What'sApp to let your sister know.

INT1: Uh huh.

SL: Overall how well do the channels align with various stages in your fashion shopping journey? Do they fit well, could they be better?

INT1: No I do think they fit well. I think the only difference is more out of convenience I could do is to go on…use of apps. Because I think if you are in store you can just go on the app and double check the price in another store or again if they don't have your size you could maybe order it online straight off your app on your iPhone. So that would definitely make it, add to the convenience factor.

SL: And you would, if you had a smartphone with the apps as I know your phone is currently broken would you… or is that something you would be comfortable doing?

INT1: Yeah definitely. I know I have been em in store before and they haven't had the dress in my size and I've sat with the sales assistant and just quickly gone on the app with her and just ordered it online. You can get it ordered into the store so you can actually collect it from the store.

SL: Did you do it with your final dress, the Mango dress?

INT1: No, but I have done it before.

SL: You've done it before.

INT1: So just showing you how apps can be really useful in that sense.

SL: So you have ordered in store, so was that through the sales assistant's ipad on their app.

INT1: Yeah and then gets delivered to the store.

SL: Ok now what I want you to do is you can keep it in the stages that you've got there. I want you to tell me about the devices you used to access each of the channels you have selected. So by device I mean the medium you have used to access that channel.

INT1: Ok.

SL: So I've got the devices here so I've got a desktop, I've got a catalogue, I've got some magazines over here, got laptop, iPad things like that here but I also have them laid out as cards. So do you want to just place a card or the actual item next to the channel ok.

INT1: So a laptop would be this one and this one, then that would be obviously a magazine as well.

SL: So with the laptop would that be to access the ASOS magazine. So with the store you hopped in in person I presume, you didn't get someone to go for you or anything.

INT1: No.

SL: Do you want to just tell me a little bit about that as well?

INT1: Sure, so I tend to like read magazines I'll get them however often like weekly or anything but if I've got something on my mind that I know that I need to get em I will like keep a special 'eye-out' for it. Like in magazines look at the styles they have in. So I know like Heat magazine I know I wouldn't necessarily associate it with fashion but I know they have a little feature about because the Oscars have been on, all the dresses that were worn and em they have look a like dresses to what the celebrities worn so if you looked for a style as in a particular style that I liked, that I dunno, like Kate Hudson wore then I could see where they'd shown a similar dress and maybe look into more of that store if I know they are already stocking that style then what other styles they have in. So that was helpful.

SL: And you said obviously you have kind of two levels of magazine, so you've got your Vogue like your maybe Harpers and you say with Look and Heat is that a different level?

INT1: Yeah definitely it's more practical for the high street styles because obviously that's where I'm going to buy it from. It gives me a bit more of an idea of who's stocking what before I even go onto websites.

SL: So for this particular one you used Vogue, Heat magazine and Look.

INT1: Yeah and Look as well.

SL: Ok you used computers for the other one is there anything specific you want to tell me about that or…

INT1: Em no just that the laptop is the main medium I use because my smartphone is broken so I just use that to go onto any of the online sites like the ASOS magazine and to any style bits they had.

SL: And would a smartphone… would you choose that over a laptop?

INT1: Yeah definitely, I'd much look on that for things like social media.

SL: On your phone?

INT1: Yeah.

SL: Now obviously if you're saying that hypothetically you would use a smartphone you can integrate that into your response that's not a problem. Do you associate different devices with different purposes when you are shopping?

INT1: Mmhmm so a magazine is inspiration. If I use my smartphone that will cover quite a range of them so you can use it for inspiration on the social media side then you would also use the app probably when I was in store to make sure probably to compare prices or if I needed a different size.

SL: Would you purchase on a smartphone?

INT1: Yeah I would yeah. If they didn't have my size and I like looked at it in store or I'd tried it on and knew that I needed a different size in it. As long as I was confident in the item then I would definitely feel comfortable purchasing from an app.

SL: What I want you to do now is just to tell me about your overall experience of that shopping journey so your overall customer experience.

INT1: Em I guess that kind of starts like more with online websites doesn't it?

SL: Yes, just whatever you think?

INT1: I'd say that it was easier to start on the laptop with the comparison just because you can open a load of tabs at the same time so it makes it a lot more easier and less stressful than having to traipse round a load of stores. So that's how I would use it personally. Em the only problem sometimes with online website is some retailers still don't provide like that good or that simplistic a service so navigation around a website should be really simple and straight forward and there's still some retailer sites that can make that a bit difficult or make the process a bit more lengthy.

SL: And how would they do that?

INT1: So ASOS have hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of brands and clothes and sometimes you feel like you are trawling through it. Em and I also find that if they allow you to refine your search so you can pick like a full length dress and click on maxi-dresses but I still find that misses out some of the styles that I might be looking for but then you would have to traipse through hundreds and hundreds of pages of dresses to find the styles so I think it can sometimes can almost add to your journey rather than help it.

SL: So it can have pluses and minuses.

INT1: Yeah definitely but it is the best way to look into all stores so I do that. Then in the store the only thing I would say is that I hate all the queues and the waiting and stuff so that can be almost quite stressful. Especially if you have people with you or you are in somewhere like London it can get a bit em like crazy and that would be, maybe drive me, if I get to try something on to purchase it like online or off an app because I just can't be bothered to stand in a queue.

SL: Overall, just your overall kind of customer experience is there anything else that you want to say about that?

INT1: No. I think em it was quite a long process I think. Longer than it would be because I put a lot of thought into it because it was an item that I wanted like to invest in and I wanted to look nice obviously, it was quite important the style and everything.

SL: So the purchase meant a lot to you?

INT1: Yeah. It did and that's why I think I did so much research beforehand to make sure I got the right thing.

SL: Can you tell me about the marketing communications you encountered during the shopping journey was there anything you received from the retailer or any other kind of contact you had with the retailers?

INT1: Yeah one of the big things I noticed was searching the online websites then if I went on something like Facebook or Google or my emails or something, all of the ads would pop up of the dresses that I have been looking at.

SL: How do you feel about that?

INT1: Em it was fine, it doesn't bother me because I ignore them anyway so but it is a bit creepy isn't it. They know exactly what you have been looking on and it all pops up and I think I had a few emails as well, like offers.

SL: Did you use any of the offers or anything?

INT1: No.

SL: Was that because it was such an important purchase that that was on the back burner?

INT1: Yeah, yeah. The price was taken out of it a little bit em and then when I was in Mango making the final purchase they had a big marketing promotion – they were pushing their student discount. So I was like great. I wouldn't have known that they did student discount before, I wouldn't have associated student discount with Mango but because they advertised it I obviously used it.

SL: And obviously if they didn't offer the student discount would you have still made the purchase?

INT1: Yeah it was just like a bonus.

SL: Ok and again you have mentioned things like stress. Can you tell me a little bit more about your emotional responses during the journey and how you felt.

INT1: I'd say like the magazines and looking at the style stuff is more like exciting, it's more fun or a bit of escapism like browsing online and having a good time and it's like an enjoyable experience. Then I would say the website searching and the comparison – it was fun at first but then it got a bit tedious because there is so many websites and so many dresses. Then the final stage where I was going into store and trying things on was definitely stressful because it was a Saturday in London, which is definitely not the best place to do it. Em because the queues and the crowds I just don't have time for. But then once I knew I made the right choice with the dress I was really like happy and pleased.

SL: So you felt good at the end of it?

INT1: Yeah.

SL: So how satisfied were you with this omni channel fashion shopping experience?

INT1:Yeah I was really satisfied definitely. I think I did it in the right way. I think a smartphone would have made it a tiny bit more convenient.

SL: Now obviously we were talking about you were purchasing a dress, it was an important occasion. If you think about a typical shopping journey is there anything you would do differently?

INT1: Em probably just I would make more of an impulse purchase in the store. Sometimes I go in to look for one thing and I completely get taken over by something else.

SL: I don't need to ask you to discuss a journey with the same retailer across two channels because you mentioned that you used Asos and Mango both across two of their different channels. So now I am just going to probe a little bit more about that. So keeping those particular instances in mind so with Asos for example can you tell me which channels you used.

[important this identifies that the participants of that age group are interacting in omni channel experiences ie multiple interactions with the same retailer.

INT1: Yeah I used both of them were online website I guess but I used them in two different ways one to look at dresses of all the different retailers and what they had available and I also used their website for their style advice as well and inspiration.

SL: And was that both for Asos and Mango?

INT1: Whereas Mango because I had seen the dress on the Asos website em and sometimes they will have exclusives on Asos and they won't just sell it in the mango store. So I just check and look at it on the actual Mango website the dress I had in mind. Then obviously I went to store to try it on properly and purchase it.

SL: Which channels do you switch back and forth with?

INT1: The online website and magazines. Just the online style advice, Asos because I already had looked at the other magazines.

SL: So the online style advisor, was just part of the ASOS website?

INT1: But if I hadn't have made that Mango purchase I would have gone back online again and tried to find stuff.

SL: Move back and forth?

INT1: Yep.

SL: And with the style advice do you regard that as another type of magazine.

INT1: Yeah I would definitely regard it as different to a normal magazine.

SL: So it's also like an inspiration section of the website.

INT1: Yeah definitely.

SL: What motivates you to move between channels? What triggers you to start that process in one channel and then say you're going to go off to another channel?

INT1: I think when I feel fully satisfied that I have kind of exhausted it. So for example once I've looked at the magazines and the style advice then I think, right I'm satisfied, I have an idea in my head what I'm looking for then I can move onto the next stage be that the website by laptop. Then i'd begin to compare and stuff and then I go into store. Then if at one stage I wasn't satisfied say I didn't find what I wanted in store, then I'd go back to the other stage and start again.

SL: So the previous stage or would you jump all the way back to the beginning?

INT1: No just the previous stage. Then if I wasn't really satisfied then I'd keep going back and keep repeating the process.

SL: Did you use any channels simultaneously? What I mean by that is for example using a smartphone in the store, did you do anything like that?

INT1: Em, probably when I was doing the online comparison I would definitely look at the style advice provided on each website as well. Just in case they had something different.

SL: So did you have tabs up with each of them at the same time?

INT1: Definitely, I would just flick between them.

SL: Now I want us to think about the ASOS and Mango instances where you are having multiple interactions with the same retailer. Do you get the same level of benefits from each of the different channels you encounter or do you perceive differet benefits?

INT1: Yeah definitely different. I'd say with Asos I found the online website the comparison much more beneficial because Asos has all the brands in one place so it allows me to see a wider selection of product. Whereas the style inspiration (asos mag) was almost a second hand thing because I already looked at a lot of magazines so it was just to see if there was anything new there that would give me a different idea for example.

SL: So was that more like a confirmation of what you came up with from your research.

INT1: Yeah, I'd say so yeah definitely. Em and then with Mango I'd say that going into store at that point was obviously more beneficial because it was at the stage where I needed to try the dress on and fully see if I would be satisfied with purchasing it.

SL: And you said you went on the Mango website, what did you do that for?

INT1: Just to make sure the dress, they definitely stocked it in store and just to have a look.

SL: Did you get the stock information then, did it tell you?

INT1: It just em… because normally they have it on their website. I originally saw it on Asos and sometimes if they put it on Asos they don't necessarily put it on their website. So I wanted to make sure that they were still selling it on their website and the colours they put on Asos just to see if they had like done a different range of colours or offered a different range of sizes just to make sure that when I went into store I knew what I was gonna get variety wise.

SL: And did it give you the information about those things that you needed?

INT1: Yeah definitely. I mean on Asos it was in one colour and in the Mango website and in the store it was in two colours.

SL: And did you choose the other colour in the end?

INT1: Em no, I stuck with the original but I tried the other colour on as well just to see.

SL: And what about the stock information? Did you see that? Did it tell you what the stock was in the store?

INT1: No but I could of… guess I could of rang up or looked at the stores beforehand. Because I knew there were so many in London there was like three or four, like there was two on Oxford Road, Oxford Street or whatever and on Regent Street so I knew that I'd have a good selection.

SL: Now thinking about those channels again because you are mixing them up together with the same retailer. By mixing and matching channels from the same retailer do you gain any overall collective benefits or are there any collective negatives that you might not of got if you had been just using one of their channels?

INT1: I think that probably applies more to Mango. Just the benefits were getting more detailed information I'd say. Because if I'd just gone in store I wouldn't have felt…

SL: A bit more oblivious?

INT1: Yeah, definitely.

SL: So is it more a reassurance?

319

INT1: Yeah I'd definitely say a reassurance.

SL: More confident?

INT1: Confident in making the final purchase.

SL: More likely to make the purchase?

INT1: Yes, definitely because I have explored all the other options.

SL: So thinking more generally now are there any combinations of fashion retail channels that you think do or do not work well together?

INT1: I think em social media and online websites. I think retailers can make it more obvious on their online websites their links to social media because I think the social media is what drives the inspiration or the impulse kind of purchase. Obviously the website as well is where you get it from so I think they should make stronger links between them they fit together well.

SL: In what way could they make stronger links?

INT1: Just make it a lot more obvious. Like you know how the homepage they have em…for example Topshop's homepage they have features. I think they should feature one of their social media channels just to make the customers more aware. Em because at the moment obviously, normally the links are at the bottom of like a home page and it just has like Twitter, Facebook, Tumblr or whatever. I think if they made more of a deal about it, it would definitely drive like higher consumer awareness and then it might encourage more impulse purchases. Especially if you can see how the product is styled on different people. [Greater embeddedness of channels within one another]

SL: And are there any other channels that work well together?

INT1: I guess having ASOS's online fashion magazine and their online website it makes it a bit easier to access if you are registered and signed up to it and their style advice as well.

SL: And do you enjoy the magazine bit, is that more of a fun…?

INT1: Yeah that's more of a fun experience.

SL: More of a fun experience before you go in to start searching?

INT1: Yeah.

SL: Would you like to see more retailers do that?

INT1: Yeah I think it's a massive benefit especially when you sign up and get them posted as well. Em I just think it's a really good way to drive awareness and again encourage more impulse buys because…when the way they've styled it or when they've put it together it makes it look so much better than when you have just seen it on a website by itself.

SL: In a list with a picture?

INT1: Yeah, much more appealing.

SL: Are there any devices that work well together, because obviously you mentioned you used a magazine then a laptop. Is that one of your normal patterns.

INT1: Yeah, I'd say more for research for this particular purchase obviously. Em whereas normally I wouldn't be as fussed for the actual magazines and just look at the style advice on the website. So I'd combine the online website and the style advice. Because they'd both be the same, I'd be using…

SL: So not even a retailer fashion magazine it would be more what's just on the website there and then and you would do that through the laptop but for a more important purchase your are using more devices?

INT1: Definitely more channels to get a greater selection of research I guess.

SL: Then say with a typical purchase would you with the magazines would you be more kind of… do you need to start your journey off as much with a magazine?

INT1: For normal purchases?

SL: Yeah.

INT1: Less so, no I wouldn't necessarily but then if something inspired me in a magazine that I was reading then I might start my journey as I might think oh I like that where else can I get it and then almost start the process.

SL: And has your experience of one channel ever affected your experience or use of another channel? Has it ever has an impact or influence, or changed a perception?

INT1: The only one I can think of is Topshop. I used to go into the store a lot but now I only go in… like instead I normally go on the website and I check their new in pretty much like every other day and if there is something that I really like it will drive me to go into store. Whereas before I would just wander into store all of the time.

SL: Now these are some broader questions I want to ask you about and I want you to keep in mind those instances e.g. with Mango where you are using multiple channels of the same retailer. How do you think all the different retail channels that are available to you are becoming blurred or merged?

INT1: Yeah well obviously with ASOS a lot of their style advice is on their website and places like their market place and fashion finder and stuff is linked really closely to their website. So the style advice and their website kind of merges into one.

SL: How do you feel about that?

INT1: I think it's better for like the inspiration stage or like an impulse purchase. Because like obviously on stuff like market place or fashion finder or one of them it shows you're the outfits that people have put together using ASOS product and you can just click on them and you get to navigate straight to buying it.

SL: And does that navigate you straight to the whole outfit?

INT1: Yeah. It will show you, you can click on each bit and it will give you a link. You are going to be more inclined to purchase it if it's as simple as that. Em.

SL: In your opinion what represents a seamless fashion shopping experience? Now whatever that means to you.

INT1: Em to me, it means that they have provided a clear and consistent brand image across all of the mediums they provide to the consumer. So their store must match their website, must match their social media, must match how they present their style advice or their magazines.

SL: And what specifically should match?

INT1: Just the brand image, the way they present the products. It should all convey like a clear message. Otherwise I think it becomes, confusing and then I won't necessarily trust the brand for what they're doing themselves. So I find New Look do that. I think they send off too many different messages and I'm just going to stay away from it.

SL: Are some better than others?

INT1: Definitely.

SL: Which ones in particular?

INT1: So Topshop I think do it really well. Em…

SL: And why is that?

INT1: Because the store and the atmosphere they create in the store and the clothing brand and everything gives off one image and then their social media and their online website it all matches. So there is nothing where I would look at and be like that doesn't look like Topshop or, or that doesn't fit in with their brand image. It all seems to fit really well together. So I know that wherever I go I am going to be seeing the same stuff as before. I can trust it's going to provide me with the same information.

SL: And do you want to see the same stuff all of the time? Or are you hoping that there will be other things there? Or would you just have everything consistent?

INT1: Em in like brand image yeah I would want everything consistent. With inspiration stuff, sure they can provide different things. So like social media might have their latest collection, their latest drops.

SL: What about their products as well?

INT1: Yeah so social media might feature their latest collections and drops that might not be in store yet. That's just creating hype around the item.

SL: And when you are actually looking to view products do you want to see the same products in every channel or do you want to see a bit of variation?

INT1: Em, there is going to be a bit of variation anyway, compared with online to store because store cannot stock the full range. Em but then sometimes that is frustrating because you go into store and have a look around and you can't find it anywhere and so for me that is really frustrating because I like to try things on. It's almost becomes a bit of a search mission and then it's can I bothered to order it online, to send it back if it doesn't fit.

SL: See going in to try things on, so I know in the focus groups people talked about going in to try things on in a different size just to get a feeling. Would you do something like that?

INT1: Only if I really really like the product and wanted to purchase it would I try it on in a bigger size, because I am really funny about fit.

SL: So Fit is important to you?

INT1: Mmmhmm.

SL: Obviously we've touched a bit about on those seamless things that you mentioned. Do you find different shopping channels of the same retailer are consistent in terms such as information?

INT1: Yes and no but I think that's down to their target consumer. So for example like I think that ASOS is like really consistent across it's channels. But then I think something like New Look who targets a way broader audience I don't think they are consistent. But I think that's because they try and use their social media channel for one customer, store target another customer and I think when you try and use all of the different mediums you end up becoming confused.

SL: And you are a consumer that will use different channels of the same retailer?

INT1: Yep, definitely.

SL: So would you still expect some sort of consistency?

INT1: Consistency, yeah.

SL: Next thing I want to ask about consistency… was your impression of the brand say Asos and Mango consistent across the channels?

INT1: Yeah I'd say for those two examples like definitely.

SL: When you made your purchase how did you reassure yourself that you were making the right purchase decision?

INT1: I think because I knew all the research I had done and I knew that that was one of the dresses. Almost by purchasing that I knew I wasn't going miss out on anything else because I had already seen everything else. I felt like I had seen everything else, the amount I searched. And then the feeling obviously as well when I tried it on it made me feel really good and it fit really well and it was kind of in my price range so it was everything that I was looking for.

SL: And it made you feel good as well?

INT1: Yeah.

SL: Ok, so does your omni-channel shopping journey so using multiple channels of the same retailer does that affect your trust with either of those retailers has your trust changed in any way?

INT1: I think it would only change if I had a bad experience, so say I'd ordered Mango off the ASOS website and had a bad experience with that, then I'd be annoyed with ASOS and I should have thought that I should have went to Mango directly.

SL: Obviously if it goes well do you trust those retailers, ASOS and Mango?

INT1: I wouldn't say so much Mango as I haven't really bought anything from there but I trust ASOS and I trust that they are showing me a wide selection and giving all me all the product information and showing me a good selection of the brands available that they stock. They are showing me a good selection of Mango, a good selection of Warehouse. Em but then with Mango I didn't trust them as much I guess, because I hadn't really bought that much from them before. But now I would definitely consider visting them again.

SL: What about your loyalty, has that changed or stayed the same?

INT1: Probably stayed the same. I always look on ASOS because of the selection they provide.

SL: So are you a loyal customer of ASOS would you say?

INT1: Em fairly loyal yeah. Like I always check it out. But then Mango obviously I am not as loyal to but it's probably built more of a relationship with Mango by getting that dress from them.

SL: Do you feel that is beginning to get established from them as well?

INT1: Yeah.

SL: This is a really broad question, again it's just whatever comes into your mind. As a fashion consumer what does the term 'connected-consumer' mean to you?

INT1: I guess being constantly connected to the brands. So whether that be through things like social media and apps and stuff because you now have the opportunity to do that through smartphones. I'd say you are now constantly connected with brands and brand messages and you are bombarded by them. Whether that's a good or a bad thing I don't know.

SL: And with social media which types of social media do you use?

INT1: Instagram, maybe Pinterest and Twitter I'd associate most with retailers.

SL: Do you enjoy or not enjoy shopping with multiple shopping channels of the same retailer?

INT1: Em, yeah I do enjoy it because I think it takes out the stress of the search but sometimes I can find it a bit tedious.

SL: And is that because…

INT1: Just because I feel I am being constantly bombarded by it.

SL: Do you choose to use more than one channel of the same retailer. Is that a choice you make or is that because you have to?

INT1: Em I would say that is a choice. A bit of both actually, with ASOS that would be a choice because I am using the style and I'm looking as well but… Then I say the Mango purchase the website and the store I would say more because I have to. To make sure i'm not wasting my time. Anything else you want to add to the discussion?

SL: Anything else you want to add to the interview?

INT1: No not really. Just stuff like catalogues and in store kiosks I wouldn't use personally I think that's probably for an older consumer.

SL: But you would use an ipad you mentioned before if someone was in the store to order something.

INT1: Yeah.

SL: Would you regard that as different to an instore kiosk?

INT1: Em, I can see how they fit the same purpose but I don't think…I associate it with older retailers like Next or something or Argos.

SL: But would you be happy to go down the ipad route with someone.

INT1: Yeah, I don't think I would actively search it but I think if I was stuck like that dress then I would.

SL: Is that your last port of call?

INT1: Yeah, definitely.

--Ends—

Interview II - Abigail INT2

SL: So this is interview two with Abigail and we're just going to talk about Abigail's omnichannel fashion shopping journey. So Abi the first questions that I would like to ask, what drives you to use many channels during a fashion-shopping journey?

INT2: Em probably availability is a key thing so often popular things, being a fashion student I'm always looking for top trends and they are always the things that sell out in store.

SL: Yeah.

INT2: So often that means I then go to other channels like through mobile apps or online on my laptop.

SL: Do you have an iPad?

INT2: No.

SL: The next question is, are you confident in your ability to use such an array of different channels when purchasing fashion?

INT2: Yes, definitely. I am kind of always on my phone and things. Every morning I am checking through all my apps, checking through Topshop, checking the new in and things like that. So it's something I use a lot, probably more than I do conventional shopping.

SL: So what I want you to do now is to think of your most recent shopping journey for high street fashion apparel. It doesn't matter if you bought the item or you didn't, that's perfectly fine. Em can you tell me what triggered you to begin that shopping journey.

INT2: Em, it's quite an easy one. I was looking for a particular coat. I really wanted a pastel colour coat. So I was just like right and I just kind of scanned online went into town, things like that because it's difficult like a lot of people have the same sort of coat. I was like I wanted to try and find something different so em, had a look in town kind of Topshop places but quite a lot of it was like out of my price range. So em I ordered a coat online with Missguided. When they came I didn't like them so they got sent back and then I saw one in a magazine that I liked the look of which was actually from Matalan and then ended up ordering that online and I kept that one.

SL: So what I want you to do is obviously you have now told me a bit about that journey. I've actually got some cards, which identify different shopping channels I want you to arrange the cards in order that you used them for that journey. Then we will talk through them. If you come round this side, what we've got is we have all the channels on this side so just pick out the different channels that you used and put them in a long line, a horizontal line to map your journey.

INT2: Store's first. Em no it was probably em, no it was social media first because that's where I first saw, that's where I got my idea from. Then online.

SL: If you used any channels multiple times you can do that.

INT2: Yeah I was just going to say that. Em, App then back online and that's when I found it.

SL: Did you use any channels post purchase?

INT2: Em?

SL: Did you let anyone know about your purchase, you didn't post any reviews or anything?

INT2: No. Actually I probably will have snap-chatted my pals.

SL: Do you think you will of?

INT2: Yeah.

SL: So if you want to put that as a social media card on the end there. So would you say that all maps out your journey?

INT2: Yeah.

SL: So what I want you to do now is I want you to do now is to write down, for example you said you visited social media, which actual sites you used, which websites you used etc. for me and just stick a post it under each one… So I can see there from the ones that you have identified Topshop, River Island and ASOS you have touched upon multiple channels of the same retailer.

INT2: Yep.

SL: Can you tell me what was your motivation to use these different channels for this particular shopping journey?

INT2: Em, probably continuity. Often there is things online that aren't in store so first I went in store and thought I better check online as sometimes there are online exclusives. Em and yep availability. I saw em one in River Island that I wanted but it was in the sale in store and it didn't have the size. I then checked online and things like that.

SL:
You ended up buying with Matalan is that right?

INT2: Yeah.

SL: Did you use Matalan at any other point in the journey?

INT2: No because it was purely that I got to this point and thought, no I am never going to find one and I saw it in a magazine.

SL: Ok so we need to pop a magazine into this journey, I'll just get a card. Which sort of magazine was it?

INT2: I think it was Look.

SL: So we'll pop that where?

INT2: Here yeah.

SL: You have a long journey.

INT2: I was determined.

SL: Any other kind of reasons?

INT2: About using the multiple channels?

SL: I just want to understand your motivation for using the channels as you can see you were very determined.

INT2: Yeah it was kind of something that I really wanted. It was my birthday coming up and she said if you find anything then your brother will just pay for it as your birthday present so em I was kind of more determined in that sense. In that I really wanted it in coming up to spring. Em so definitely fashion orientated, to make sure to stay on trend.

SL: Do you associate certain channels with certain purposes in the shopping journey?

INT2: Yeah probably. Normally for me I only go into in store if I need to try something on. If I think that it's something I really need to try on or if I am looking for something for a special occasion. If I know what I am looking for I just normally use online.

SL: In terms of using those multiple channels are using them because you have to or because you are choosing to?

INT2: A bit of both to be honest. Have to quite a bit as well for availability and em obviously some of them like ASOS and that are still online only. So em, yeah but kind of want to as well as I check things most days anyway so. I'm a bit of a shopaholic.

SL: So just to reiterate and to follow with the questions, you did choose multiple channels of the same retailers.

INT2: Yep.

SL: What made you make your final purchase?

INT2: Em, I saw it in a magazine, I kind of ordered it because it was new in that week and it will sell out so I might as well order it and see and it was the best in terms of price and quality and things.

SL: The next question I want to ask you is really another task that I want you to do. I want you to group the channels together; each of the groupings should identify a stage in your shopping journey. I want you to give that stage a name. If you need to move the cards around you can do.

INT2: So into stages of…?

SL: So you might have a purchase stage, you might have a research stage… I'll get you some more post-its.

INT2: Can I move these?

SL: Of course you can. So you have identification, research, purchase, after purchase. In that research stage why did you combine lots of different channels?

INT2: Em to kind of get a real over view of everything on the market. I think if I just went to store I wouldn't see everything that I wanted to see. I ordered a coat off an online website and returned them. I wouldn't have seen them if I had just checked in store. And magazines obviously that's where I get some inspiration. So yeah. But yeah to kind of be able to compare everything that is available.

SL: The identification, can you tell me a little bit more about that one?

INT2: Yeah that was like obviously like following a lot of fashion blogs, a lot of people have been styling pastel coats for spring and things. So I was kind of like, ooh I like those and there are a lot of retailers on Instagram and things posting pictures of new coats in store. Which quite inspired me to start looking.

SL: So you called that stage Identification there, can you tell me more about why you called it identification?

INT2: Em probably identifying that I actually need, well I don't really need it but identifying that I wanted it. Before it was just something that I liked but I guess after looking at it more I was kind of like oh well yeah that is the sort of thing that I would really like.

SL: Then you said you get inspired by women's magazines, so how does that stage differ to this one?

INT2: Em that probably because, when I am on social networking I just kind of vaguely scan through. I guess I don't really look at where things are coming from, prices and things like that. A lot of bloggers its a lot higher price range than I can afford so I use like em Look, things like that to kind of get cheap alternatives. They do a lot of like copies of like design things don't they. They do comparing high street with designer so.

SL: So is it a particular type of magazine?

INT2: Em yeah probably.

SL: So I have got a picture of Harpers Bazaar there, would you say that is a different type of magazine?

INT2: Yeah different. It's kind of more fashion based so yeah em rather than say celebrity say Look, Company and things like that actually.

SL: So a bit more practical and realistic?

INT2: Yeah.

SL: You also have the store, online website as well for research but you have also mentioned the mobile app. Which apps did you go for?

INT2: I used Topshop, ASOS and Miss Selfridge. Em purely because sometimes I find it easier than using my laptop and em it's easier. Like there was a coat in River Island that was out of stock and it's easier to keep checking back on my phone, than it is to go open up a laptop, log in and.

SL: Do you have a lot of retailers on the apps that you have?

INT2: Yeah, quite a few.

SL: Are they like your favourite ones?

INT2: Yeah just my favourites, things that I would probably look through a couple of times a week. Looking at new in and things to stay on trend.

SL: What would make you download one?

INT2: I just download something for ease of use. If I am looking at something on my phone. A lot of the time now if you go on internet on your phone and search for a particular retailer it will say download the particular app. That's easier to download the app than search through the internet for it.

SL: You put these channels next to these certain stages. Do you associate certain channels with certain stages in your shopping journey?

INT2: Em kind of like social media channels I don't really use in the actual purchase at all. They are kind of before and after thoughts. So that's what I use before and after the actual buying of anything, researching it.

SL: What other channels do you associate with certain stages?

INT2:
Hmm not particularly I kind of really use them all in conjunction so if I know that I am looking for something I will use every kind of possible method in quite a short space of time. So I will go into the store, then go straight home and check online and things so it's all quite connected.

SL: Obviously after the purchase you used a mobile was it an app of Snapchat that you used?

INT2: Yeah.

SL: And overall how well do these channels align with the various steps in your fashion-shopping journey? Did they fit well for what you needed them to do?

INT2: Yeah, definitely. I think em yeah. Things seemed to work well for me. There is nothing that I kind of don't use as much like. I enjoy using all different aspects so for me they all kind of align quite well and it's something that I enjoy doing as well.

SL: So do you like the process of shopping?

INT2: Yeah, definitely.

SL: So now that we have got these laid out I want you to tell me about the devices you used to access each of the channels, because you said you do use some technology. So if you just walk up to here I have some devices here. So what I want you to do is take a card or the device and put it next to the channel. You can talk me through if you are not sure of anything as well. So obviously like the store you went in on foot.

INT2: Can I have like multiple?

SL: Of course you can.

INT2: For research I used both [mobile and laptop].

SL: So for the mobile app did you use a phone for that one?

INT2: Yep.

SL: With the online website you used the laptop.

INT2: And phone.

SL: Now did you use an app or just go on the original website itself.

INT2: On the website. Then magazine was just the actual paper magazine. Online website was then on my laptop then the social media snap chat was just off of my iPhone.

SL: So you used an app again?

INT2: Yeah.

SL: It's just to get an idea of how you are accessing the channels versus another participant as well. Can you just talk me through some of those devices and why you used them in the way that you do.

INT2: Yeah so my phone I use an awful lot em just because it's kind of ease of use. So on the bus on the way to uni and things like that it kind of fills a void. That's something I use a lot more when I am on the go. Like my laptop I use a lot more when I am at home like. Em, I use that for clear reviews of things, so if I was looking at the bits that I ordered online I use my laptop after I had seen them on my phone to kind of get a better view of them rather than just on a little screen.

SL: You say you use your laptop at purchase is that a preferred device to do that with?

INT2: Yeah, kind of. I steer clear from buying things on my phone. Once I have kind of entered my details on my phone it seems all too easy to just click and buy things on my phone. I prefer to kind of do it on my laptop. Em yeah I think especially yeah when I am on my phone I am usually out and about. So I won't kind of be stopping in the street to buy something online. But then I would go home and do it on my laptop.

SL: Then obviously Snapchat, you used that through your app on your phone. What did you use Snapchat for, what was that for?

INT2: Just to send my friends, a lot of my friends had been laughing that I had a lot of issues trying to get the coat, em trying to return different ones I didn't like and things. Everyone found the whole situation quite amusing. So when I eventually got it I was like, hey hey!

SL: And with the issues that you had with the coat can you talk me through some of those?

INT2: It was just things like… I ordered a couple off of Missguided and to return them you have to drop them off at a collect plus point and all the points I found all said we don't do collect plus anymore and I was kind of carrying this coat around everywhere with me for days. Em so yeah that was probably my main issue. But I mean I returned those because of the sizing. It's an online only retailer so it was difficult to try them on. So em, it was a coat that one of my friends had already in a different colour and I probably should have tried theirs on first and it would have saved that but… Obviously you have to pay for the returns and I think it's about £3 is deducted from your refund amount. So something when you are not buying anything at all is a bit.

SL: Bit of a kick?

INT2: Yeah.

SL: So another question I want to ask is do you associate different devices with different purposes when you shop for fashion.

INT2: Em yeah I think I use my phone a lot more in the research stage. Em purely because it's kind of… I find like mobile apps on my phone like the Asos app and things easier to use than getting on the website.

SL: And even as opposed to like a mobile website?

INT2: Yeah. Em I think they're a lot quicker than trying to load the mobile website. Sometimes they kind of, some of them aren't designed to fit on a mobile phone. It's all a bit kind of off-side. But em… so yeah, I use my phone a lot more in research and my laptop for main purchases. Em… and just getting a clearer view on any items that I like.

SL: So what I want you to tell me in general about your overall shopping experience as you have mentioned some highs and lows there.

INT2: Em yeah, it was interesting. It was a long journey to eventually find what I was kind of looking for. So as I say like returning things is a bit of a hassle. Em, with having to pay for the kind of returned things. Also I, the coat I eventually ordered from Matalan I ordered in two sizes. So one of them I am waiting to send back. Because it's about £5 to send it so I am going home at the weekend so I will just drop it in when I go home because there is not one near here. So it's all a bit of a faf in terms of my actual em transportation and things. Like when I am at home I have my own car and it's easier for me to zip about and check in store for things. Em so it's a bit stressful in getting the bus all the way into town but… I have to say there's like quite a few highs in terms of inspiration for it because there's so many magazines and featuring the coat that I was sort of looking for and magazines are something I enjoy reading anyway so that was...

SL: More of a leisure activity?

INT2: Yeah.

SL: And with Matalan you obviously made the purchase online but you are going to return it in store. Could that have been made better in anyway.

INT2: I think the way Matalan work it is that you take it to the post office and you pay the postage whereas a lot of other companies like Missguided and things they have stickers already printed and then you already have your label and drop it off and you haven't got to pay there and then they take it off your final refund. But it works out cheaper. This coat if I were to pay it for myself it would probably more expensive than the rate the company pays.

SL: And can you tell me about any of the marketing communications you encountered during your shopping journey and any other contact you had with the retailers?

INT2: Em, yeah quite a lot of marketing on the Matalan coat. It was quite a big piece for them, I mean they are not one of the highest fashion retailers and the coat was actual kind of well advertised and things purely because a lot of magazines had seen it and went Matalan has done this. So there was quite a lot of marketing of that. Em, communications I'm trying to think? In one store called Ark in the Arndale I couldn't see that they had any coats in store so that was kind of more em kind of speaking to sales assistants and things and whether they had anything or whether it was just…

SL: What sort of things did you ask the sales assistants and how did you find them as well?

INT2: Just kind of asked if they had any coats in stock and the girl kind of said what sort of thing are you looking for and after I explained it she said no and to kind of check online in case. Which is went I did afterwards.

SL: Did she help you; did she have knowledge about what was online and what was there?

INT2: Yeah she said it was quite a small store the one that I was in she said obviously we don't get a lot of the actual stock in store so there was a lot more available online. So she really recommended using that. Em…yeah…

SL: Ok I want you to tell me about your shopping journey in terms of your emotional responses during the journey. So just thinking how you felt along the way?

INT2: Yeah, em so quite a bit of excitement especially with the coats that I had delivered when I was in uni I got like the email from the depot saying your order has been despatched and I'm like, oh yay. It's coming today so that's quite a big thing. Em but also em, a bit of annoyance when things that I ordered I didn't like and having to wait for the refund kind of cuts you down. Although I'm getting the money back it's like a long process. I think eh yeah kind of disappointment with one the one I ordered online from Missguided because it was really nice but the quality for the price was just not worth it so that was kind of really frustrating as if the quality had been slightly better I would have kept it. But just for the price that it was I thought the quality wasn't quite there.

SL: Any other emotions or feelings?

INT2: Yeah probably as I said all my friends are finding the whole situation rather funny when I am missing deliveries as well. Em and having to wait til the next day. So quite a bit of frustration at that but I guess in the end it all worked out.

SL: So overall how satisfied were you with this shopping journey?

INT2: Reasonably, some retailers are different to others. So I think for me Topshop for me, their continuity between in store, online, mobile apps, and things like that is really good so everything is in line with their kind of advertising. Whereas when it came from Matalan it was disjointed. I haven't been to a Matalan store for years and it was only that I came across it in a magazine.

SL: What do you mean by disjointed?

INT2: Probably in the fact that it's…it kind of…when you sift through it there is an awful lot of products on it's website and it took me a while to find the coat and em… kind of pick it out and em… Yeah I mean I haven't really been in store but from what I know the store's a more kind of casual and not fashionable store. Whereas online it was kind of suggesting that it was more kind of fashion led that what it was in store.

SL: So you were reasonably satisfied. Anything that could have changed that – made it better, made it worse?

INT2: Em probably just like, well it's probably my own fault with the fact that I use online only retailers like Asos things like that. I saw a number of coats on ASOS but I just didn't order them purely because em it's on a budget, it's difficult to order coats when you know that the sizing could be completely wrong and things like that so. For me it would have probably been improved if I could have tried things on before paying out for them and would have saved hassle in returning different products.

SL: So the hassle of returning is that something you think about?

INT2: Yeah definitely.

SL: Next question I want to ask is which channels did you use of the same retailer?

INT2: Topshop I would have used store, website and app. Asos I used both website and the app. And River Island I used in store and the mobile app.

SL: So you are interacting with more than one channel of the same retailer. What motivates you to move between channels?

INT2: Kind of to keep all options open, kind of to check that I've seen everything before I make a purchase.

SL: How does that make you feel if you know you have checked everything?

INT2: More confident in what I'm ordering so rather than ordering something and seeing it elsewhere for a cheaper price or something like that or kind of a different style that I would have preferred so I like to use the multiple channels to check that I have seen everything.

SL: How would you feel if you hadn't had checked everything?

INT2: Probably frustrated. If I'd had seen something that I would have preferred yeah.

SL: Now obviously this shopping journey does cover a number of channels would you say this typical of your normal shopping journey? INT2:
Yeah most of my kind of fashion journeys take multiple channels. As I say like with the apps and things it's something that I check regularly and if I see something on an app that I might like I go into town and look for a similar product in various kind of stores and go and try that particular one on.

SL: And the route that you have taken for this particular journey would you say that's typical?

INT2: Yeah, probably I always kind of start with em my inspiration from things like social networking so I often start there and go straight to mobile apps and then into store if I see anything.

SL: And who is your favourite fashion retailer?

INT2: Em probably favourites probably Topshop, River Island. I think for me it depends on what I want depending on the actual clothes. I use Topshop a lot for the petite range because I am so short so it really depends on what I am buying where I would go.

SL: So obviously you'd use Topshop within your journey here so that is quite characteristic as well. So that means that means we don't need to repeat some of the questions because you have already covered some of those points which is great. I'm now going to go on to the next stage, some more broad questions. What I want you to be thinking about is those interactions with Topshop, River Island. So just keep those in mind. First question is do you view your shopping journey as stages or as an overall journey?

INT2: Kind of overall I guess. I wouldn't say I must look on websites before I go in store. I kind of do it as it comes to me so; yeah for me it's an overall process. I don't really see it in stages. Because I think it changes every time really I order something online or buy something in store. So yeah it's more of like a process in terms of the fact that I go back and forth between different channels.

SL: Ah because that is my next question so you go back and forth between different channels?

INT2: Yeah as I say originally started in store, then went online and on mobile apps and then back onto websites. So I kind of mix things around. When I ordered a couple online and I didn't like them I returned them and went back into the stores to see if there was anything new in. Em so I kind of jump between the channels quite a bit its not really a set out process in terms of following every stage.

SL: And obviously I am just going to reiterate that question. I know I have kind of touched on it already. So when shopping for fashion does your journey consist of you going through channels consecutively or as you said switching back and forth? Why do you do that because it is also different stages as well?

INT2: I think I do that more if I am looking for something more in particular. So say I am having a browse about and I found something I liked I would just purchase it. But say in this particular example. When I was looking for the coat. It was kind of like a lengthy process so I kept. Kind of checking different things. Because with a lot of websites like Asos and things like that they have new stock online every day so it was kind of a real flip between different channels.

SL: In this journey that you mentioned did you use any channels simultaneously? So what I mean by that is for example did you use a mobile in a store to check anything, did you have multiple tabs open on your computer or? Anything where you used two channels at the same time.

INT2: Yeah I think when I am on my laptop I kind of have so many different tabs open. Kind of flicking between social media blogs and things and online stores. I mean in this particular example I don't think I did but sometimes when I'm shopping I'll use my phone to be checking. If I found something in store that I liked I would check quickly on apps on my phone. I'd check quickly to see if there is something else that I might prefer.

SL: Just again is that for reassurance?

INT2: Yeah kind of reassurance in the fact that I like to know that I have seen everything.

SL: And do you enjoy the research phase of it?

INT2: Yeah definitely. Em it's something that even if I'm not looking for something in particular I would carry it out a lot anyway. So I'm always kind of browsing different websites, apps and things. Just to keep kind of up to date in the store.

SL: And when you're looking at different websites and things. Do you go straight onto the website and things or will you go through Google to search?

INT2: No, most of them if I typed in it would go straight to Topshop. My browser and things so a lot of them are just already just kind of remembered.

SL: Do you get the same level of benefits from each of the different channels that you use or do you perceive that some offer greater or lesser benefits?

INT2: Em, I think in store offers more benefits in terms of em it's kind of a nicer experience to have a wander round and be able to try different things on. So in particular in store if certain items that I wouldn't necessarily normally buy, you get the opportunity to try them and see whether you like them. Whereas if it was online I wouldn't order it through the unknown. So I think that's kind of there's more benefits in store, it's kind of an overall experience. So em with shopping assistants… with sales assistants and things like that it's kind of an overall. It's easier to browse through everything. If I'm looking online I kind of just look for what I am looking for I won't scroll through pages and pages of jewellery or anything. Whereas if I'm in Topshop or that I look at dresses and then have a look at things that could go with it. Em, I think like mobile apps are quite limited in terms of things like the actual product description and views and things. So it's a lot more limited in how much of a feel you get for a product.

SL: From what I can see here you use them a bit at the end more kind of in your research phase.

INT2: Yeah to kind of get a quick overview and then if I see something I like on it then I'll kind of look into it more on the actual website. But I mean normally I kind of just scroll through them quite quickly. Just to get a kind of feel for what's available.

SL: And obviously now we're talking about if you use your app you will be going on your smartphone for that would you say different devices offer different benefits.

INT2: Yeah I would say that. One of the girls that I live with, she has got an iPad and when I've used that it's a lot easier. I kind of em, because it's got such an enlarged screen compared to my little iPhone it's a lot easier to see like different products and things like that and to be able to flick through different tabs easier than it is on a phone. So yeah.

SL: By mixing and matching channels, so think of Topshop in this case perhaps, do you gain any overall collective benefits or disadvantages that you would not have experienced if you just used one channel of that same retailer. Do you get anything extra or anything worse because you are using lots of channels of the same retailer?

INT2: I don't know really. For me it benefits me more in terms of extra reassurance. It's just a kind of personal thing, because I am so poor as a student I like to know that I've got the best that I can for my money. By using multiple different channel it allows me to check everything.

SL: So is it to get more information?

INT2: Yeah to get more information and to check that I have seen everything available.

SL: Are there any negatives using multiple channels of the same retailer?

INT2: Sometimes negatives in terms like things being in stock. Sometimes things say they'll be in stock on your phone and it'll not be in stock on the website. Sometimes it's not very well linked. In general not many downsides to it.

SL: Do you think it's better than you shopping on just one individual channel of the same retailer?

INT2: I think it's a better process.

SL: Are there any combinations of fashion retail channels that you think work really well or not so well together for the purposes of fashion shopping.

INT2: I think things that work really well together are like mobile apps and social networking so companies that are using Instagram alongside mobile apps. You get quite a few links like on the ASOS app you can kind of link through to their Instagram from the Asos app. I think they interlink quite well because I think a lot of people use social networking a lot more on mobile devices so they are on that platform so it's easy for you to link between the two.

SL: Any others? So are there any other combinations of retail channels that work well?

INT2: Em I think some particular retailers the stores and online work well. Some are like very different. I find like retailers like H&M in store there is so much on offer and if you look online you won't see anything that you've seen in store. So sometimes they're quite disjointed in terms of how the continuity between the two channels.

SL: Has your experience in one channel ever affected your experience or use of another channel? Do you carry any things over when you.

INT2: Em, I think if I like as I say with H&M I really don't like their website em so I just really don't use it. So if I'm looking for something from H&M that I've seen in a magazine or something like that I would go straight in store. I just don't even consider going on the website.

SL: And why is that?

INT2: Just because for me it's because…I just don't know… I just don't feel that they have like all of the products, the good products in store. None of them kind of really touch base online. You can't really find them and you'll be scrolling forever. Em as well as that with Asos I mean I tend to use the app more than the website purely because of the volume of products online. It's easier to narrow things down on the app to click different boxes and sort through it all.

SL: So have you ever had an experience where you have had a negative experience in a channel has that had an effect on you using another channel?

INT2: Em yeah I guess with some retailers kind of. I find New Look in store the staff can always seem to be quite rude and unhelpful. So normally I just head straight to the website. Purely because I mean it's harder to order things online, it's nicer to browse in a shop shop but when I think staff are a bit like rude and not particularly helpful it's easier to order it online.

SL: So it doesn't put you off the brand?

INT2: Not off the brand just off the actual channel going into stores and things.

SL: Are there any devices that you think work well together? Also with a magazine would you see that as a device or a channel?

INT2: I kind of see that more a device. I wouldn't go to a magazine to look for something in particular. I would stumble upon it.

SL: Does the magazine work well together with any other devices?

INT2: Yeah I guess a lot of them are more interactive now, you get the little scan codes for certain like offers and things that are in magazines. I think like the other week I had one that was like scan for like twenty percent off or something like that. That works quite well in terms of that's quite easy to do. Em…yeah I don't. I kind of use my phone in store quite a lot just because its quite easy to have with me and check through.

SL: Would you use an iPad if you had one?

INT2: No I think I would stick more with my phone.

SL: This is a broad question so whatever is your interpretation of it is completely ok. How do you think all the retail channels that are available to you particularly those retailers we have talked about, are they becoming blurred or merged in anyway?

INT2: Em, I think it's really dependent on the retailer. I mean some of them work really well together and some of them are very different. I sometimes feel like when you use something like Topshop, the app, the website, in store is so interlinked, the continuity is there. If you saw like a best seller in store you would easily find it on the app. Easily find it on the website. But then other retailers they just kind of like… New

Look and their Instagram just kind of give of this real fashion based em kind of look and when you go on their website it's always kind of clearance, kind of very disjointed. So it kind of depends on the retailer.

SL: Again another really broad question, in your opinion what represents a seamless fashion shopping experience?

INT2: Em I guess kind of seeing a product that you want whether that is online or in store and kind of purchasing it and being completely satisfied with it there and then. Rather than having to hunt down the size in different stores. Not having to kind of… more seamless in terms of quality and things like that so to come and way really satisfied and really please and feel like you've got value for money and things like that.

SL: Do you find different shopping channels of the same retailer are they consistent in terms of information?

INT2: Em yeah. As I said before I think some of them are and some of them aren't. So sometimes I feel like retailers like Zara have a lot more in store than they have on the website. The same with H&M. H&M kind of put a lot of their casual wear online so like basic t-shirts and basic leggings on line so there is not so much of the fashion focused products that you can get in store or on the website.

SL: If you think of some of those retail brands again, was your impression of the retail brands consistent across all of the channels?

INT2: Em, yeah I think River Island and Topshop are really consistent in the fact that they are very clear in all sorts of channels as to who they're aiming at and who their market is. As I said with like New Look when you go into store they have had such a big revamp it's such a better experience than going online. Not because of the staff, because they can be rude but the shop feels a lot more fashion focused than when you go online. As with H&M, H&M online kind of gives off the impression that it is aiming at the older market and that it is aiming at the casual basic you wouldn't go there for an outfit for a night out whereas when I am in town shopping that is one of the first places that I would go if I was looking for something for a night out.

SL: You have mentioned with the staff a couple of times and how they were a bit rude. I mean what do you see as the role of the staff?

INT2: I mean I feel from being a sales assistant myself, staff should really know the product, know what they are selling. I feel a lot of retailers employ people and don't really give them any training in customer service. They're very blasé with just chucking someone into the job saying scan that through a till, take money. I think it should be a more enjoyable experience I think. I think sales assistants should be there to help inspire customers.

SL: What do you think there role is with all these channels as well?

INT2: Em, I think kind of. I think staff should be in the know with the multiple channels. I mean when I worked at Monsoon so we had iPads in the store. So like if customers were looking for a certain dress and we didn't have the size we could order it then and there and we could give customers others ways of access to the store.

SL: And as a consumer would you use facilities like that?

INT2: Yeah definitely yeah. If it's available yeah.

SL: Would you see an iPad differently, so someone holding an iPad in store, would you see that differently to an in store kiosk?

INT2: Em yeah I think it's kind of more personal. I've used kiosks before and sometimes they can be like confusing and just… I think having an actual sales assistant there and saying oh these are the alternatives we could offer you and showing different products it's a lot more personal.

SL: How do you reassure yourself in making the right purchase decision? What reassures you?

INT2: Quality and price are my two kind of main focuses. I mean for me I wear a lot of fast fashion so I don't buy things of the intention to keep them for years and years. But yeah mainly I think, not that the quality has to be high and the price low but for them to work well together. I wouldn't buy something that is crap quality for a high price. Like I do shop in Primark and things like that. Although the quality is not there it is a low price and for things that I am wearing for like a couple of months so they kind of reassure me in terms of that. Kind of knowing that I bought a top from Primark and I could get so many wears out of it for the price.

SL: What would you do with it after the purchase?

INT2: It depends on the retailer. Primark I give to charity. Anything I don't wear anymore from Topshop I sell quite a lot on eBay so em I kind of all think I put that all back into eBay.

SL: So do you think with your coat would you do anything with that post-purchase?

INT2: Yeah, I think so definitely em yeah kind of more high street retailers I sell online so Topshop, New Look, Zara. I put it all back into eBay.

SL: Do you sell through the eBay app?

INT2: eBay app on my phone because it's easier I can just take my photos on my phone and upload it and rather than plugging a cable into my laptop. It speeds things up.

SL: How does your omnichannel shopping journey affect your trust with a retailer, so all those interactions with a retailer?

INT2: I think it really depends like some of them. If the channels don't link together then I feel like companies aim certain things. Like with H&M I find it really frustrating that they won't just put everything they sell in store on the website. I steer clear of the website and things like that. But it doesn't really affect my trust I still use all of the different stores I just use the channels I prefer.

SL: Do you have a list in your head of all the key retailers that you would use?

INT2: If I am looking for something in particular I kind…

SL: Are those retailers ones with multiple channels?

INT2: Most of them yeah.

SL: How is your loyalty affected by omnichannel shopping? Or are you loyal even?

INT2: I wouldn't say I was that loyal. I think I kind of just go where the products are so I wouldn't… I don't really do it in terms of loyalty. If I see a product in one store that I like I'll go there. I think things that more affect my loyalty so if something didn't kind of meet my expectations then that's more affecting my loyalty.

SL: As a fashion consumer what does the term connected consumer mean to you?

INT2: Em, to me I kind of view that term as someone who is in the know about all the different channels and kind of uses all of them in connection with each other and is aware of the different options that they have available to purchasing through certain retailers.

--Ends--

Interview III - INT3 Jessie

SL: INT3, can you tell me what drives you to use many channels during your fashion shopping journey, as opposed to say using just one channel?

INT3: Em, I use some channels for research for other clothing brands so I will kind of through other magazines or Instagram or even online will get to one channel and then be referred to another channel and that will make me then branch out to look at other things. Other than that for convenience sometimes say whether or not I'm in town or at home, what mood i'm in, whether I feel like going shopping and having the experience throughout the day or if I fancy just sitting at home and just browsing a few things and pick out a few things online sort of thing. Em I use some channels more for shopping. Em but a lot of channels interlink because of the way that I gather information about the things that I like.

SL: Do you use more than one channel because you need to or because you choose to?

INT3: Because I choose to. Well sometimes online...if you're at home and you don't fancy going into town because there's weather like this yesterday, it was raining em then I guess you wouldn't fancy going into town. If you have money to spend or your loan has just come in then you might fancy shopping and you might prefer to do it online. Sometimes if I can't be bothered to go in and try lots of things on because i'm not in the mood but i've got a party to plan for or something I might have a look online and check out a few options to order and just return some. In terms of like returning it isn't a big deal for me if I post it or take it back in store because either way I am going to have to do a trip to the post office or back into town, it doesn't really bother me.

SL: Are you confident in your ability to use such an array of channels for purchasing high street fashion?

INT3: Em I think more, like more and more recently you learn that most fashion retailers in store also have a website and quite a lot of them coincide with each other so it's quite easy to use.

SL: So what do you mean coincide with each other?

INT3: Like a similar sort of thing so like you'll kind of go online and expect not the atmosphere but you'll get the same sort of vibe on the online website as you do in store sort of thing. Also sometimes online there's more of an option or something. So if I go into the London store and don't have the money at the time but I live in Cambridge or whatever. I might go online and check and see if they've got it there and then I'd choose to go online sort of thing. But I'd say I'm confident in using an online website to order.

SL: Would you say as a fashion shopper that you are confident? You're own style you're own kind of choices as well?

INT3: Yeah I don't think my style's the most obvious style. I don't think it's like she'll like this, this and this. I do like lots of different things. But at the same time I do know what I like so I buy what I like. But it's not like, aww she's so this. It's kind of a bit of a mish mash.

SL: So what I want you to do now is we're going to do a task. I want you to think of your most recent shopping journey. It can be for any kind of really clothing.

INT3: Ok.

SL: And what I want you to do is just tell me what triggered you to begin that shopping journey?

INT3: Ok. Em, what shopping journey? Em I can't think but I have bought some stuff recently. A jumper but I don't want to talk about buying a jumper. I'll go back to a jumpsuit because that is in my mind.

SL: Ok.

INT3: Ok so that was a bit of a spotaneous buy actually but i've always wanted a jumpsuit. So I have done research previous to getting it, what sort and where I could get it. I had a look online because I couldn't find some in store and I was looking around in vintage shops, couldn't quite find the right one so I knew I wanted it and when I saw it I got it. But previous to that I had a look at some Instagram photos where people were looking at different websites online and I couldn't quite find the one I wanted. Then when I found it I bought it sort of thing.

SL: So what I want you to do is just put from left to right I want you to map that actual journey so all the different channels that you used so if you want to pop round here. So these are the channels here, these are the devices that we were talking about so I just want you to map the journey that you went through. So what channel did you start with?

INT3: Ok. Well I suppose initially I did actually research into trying to get something previous to buying the item. So I would say magazines and Instagram which I could look up on my phone.

SL: Was it the magazine or Instagram first do you think?

INT3: Probably magazine because I have been looking at a few.

SL: Was it a women's magazine or just one from a retailer.

INT3: No it wasn't one from a retailer although I do look at them quite often as I get ASOS ones subscribed to me. But it wouldn't be one from a fashion magazine because otherwise had it have been one that I liked from ASOS I would have then gone to look at ASOS. It might have triggered me wanting it.

SL: And then you said Instagram…

INT3: Yeah Instagram.

SL: Ok then what did you do after Instagram?

INT3: It would have been looking at online websites to try and find any appropriate style of what I wanted.
SL: And then what did you do after that?
INT3: I went in store and found an item but it took a lot of previous research to get there sort of thing.
SL: Can you just write down the names of each magazine, each social media?
INT3: Yeah….So Missguided, Boohoo. Then I would have looked at typical Zara, Topshop, ASOS. What else…maybe Urban Outfitters, Cow online, instore. I bought it from Cow in the end.
SL: So obviously you got inspired through the magazines and the Instagram so that answers my question on how you got inspired. What made you make the final purchase in the end?
INT3: I think because I was looking for the item for quite a long time and then I decided. That it was kind of the one I was looking for and it would suit me and I liked it and I kind of impulsively bought it then because I thought it was in a vintage store and I might not be able to get it again sort of thing.
SL: In the end did you use any channels post purchase?
INT3: I Instagram'ed it. I Instagram'ed a picture of me wearing it.
SL: So we'll pop that on. If you just want to write that you Instagram'ed it.
INT3: Yeah of course. I haven't sold it I kept it. I found a new website actually I don't know what it's called but it's one where you can upload things to your phone and sell it, it's kind of an Ebay. I put my Dr Martens on it the other day. You just put the price on it that you want or put negotiable. It's a bit easier than ebay because it's kind of like for people that are interested in fashion and stuff.
SL: So we've covered what channels you use post purchase. What was your motivation to use these channels for this particular journey?
INT3: I think it was what I wanted in the end. I had all these kind of ideas initially from kind of looking at what I wanted to buy sort of thing. I wouldn't have necessarily gone to a magazine to look for items, because I am a regular magazine reader I would have picked it up and then seen things that I potentially would have liked. I sometimes take photos on my phone of things in magazines for me to go back and research the website. I do that quite a lot and then it just triggers a journey of me kind of looking at new websites or kind of going on to think I like this but it's given me an idea to try and start looking for a certain item.
SL: So see when you said you would take lots of photos, did you do that for this journey?
INT3: Em I don't think I did for this journey. But I hadn't bought anything from Regal Rose but I found Regal Rose recently and took a picture and went to the online website and then I am contemplating buying the choker but I am not sure it would suit me. I dunno, it's cool.
INT3: I had never heard of Regal Rose before and I found it in a magazine, took a picture and did research online. So I used them.
SL: So is that something you would do in a typical journey or is that just every so often.
INT3: It wouldn't necessarily end like me buying something but in terms of me findings something new things. It's just the start of the journey.
SL: So is that quite typical for you?
INT3: Yeah I take photos a lot of magazines and stuff and print screen instagram.
SL: So for your typical journey we'll put a note of that in that one. I now want to understand the stages of your journey. So could you maybe take some post-its and give some stage names for the channels. It could be that you combine them so research you can do that or just give the individual channel a stage. I just want to understand the stages that you go through.
INT3: Ok so I guess magazines and Instagram em I do go on Twitter and blogs but I rarely get anything from them, sometimes blogs but I do prefer Instagram as I am much more of a photo person that reading through lots of things about someone's comments. Em so they would be partly for fun, for entertainment, me kind of picking up a magazine, passing the time kind of thing.
SL: So does the fun kind of describe how you are feeling at that point?
INT3: Yeah not so much fun but entertainment sort of thing. I buy them for my own entertainment, I can sit down and look at Instagram or a magazine for ages.
SL: So are you in quite a good mood at that point of doing the kind of browsing.
INT3: I think with em magazines especially. Instagram I kind of go on a bit of a trail but sometimes it's kind of pure boredom that I'm just sitting there, scrolling through photos. But in terms of kind of going on a journey through Instagram it can be through this celebrity and then this celebrity. It can be interesting.
SL: So would that be a stage? What sort of research is that?
INT3: When I put research it kind of comes to me rather than me going out of my way to kind of look for new things. But it's kind of Magazines or Instagram a way of getting ideas or a way of findings out about new websites, new kind of shops or something, new styles that are coming in that I would then go on to pick up something like that.
SL: At that stage are you getting inspired?
INT3: Yeah inspired about new garments definitely and inspired about what else I should be wearing and stuff. I love magazines, looking through adverts. I used to be, when I was at home, subscribed to home but I'm not here. But I used to love just sitting through the beginning, looking at adverts rather than brush past

them. Em so I kind of get a buzz off looking at that because I want to do marketing, so that's the sort of thing literally that I want to do.

SL: So what do you call these stages potentially.

INT3: Instore would probably be the experience of being in store potentially. Going out, making a day of it sort of thing.

SL: Ok so do you want to give that a label.

INT3: Experience I guess.

SL: And what about the website?

INT3: Website, browsing if fortunate buy something sort of thing. Kind of…

SL: What sort of stage would you call that?

INT3: I don't know would browsing be one?

SL: If you want to call it that then yes definitely.

INT3: Yeah because it is not necessarily browsing because I do purchase things at the end. I would then sit on a computer and have about six different tabs open. If I am in the mood for that sort of thing I could do it for hours but looking at lots of different ones at the same time. Unless I have a specific thing that I want to purchase and I'll look for that.

SL: So is that like another type of research then?

INT3: It does come under research but I do do it to look at what's in stores at the moment. Until something else come's to my head I'm gonna put browsing if that's ok?

SL: Yeah. And what about social media when you are doing those posts on Instagram what would you call them?

INT3: Eh, kind of like blogging maybe or it's a stage where I show friends what I've purchased sort of thing. Something like to show and tell what I've just bought. Lots of my friends are similar to me lots of them is doing fashion, one of them is a model in London and they're all quite into it. So we often share clothes or show each other what we've bought. Keeping each other in contact through social media.

SL: For the research you have combined two channels there – your women's magazines and social media. Why did you combine those channels for that particular stage.

INT3: Well to be fair, I think because they both give me information that potentially I might not have heard of before so I will look through both and find…Urban Outfitters put up garments which they've got and stuff which would maybe lead me to go to their website and I hadn't thought about that for a while. And the magazines and Instagram have imagery and give off websites or descriptions which then might take me to look at something new rather than stick to the obvious retailers that I tend to look at when I go online or instore.

SL: Do you associate certain channels with certain purposes in the shopping journey? Like this channel is for that purpose and that channel is for this purpose?

INT3: Eh well I think in terms of instore and online websites. Online websites is for browsing, kind of having a looking at what's instore maybe before I go into town if I was in the mood for shopping. But then I'm not sure what they've got in stock at the moment maybe have a look previous to going in store, or maybe if I wanted to buy something have a look online sort of thing. So that would kind of be a buying process, seeing what's new in. Zara release what's new in every week so I'll keep a look at what's new in on their website to see what's potentially going to be in store when I make the trip into town.

SL: What purpose does the store serve?

INT3: The store is the experience. I often go to town. Occasionally I go in for one store but I never end up going in to just one store. Occasionally I go in with the intention to go to one store. If I have something that I have seen online and I have two days to get it sort of thing. I'll make the trip into town to see if it fits and go in store.

SL: And with social media you've got that at the start of the journey and at the end of the journey. You've got it for showing off, you've got it for looking at other people showing it off. Is that the kind of key purposes for you to use social media.

INT3: Again that's just for my entertainment. My and my friends entertainment for kind of finding new things. I love looking at new pictures. I am much more of a pictures person than sitting reading big blogs about something. I mean I'd rather look at something like Pinterest or Instagram or than blogs.

SL: Now just for the purposes of the recording I see you look at Cow on two different channels, website and store which is good.

INT3: Yeah.

SL: Do you associate certain channels with certain stages in the shopping journey? So do you associate that channel specifically with experience and do you associate social media specifically with research and entertainment?

INT3: In a way yes. In store it's kind of much of the mood that I'm in to take me into town. That will then give off the experience that I've had. If I'm in a good mood and I have gone into town and I've got in my head I want to spend some sort of money that would be the end of the cycle if I was in the mood for buying sort of thing.

SL: Overall how well do those channels fit with the various steps in your shopping journey? Do they give you what you need at those particular stages? So did the magazine give you what you desired at that point.

INT3: I do love all of these things. I do love reading magazines amongst other things. I then document what I've seen and take it further. In terms of entertainment if I want to take anything further from the magazine it still gives me entertainment sitting down reading it.

SL: Now I want you to tell me about the different devices you used to access the channels. So I have obviously got the devices themselves and I have got the cards. Eh how did you access the women's magazine?

INT3: Eh through a newsagent.

SL: So it was a printed magazine?

INT3: Printed magazine, yeah.

SL: Ok so you can take the actual magazine or the card whichever is easier?

INT3: Ok.

SL: Instagram?

INT3: Instagram through smartphone.

SL: Is it an app?

INT3: Yeah but also I go on it online as well.

SL: Ok so we can put both.

INT3: Yeah?

SL: So then you do your laptop.

INT3: Yeah I go on Instagram on my computer as well.

SL: And then the online website?

INT3: I do online websites through laptop. To be fair I sometimes do go on my phone as well for looking at online websites.

SL: Is it through an app on your phone?

INT3: No I don't go through an app. Just the mobile website.

SL: Just so I know which one you used. Store you just walked in you didn't get someone to pick something up for you?

INT3: No, no it was me.

SL: And social media and showing off was that laptop or….?

INT3: No that was mobile app.

SL: Ok do you associate different devices with different purposes when you are shopping?

INT3: Em…

SL: Do you see the laptop as doing one thing and the smartphone as doing something else?

INT3: Eh in terms of my experience or in terms of shopping?

SL: Shopping, do you associate them with different purposes in the journey?

INT3: Hmm…

SL: Because obviously if you're using both mobile and laptop and towards the end of the journey you are just using laptop so do you associate the smartphone with doing something particular there?

INT3: Yeah in terms of documenting things I will take photos and for convenience I will use my smartphone. When I look at Instagram on my laptop it's very much to kind of browse through other people's stuff rather than to put anything forward for me. Em I wouldn't, I don't particularly take out my phone instore unless it was to be Instagram or something.

SL: Is that something that sometimes you do that though, take your phone in store?

INT3: My phone's always on me so I mean it might be that I sit there waiting for a friend in the changing room and sit there and start looking through stuff but I don't know if it is a key part of me researching. Previously I have been on online instore to see if they've got something in stock that wasn't in stock and em in Topshop as well they once gave me, they once said that they didn't have stock of something but they had stock online and they showed that on the iPad to me and I would have gone off and bought it.

SL: Can you tell me about what was your overall experience of that journey?

INT3: Em… It was good I had been wanting this playsuit for quite a long time and I just hadn't quite found the right one but kind of seeing things I liked and not being able to find them or something not being quite. When I went in store, found this one and tried it on I fell in love with it straight away and so it made me feel positive with the fact that I had found something. I mean I had it in my head with festival gear.

SL: And can you tell me about any marketing communications or contact you had with the retailer? Did you receive any emails or marketing?

INT3: I do get quite a lot of emails from quite a lot of retailers. Cow, the one where I ended up buying my jumpsuit, not so much. For example Urban Outfitters and ASOS you get emails about offers. If they say like 20 percent off today or like a certain line I'll follow through with that email and research into it.

SL: Just tell me about your emotional responses during the journey? You said it was kind of entertaining and fun at this point. So as you move to the online website and store, how do you feel at that point?

INT3: Em, probably maybe because I long this process out sometimes unless there's something that I particularly want to buy I could probably sit on there for ages – part of boredom a little bit that I'm entertaining myself or procrastinating through kind of going on an online website that I choose to do. Like I choose to sit down and read a magazine.

SL: So do you feel quite cheery at that point and then it gets a bit lesser?

INT3: Well it depends how I tackle the online website. If I treat it like in store, wanting to purchase something. Then you get a rush. But sometimes I do just sit there with a load of just to kind of have a look at what's online. Having said that I will kind of look through lots of things on one certain website to try and find kind of.

SL: So how do you feel at these points do you feel better or worse than you do at the start?

INT3: Em I wouldn't say particularly worse. This is like more entertaining. This is ….

SL: More stressful?

INT3: It can be. It can cause a little bit of not like tear your hair out but it can be if I want to look for something or if I want to find something. It can be a bit more challenging. But if when I purchase something I never feel bad about purchasing.

SL: So when you get to this point when you are posting things how do you feel at that point?

INT3: Positive.

SL: So does it make the stress bit worthwhile?

INT3: Yeah definitely.

SL: Cool. How satisfied were you with that journey overall?

INT3: Satisfied.

SL: What I want to do is I want to map out your typical journey so you said you might take pictures. Is that a common thing you would do?

INT3: Yeah definitely. If I find something I will just print screen it.

SL: Is there anything else you would do differently in your journey?

INT3: Em I don't get catalogues so much anymore but I do get, when you say fashion magazines, these do come through. So I do look at those also. Occasionally the aftermath, if I do send something back or I do eBay later on after my fashion journey to sell something on.

SL: So do you do the retailer fashion magazine before or after on a typical journey?

INT3: I'd probably put it after as these do stick around longer and these will come through the post and I will look at them.

SL: Is that part of research and entertaining?

INT3: Yeah I treat it like a magazine because it gives you beneficial things about a certain website.

SL: When you are taking photos at what point will you do that?

INT3: It will overlap. Well actually it won't really be that it will be more specific between these two because I'll either print screen something that I've seen and then come back to it later.

SL: So the magazine first, then you'll go onto that, then you'll go onto that and use the smartphone to take images of these, with that one would you just go and click through?

INT3: I'd click through.

SL: How would you access the magazine would you go onto the website?

INT3: No they send it through the post so it would be on paper.

SL: And then, that's fine. Is anything else different about your typical journey or is it the same?

INT3: I could potentially throw in the online website after the magazine because sometimes it doesn't take you a whole journey to then to researching. Sometimes I'll have the magazine there and my laptop will be up at the same time and then I'll be oh ok that website is cool, have a look online then go back to the magazine sort of thing.

SL: So we've got, just to make this clear. So you've got that bit there and website would that be before or after?

INT3: Yeah yeah after.

SL: And then you do a bit of social media.

INT3: Yeah.

SL: So is this all, would you give all this stage the same name? Would you still call that research entertaining.

INT3: Yeah I guess, I don't really know I think for me I am passionate about clothing and fashion and stuff. I do find it fun sitting and browsing through and finding new websites.

SL: So would you give that the same sort of stage names?

INT3: Yeah. I reckon so.

SL: And then after you have done Instagram, what would you do next.

INT3: I would go onto to how I would want to purchase any items that I would then desire to buy.

SL: So would you do that instore or on the website again.

INT3: In store and online. In terms of which way round it might depend on what I am doing.

SL: Say typically?

INT3: Typically, I'd go online first and then go in store, into town.

SL: And then social media?

INT3: Yeah.

SL: And I take are all those stages still the same name. So website would that still be browsing? Store that still be experience?

INT3: I do definitely think in terms of experience you do get more in store than online. I wouldn't say online website would give me the experience but it is something very easy to do whereas em in store you have to actually have to make the trip out to store dependent upon the weather, your mood, your financial situation.

SL: So I'll just go through to the next questions. Does your fashion shopping journey consist of you going through channels consecutively or do you switch back and forth?

INT3: I switch back and forth I would say. This route does suit how I would intend to go purchasing something but I do switch back and forth and use both at the same time such as smartphone and magazine.

SL: And what motivates you to go from one channel to another?

INT3: Finding out about new information with the intention of buying something for me or for others and where I want to take the information that I have gathered.

SL: Do you ever use two channels at the same time at all?

INT3: Yeah if it counts I would have my smartphone up with Instagram, plus my magazine, plus my laptop up with my online website all gathered on my bed. If I get in the mood for online shopping, I'll do it for ages and then I'll sit there. As long as I don't have anything else to do I can sit there for ages doing it.

SL: Do you get the same level of benefits from each of the different channels that you use? Do you see them all equally? Or do you get more benefits from some more than others?

INT3: I'd say I enjoy all of them but em I think the benefits are a bit different. I mean magazines isn't just fashion, you get not just clothing in there you get the stories and all of that and I don't like reading books so that for me is my reading so that's good because it's what I like. But in store for example if you're coming out with all your bags and stuff you tend to feel good if you've purchased something you like or if you know you are going to wear it tonight and you know you look good or whatever then that experience is much better than waiting on. Well on saying that I do get excited about things coming in the post but kind of looking online is very different to looking in store.

SL: So do you perceive that some channels have higher benefits to you?

INT3: Well that's the thing because instore you can have a really crap day shopping and then you'll be in a mood. If it's a good day and I've purchased something I do generally love shopping and looking at everything and trying on lots of things. So I would say in store does favour online website when purchasing.

SL: So what about devices do you see particular devices offering higher or lower benefits?

INT3: Em. Well I think maybe they do different things? So I think in terms of laptop over smartphone going on a website – for convenience you can see much more on a laptop. It's a big screen. It's easier to use. Because I don't particularly like using the apps for retail shops so I'd say the laptop would be favoured. But in terms of Instagram, I've got Twitter on my phone, I used to have Pinterest it would be more sort of a smartphone mobile app sort of thing.

SL: By mixing and matching these channels do you get any overall benefits by doing that, that you wouldn't get say if you just used one? Or is there any overall negatives?

INT3: I think it all benefits me, I don't think there's any negatives. Otherwise I wouldn't particularly do it. In terms of finding out new information, kind of coinciding ah there's something in the magazine that makes me want to shop there. I maybe wouldn't have thought to go on Zara for a couple of weeks and didn't have any money, would have seen something in a magazine and followed it through with something that I'd seen then I'd maybe not looked at it. So I think they do help out each other yeah.

SL: Are there any particular combinations of channels that you think work well together?

INT3: Eh, I don't think so. No not really.

SL: Has your experience in one channel ever affected your experience or use of another channel? Have you carried over any feelings or thoughts or anything?

INT3: See if I had a negative experience in a shop I'd think ok that was that one time. I wouldn't care about it. If I liked the shop I probably would have gone back to it. If I had a negative experience online it would take me a lot more to go back to that website. Whereas it would take me a lot less to go back to that in store shop.

SL: And just to recap see for this typical journey are all these devices the same that you would use (compared with actual journey)?

INT3: Yeah I wouldn't use anything else.

SL: Em how do you think all the different retail channels that are available to you these days are becoming more blurred or merged.

INT3: Do I feel like they are?

SL: How are they doing that if they are?

INT3: Well I know that Topshop have an iPhone app and things like that and they have their own different Instagram and stuff. They link Instagram to the website which for me isn't a bad thing I don't mind them kind

of pushing you on to go buy something there because you can't still buy something from Instagram. But in terms of their app I don't choose to use it because I would prefer to go in store or online. Em, but I think but most in store shops now should have an online website available for you. Unless their independents for example. If they're in store and they are kind of a big retailer and the fact that Zara came out quite late with their website and still haven't quite mastered how to work it out yet is quite disappointing. Zara I have purchased once online. Whereas all the time I purchase in store. Whereas Topshop and ASOS they're easy website to use and I definitely purchase more online and I will happily do it. Online for example ASOS and a few other websites when they have the catwalk run shown to you I think that's great that they've brought in that because that shows how items fit which is helpful because it's kind of taking you in store, showing you what it could fit like and you could figure out if it's baggy there sort of thing.

SL: And in your opinion what represents a seamless fashion shopping experience?

INT3: I don't know?

SL: What do you think that represents?

INT3: Is it an easy fashion experience?

SL: Yeah. Well is that what it means to you, because that's what I'm interested in?

INT3: Yeah I would say an experience that is easy and keeps you in a positive mood sort of thing.

SL: Do you find different shopping channels of the same retailer, are they consistent in terms of things such as information, the look, the feel? So think of the ones you shop from are they consistent.

INT3: Eh I think in terms of brand image their quite good at showing off the same sort of thing. Kind of in store you'll get the same sort of vibe as to the way present it online. Urban Outfitters are quite hippy and funky and online it's very kind of floral kind of thing. The stores that have good merchandising in store it's very easy to see that online as well how things are. I do think there are certain websites that have lacked, aren't quite so consistent or as good. For example what I said about Zara. I don't like purchasing from them that much. I was trying to do research for my fashion project and it was a very hard kind of website to find the prices to hover over or something. It was just a bit hard, kind of a mission. It wasn't as convenient and I think considering it's such a strong brand instore and it has got such a good reputation their website should be a lot stronger.

SL: How do you reassure yourself in making the right purchase decision, if you are purchasing fashion?

INT3: Em if I feel good about it then I will buy it, if I feel a bit wobbly about then I'll buy it and keep in mind that I might have to return it. So it's whether or not I would go for the effort of returning it to see what it looked like. But I normally I wouldn't purchase something without… I've got, I used to have a bit of a distorted image of what I would suit but now as I have grown up I kind of know what I suit a lot better than when I was younger so now I'm quick to think no that's not good or that's got potential so when I'm buying stuff I know whether or not to cut it out straight away or know whether or not it will look good and if I feel like it would suit me then I'll feel positive about buying it as it will be a good addition to my wardrobe.

SL: And see the stores you wrote down under the different channels, would you say they are pretty typical for your normal shopping journey?

INT3: In store I'll go to loads I put Cow because that's where I ended up purchasing the jumpsuit.

SL: What other stores would you go to? Just top level?

INT3: Mango, Zara, Miss Selfridge, Urban Outfitters, Topshop.

SL: Websites?

INT3: Missguided, Boohoo, and a few other more independent ones. But mainly the ones that I tend to go into store or just on online websites.

SL: And with social media is it just Instagram that you use or.

INT3: I mean I follow on Facebook Topshop and other retail stores.

SL: So at the kind of start of your journey?

INT3: Yeah. I mean if it came up on my homepage. I don't often type it in but I follow them, Topshop on Twitter. Blogs occasionally some of my friends blogs so when I get on the blog websites I have a look around but rarely to do with anything towards my journey.

SL: Ok and with retail magazines it was the ASOS magazine that you would look at?

INT3: Yeah.

SL: And at the end it would it be Instagram that you post to?

INT3: Yeah definitely.

SL: And then ebay occasionally later on.

INT3: Yeah.

SL: How does an omni-channel shopping journey affect your trust with a retailer? So by engaging with all these different channels of a retailer.

INT3: Em, not really. It doesn't really affect my trust unless you know something went wrong with a delivery or something and then you know, if it was a bit late or something but then even still I know, being a fashion student, you know that sometimes, I am quite understanding if something mucks up then I'm not then just gonna hate on that or something because if it's still got stuff that I like and someone might have mucked up it's not the company the whole time and if they're generally quite good. As I said, returns some online

websites are still rubbish about returning you have to return it and get a refund and buy it again which is just inconvenient. Those websites that I've been on…

SL: How would that affect your trust?

INT3: Well misguided I bought dungarees and they were sixty quid and I sent them back and there wasn't a returns sheet saying would you like to swap it, it wasn't an option. So could I wrote, can I swap it for this and then emailed them and then I kind of see if it's come back into my bank and if I wanted to purchase it I'd have to purchase it again. But it takes a while to come back into your back and actually they've already got the sale from me so if you're gonna return something and you want it back in another size they've got the sale, they're winning with the sixty pounds so I didn't buy it again and they lost out which was a bit like, you need to sort out your return policy.

SL: And how is your loyalty affected by an omni channel shopping journey? So say if you are interacting with Topshop across all these different channels, how does that affect your loyalty?

INT3: Em well I think I know more things about the store if that counts. I feel like if there's something. Like if they drop an email saying you know just for people that get our email sort of thing get discount sort of thing you feel that if you are part of quite a lot of their channels or something you might get benefits from it which they do.

SL: So are you more loyal, are you less loyal than you were before as a result.

INT3: If anything more loyal because you just keep up to date with them a bit more. You kind of know a bit more about the company. A bit more about what's going on. You know if you get an email through saying there's twenty percent off for two days, then any other ASOS regular customer might not know that. But if you check your emails, you'll see that.

SL: So you said before that your trust wouldn't be much different but you would be more loyal?

INT3: Yeah.

SL: That's quite interesting.

INT3: I think that for trust it would be me, my opinion on the company. Something would have to properly aggravate me for me to start not shopping there, if I liked their clothing. Whereas loyalty is something that grows, that the retailer gives to you. If you're part of their Facebook or Instagram and they give you a hint of something then you'll feel like more of a valued customer.

SL: So is loyalty more about from them to you?

INT3: Yeah.

SL: And trust is more about…

INT3: Me to them.

SL: As a fashion consumer what does the term connected consumer mean to you?

INT3: Connected consumer?

SL: What do you think that means? There is no definition so I would just be interested to think what it might mean.

INT3: Eh, I guess connected consumer to either a particular store through, you know, that you've got, you use many channels to connect to one retailer. Em, I guess.

SL: And final question. Do you have a set list of multi-channel retailers that you shop from?

INT3: Em yeah I've got a list of go-to retailers. Im happy to listen and look at more but I think in terms of what you know and what's good. You go to the ones that are similar to your fashion sense, that you know works sort of thing.

SL: So what are your top three?

INT3: Online or…?

SL: Who are your favourite three retailers?

INT3: Topshop, Zara and Urban Outfitters.

SL: And do you engage with them across lots of channels?

INT3: Yeah.

SL: Do you do the same as Topshop?

INT3: Yeah I pay more attention to Urban Outfitters Instagram and stuff, than I do Topshops.

SL: And then Zara?

INT3: In store but I'm loyal to them because I used to work for them so I feel like…I do love their clothing but I do loathe their website.

SL: So with Urban Outfitters and Topshop, they've got quite. Their brands are quite well displayed on each of their sites and that was quite interesting because if that's the ones you're drawn to and shop with the most they are also the ones that have the most channels as well.

INT3: I think they've got a strong brand image they're very consistent as well. They're easy.

--Ends--

Interview IV – INT4 Skye

SL: What drives you to use many channels when shopping for fashion, say as opposed to you just using one channel.
INT4: Em probably, mainly information because it is easier to find out information on the internet rather than go to store. If I don't have the time, i'll use the internet rather than go in store.
SL: Are you confident in your ability to use such an array of channels for your fashion shopping journey?
INT4: Yeah I think most of them are easy to use. Some that don't have like apps and it's just a website they can be difficult to use. So I just wouldn't use them. If I find them hard to use I just wouldn't use them.
SL: Are there any ones that you find hard to use?
INT4: Websites on mobiles are hard to use, if they have got apps it's easier. But I'd only have apps for ones that I regularly go on like ASOS, Zara - ones that I would shop at regularly.
SL: So how many apps would you say you have got for fashion retailers on your mobile?
INT4: I think I have got about five.
SL: Now what I want you to do is think about your most recent shopping journey for fashion, it doesn't matter whether you bought the item or not. Firstly, what triggered you to begin that shopping journey?
INT4: I'm still looking for the Coat [as mentioned in focus group]. I haven't bought anything really recently… oh actually I have. I bought two pairs of jeans from ASOS. What triggered me to buy those is em, I previously bought a pair of jeans from ASOS on a whim. Usually I just buy jeans from a store because they are very like fit dependent and usually I will go to Topshop because they fit me but I thought I would try ASOS because they were on sale for £20. I tried them and they fitted really well so then I bought another two pairs, knowing what size I needed and I bought, one of them was the exact same pair but I bought them in a different colour but then it prompted me to buy a slightly different pair as well, which I kept as well.
SL: At the end of that journey so you bought two pairs of jeans, is that right?
INT4: Yep.
SL: So what I want you to do now, thinking about that shopping journey, is can you tell me about the sequence of the shopping channels you have used. So what I want you to do i've laid out some cards with shopping channels on them there and I want you to lay out the cards in the order that you used them. Now you don't need to use them all, it's just what you used on that shopping journey for jeans.
INT4: I guess it began there.
SL: In the store?
INT4: In Topshop. If you go right to the beginning.
SL: You can always move things around if you need to and what happened next?
INT4: And then I was looking on ASOS.
SL: How did you look at ASOS was it the app or the website?
INT4: Just the website.And then I purchased it and then I went on the website again.
SL: What did you do that for?
INT4: Because I purchased the first pair to try on and that prompted me to buy the second pair that I knew would fit.
SL: And was that all in the same shopping journey?
INT4: Yep.
SL: Did you use any channels afterwards?
INT4: No
SL: Did you speak to any friends about it. Did you use any social media?
INT4: No. I think maybe if I would use that it would be for something more exciting than a new pair of jeans. It would be for a new pair of high heeled shoes or the latest jacket or something. Not just a new pair of jeans.
SL: So would you say this journey - is that a typical shopping journey for you?
INT4: Em, yeah but I don't know I'd probably swap them round and go to the store. But recently I have really been buying off of ASOS.
SL: Right so that if that is your journey for your jeans. Can you just map out for me your typical shopping journey? So how would that start?
INT4: Ok, it would probably be blogs first and maybe like a magazine and then it would be the online website and then in the store.
SL: And what about post-purchase? Did you use any channels there?
INT4: Depending on what it is again. So I'd maybe use Instagram if it was something I really liked.
SL: What would you use that for?
INT4: So like high heeled shoes, something designer ?
SL: Would you post something or ?
INT4: Yeah just post a picture.
SL: Anything else? Like would you use any Ebay or anything?

INT4: No i've tried it before but i'm rubbish at it.

SL: Can you just map out some of the retailers you use for your typical journey just using the post-its. So which social media, which magazines, which websites and which stores so I can look at that as well etc.

INT4: Yeah.

SL: So obviously you used the ASOS channels twice in the jeans journey. This is a typical journey. Who is your favourite high street retailer?

INT4: At the moment ASOS.

SL: And with ASOS which of their channels do you use?

INT4: The website because I prefer it on screen so I can see it in more detail.

SL: And do you use anything else like the ASOS magazine?

INT4: Yeah I get it through the post. I tend to like look at it more when it's posted to me rather than when it's online.

SL: Do you do anything else on a typical journey?

INT4: A blog quite a lot for that as quite a lot of bloggers wear ASOS and they refer to the ASOS links.

SL: Where would that be in the journey?

INT4: Probably be at the very beginning or at the same time as the magazine.

SL: So does that quite accurately reflect the path of your typical shopping journey?

INT4: Yeah.

SL: If we go back to the jeans journey with the store and asos website. What triggered you to begin that journey?

INT4: Em, I just needed jeans and I think, I don't know, I just recently gone off Topshop. Oh I know because I had a pair of Topshop jeans and after a couple of washes they went all scruffy so I was like I need to find some jeans elsewhere.

SL: Talk me through your jeans journey.

INT4: So usually I would buy my jeans through Topshop, in the store.

SL: So what did you do this time?

INT4: I was searching online.

SL: Were you just googling or ?

INT4: I'd look on websites that I know so like ASOS, Zara and maybe like Missguided or something.

SL: So do you want to keep the journey with the store in it? Was that part of that journey?

INT4: No I don't think so.

SL: Can you just write down which of the online stores you went to for me?

INT4: Probably just ASOS and Zara.

SL: And then when you went onto the website again, which website did you go on again at that stage.

INT4: I think I was leaning more to ASOS as they just have a large variety. I have ordered with them before and they are easily to do returns with and Zara I think is a bit more complicated.

SL: And so you bought the two pairs of jeans in the end of that journey. Did you do any reviews, or share any information with your friends after that journey?

INT4: No.

SL: Ok, can you tell me what was your motivation to use these channels for this particular journey?

INT4: Em I guess it was the ease of it and using the website over the app as you can see it in more detail, bigger pictures.

SL: And how did you get inspired to buy the jeans?

INT4: I needed the one pair but the extra pair that I bought were actually blog inspired I guess because I had seen someone where light blue jeans and I thought I want to try light blue jeans.

SL: So you had a blog moment here, at the start.

INT4: But I guess just thinking back to it. Rather than taking a link from there when I was searching I'd see the blue jeans and it would remind me of what I saw.

SL: So you saw it earlier ok. What made you end up making the final purchase of the pairs of jeans.

INT4: Eh, I dunno, eh I just decided to buy them ok.

SL: So you didn't use any channels in the post-purchase stage. What was your motivation to use these channels for this particular journey?

INT4: Well the blog cause I am always on them anyway. It is not really intentionally for a journey but it can ignite one I guess. Em then the website because I am always on the ASOS website anyway. Again I don't really go on the ASOS website for anything in particular but in that case I did because I knew I needed jeans from somewhere that wasn't Topshop so that's why I went on to the ASOS website.

SL: So you went on ASOS then Zara then back to ASOS can you tell me about what you did there.

INT4: Because that was when I chose ASOS rather than just browsing. So I chose ASOS because of the delivery and the ease of it.

SL: So in the jeans journey did you use multiple channels of the same retailer?

INT4: No just the website.

SL: So hence why I have asked about your typical journey [respondent engaged in multiple channels of the same retailer]. Do you associate particular channels with particular purposes in a shopping journey.

INT4: Eh yeah, a bit like I was saying earlier the website is for information or when you need something you know you are looking for trousers and jeans you can go straight to them. In store it's more a browse and an experience and then if you see something it's an impulse purchase because you see something that you need. Because in store it's not like a jeans section it's more a kind of story.

SL: And any other channels you associate with certain purposes?

INT4: The magazines and the blogs are like influencing people em just providing inspiration which is similar to the store but obviously online or on paper.

SL: See with the online website with your jeans journey, how did you access the jeans websites?

INT4: Just on my laptop.

SL: Now what I want you to do, now I want you to do it for your jeans journey but also typical journey. Now just to clarify on your typical journey is that a typical journey you normally go through?

INT4: Yeah.

SL: So what I want you to do is group the channels that you used together and I want you to give them themes and then put a little post-it note to signify what the theme is. Now you can move the cards about and to do it for both journey. So I can understand the typical stages of your shopping journey.

INT4: Just like that?

SL: Yeah that's it.

INT4: And I would also do like ASOS magazine there.

SL: Ok so put that into your journey. So was that before or after the regular magazines.

INT4: Maybe after.

SL: Is it just the ASOS magazine or are there any other retailer magazines?

INT4: I go on net a porter magazine.

SL: Ok so just put a note of them there.

INT4: Oh and em Topshop.

SL: Is it a Topshop magazine.

INT4: Yeah it's called like Design or something.

SL: And websites?

INT4: Does it have to be all the ones that I go on?

SL: No just the main ones you visit.

INT4: Does it have to be for purchase?

SL: No, not at all just whatever you think in your mind at the time. So obviously it's quite interesting in your typical journey you have used Topshop quite a few times. So you have used, is it their retailer magazine that they have?

INT4: I think you can view it online but they have it in the store as well.

SL: Have you viewed it in the store or online?

INT4: I usually pick it up in the store.

SL: Do you take it home?

INT4: Yeah.

SL: So it's a printed magazine and then you use Topshop on their website and then Topshop in the store as well?

INT4: Yep.

SL: So going back to the earlier task I mentioned what I want you to do is group the channels that you have used together so and I want you to give that group or theme a name to signify a stage in your shopping journey. If you want to move them around you can.

INT4: [Writes on post-it.]

SL: So is that [inspiration] for all three of those [social media, retailer magazine, womens mangazine]?

INT4: Yep.

SL: So information.

INT4: I've put two things there.

SL: So for enjoyment and visualisation?

INT4: Because I sort think you can visualise it sort of more in the store.

SL: And the final one?

INT4: I don't know how to describe that?

SL: Tell me about what you use it for and see if that can trigger anything in your mind?

INT4: Hmm, I guess it's sort of like.

SL: Be honest…

INT4: I don't know it's sort of like a showing off stage.

SL: Ok so you could call it that if you want or is there a better name for it?

INT4: Don't know.

SL: But if that's what you want to call it then that's fair enough.

INT4: Yep.

SL: Ok, that's fine so stage one you have inspiration, stage two you've got information, stage three you've got enjoyment and visualisation and stage four you've got showing off. Can I just ask have you used post-purchase channels for anything else other than showing it off.

INT4: No, nothing else. I read the reviews but I don't make them myself.

SL: Do you associate certain channels with certain stages.

INT4: Yeah.

SL: Ok can you tell me a bit more about that.

INT4: The inspiration stage because well I'll always be on these every day. So they're the sort of things that would trigger me to go in the store or purchase something off the website because yeah, I don't really go onto a blog saying I need something to buy. You just see something you like on go onto the website or go into the store.

SL: OK with these at the inspiration stage with all three of these would you read them all at the same time or would you go one after another.

INT4: I would probably read them all at the same time.

SL: Overall how well do these channels align with the stages in your shopping journey? So how well do they fit your needs at that particular stage?

INT4: Em, yeah I do think sometimes the store can let you down whereas the other stages can never let you down. Because here you're not actively seeking something.

SL: So at social media. And do they let you down in any other way?

INT4: Yes, when it's busy that lets you down em, cause it makes it a lot more complicated than just buying something.

SL: Now I am really interested to find out which devices you used to access each of these channel. So I have got a selection of devices here but just for reference there is a television, there is a desktop, i've got an iPad, laptop, catalogue, magazine, fashion retailer magazine. I just want to identify with each channel that you have mentioned which devices you have used. You can put the device next to the channel or you can use the cards. So do you want to do that for me?

INT4: Yeah.

SL: So for social media what did you use?

INT4: Laptop but i'd also use my phone.

SL: Ok and how would you access it?

INT4: I'd use an Instagram app. That's like the only thing I go on daily.

SL: So if you want to pass over the app card just so I know how you access it. And women's magazines.

INT4: It would be the actual magazine but I would also go on Vogue on the website. I have tried to start using the apps but I find them really complicated. I'm subscribed to Vogue and Elle and you're meant to be able to get it free on the app. But I have not worked out how you do it.

SL: What about a retailer fashion magazine can you tell me how you access those?

INT4: Well the ASOS one is delivered to me. The Topshop one I pick up from the store. So they're both physical magazines but the Topshop one isn't delivered. Em and then the Net-a-Porter one, just online but actually they have just launched a printed magazine now that I get as well. I'm subscribed to that one but I read the online magazine as well.

SL: What about ASOS is it more the paper one?

INT4: I do, do more the paper one. But if I see something in the paper one I will maybe click online to the online one so I can just click onto the links and stuff.

SL: So the majority of those would be paper is that right?

INT4: Yep.

SL: And online website how do you access that?

INT4: On the laptop.

SL: Stores? Just walk in?

INT4: Yep.

SL: Social media?

INT4: That will probably be on my phone cause it's taking a photo so.

SL: On the smartphone is it an app or?

INT4: The Instagram app and the Twitter App.

SL: Ok so you have just identified the devices you use to access things. Do you associated different devices with different shopping purposes?

INT4: Em, yeah but like the end one [social media/showing off] you're taking a photo so you need the phone. Em so I wouldn't really use like my laptop to go on Twitter or Instagram because it's more app friendly, it's a lot easier to use.

SL: You said you accessed Women's magazines through actual printed magazines. So is that a device then, the printed magazine?

INT4: Yeah I guess so. I would prefer to use them in their physical form because I don't really like the look of them on the screen.

SL: Do you associate any other devices with different purposes with shopping? I mean what do you associate a laptop for?

INT4: I guess like here again…

SL: So at the inspiration, women's magazine?

INT4: The laptop is more em just a quick look or more for recent information or just something that's quick because people are writing on their everyday whereas a new magazine will take a month. A magazine is more something for enjoyment, to just sit down and read through.

SL: So you would go on the laptop for Vogue and …

INT4: Elle.

SL: If we think about your overall experience of a typical shopping journey, can you think about a recent journey like this.

INT4: I haven't really bought anything in store. Oh ok, I bought a pink skirt in new look.

SL: Did you use these channels?

INT4: Yeah the magazine featured really prominently it was like everywhere saying that pink was in.

SL: What was your overall experience of that shopping journey?

INT4: Overall good but it was sort of an impulse one because I bought it in the store. I think of sort of looking at online websites that I did want something pink, but when I went into the store and saw it I purchased it.

SL: Do you associate different devices with different stages of your shopping journey?

INT4: Well the laptop is sort of like at the beginning and then it looks like it ends with the phone.

SL: And your using apps on that phone?

INT4: Yeah.

SL: Can you tell me about any marketing communications you encountered during your shopping journey?

INT4: Well I get loads of emails every day. But I don't read those, I just like to leave those.

SL: Any other contact you had with the retailer?

INT4: No, I don't think so.

SL: No that's ok. Did you interact with the staff at all?

INT4: At Topshop like I said before in the last one [focus group] I bought something and then I took it to the till and she said I've got that jumpsuit I love it and that sort of makes me feel more confident in my purchase. Obviously on a website you don't have someone saying oh I love this.

SL: Can you tell me about your emotional responses during your typical ourney?

INT4: Em I think this is just the excitement journey at the start.

SL: So the inspiration stage, that's exciting?

INT4: Yeah that's just what I enjoy doing. I enjoy the information as well. I wouldn't really see that as like searching for information I would see that more as enjoyment. I guess I find the store as enjoyment as well except from when it's busy or when it's rubbish.

SL: Overall how satisfied were you with that shopping journey?

INT4: Yeah satisfied.

SL: Yeah. So obviously you've mentioned you've had a journey for some jeans but you use blogs, websites but you said your typical journey looks more like this one here where you've got the social media, magazines, retailer mags, website, store, social media. Now I am going to ask you some broad questions, so not so much related to this particular journey but overall. Do you view your journey as stages or as an overall journey?

INT4: Em, I'd probably see it as stages. But the inspiration stage isn't a journey because I am doing that all the time. But that is a stage of the thing. And then the store is definitely a stage. So I'd say stages.

SL: When shopping for fashion does your journey consist of you going through channels consecutively or do you switch back and forth?

INT4: I'd say I switch back and forth because of the inspiration I do that everyday. That could take place at the same time as the website or at the same time as the store. Even after I've purchased it, looking for the next thing that would happen all the time but then I think the store would go at the end of the journey.

SL: So which channels do you commonly switch back and forth between?

INT4: Em in between the social media and the magazines.

SL: Ok. And obviously websites you talked about your Asos journey you went from Zara then back again Asos again. Do you switch between website regularly or is that a bit of a one-off?

INT4: Yeah, I think I would switch back and forth because yeah they are the three main websites I go on, Asos, Topshop and Zara. That would be the ones that I would flick in between.

SL: What motivates you to move between channels?

INT4: I guess its deciding to act on it, because at the inspiration stage you're not really looking for anything specifically then. Then if there is something that keeps coming up, not if it's a one-off, if it's in you magazine,

if it's in your blog, if it's in Instagram as well it's a big thing. So then I start looking on websites for it, so I'll start looking in the store.

SL: In any of the journeys we mentioned did you use any channels simultaneously, at the sametime?

INT4: Em, I'm always off and on Instagram so I'd probably use Instagram inside the store.

SL: Is that through your mobile?

INT4: Yep.

SL: Anything else?

INT4: I don't know whether you could use the Topshop magazine in the store? I'd take that in store and I'd properly look at it whilst I am in store.

SL: When shopping on websites do you keep lots of tabs open or do you just look at one at a time.

INT4: Yeah, keep lots of tabs open.

SL: Do you get the same level of benefits from each of the different channels you use or do you perceive some are higher or some are lower?

INT4: Em, I would say the store has a higher benefit because you have the whole. It's a lot easier to visualise it than on a website.' So it does seem like the best thing but it can let you down a lot. Things like Asos I love the website, it's really easy to use, I love the product that makes me just go on Asos. I see them on a level with Topshop as a creative store.

SL you perceive other channels as having higher or lower benefits?

INT4: Em I guess the magazine I prefer the physical copy rather than online. So that probably has a higher level of benefits for me than on the screen.

SL: Do you different devices, do you perceive them as having higher or lower benefits.

INT4: The thing I said at the end, the camera on your phone. That has the benefits of the camera. And then the laptop 'cause its so easy to see rather than on an app. But that's different for things on Instagram where I'd rather use the app than the laptop.

SL: By mixing and matching channels do you gain any overall collective benefit or disadvantages than if you'd just experienced a channel individually? Because you've used lots of channels of Topshop what benefits does that bring.

INT4: Em, I guess that does sort of provide inspiration before you even go in , like the magazine, like even the website. But I think if it was just the Topshop store I would be more hesitant going in. Because I know recently I have not enjoyed going in there cause everything looks rubbish. On the website I can find more things that I like.

SL: What does that do, having the Topshop magazine, having the store?

INT4: I guess it's just like being updated, being ahead as well cause Topshop is very keen on the Topshop crew so you want to know sort of like everything about them. So you do use every channel that they've got so you know all the information.

SL: Is it because you can't get all the information in one channel?

INT4: Not necessarily its in a different format, the store gives you nice little stories and the magazine gives you nice little stores.

SL: Are there any combinations of fashion retails that you think do or do not work together for fashion.

INT4: Like channels?

SL: Yeah, like any combinations of channels?

INT4: The retailer magazine, social media and the women's magazine especially.

SL: So the three from inspiration work really well together. Ok anything else?

INT4: Probably the retailer magazine and the website work quite well together.

SL: In what way?

INT4: Because you can have the links on there, onto the website but even if it's a paper copy it makes you want to go onto the website to sort of look at more.

SL: So why don't you want to just go straight onto the website, why do you look at the magazine.

INT4: I just like looking at the magazine.

SL: Is it a different sort of activity?

INT4: It's an enjoyment activity. Especially with ASOS it's prompted from them delivering it to me rather than me picking it up. So if it came through the door I will be like oh i'll have a look and that would make me go on the ASOS magazine on the website.

SL: I want you to obviously keep in mind your experience with multiple channels of retailers. Has your experience of one channel ever affected your experience or use of another channel?

INT4: Em, I guess the Topshop magazine wasn't that good recently I don't think so then I would use the Topshop website which has little features on there which is nice to enjoy.

SL: So you still went on the website even although the magazine wasn't so great that month.

INT4: Yeah. I think it would probably prompt me more to go on the website because I want more stuff to look at, I want more excitement. I've lost my trail of thought, what's the question again?

SL: So has your experience of one channel ever affect your experience or use of another of another channel?

INT4: I guess the store one, when it is rubbish I just think why do I bother coming in. I think I just might as well look on the website but because it's a lot more of effort to go into the store. So I think if you're disappointed by the store it affects you a lot more rather than the website because you know on the website you can look tomorrow and you know there will be new things. Whereas in the store it might take a week for new things.

SL: How do you think all the different retail channels that are available to you are becoming blurrred or merged in anyway?

INT4: Em well I think the magazines sort of are really getting blurred with retail now.

SL: Ok tell me more about that?

INT4: So it's like Net-a-Porter so they started off with the website, that was meant to be buying from the magazine. Then they had an online magazine and now they are going into print. So I think there's a lot about this stage.

SL: So the inspiration stage.

INT4: But I don't think many stores can function without that now.

SL: Without the inspiration element?

INT4: Yeah because I think a lot of people want enjoyment, for me especially I like fashion obviously. But I think that's [inspiration] is a lot more important than just the store.

SL: Is there anything else you want to add, so the question was how do you think all the different retail channels are becoming blurred or merged? Say think of your experienced with Topshop.

INT4: I guess they do get the fact that the magazine is in the store and there is stories in the store. So it's not like a real magazine but it's like it is a story and it is exciting and enjoyment just like a magazine.

SL: In your oppinion what represents a seamless fashion shopping experience?

INT4: Em, I guess it's findings something that you like and being able to purchase it at the right price.

SL: Do you find different shopping channels of the same retailler consistent in terms of things such as information?

INT4: What the different channels. Em but I think it's easier to get it on the website because you can see things like the fabric content, the washing and stuff. Whereas in store I wouldn't really take a look inside the clothes to have a look but on the website, when it's there it just makes me have a think.

SL: Are there any fashion retailers that you think are not so consistent with their channels?

INT4: Em yeah I would say so. Is it Zara I think I don't know. I think their website is very aspirational whereas their store is not so much I think. Their store there are certain areas which are aspirational, the staff are in uniform rather than in the clothes like in Topshop you get less of a brand experience but I think they really show it on the website.

SL: Think of multiple retailers was your impression of the brand consistent across the channels?

INT4: Em, that's a bit like what I said for Zara.

SL: Yeah so was your impression of the brand consistent across the channels?

INT4: Yeah, em I think they are but then there's the Zara thing where I think it is less aspirational in the store. Em, but I think Topshop is very good like at being consistent because it has such defined like clique that everyone wants to be in too.

SL: How do you reassure yourself when making the right purchase decision for fashion?

INT4: Em, I probably would go back to this channel.

SL: So go back to social media.

INT4: Yeah, if I then saw something on there with how to style it, how to wear it or how they wear it then it made me think I can wear it in many ways and I should keep it.

SL: When thinking about shopping across channels with multiple retailers how does your shopping journey affect the trust with the retailer?

INT4: Em, well I think the websites especially can affect it. I only use the website I trust. Like I really trust ASOS that it's going to come on time and going to be able to return it and get the money back quickly. Em whereas Zara is a bit dodgy for that so.

SL: In what way dodgy?

INT4: I don't know it just seems more complicated and you have to pay for the delivery but now they've got click and collect but I've not tried that yet.

SL: How is your loyalty affected by an omni channel shopping journey? So interacting with lots of different channels with a retailer?

INT4: Well with Topshop all the different channels does keep me quite loyal because although the stores not really working for me now, I still have the magazine at home to look at and i'd still go on the website everyday and the store wouldn't really affect me because I am still enjoying it through the website.

SL: So say because you are loyal to lots of specific retailers with lots of channels, do you have a list of like your top ones?

INT4: Eh, Topshop, ASOS but they don't have a store, Net-a-Porter but I have never purchased and Zara.

SL: As a fashion consumer what does the term connected consumer mean to you?

INT4: I think it's about being aware and I guess it is being a bit tech savvy and not just being a store person. It's going on the websites as well. I don't really know.

--Ends--

Interview V – INT5 Lizzie

SL: First question that I want to ask is what drives you to use many channels on a fashion shopping journey as opposed to just using one?

INT5: Em I think there is a couple of reasons. Firstly, it's laziness. I don't like going into town, I don't like going in if it's going to get really busy. So if i'm going to go in i'm going to go in when I know other people are at school or work. So I tend to use online first because I don't wanna go into town. It's easy for me. I like having things delivered to my house. Em so I think that the only times...so what drives me to use many channels is only if I can't find the thing that I want online so i'll go in store or i'll ring up and see if I can. Actually the first thing I will do is ring up and see if I can get it delivered to me still rather than having to go to town. Then if I still can't have it delivered then i'll go into town.

SL: So would you ring up like a call centre or something?

INT5: Yeah or whatever the contact number is on the website or i'll email them.

SL: Ok. Are you confident in your ability to use such an array of channels when shopping for fashion?

INT5: Yeah, yeah I am.

SL: Ok so tell me a little bit more about that?

INT5: The only things that make me unconfident about it are things like shoes and sizes, so things like jeans. I wouldn't tend to buy those online unless i've got...I've got a specific set of jeans that I stick to now so i'll buy them online because I always buy the same size and style. But if I want a new pair of jeans I would just never buy them online or in a catalogue or something like that. I would have to go in and see them.

SL: So what makes you confident then in using such an array of channels?

INT5: I've got confidence in my size and my size in different retailers and in my own style. So the things that I want. I know what suits me I know what colours I like. So i'll always go to those things.

SL: So what I have got now is I have got a bit of a task for you. I want you to think of your most recent shopping journey for high street fashion apparel. Can you tell me first of all what triggered you to begin that journey?

INT5: Eh so there's a couple that I could use. So yesterday I was really cold at university and I decided that I needed a jumper. So it's kind of two that link into one if that's ok. So originally I wanted a black cardigan. I wanted one, I didn't want it to be a work one because I have got like a black one, so a casual black cardigan. So I know that Gap do really good basics range and they are one of my favourite retailers so I went straight to them first and I saw on their website that they had a really nice black cardigan.

SL: So did you go on their website first?

INT5: So yeah straight to the website and saw on their a really nice cardigan about two and a half weeks ago. So yesterday at uni I was really cold and I have like a two hour break in between our lectures so I was like i'm gonna go in town and I'm gonna get a jumper because i'm freezing. So I thought I could go to gap to see if the cardigan that I want's in there.

INT5: Yeah

SL: With your typical journey would you use any channels after purchase?

INT5: No, not normally. I might go back, say if I've bought, like with my coat I might go back and look for another dress to go with it for a different wedding so I might go back and have that in mind while I look for something else to go with it.

INT5: So do you mean that the journey would repeat itself?

INT5: Yeah.

SL: So would that help you open up a new shopping trip?

INT5: Yeah. But no I wouldn't go back for one product.

SL: So I can see on here I have a question, did you use multiple channels of the same retailer. But I can see on here in both of the journey's you've mentioned you do interact with multiple channels of the same retailer. So namely you have got there John Lewis and ASOS. What was your motivation for the coat journey to use these particular channels that you've got here so magazine, website, mobile website, mobile app and store? What motivated you to use that group?

INT5: So the website that's where I always start, that's where I begin by researching things online, seeing if I can find them online. Em and I couldn't find anything that I wanted, everything that I thought was not nice enough that it was going to suit me. So then I went to the mobile website because sometimes stock can differ between mobile website and online website.

SL: How do you feel about that?

INT5:

I kind of find it a bit annoying. I can kind of understand why retailers do it and understand why it happens but I dunno I'd rather just go online and be able to see everything there. I'm not a huge fan of mobile websites because like I don't mind purchasing things on my phone but I only do that once I know what I want so I can type in like the product and it pops up and I can just purchase it. I don't like searching for

things on my phone. Em so then likewise with the mobile app I find it hard to search things on the mobile app and then the store was obviously just walking through the store saw it and just had to have it.

SL: You can refer to any of your journeys here. Just let me know which one you are talking about. Do you associate certain channels with certain purposes in the shopping journey?

INT5: I think I probably do.

SL: That's interesting can you tell me a bit more?

INT5: What do you mean by certain purposes?

SL: Do you associate certain channels with doing certain things or doing a particular function in your shopping journey?

INT5: Yeah I suppose I do. Like I use online I suppose as a sort of research tool.

SL: Online website?

INT5: Yeah, as well as a purchasing channel. It's main purpose for me is researching to see what's out there. Like if there is something out there that I really, really want, if I can't find it on John Lewis or ASOS or one of my go to sites then I'll just go on Google shopping and see where I can find it. Em … whereas with like a mobile app is like one of my last resorts. Like I can't search for things. The purpose of an app for me is to like purchase. I go on there to purchase I don't go on there to price things.

INT5: What about the magazine?

INT5: That's almost like a last resort although I do it first, I only look at them if I have remembered or if I think I wonder what is going on in the fashion world. If I feel like I need to be a bit more fashionable, I need to get a bit more on trend, then I'll start looking at it. Otherwise I've got…

SL: So what function does that serve, that magazine, what purpose?

INT5: Again it's a research tool it's something for me to look at before I've really thought about purchasing items. Generally because I am quite confident in my own style I know what I want. Like I'll just think oh I really quite like that. So magazines are when I am feeling a bit less creative. When I feel like I need some sort of inspiration. So I know that some people use social media, but I don't do that. I go to magazines and I would go to things like Vogue first and The Times style magazine and see what they've got and see if I can find a cheaper alternative.

SL: How would you find the cheaper alternative?

INT5: I look online.

SL: And what about the store what purpose does that provide to you?

INT5: Stores are more of a kind of social thing. I only would go shopping in store if I have to 'cause I can't find what I want online or someone's going shopping and they say do you want to come with me and then I'll go shopping with them so it's kind of a social thing or a last resort for when I need to find something that I can't find online.

SL: So the next task that I want you to do is to group the channels together into particular themes so that I can understand the stages of your journey.

INT5: I would put those two together, those three together and call that research. Then actually I might take that one out so have those two as research.

SL: So take mobile website out of research.

INT5: Mobile website and mobile app will be like purchasing, like planning to purchase. Em and then the store would be on it's own and be final purchase.

SL: So with the mobile app, what do you mean by final purchase?

INT5: So the store is where I will actually purchase it so the mobile app and the mobile website I am planning to purchase it on those devices but it's not there or I can't for some reason purchase it on there so the store is where I will go to purchase the item.

SL: So you've got three stages there, research; plan to purchase; final purchase. And obviously plan to purchase means that you are planning to buy it but something's happened. On your typical journey would these stages change in anyway?

INT5: No I don't think so. I mean…

SL: Obviously your journey is shorter on your typical one.

INT5: It might be more like a… well my typical one I have mobile app and online website as research.

SL: So you would put apps into the research stage as well.

INT5: Em, it would either be, sometimes I'll purchase straight away on the online website. So that'll be the final purchase.

SL: On the online website?

INT5: Yeah.

SL: Em so would you put that in plan to purchase as well then?

INT5: Yeah or even just final purchase. I don't really have a…So it would be like research then the mobile app and mobile website would be planning to purchase or final purchase

SL: So would you buy on the website?

INT5: Yeah I would buy on any of these three.

SL: So would that go plan to purchase or final purchase?

INT5: Actual purchase unless something goes wrong. So actual purchase in any of these three things but if I can't find the size on there or the thing that I want.

INT5: So would you say they fit in the plan to purchase stage? Or do you want to give that stage a different name.

INT5: No let's just call these actual purchase because thinking about it I would just wait til they come back into stock online.

SL: OK, so just so I can understand. I am still a bit confused. So you have plan to purchase up there and that's on that journey you plan to buy it but you couldn't and then you end up buying it in the store. So would these fit in your final purchase? Obviously you plan to purchase through those...

INT5: Yes, yeah.

SL: So you would put them in plan to purchase or final? So those two stages are confusing me.

INT5: So in the coat one they were my planning to purchase but I couldn't purchase it. But in my general shopping experience they would be my final purchase.

SL: So your typical stages are research and purchase really?

INT5: Yeah.

SL: So just for the purposes of the recording on your coat journey you have research, plan to purchase – couldn't get it and final purchase. On your typical journey you had research on the mobile app, then actual purchase...

INT5: Online website crosses over the two of them.

SL: That's ok.

INT5: So research online and then I'll...

SL: So you have mobile app and website to start with [research] and then you've got online website, mobile website and mobile app as final purchase. So it just means that your coat journey was a little bit longer as you had to go to the store.

INT5: Yeah.

SL: Ok that makes sense so do you prefer to buy online then?

INT5: Yeah definitely but whenever I go shopping in store I always enjoy it more than I think I am going to but as a general rule I would purchase everything online.

SL: So as I take the pictures there I have got as research, mobile app ASOS and online website and as final purchase we've got online website, mobile website and mobile app for the typical journey. For you original journey you have research again so women's magazine, online website and plan to purchase so mobile website, mobile app and if no success there you end up you resorted to the store. Ok so do you associate certain channels with certain stages in your shopping journey?

INT5: Yeah. So my research will always... it will always start with online websites and mobile apps in... or their website including like The Times Style magazine or Vogue online. Em so yeah that's the key ones my research will always start online. I never go into a store to have a look, I'll never use social media to research.

SL: And you would use a print magazine?

INT5: That was just a one-off. I might use an app version of a magazine or a periodical. But I never really have hard copies of them. And what was the question sorry?

SL: So do you associate certain channels with certain stages of the shopping journey?

INT5: Yeah, so I think my purchase stage. I prefer to purchase things on a mobile website or mobile app. My purchasing stage... I always associate online and mobile websites with purchasing. Store is always...there's always a sense of if I'm going to store it's my last resort and it's like the...

SL: So is mobile like your second last resort.

INT5: Yeah, so those two are right at the end of the process.

SL: Ok and is that for any reason that they are at the end.

INT5: I think it's because they're the two things that I like least. Store because you have to make an effort to get there. Generally things that I want are from places like John Lewis and our nearest one is the Trafford Centre so it will take me all morning to get there and to go look round. Or even going into town it will take me half an hour from my house to go and look around and find what I want, might not be there and then have to go back. So then I feel really guilty because I feel I should be doing work or you know something else that I should be doing instead. So I think I leave that as a last resort because I feel like I am having to make an effort, to make time. Whereas online I feel like you can just waste so much time so easily but it doesn't feel like you're wasting time. I'm still on my laptop or on my iPad doing work and I'll have two tabs open up at once. One will be my essay and one will be ASOS and the mobile app I don't really like browsing on because like I'm not sure if I trust them that much.

SL: And what about you said in your coat journey you see it on a friend, is that a common thing that happens?

INT5: Yeah definitely.

SL: So would you put that in your typical journey then?

INT5: It's not typical. It wouldn't be on my typical journey, I wouldn't do it all the time. It would happen at least once a month.

SL: And obviously on most stages of your journey bar the store where you made the purchase via the store on the coat journey you've combined multiple channels. Em why did you do that? Why did you use multiple channels at all these stages?

INT5: I think it's just because I…I don't really know I have just always done it. Em I guess I want to see if there is anything that I am missing out and I want to see if there is anything else I can find. Like I want to see on the mobile app that is perhaps not on the website. Em generally I tend to leave things in my basket as well so if I'm on a website I'll leave things in my basket for a couple of days and like think about it. Then go back to them but it might be then while I'm sitting waiting for a bus or something I'll be looking through my phone, I'll be looking at the app and things that I put in my basket that I put on from the website and then while I'm on the app I can add more to it. They kind of link together, they talk to each other. So the website knows what I put in my basket from using the app and the app knows what I have put in my basket from using the website.

SL: And do you like that?

INT5: Yes.

SL: Does that happen with all the retailers that you use?

INT5: John Lewis do it and Not on the High Street do it and Amazon.

SL: How do you feel about the retailers who are not doing it.

INT5: I feel they are probably missing a trick because it is a good idea, it is quite handy because you know if I have put something in my basket that I had forgotten about I can see it from whichever one I'm next on. Oh I don't remember putting that in my basket ha ha. So sometimes it will like be a bit annoying because I'll remember that I put something in but I can't remember what it's called so I'll trawl through everything and I'll like find it again.

SL: And how do you feel about that?

INT5: Eh I find that really frustrating actually I find that I've already spent the time looking for it. I've spent the time researching it and thinking about and I've made the effort to put it in my basket and now it's not there and I'm going to have to go through and find it all over again.

SL: So obviously we have talked about after the purchase but I just wanted to confirm that you didn't use any channels post-purchase in either your coat journey or your typical journey.

INT5: No.

SL: That's fine. Overall how well do you think the channels align with the various stages in your shopping journey – you can consider any journey. Do they fit well for your needs at that stage?

INT5: I think they do yeah. Because essentially I'm probably quite lazy I don't like having to make the effort to go into town and fight through crowds of people to get what I want so yeah I find that online websites and mobile website's are really handy and they really work well for me because I can just use them all and I get bored really easily so then shopping online is something that I can do anywhere, they do align well for me.

SL: Could they be improved in any way?

INT5: Hmm… I'm sure they probably could but there's nothing that I can think of immediately that would improve them for me.

SL: Ok, that's fine. Now I want you to tell me about the devices you used to access all of these different channels. I've got over there some cards with devices on them and the devices themselves. I want you to place a device or card with the corresponding channel card. Em if you could do that for me for both journey's. You can put the ipad device there if that helps but if you need more ipads then you can use the cards.

INT5: Some of them [devices] kind of cross over.

SL: So I'll walk through them just to understand. So mobile app how are you accessing that?

INT5: On smartphone.

SL: Online website?

INT5: It will be on a tablet.

SL: Another online website?

INT5: Generally on a tablet but sometimes I'll use my laptop. I'd rather use my tablet because it's easier and just sometimes it's there and I don't have to switch it all on.

SL: Mobile website?

INT5: Smartphone.

SL: And women's magazine?

INT5: I suppose sometimes it's on a smartphone. I never really do it on paper it's either going to be smartphone or laptop or an iPad.

SL: Online website would be?

INT5: Tablet, generally tablet first.

SL: Then mobile website?

INT5: Smartphone.

SL: Mobile app?

INT5: Smartphone.

SL: Obviously you would go in store just in person. Do you associate different devices with different purposes when shopping for fashion?

INT5: So my tablet is always for research and purchasing. My laptop is just for purchasing I don't do any research on there I don't do any… because I have to… it's like I don't have a Macbook. I've got a Dell and it's heavy and clunky and it's slow and it's far easier for me to go straight to my laptop and it's always to just go straight on it. I know what I want and purchase it. And likewise with my phone. If I'm using a mobile app it's because I'm going to purchase something. I'm not going to browse on anything i'm going straight to just actually purchasing something. Em but again my smartphone can be used for research purposes so when I'm like on the bus I'm always reading the news and like using the Guardian and The Times apps so I'm always seeing what they've got on their so it's research and purchasing for both smartphone and tablet and laptops are just to purchase something.

SL: Can you tell me about the overall experience of your coat shopping journey? I want you to tell me about your customer experience on that journey?

INT5: There were a lot of emotions involved so it was excitement thinking oh I'm going to get one and then there was disappointment when my two favourite retailers John Lewis and ASOS and Gap didn't have them .

SL: Where?

INT5: Online. So it's just always straight online first. And then I didn't make a special effort to go and look in store for those retailers I just looked online. Eh so there was a lot of disappointment there. So I turned to… I thought I would wait a few days or a week and maybe see if they got more in. It was kind of a spring style so lighter coats. So I also thought I would wait and see if they get any more in and keep checking and they didn't so I was still a bit disappointed and then there was I guess elation yesterday when I saw one in Zara and I liked it and tried it on and so yeah.

SL: So what was your overall customer experience of that journey? Was it a good one, was it a bad one?

INT5: In Zara it was really good the service was quick, it all went really smoothly. I purchased it really quickly and the whole thing took about ten minutes. And then with the other retailers it wasn't so good because they didn't have the thing that I wanted and although they had like ASOS for example I always expect them to have what I want and they didn't have ones in any colours that I liked or they were too boxy or it just wasn't going to suit me or would have been far to expensive for my budget so... that like it was a bit disappointing, it did disappoint me. I was disappointed in ASOS because normally they have what I want so my experience with that, with ASOS wasn't so good.

SL: Can you tell me about any marketing communications or contact you encountered with any of the retailers?

INT5: I'm not sure I had any. I tend to get the magazines through from ASOS and like they email me updates as do John Lewis, but there was nothing specific with them?

SL: So you didn't interact with the store staff, you didn't get any emails or anything

INT5: No I mean I had the store staff when I went to get to the till and purchased it but there was nothing specifically about the coat.

SL: Obviously you have mentioned a bit about your emotional responses about the journey, is there anything further that you want to add about how you felt?

INT5: No I don't think so.

SL: How satisfied were you with that omni channel shopping experience?

INT5: At the end of it now I'm satisfied that I've got the coat and I'm pleased with it because it's nice but in the… when I got to the third stage and I was planning to purchase and I was on the websites and mobile apps and I couldn't purchase anything because they didn't have my size or a colour that I wanted then I was really dissatisfied and em yeah, really not pleased with my retailers that I like to shop at not having what I wanted.

SL: Can you tell me a little bit more about that, that they didn't have what you wanted?

INT5: If they don't have... obviously they can't have everything to suit everyone but I think I generally have quite broad tastes in clothing and I've got, like I don't mind, like I don't have a very slim colour palette like I wear lots of different colours, different styles. So when somewhere that I think like ASOS that has got so many different styles, when they don't have something that's a current trend that's in a colour that I like or in a style that I like I get really disappointed with them, they should do something that's current that people are wearing now and you know, although it's spring and everyone is getting into lighter clothes and lighter colours we still live in the UK and it's cold and rainy.

SL: So that's my questions on your actual/typical journey. Next section I want to ask is do you view your shopping journey as stages or as an overall experience.

INT5: I think it depends. The purchase of the coat was definitely in stages because there was a big research process looking in to what everyone has got but as a general rule I think it's just an overall thing. It's stages

but it will all happen at once in one evening but it will be stages in that I research things and I will look at different ways of purchasing it. Like I'll have my laptop my iPad or my iPad and my phone but with the app and the website on at the same time to see what's going on so it's stages but overall in the sense that it happens within an hour and a half or two hours.

SL: When shopping for fashion does your journey consist of you go through stages consecutively or will you switch back and forth between channels?

INT5: I switch back and forth between quite a lot [of channels].

SL: Can you tell me a little bit more?

INT5: I'll always start on the online website generally, with some research on the mobile app. But it's generally always a website then I'll put something in my basket on the website and then I'll go off and leave it. But then I'll have my phone and I'll look at what's on my phone and see what's on the apps on the mobile store there or I'll have both open at the same time trying to see if there is something different on the app or even looking at the same item to see if there is different photos for both and see if it looks different like if the colour looks different on one to the other.

SL: What motivates you to move between channels? What motivates you to move from one channel to another?

INT5: Em I think it's just, I hate sending things back and I always try to avoid returning things because I hate going to the post office queuing up to wait and hand things over and waiting for refunds and things like that. I want to make sure what I'm purchasing is going to suit me and is going to look like what it says it is online. So I like to make sure that the colours and the style looks the same across of the channels and make sure that everything looks the same. Another one is if I've left my iPad upstairs and taken my phone downstairs and I'm cooking dinner I'll be scrolling through through the apps while I am on the bus. That kind of thing. It's just convenience as well.

SL: Do you use any channels simultaneously so at the same time?

INT5: Yeah I'll have had like an online website and a mobile website open at the same time.

SL: On different devices?

INT5: An online website on my tablet and mobile website on my phone.

SL: And why do you do that?

INT5: Em I'm not really sure it's just habit and again looking to see that everything looks the same across the websites and sometimes I'll have a mobile website for a different company with my iPad because a lot on my iPad I can't have like two screens open at the same time. So I'll have one retailer open on my iPad and one on my phone to see if the price is different or to see if they've got something similar or to compare items to see how different they are. So if you're looking at a shift dress you might see there is a long sleeve one as well.

SL: Do you get the same level of benefits from the different channels that you encounter or do you get particularly higher or lower benefits from some versus others?

INT5: Online websites for me have higher benefits. Especially with sites like John Lewis I know I'm going to get my discount on them, there is more information on them, more products and you can scroll through. Mobile apps for me have much lower benefits. For me you can't see products as clearly on your phone. Unless you have got tiny tiny thumbnails you can only have one product on the screen at once or at the same time so yeah. I definitely think mobile apps are less beneficial.

SL: Do you see different devices as offering the same level of benefits or do some have higher benefits that others?

INT5: I think my iPad I prefer to my phone in general because it's quicker. It's got a speedy screen so I can see the products clearly and I can access the online website rather than the mobile website.

SL: When mixing and matching channels do you gain any overall collective benefits or negatives that you wouldn't have experienced if you had just experienced the channel individually?

INT5: I don't think there's any negatives as such. It might take a bit longer. Benefits are you can just get a broader view of the range that the retailer has if you are using lots of different devices and you can look at more retailers and the things that they have at the same time.

SL: Are there any combinations of fashion retail channels that you think either work well or not so well together when purchasing fashion?

INT5: I think online website and mobile website work quite well together. I think mobile apps for purchasing fashion I don't know. Like I'll use it but I'm not a huge fan of it because you can't really see what you are buying. I don't mind buying like books on an app, like on the Amazon app it has a really good description you can just read and you can just see that this is what it's going to be. Em but with so an online website and a mobile website, things are clearer. You can often read the descriptions whereas on the apps loads of products get missed off. They don't have a full description, they don't always have the full fabric contents and things like that so yeah.

SL: Are there any combinations of devices that you think work well together?

INT5: I think my tablet and my smartphone work well for me. I think because they are both Apple they like sync together. So if I 'screenshotted' a picture from my iPhone it would be on my iPad immediately as well.

SL: Has your experience in one channel ever affected your experience or use of another channel?

INT5: Em no not really.

SL: How do you think that all the different channels for fashion retailers are available to you becoming blurred or merged together?

INT5: I think a lot of them are I don't know it's a good question that.

SL: Just think about your experiences. Are they becoming blurred or merged? For example you said with the basket is there anything else?

INT5: Yeah they are because actually going back, remember when you said for example would anything make it better say if you go on an online website, say for example ASOS or John Lewis it tells you what you looked at previously that doesn't carry over to a mobile website or to an app.

SL: And would you like to see that?

INT5: Yeah I think I would because quite often I'll look at things and then… So sometimes I'll look at things and think I like that I'll put that in my basket and I'll have twenty things and I can cull some of but sometimes I'll look at something, I won't put it in my basket but it will still be in the back of my mind and I'll go to my recently viewed and I can see it and I'll be like ah yeah I do quite like that. So it's good if you've got the online website but if you've got the mobile website and I'm out and about and thinking actually maybe I'll put that in my basket and I can't.

SL: Anything else?

INT5: Eh, no I don't think so? It would be quite good… you know how they give you suggestions like with Amazon there's crosses over. So if I look at anything on my laptop or my tablet the same things come up on my phone with a 'this is what we think you might like' em and there's nothing like that in fashion really you don't get that blur and mentions of them saying you've looked at these recently how about something like this.

SL: In your opinion what represents a seamless fashion shopping experience?

INT5: Having the exact product that you want so the right size, the right colour, the right style. Having them in stock online, having them in stock in store if you want to go and see them. I think online replenishment is a big thing because quite often it can take retailers a long time to get stock online and some of them that I find really frustrating if they have the picture online and it says out of stock and you click on it and it's not in stock so yeah.

SL: Anything else, what represents a seamless fashion shopping experience?

INT5: And getting… if you order the product online getting the product quickly and then for me it's mostly about having the right size in stock and making it just easy for me to purchase and just having it because I do a lot of online shopping and like having a smooth online payment system where I can put it in my basket, go straight to the check out and then it remembers my card details and it's at my door a couple of days later.

SL: Do you find different channels of the same retailer are they consistent in terms of information?

INT5: Generally yeah. I've not found that they've had different product information. Quite often on the ASOS app they just won't have product description. They'll miss something off somewhere but when they do it it's generally the same on the mobile site and the online site. I've never found anything different.

SL: Thinking about those retailers again was your impression of the brand consistent across all of the channels?

INT5: Yeah.

SL: Is that something you notice?

INT5: I think I'd notice if I had found something different like it wasn't very, it wasn't in line with their brand.

SL: And how do you reassure yourself that you are making the right purchase decision?

INT5: It's going back to the way that I buy it. Thinking of a scenario when I'm going to wear it and what it's going to look like when I'm wearing it. I spend a lot of time thinking well I can wear this. If I can wear it on a night out and during the day then I'll definitely buy it. If I can see it,you know, carrying across seasons as well. If I think it might be something that's going to stay in fashion for quite a while then I'll reassure myself that it's a good purchase. Yeah that's really annoying

SL: How does your omni-channel shopping journey affect your trust with the retailer - if it's all seamless all blurred together?

INT5: If it's all seamless and if they've got stock of the things I want and if they've got both the product that I want on the website, the mobile website and on the app, if everything's there then yeah it's a good experience. If I can purchase it quickly and easily and if they remembered my products that I liked then it puts a lot of trust, it gives me a lot of faith in the retailer. Em if they don't have the things that I want or if they've got a product that I want on the online website but it's not on the mobile website then it's a bit more frustrating but it wouldn't like put me off using that retailer again.

SL: So it wouldn't put you off using the retailer again, but how would you feel?

INT5: I'd probably be a bit disappointed and feel a bit frustrated but I'd just go back to the online website. I'd go back to my tablet and you know, all would be forgotten.

SL: How is your loyalty affected by an omni-channel shopping journey?

INT5: I think it's increased a lot yeah, it's not made me apart from H&M whose websites awful it hasn't made me disloyal. It has made me more loyal because I can go shopping anywhere and at any point and look at the different products and the way that they look on the app and the way they look on the online website. I find it quite encouraging having these different ways to look at things and if they're well managed by the retailer it's just going to make me more loyal.

SL: As a fashion consumer what does the term connected consumer mean to you?

INT5: I think it means that the retailer values me and tries to connect with me and keep me up to date with what's going on across their different channels. So they'll pay attention to what I like and show me the things that I like to see and email me and say we noticed that you've put this in your basket why haven't you bought it yet, have a discount. What can we do that will make you buy this item. Or about sending me things saying this is the new stuff that we have got in, why don't you have a look. Making me aware of the fact that they have got all of these different ways of shopping with them and it's about keeping me connected to them and what's new with them, what's going on with them. Keeping me connected with their different channels that I can purchase through.

SL: Do you have a set list of your favourite omni channel retailers in your head?

INT5: Yeah definitely, John Lewis and ASOS are always ones that I go to first.

SL: Because you mentioned previously that they are kind of quite seamless does that mean that you prize them more, do you remember them more in your head?

INT5: Yeah definitely, especially with ASOS em I don't know I think it's just, that I've not yet had a bad experience with them. I've never had a bad experience returning things, I've always got what I've wanted and it's always been the right size. So I've just been very lucky with that. Em and they've got a good array of products, I trust them I think. And then I've got like Gap. I like Gap for things like basics, like I've got a pair of trousers or a basic jumper but then with them I prefer to research online and go in and purchase it. I've got a couple of blacklisted ones like H&M and Zara.

SL: How come?

INT5: H&M they take far too long with delivery. Like you'll buy it and it will come six weeks later when you could have just gone into store and just buy it. Eh and Zara and I generally just don't like their website. It's got limited products on it compared to the store. It doesn't have the same newness that the store has and it's just slow and again delivery takes a long time.

SL: Is there anything else you don't like about the Zara website?

INT5: I don't know, I don't think so. I think it's just the product selection. I have a much better experience when I go into store and just see what's going on and yeah.

--Ends--

Interview VI - INT6 Rhona

SL: Could you tell me what drives you to use many fashion shopping channels during a fashion shopping journey?
INT6: Price, like especially like now it's getting to the end of term and I'm running out of money. It's definitely good to like have a look in magazines, in shops and then online and compare prices for everything.
SL: Uh huh.
INT6: Usually it's cheaper online with like Boohoo and things I find they're usually the cheapest but like if I'm going to splurge I'll like go to Topshop.
SL: Ok. Are you confident in your ability to use such an array of channels for your fashion shopping journey?
INT6: Yeah, 'cause like as I found like most retailers link them in together so like it's easy for like anyone not just a fashion student to link them together.
SL: So tell me more about that, that is really interesting.
INT6: So like ASOS magazine they've got all the product codes and everything it's so easy and everything you can copy it into the search bar easily and find it again. Em what other channels are there? So like Topshop online you can. Like I've been on Topshop, like found something and then gone into store and asked them about the product and then they have like a computer thing.
SL: Like an iPad?
INT6: No it's on like an actual desktop store system. It was in like Oxford Street Topshop and I didn't want to like look around like five floors so I just went to the man and he like went to the back and got it straight away. So that was really good…speedy!
SL: Oh right. So you would say you are confident in your ability to use different channels.
INT6: Yeah.
SL: Now my next task is I want you to think about your most recent shopping journey for fashion, obviously high street fashion apparel. It doesn't matter whether you bought the item or not. Can you just tell me first of all what triggered you to begin that journey?
INT6: It was my trip to Paris.
SL: Ok and tell me more about that please?
INT6: So I was going with the University and it was three or four days we had there and I thought if I'm going to Paris I need to look kind of chic and I might as well get some new items. So I thought I'll get like new jumpers and t-shirts because you can easily mix and match them.
SL: At the end of the fashion shopping journey what was the outcome?
INT6: Em I ended up, I looked online a lot kind of on like discount, like cheaper websites, like Boohoo and things. Like found loads of items and kind of bought them all.
SL: So you made purchases.
INT6: Bought like loads, kind of tried them on and 'cut them down' that way. So I ended up with only like two from Boohoo.
SL: So was that two jumpers?
INT6: A jumper and a t-shirt and then like sent back items that you think that might not look nice. I bought like a crop top kind of thing and bought a pvc skirt just to kind of try it out but they weren't very nice so they went back and I did like have a look for high street shops as well.
SL: For jumpers and t-shirts?
INT6: For more t-shirts.
SL: Ok.
INT6: But I dunno I think I was just exhausted by that point. And I was like one t-shirt would do.
SL: So what I want you to do was I want you to talk me through the sequence of the shopping channels you used for that shopping journey. I would ask you to focus on one particular product if that makes it easier but it is purely up to yourself. No what I want you to do is there are lots of cards with channels on the left and I want you to put them in order from left to right and you don't have to use them all. If you have used multiple channels over and over again then there are multiple cards there. So which journey are you going to talk about?
INT6: Probably finding t-shirts.
SL: So think to the very very start of the journey?
INT6: I think it was social media actually because after our last meeting [focus group] Skye was talking about a camel coat and I thought I really want a camel coat, so I started looking on there. I was in my basement watching telly when I thought I need a new jumper. So I got my laptop em and then I bought all the products online then after that I went in store to have a look. I don't think I looked at any magazines really. Yeah that was my journey.
SL: Ok, you didn't use any retailer magazines either?
INT6: No.
SL: And did you say you made some returns?
INT6: Online, I did the returns.

SL: And how did you do the returns?

INT6: I took it to like the post office cause it was a freepost label and I needed to get travel money out so I did the two at once.

SL: We'll pop a note of that there so we've got a note of your returns. So you make a purchase online so what did you purchase online that you kept?

INT6: A t-shirt, a jumper and that's it.

SL: Then when you went to the store what happened there?

INT6: I had a look around at more t-shirts and jumpers that just couldn't really find anything and it just got really long walking round the Arndale so just kind of gave up.

SL: And then… after that did you use any channels post purchase, did you let your friends know about anything or?

INT6: Yeah they did like ask where is this jumper from, Boohoo.

SL: Did you do anything with social media, did you post anything, did you review?

INT6: It was like a nice sunny day so I had my new top on and I tweeted it.

SL: So if you want to take a social media card so that we have a record of that activity. And did you do anything else post-purchase?

INT6: No I think that was it.

SL: You didn't post anything with the retailer or review it?

INT6: No.

SL: You didn't Instagram?

INT6: Maybe because I think my accounts are linked so if I sent it to Twitter it kind of thingy's over there.

SL: Ok, so do you want to take another social media card, just so we've got an accurate picture.

INT6: Yeah.

SL: Now with this journey that you have mentioned here is that a typical fashion shopping journey for you?

INT6: Em, yeah but sometimes these two would be swapped. So like I'd go to the store instead of the mobile for sure.

SL: So for the purposes of the recording you've got online website and store there but sometimes you'd swap them round.

INT6: Yeah.

SL: What'll do is map out your journey again but with them swapped.

INT6: Ok, sure.

SL: Again you'd still start with social media.

INT6: This is probably like more typical yeah because usually I don't really have a specific kind of aim in mind. I don't know I want a jumper so I'll have a browse like on Topshop if they've got nice new things, go in store and if they haven't got it in store go online if there is like something I like.

SL: So that was your journey for your jumpers and t-shirts. And this is your typical journey. So during the conversation we might touch on both journeys just to get an accurate picture of things. With your journey's you both started off with social media can you just tell me a bit about that and why?

INT6: Especially like Pinterest, I like going on that.

SL: What does that do for you?

INT6: It gives you like ideas of ways people put outfits together. So like I've got this pair of white jeans and you see how people have paired it. So you'll see someone with a bright red t-shirt and you'll be like oh my gosh I need it and then that starts the whole thing. So it's like an inspiration element, definitely. It gives you like a drive that you didn't have before. Especially if you do it over and over if you do it on Pinterest and you keep seeing people do it you're like this is really good it's going to be big. I need to get my red t-shirt now.

SL: And with your jumpers and t-shirt what made you make your final purchase?

INT6: What do you mean, about the product or?

SL: It can be anything. You can be at the website and what made you say im going to buy these im not just going to hover over them.

INT6: Probably like free delivery.

SL: Was that free delivery to your home?

INT6: Yeah, I thought if it's not nice I can send it back and like I've always got the Arndale so that's kind of like always kind of pushed me.

SL: And obviously with the post-purchase stage you'd normally use social media both on your jumpers and t-shirts journey and also your typical one. Can you tell me a little bit more about what you would do there?

INT6: Em I'd usually like my hairs gone well that day and I am wearing a new outfit I just want to be like oh look I've got new clothes and kind of just snap a picture in the mirror and post it like woo! [laughs] And because I am away from home 'cause I live in London my sisters like to see my outfits and stuff and my mum likes to see me. So linking back to them [laughs].

SL: And the next thing that I am going to ask you was. What was your motivation to use this particular group of channels for that journey for the jumpers and t-shirts?

INT6: 'Cause like I didn't have a lot of time because this was only a week before that's why I kind of did it on my mobile and you can quickly search for items as well. Em and then the online website to get a bigger clearer view of the pictures that you're seeing on the website as well.

SL: So the next task that I want you to do is identify for each of the channels which ones did you visit, which online websites, which stores. If you just fill out the post-it's and put one underneath each for that one and for the typical journey… So I can see from both of your journeys for the purposes of the recording you've used Boohoo with mobile website, online website. Eh with ASOS you've done online website, mobile website. So is it correct for me to say that you have been using multiple channels of the same retailer?

INT6: Yep.

SL: Do you associate certain channels with certain purposes in your shopping journey?

INT6: Yeah like, em so like social media is kind of like inspiration and then like showing off after you have bought it. Em mobile website that's just like for casual browsing if you get a break from lectures to just have a look through. Store is kind of the whole brand experience, it's kind of more entertaining and fun than going shopping on the website and you can make a whole day of it and go to Costa and things. I'll do that on a weekend just like if you want to get a break from things. Em and then online website, so like a bit of browsing like say Topshop I'd probably go to the store after finding it online. Their sizes are funny on my so I would double check there. Em so the online website I dunno that's like if I need a specific product I'll order it online. Like I'll probably always rather go to the store but I'd use the website if I don't have time yeah.

SL: So the next task that I want you to do I want you to group the channels that you use together. Each of the channels should identify a stage in your journey. I want you to do it for both, just put a post it above each of the stages once you have given them a name.

INT6: So for each channel or for each journey?

SL: For each journey just tell me what stages went through and I'll allocate the channels to a stage.

INT6: So like these two they would be inspiration because you don't really know what you want you just kind of have a browse.

SL: So is that the same on the other journey?

INT6: Yeah.

SL: So if you want to put an inspiration post-it there, I know you are repeating yourself but just to make sure.

INT6: They are kind of the purchasing and it would be the same there as well.

SL: If that's what you want to call it sure.

INT6: And that would be purchasing as well.

SL: And then social media?

INT6: That's like showing off [laughs].

SL: You can call it showing off because if that is what you are using it for. So for your typical and actual journey you went through the same stages for both your actual and typical journey is that correct?

INT6: Yeah.

SL: So just for the purposes of the recording you've got your inspiration stage – so your social media, your mobile website. And then for ….is this your purchasing stage yeah?

INT6: Yeah.

SL: So store and website and then social media for your showing off stage. So can I ask you, do you associate certain channels with certain stages of the shopping process.

INT6: Yeah definitely. Oh actually I was going to say I can't imagine buying anything on my mobile but then I have. So maybe like now it's not really acceptable like the apps and stuff are not really that good. But on the iPad actually the app's really good.

SL: I can see you have just pointed to the actual iPad there.

INT6: Em.

SL: And why is that one really good.

INT6: I don't know it's just. I don't know if it's the white or anything it's just really clear and just really easy when you click on things. I dunno it's a lot easier to get back to your main page whereas that on the mobile you can click wrong and go back like 10 stages and it's just really annoying getting back.

SL: So do you associate any other channels with certain stages of the shopping journey?

INT6: Em so like purchasing I would always do store or online if I kind of had a choice. Whereas with Delilah Dust [talked about an item purchased in the focus group] I bought it on Instagram but I didn't have the choice to go in store so I kind of had to like take the risk, but then that was kind of a bit of excitement so. Like showing off you can't really do that in store.

SL: After the purchase you have got your showing off stage and also you have got social media at the beginning. Overall how well do you think the channels align with the various steps in your shopping journey? Do they fit well?

INT6: Yeah, so like inspiration you get from mobile social, so if you go on like ASOS Twitter or whatever, even like their Instagram they put their product codes on that and that links well to like their website. Like if

you want to visit it on the mobile you can easily do that, just like copy and paste. Em so that works really well.

SL: Overall how well do the channels fit with the stages in your journey?

INT6: I'm trying to think.

SL: So for example does social media fit well for the showing off stage?

INT6: Yeah because I have to have the product and love it to have toput it online and say this is what I have.

SL: What about the store and website do they fit well with the purchasing stage?

INT6: Yeah cause they're both like easy to buy things on.

SL: Anything else?

INT6: No, not really.

SL: That's fine, that's ok. Now the next task that I want you to do is I want you to tell me which devices you use to access each of these channels. You can place the devices which I have got here or you can place the device cards, whichever works easiest for you. If you just put them beneath each of them [channels] just like that. So if you want to do it for both journeys.

INT6: Em so I have got like a net book instead of an actual laptop.

SL: Fine, that's ok so if we start with this one at the top and work through that one.

INT6: So social media probably on my phone.

SL: Did you do that through an app or…

INT6: App.

SL: So if you want to get an app card so that we can keep note of that. And your mobile website how did you access that.

INT6: That was on smartphone on the browser.

SL: Online website?

INT6: On my netbook.

SL: Store. Obviously you just walked in?

INT6: Yeah. Social Media that was my phone and app. So both Twitter and Instagram there.

SL: If we come down to your typical journey. How did you access that?

INT6: Same again I used my smartphone.

SL: Same again for that? So mobile website. Store.

INT6: Yeah.

SL: So online website?

INT6: Yeah.

SL: And social media is still the same?

INT6: Yeah.

SL: Is there anything else missing there or is there anything that you want to add?

INT6: No.

SL: Can I ask you one question just randomly? Is there any reason why you chose the cards over the actual devices?

INT6: I dunno, cause I thought with the mobile app it would be hard to put the mobile on both spots.

SL: It's interesting to see how you are using them. Do you associate different devices with different purposes when shopping for fashion?

INT6: Yeah.

SL: So tell me about that?

INT6: So like on my phone, then again I say I wouldn't want to buy something on my phone because I dunno it doesn't feel like maybe as like secure and like it's all smaller and a bit annoying compared to like your netbook where you can see everything.

SL: Do you own a laptop as well?

INT6: Yeah but it's at home.

SL: So do you use your netbook out and about?

INT6: I use my netbook for like everything cause em, I dunno I usually like going in the living room on the netbook and things. It's just so much easier to take it round those house compared to a massive laptop so em like I'd always use my netbook for like online and then like I'd like to use apps for like Instagram and twitter because it's easier than on the web browser.

SL: So it's easier. Ok, that's fine. Do you associate different devices with different stages of your journey. So you've got like inspiration, you're using smartphones, purchasing netbook.

INT6: Yeah 'cause like I said I wouldn't want to purchase something on my phone but I'd rather do it for inspiration. But then sometimes I do like if I've been doing work and I've got bored I will open up Pinterest or something and just have a flick on my netbook and just get some inspiration that way. So they can be like interchangeable I guess.

SL: Do you read many magazines at all?

INT6: I used to about a year ago I'd read Look every single week but I just find it like a lot easier to be on my phone and find it a lot cheaper as well than buying it every week.

SL: Obviously just for the purposes of the interview recording we can see here that you are using multiple channels of the same retailer and that's across both your journeys.

INT6: Yep.

SL: Thinking back to that journey for your jumpers and t-shirts can you just tell me about your overall customer experience about that journey?

INT6: I didn't really experience much.

SL: Ok, that's fine.

INT6: Em, because I browse on my phone and everything, then I went online. I don't think that I used like Boohoo. They've got a customer service team not like ASOS where you can get customer help as you shop.

SL: What sort of customer help?

INT6: Well they had like chat. I'm not sure if they have got rid of it now. A few months ago this chat thing popped up and they can like help you just any query, like sizes you could do. Whereas Boohoo it's just literally like you're on your own. I guess they've got like the size chart and things.

SL: And what do you prefer? What kind of works better?

INT6: I kind of prefer the size chart. Cause like when it pops up it's a bit annoying and especially when it pops up and you don't want to like buy anything you're just like looking, it's just like looking then it's just like euh.

SL: Anything else about your customer experience in your journey that you want to tell me about?

INT6: I guess like in store where you've got all the assistants like if I needed help I probably should have asked for it really. They're like available to you. So it's a lot easier to get customer service that way.

SL: Is the customer service good when you do interact with them?

INT6: What do I ask?

SL: Like you went to the guy last time.

INT6: Yeah. It's usually if they don't have my size out or have you got this? Or if I said I can't be arsed to walk around the whole store I will go up to them and ask have you got a pink top.

SL: Anything else about your customer experience or customer journey?

INT6: No.

SL: Can you tell me about the marketing communications you encountered during your shopping journey and any other contact that you had with the retailers?

INT6: Is that in general or on that one?

SL: Do it for that one first [actual journey] then do it for the other one [typical] next.

INT6: Em for Boohoo I get a lot emails through on my phone. That was what subconsciously prompted me.

SL: And that was in your jumpers and shirts one?

INT6: So that was hidden kind of inspiration to go on them. But saying that I get loads of emails from Missguided and that like puts you off. Cause it's always like deals and offers. I dunno like when I get that I think I don't need anything now but if I go back in a week they'll still have like an offer on. So I'll just do it then. But you never go back really. So online I don't think I had any communication with like the store em. But then like going into Topshop I usually pick up the magazine in store. So that's like in my usual day I would like have the magazine and like stop for a coffee and read it.

SL: So the Topshop magazine, is that like one you'd pick up in store?

INT6: Yeah, I've done that like sat read it in Costa and thought this is really nice and kind of go back and look for it. And again I would still get emails on this stage.

SL: Emails on the mobile website stage and then your typical journey. Anything else? Any other interactions with the retailer.

INT6: Actually with like social media if like ASOS pops up and it's like a really nice dress or something I'll go onto the website and like have a look and see if they've got anymore like nice dresses and stuff. So that's like a good drive for me to go on the website. I don't think there's a lot of communication online that I can think of.

SL: Now just going back to your jumpers and shirts journey can you just tell me about your emotional responses during that journey?

INT6: Ok em, I was like really intrigued and excited at the social inspiration stage. It's the first kind of ooh, will I like find anything and then em especially on the mobile when I found a nice jumper on Bohoo I was like I better go and get my netbook and go on like the real website so then em during that I was quite excited because I found loads of things that I liked. And then it all came back and when you try it on it's all kind of like mixed emotions somethings are lovely and some things were hideous. Then going into the store I don't know, maybe I was just in a bad mood, I was just kind of feeling like drained and really like worn out. I have to find like a t-shirt. Like when I have to find something it's a bit kind of daunting and you feel like you have to go to all the stores and look at everything. Em but then like the social media stage you feel good again 'cause like yeah I love this jumper.

SL: Is there anything else on like your typical journey about your emotional responses?

INT6: Probably on my typical journey, inspiration is the same so you'll be like excited at the prospect of new clothes. Usually when I go to the store, on a good day, I am more kind of positive and I like the journey of going through all the stores like looking and just.

SL: There's more like browsing to purchase on your typical journey rather than having a goal or objective.

INT6: That's a lot funner as well. And like online as well it's less kind of exciting and fun especially. If you have like seen a product and they don't have it so you are like a bit deflated and then you just go online and order it and you have to like wait for it. It's a bit like euh. And then finally showing off when you have got it you are like yay.

SL: Thinking back to your journey with the jumpers and shirts, how satisfied were you overall?

INT6: I was very satisfied after going online. But then my store experience didn't satisfy my need.

SL: In what way?

INT6: Cause like I didn't find what I was looking for and I dunno, like when you have to find something you don't like take in the whole experience on the journey like ambition and kind of trying to find this one item so it's less kind of fulfilling.

SL: Obviously your typical shopping journey you pretty much mirrors your normal journey other than the store and the website are just the opposite way round. So you would prefer to purchase from the store is that right?

INT6: Yeah cause like size is acutally different I find. Cause actually like jeans and and things I find there is so much difference.

SL: So why did you, on your jumpers and shirts journey, why did you do the online website bit first and then do the store.

INT6: Because I had only like a week til I went so I thought buy it online now, return it if it's bad then return it in store.

SL: Who is like your favourite fashion retailer for kind of high street fashion?

INT6: I'm probably going to have to be really boring and typical and have to say Topshop.

SL: So Topshop features in your typical shopping journey would this be an accurate for you with Topshop?

INT6: Yep.

SL: Now I am going to go on to some really general questions. Do you view your shopping journey as stages or as an overall journey?

INT6: I think it's more like an overall journey for me 'cause where like I go on a whim I usually like spend the day in uni looking at clothes on my phone. If I get an email I'll like go shopping after. So it's quite like instant after the inspiration that I go to the store and have a look and then purchase and like show off. It's not really like on one day I get inspiration then I go shopping. It's more kind of like flowing.

SL: Is it more all happening at the same time?

INT6: Not at the same time. I dunno 'cause sometimes when you're purchasing and if you're in the changing room you take a picture so those stages can happen together.

SL: So take a picture on social media?

INT6: Yeah.

SL: When shopping for fashion does your journey consist of you going through channels consecutively, so one after each other, or will you switch back and forth between channels?

INT6: I probably like if I like have some inspiration I'm like ok I want the camel coat and then I'll go like in store and online and have a look and I can't find it. I might like go back to the inspiration like find an alternative maybe. So like the other week nowhere had like camel coats 'cause it's coming into summer but ok I have to let this one go. I have to find something new to go and purchase.

SL: And when you do move from one channel to another what motivates you to move to that next channel?

INT6: So like if I was going from inspiration to purchasing it'd be like if I saw a really nice dress or something from Topshop and I have to go and get it, especially if it is like new in you feel you need to go quickly before it kind of sells out. Yeah then if it feels the other way round from like store to back to inspiration 'cause it wasn't satisfied. Then I'd have to go back and start again.

SL: In any of the journey's you mentioned did you use any channels simultaneously? Now you have already given me an example because your said you have used social media on an app in the store in a changing room. Are there any other instances where you have used channels together at the same time?

INT6: I've definitely been in the store before and I couldn't find something so I went on my phone and typed New Look or something in store and so went to kind of checking from Topshop to New Look to kind of check before I go. Then if there's nothing I will go the other way and shop differently.

SL: And see when you're on online websites do you go on each website after each other?

INT6: Yeah 'cause I, when I shop I open up tabs of new products so I'll go on Zara and there will be a million tabs for Zara and I'll kind of go through each tab and decide do I want this do I not close it down. Then I'll go on to the next website and do the same so then I have got a few options from each website and then kind of narrow it down that way.

SL: So it's quite systematic.

INT6: Yeah.

SL: Do you get the same level of benefits from each of the different channels that you encounter or do you perceive that some have higher or lower benefits?

INT6: Well the store experience is definitely more I don't know like the brand. You get more kind of fulfilment and enjoyment from that whereas like the website it's kind of a bit boring, you are just like kind of scrolling through.

SL: How do you perceive the channels? Do you perceive store as better then?

INT6: Store is better for the experience. Whereas online is just like better for speed and if you know what you want kind of thing.

SL: Em do different devices, like the netbook the smartphone etc. do they offer the same level of benefits to you or…?

INT6: No I think like the netbook where you've got the bigger screen you can do the whole kind of like browse all the website and like compare them whereas on your smartphone it's a lot harder especially on apps and you can't flick between them you can't have a million tabs open either.

SL: By mixing and matching channels do you gain overall collective benefits or negatives that you would not have experienced where you would just have used one channel of the same retailer? Is there any extra benefits you get using a combination of channels of the same retailer. So say with Topshop for example you're using lots of their channels rather than just one what extra does that bring you?

INT6: Added benefits as a result of channel mixing and matching… I think sometimes like if you go to a small Topshop you don't see their whole product range whereas like if you go online you can see everything and like being in Manchester, you know how they like do one specific to the Oxford Circus store you can like buy those online so you don't have to be there which is really good. So that's definitely a benefit but I guess like a negative would be if you see something nice on the website and you go in store and it's not there you feel a bit like euh, deflated.

SL: Are there any other overall benefits or negatives you can think of?

INT6: Of using loads of channels?

SL: Of using lots of channels of the same retailer?

INT6: So like if you're on like Topshop and like on their Instagram and stuff and like American Apparel and stuff like they put like kind of outfits together so you can get like inspiration and like that can make you buy more which is good for them and hopefully good for you.

SL: Are there any combinations of fashion retail channels that do or do not work really well together?

INT6: I think the mobile website, the store and online work together like really well for Topshop. Even their apps it's like all kind of synced and works well. Whereas like H&M they haven't got a really good website or anything so it's more kind of store only, which is bad.

SL: You mentioned H&M. Are there any retailers that you think their combination of channels just doesn't work well? Can you tell me a bit about why it doesn't work?

INT6: I'm trying to think of some more, I'm just trying to go through the Arndale in my mind. I think yeah I think H&M is really the only one that hasn't really picked it up.

SL: In way have they not grasped it?

INT6: Cause they, I don't really follow them on social media so you don't get the updates and I don't get like emails or anything from them either. So they kind of miss out on the whole inspiration stage as well because like their website is not really good to shop on and like delivery takes so long so I completely give up on that. I never really go on social media for something I have from H&M I dunno why but it's a bit basic. So they kind of cut out loads of stages, they've only got the store.

SL: Is there any combinations of devices that you think work well together? Or if not that's ok too.

INT6: Hmm I dunno… I guess if you have an apple phone and a laptop, that syncs together doesn't it? Like do your bookmarks sync?

SL: Yes.

INT6: That would be really useful. Like where I had a netbook it doesn't so you kind of have to go on the website again. So it doesn't really work for me.

SL: Has your experience in one channel ever affected your experience or use of another channel?

INT6: Yeah, like if I'm browsing for inspiration on my phone and like I just don't find anything or if American Apparel has a horrible print like for this season I just won't go on their website and just kind of be turned off and just probably not go into store either.

SL: And is this for just American Apparel or will it be like others?

INT6: Probably for American Apparel more because they have a range of prints and just basic clothes whereas like Topshop if they tweet a horrible dress I won't be like oh everything is horrible like I'll try and give it a chance to kind of go online.

SL: Now the next questions I am going to ask are quite broad questions so it's just whatever your interpretation is. How do you think that all the different retail channels of a same retailer are they becoming merged or blurred in anyway? What do you think that means?

INT6: With ASOS they've got their magazine and you can like view it online as well. So that's like really blurring it. I think that's really blurring it. Can you do the Topshop one online? I've never tried that. Like yeah bringing the paper into it, making it all online.

SL: In your opinion what represents a seamless fashion shopping experience?

INT6: Yeah probably like em, Topshop where like all the channels are easy to navigate and all kind of like same look so you feel like you've got like the whole brand experience as you go through each channel.

SL: Do you like that?

INT6: It's good to have a definite brand and like keep it. It feels like yeah, you kind of feel like yeah when you are on Topshop you know that whereas some website you go on it's just a bit generic.

SL: Which other ones?

INT6: I find like Missguided is really like a generic website and just brand aware or anything. I don't know why.

SL: So seamless is like looking and feeling the same. So kind of building on what you are just saying do you, do you find the different retail channels of the same retailer do you find them consistent in terms of information?

INT6: Generally like because I go on the mobile and like web page so it's like the same kind of information but just kind harder to see on your mobile so it's all quite consistent. So I think it works well. Is that with most retailers or… yeah… I'm trying to think of one that doesn't. I can't think, they must all be seamless ha ha.

SL: In terms of branding again do you find that's consistent across channels?

INT6: Definitely with big retailers like ASOS and Topshop, they've got like consistent branding but I feel like Boohoo has got kind of em Instagram page and stuff but it doesn't really work with their like branding cause their's is red and pink and black and their Instagram is all a bit wishy washy. Where as the website is really like kind of bold but they use really wishy washy filters so it doesn't quite work.

SL: The next question is, how do you reassure yourself in making the right purchase decision for fashion?

INT6: In making it from the channel or?

SL: Well just how you reassure yourself that you are making a good purchase?

INT6: Well online definitely cause you general have free returns and they usually do free delivery as well so it's kind of like even though if you pay like a hundred pounds you feel like well ok I won't like all of them so I won't have spent like a hundred pounds I would have spent like fifty ish. So that's kind of like reassuring. Whereas like in store you have to be more careful generally like you try it on, you know that you like it. You probably have to narrow it down while you are there.

SL: If you think about omni-channel shopping so shopping with the same retailer across different channels, how does that affect your trust with a retailer?

INT6: Em I definitely think it kind of builds trust because you kind of like trust them with like your card details and everything, like online shopping. It kind of…where you've got like Topshop in your home it makes it more, how to describe it, you have like more trust for it because you are always with it, if that makes sense.

SL: And which fashion retailer do you trust the most?

INT6: Probably Topshop.

SL: Why is that?

INT6: Em, I don't know I just find that all the clothes are good quality.

SL: What about in terms of your channels and your customer experience?

INT6: 'Cause it's quite professional, all their channels look quite professional, laid out well and [laughs].

SL: Is there anything else that makes you trust Topshop more than others?

INT6: Probably just like they are always on their social media as well so…

SL: Do you mean just posting?

INT6: Yeah posting, like you can talk to them on like Twitter and things if you've got like an issue. Which like ASOS is really good for as well but where their just online you don't have like the store element as well.

SL: And then in post-purchase have you posted or anything Twitter before if you've had an issue.

INT6: Yeah.

SL: Tell me about that?

INT6: An issue, em it's like my glasses I had an issue with them and I went on like their feedback thing and fed it back to them and went on their Twitter as well. I didn't really get a response from them that was bad.

SL: Next question is how is your loyalty affected by an omni-channel shopping journey.

INT6: I definitely think that you're more loyal if the store is in more stages. So whereas like ASOS does good social media so you get them from the start and like online.

SL: So you mean that if the retailer is in each of the stages?

INT6: Yeah so if the retailer is in each of the stages you definitely think about them more and like if you are always seeing your images you're more kind of inspired to buy their products more than just like going into H&M. 'Cause that's like really rare, just go in there, cause I don't know what they are doing and things.

SL: As a fashion consumer what does the term connected consumer mean to you?

INT6: That like the consumer is connected to the company and like all kind of channels. Like I said with emails and social media the company is always reaching out to the consumer to kind of engage them and shop with them and get them in the whole like experience of the store kind of thing.

SL: In your mind do you have like a list of your favourite retailers?

INT6: Em I've got like kind of key retailers that I always go to. I don't know it does change quite regularly.

SL: Any ones that are constantly in there?

INT6: Topshop's always in there, ASOS. But then Boohoo and Missguided I'll only go in there if am like low on money and things. Yeah but they'd always been constant.

--Ends—

Interview VII – INT7 Rozi

SL: What drives you to use many shopping channels during your fashion shopping journey
INT7: Em I think convenience really, just makes it easier. Em especially being able to look online if you are in a bit of a rush before going into town. Like I know me personally i'd rather just buy online than avoiding the people in town.
SL: Do you still buy in town sometimes?
INT7: Yeah if i'm there, if i'm around but normally if I want something I'll just try and get it online.
SL: Would you say you are confident in your ability to use such an array of channels for purchasing high street fashion?
INT7: Yeah I think I have used everything.
SL: So where does your confidence come from?
INT7: Em I think because I have used the internet from quite a young age. I think it is a generation thing. I'm not really scared to just buy loads of things and send them back or young consumers as digital natives.
SL: What I want you to do is to think of your most recent shopping journey for high street fashion apparel. It doesn't matter if you bought the item or not. So first of all ...do you want a couple of minutes to think about a journey or have you got one?
INT7: Em...i'm just trying to think, I know I just bought somthing from Zara...yeah.
SL: So can you tell me what triggered you to begin that journey?
INT7: Em I last bought a pair of shoes from Zara. I normally just look online every week or so and see what they have got new in and then I went into store to try them on because shoes is one of those things I like to try them on before I buy them. Em tried them on and just bought them online to get a fresh pair. So that I didn't want to have a pair that have been on the shopfloor.
SL: Ok. So you bought them in the end?
INT7: Yeah, online and got them delivered to store.
SL: So what I want you to do is do the task. So what i've got here just to show you - all these ones are shopping channels and these some of the devices. So I just want you to concentrate on this section [the channels] first of all. I want you to map that journey for your shoes from left to right. You don't need to use all of the channel cards.
INT7: Right.
SL: So the website.
INT7: And then it was store. Is there one for Zara store?
SL: Yes just one on the top right.
INT7: Umm store and then I went back to the website.
SL: And that was just the normal website, it wasn't an app or…
INT7: Yeah just the normal website. And then got them delivered to the store and then back to the store.
SL: So what I want you to do, I know you have mentioned the stores that you visited, can you just write down which stores you visited, which websites you visited for me.
INT7: Yep. Well it was all Zara.
SL: Just put Zara on a post-it that will do. So is this a typical shopping journey for you? Even for fashion non-footwear as well.
INT7: Yeah, I would say so. I would normally like to see it online and go in and maybe try it and then buy it online so I have got a new one. Clothes...it's more with shoes that I like to go in and try it on. With clothes normally I just like to order it online.
SL: So what about a typical journey for fashion, how would that differ and would it differ?
INT7: I think with fashion I don't mind buying it all online.
SL: So what I want you to do now is just because I am conscious of the distnction between your shoe shopping versus your clothes. Can you map out for me a typical journey for fashion? Do you have a particular journey in mind?
INT7: Yep. I ordered some things from Topshop so I looked through the app when I was out and about then i'd go to the online website to have a better look at it and i'd probably order clothes online to be honest.
SL: So you'd order it through the website.
INT7: Through the website, yeah.
SL: So you're using mulitiple channels of the same retailer.
INT7: I mean delivery plays a big part in whether I am going to order it to home or store because I don't really like paying for delivery. So like the shoes for example just because I just got one pair of shoes I just got it delivered to the store so I didn't have to pay. Whereas Topshop 'cause I ordered so much it was free delivery anyway. So it makes a difference.
SL: So you got them sent to your home after you made a purchase on the website. What did you buy what was the…

INT7: I bought loads, I bought black jeans a few pairs of just pumps, shoes em and a t-shirt I think and some sunglasses maybe. It was quite a big order.

SL: And obviously did you use any channels post purchase to kind of. Em not really post- purchase?

INT7: I don't really do anything post-purchase unless there is a problem.

SL: You don't Instagram, you don't anything with your friends?

INT7: Sometimes depends what it is. Occasionally it will be Instagram yeah, but I would neve Facebook or Tweet anything.

SL: So you'd Instagram.

INT7: Yeah with somethings I would yeah.

SL: So we'll pop a social media card there. And what about pre-purchased how do you get ideas? How do you begin that.

INT7: Just search, search on the app mainly.

SL: On the retailers app?

INT7: Yeah it's normally when I am just out and about and i've got time on the bus and I haven't got anything to be doing.

SL: Do you use any blogs or anything like that?

INT7: Yeah I don't usually use the brands blogs more really the fashion blogs to get inspired.

SL: When would you use the blogs, would it be at the start of the journey or...?

INT7: It would be blogs first… I mean it depends if I have got something in mind that I want. If I don't really need anything then it'll be blogs just to have a look and then maybe go on the app to see if they have got it. If I want something or….

SL: Did you use blogs there in this journey?

INT7: No. But I do look at blogs quite often.

SL: Is that quite typical?

INT7: Yeah.

SL: So what i'll do is i'll put a card there because if you are doing that typically. If I put that there would you say that is a typical shopping journey?

INT7: Yes. Sorry I just noticed that we've got blogger on there. I did use to blog and I used to put clothes on my blog but I don't anymore.

SL: What made you stop?

INT7: Don't have time. It was just too time consuming.

SL: So just for the purposes of the recording we've talked about how you get inspired and begin the journey. What made you make the final purchases in the end? I'm going to ask about the fashion items just because of the research. What kind of tipped you over the edge to purchase them?

INT7: Em in honestly I think it was just that I needed new things and desperately wanted some black jeans for ages and with Topshop there is a lot of things that I like I can get easily carried away.

SL: Is that your favourite retailer?

INT7: Topshop and Zara yeah and it was probably at the start of term too, when I had more money so.

SL: Obviously one of the questions I have got is about post-purchase but you've already mentioned about using Instagram and blogs. Em so thinking about your fashion journey particularly what's your motivation to use this array of channels on your typical fashion shopping journey?

INT7: Um I mean I think the app is easy to look at like I said when i'm out and about and I think em the website it's just good to see it on a bigger screen, bigger picture maybe look at some reviews and things like that as well on Topshop and then yeah I mean I just maybe use Instagram.

SL: So with the blogs you didnt use it on that journey but you would use it typically.

INT7: Yeah.

SL: So i'm just going to map this out as welll so we have an understanding of your typical journey with blogs. So the next question I want to ask is do you associate certain channels with certain purposes in the shopping journey? Thinking about your most typical journey.

INT7: Yeah em, I mean the app channel is probably just more for me to research um it's not likely that i'd buy through the app if I've got the laptop in front of me just 'cause it's easier. Em and the website is more for purchase I guess.

SL: And what about the social media aspects, what do you use them for?

INT7: Em I mean I do look at things like ASOS and Topshop if they post on Facebook I will look at what they have put, especially if it's quite inspirational like personal stylist, things like that. Sometimes will have a flick through blog posts and things like that if I think they look interesting.

SL: Obviously about Instagram what would you use that for?

INT7: I do look at bloggers on Instagram to see what they are wearing. Especially outfit of the day I always look at.

SL: And do you post things yourself?

INT7: Sometimes if it's an outfit that I really like if it's something that I find quite different or inspiring but not all the time.

SL: And why would you do that? Just be really honest.

INT7: Em I don't know just to be part of outfit of the day or if I think people are going to like it or if it's something completely different and interesting. And I think because I used to blog as well it's that's me getting caught up whole bloggers fear thing just sharing clothes and nail varnish and accessories especially I used to do quite a lot.

SL: With your typical shopping journey I want you to group the channels if at all to represent the stages of your shopping journey. So I want you to think about the typical journey and give them a name for the stages you might have in your journey.

INT7: Ok. So like that yeah?

SL: Yeah that's fine, so inspiration.

INT7: Em.

SL: Research stage.

INT7: Yeah if it's something that I really like then i'll go online.

SL: So we'll move them around then.

INT7: It would be probably second research and purchase I guess.

SL: And what would you call the last stage?

INT7: Em, maybe inspiration again because if you bought something and you don't know how to style it, it's quite good to have a look. Especially like Topshop they're quite good like on their Tumblr and stuff.

SL: So even after the purchase you will go back and revisit?

INT7: Yeah especially if it was something that I bought and i'm not really sure of I like to see how other people are wearing it. So yeah i'd probably say inspiration again. I also like say if a celebrity have got things I like to see if they've got what i've got.

SL: So because you said you post i'm going to put another [social media] card there. Can you just tell me what you would call that?

INT7: Em.

SL: I want to get a really truthful view.

INT7: I guess like acceptance because the whole idea about posting things is that you want to get people to like them so I don't know.

SL: It's really interesting. So just because we have changed things round would you say that's a typical shopping journey for you?

INT7: Yeah.

SL: So just for the recording again the typical journey starts with inspiration, first research stage, second research stage with purchase, inspiration and then acceptance. So just with the two research stage. You said it was looking on the website at a bigger image?

INT7: Yeah.

SL: Ok, anything else to distinguish those two?

INT7: Also maybe like product recommendations and styling. I'm not really sure that they have that on the app because yeah on the website they will have things that like go with things and outfits they've created.

SL: The inspiration stage two you said more to see what celebrities are doing.

INT7: Yeah and bloggers and what the brands have put things with.

SL: You said the final stage was acceptance can you just tell me a wee bit more about that, because that is really interesting.

INT7: Yeah em I dunno I think like eh the whole idea of posting things on Instagram is because you want people to like them. Otherwise you wouldn't put them up if you didn't want people to see them. So I guess it's just kind of showing people what you have bought.

SL: The question that I want to ask now is do you associate certain channels with certain stages of the shopping journey?

INT7: Eh yeah.

SL: So can you tell me a wee bit more about that?

INT7: Um so the first three.

SL: Inspiration, first research stage, second research stage.

INT7: I mean I do associate all of those in terms of research.

SL: Why do you associate these channels with researching?

INT7: I think because I am always on the go it's easier to look at them on my phone or laptop if i've got my laptop with me.

SL: And obviously you associate social media with the earlier and latter stages of the journey, any particular reasons?

INT7: Just because it's kind of easy to flick just through and read things see what brands have posted on Facebook and Twitter. Especially Instagram it's just easier to scroll through and look. Like I wouldn't necessarily use those, Instagram is kind of research. I...I... don't know maybe I would yeah. The app definitely is kind of like… I mean I use Instagram to kind of look at outfits as a whole if there's bloggers and

models that have whole outfits on then i'd use the app to find specific products. I wouldn't use Instagram to look at specific products they'll kind of be just to get inspired as a whole.

SL: Which mobile apps do you use?

INT7: Em, ASOS, Topshop and Zara that's pretty much it I think.

SL: And which online websites would you go for?

INT7: Same again.

SL: And then the inspiration stage. So you looked at bloggers, celebrities, any other kind of - Is it just Instagram mainly and blogger websites?

INT7: Eh yeah and Facebook. Obviously if Topshop put anything on Facebook. Like I know they did their personal stylist like each day they had like a different personal stylist and different outfit, those kind of things.

SL: And with the acceptance stage is that just Instagram on it's own?

INT7: Yeah just Instagram. I would never post anything to Facebook that I bought.

SL: Would you say you are a fashion follower or would you say you are a fashion leader? I'm just trying to ascertain your confidence level.

INT7: Probably a follower but I do kind of wear what I want, I do kind of wear what I want to. But then I wouldn't say i'm completely like avante garde or outrageous with my choices. I'm probably somewhere in the middle.

SL: And in terms of your confidence level where would you sit if this is low and this is high?

INT7: I think i'm quite high. I mean I always feel confident in what I wear, em I kind of know what I like to wear and what I don't. I mean my style kind of always changes as well.

SL: I'm just thinking when you said you post stuff as an inspiration method as well. I was quite interested between your correlation between that.

INT7: I mean yeah I guess you have to be quite confident I guess to post outfits and things like that on Instagram. So yeah I would say I am quite confident but not a complete fashion leader.

SL: Overall how well do these channels align with these steps in your shopping journey?

INT7: Do you mean em as a retailer as a whole? How do you mean sorry?

SL: No just in general em say the mobile app, how well does that meet your needs at that first research stage.

INT7: Ah ok, yeah. I mean some apps are better than others. Say if I am looking for something specific if I want to refine the search some of the apps aren't as good at refining the search. Say ASOS I know have had problems before, especially if I want something really specific and I have just typed in like pink jumper. Then I kind of expect everything to come up.

SL: And does that not happen?

INT7: Not always I think I said this before like ASOS, if you refine the options it doesn't give you all the options that are available on the website.

SL: And what about the other channels do they align well with say, like you've got the website does that align well with say your research stage.

INT7: Em definitiely… 'cause like I said it's easier to see product reccommendations. I just find it easier to look on the big screen as well.

SL: Do you own a tablet at all?

INT7: No.

SL: And the inspiration stage how well does social media provide for that, in the second stage.

INT7: Instagram especially is really really good because you can spend hours literally searching for hashtags and looking through different bloggers pictures and do you do that frequently, yeah.

SL: And the acceptance stage do social media channels meet your needs for that.

INT7: Yeah I mean it's not often I would do that em but when I do Instagram it's good for that.

SL: Would you still say it was typical say for things that you really liked.

INT7: Eh yeah.

SL: Em now what I want you to do is now to tell me about the devices you used to access these channels. Now by a device I mean a physical manifestation of how you access the channel. Say if it was a mobile app, how did you access it - is it a tablet, is it an app on your Macbook, or your phone and obviously your social media as well. The device cards are here but I've also got the devices themselves so I've got the iPad. So you can either put the iPad or the laptop beside the channel or you can use a card.

INT7: Ok. Em so I would use magazines at the inspiration stage I mean I don't buy magazines often but when I do they're for fashion.

SL: Would you class that as social media in anyway?

INT7: No, not a magazine.

SL: Is that typical in your journey a magazine?

INT7: No, not all the time but sometimes I do take inspiration from magazines. It's like if and when I have time to read them I will. At the moment i'm quite busy so I don't but if I haven't got anything on then I will.

SL: So if I put a magazine there would you say it was a typical journey or…?

INT7: I'd say it was an occasional not typical.

SL: I'll put that down there then. ASOS retailer magazine or women's magazine?

INT7: I get their magazine in the post so I'm always looking at that.

SL: Is that a typical thing?

INT7: I would say yeah.

SL: And when would you do that is that at the inspiration stage?

INT7: Yeah that's first.

SL: And would you regard that as social media in anyway?

INT7: Em, no I don't think I would.

SL: And would you be happy if I put that there?

INT7: Yeah.

SL: Smartphone?

INT7: For social media for Instagram. And then I need another smartphone.

SL: Online website?

INT7: Laptop.

SL: Social media again?

INT7: And then it would be laptop and smartphone again. And the same for that one as well.

SL: So it's just whatever you are nearest to at the time.

INT7: Yeah.

SL: So in terms of when you are using your phone…actually say for the magazine are you using that by…

INT7: Paper.

SL: When you are on social media with your smartphone at the first inspiration stage are you using just going on to the website or are you going on to an app?

INT7: I try and use the app because if the website's not optimised it's really annoying so I try and use the app as much as possible.

SL: So what would you use most typically, the app or mobile website?

INT7: The app.

SL: Social media again on this second inspiration stage are you using an app or website?

INT7: Apps and then the website's on my actual laptop.

SL: Then again acceptance would you be using an app?

INT7: Apps, yep.

SL: And why do you use the apps.

INT7: Just cause they are easier to navigate and faster and it saves manual text entry and things like that it's just more convenient.

SL: Your journey is getting longer.

INT7: I know the more I think about it. I think especially with the magazines if they're just there I will have a flick through. Especially since the ASOS one gets delivered.

SL: Do you prefer the paper magazine from ASOS?

INT7: Yeah I think it's quite nice to still have physical magazines.

SL: It's quite interesting considering you're so young and your into all the digital stuff but you still like a magazine.

INT7: Yeah I think it's just nice to have the pages to turn sometimes and because I don't have a tablet like I would never read a magazine on my phone because it's too small.

SL: Would you read it on a tablet?

INT7: I think I would yeah.

SL: Over a paper magazine?

INT7: Em, I don't … if the paper magazine was there and it got delivered in the post then I would look at it. But if it wasn't there and then yeah I probably would look online 'cause I've looked at Net-A-Porter before online.

SL: And how did you find that?

INT7: Fine. But I would rather have it paper I think yeah.

SL: Even if you had a tablet?

INT7: Yeah, it's just easier to read em, yeah.

SL: Do you associate different devices with different purposes on your shopping journey?

INT7: Yes, because I'd always use like apps on my phone to do research. Em if I mean if I was desparate to buy something and I didn't have my laptop then I would buy through an app. Then yeah, my laptop is normally for purchasing.

SL: Your smartphone in general what sort of purpose do you associate that with?

INT7: Search.

SL: When would you use your smartphone is it different to when you be using your laptop.

INT7: Yeah it'd be like lying in bed or on the bus, when it's just easier.

SL: So kind of your free time?

INT7: Yep.

SL: So what I want you to do now is tell me your overall customer experience of that journey?

INT7: Em…I'm just thinking like usually Topshop are really good with delivering. But this time I had problems returning 'cause they em… took ages to refund me for some of the things that I bought and I was getting quite annoyed.

SL: Anything else about your customer experience that stood out.

INT7: I think because I buy fashion all the time it's just kind of the norm to me so I'm not really 'blown away' by anything anymore. I think I kind of expect it to be perfect. Especially with like delivery and picking up from store. And I think that's why I mean Topshop took so long to refund me I was kind of like a bit annoyed.

SL: And why where you annoyed?

INT7: Because you just expect it. Like they just didn't confirm the refund for the goods like I sent back and they were like yeah, it could take up to a month and I thought it was like three to five days but like a month to return the goods. It was all very weird.

SL: So just going back to the devices now, do you associate different devices with different stages of the shopping journey?

INT7: Em yeah, smartphone is mainly research but then I do more so research on but then I do research on my laptop if I've got nothing to do yeah. But at the moment as I am quite busy I don't have time to sit and trawl through websites.

SL: Can you just tell me about any marketing communications you encountered on the journey we have just talked about with Topshop?

INT7: Emails, they always send emails.

SL: Anything else or any contact you had with the retailer?

INT7: I think em, yeah I had to call them and I had to email them about my return. So I'll just put the contact centre up there. That's not normal though, I don't do that unless I really have to.

SL: Ok, so that's fine. So I just want to get this Topshop journey quite clear. So when you were returning things you purchased from the mobile app, you went on the website and then you went on social media and then you went to the contact centre with the returns issue.

INT7: Yeah.

SL: And why did you return those items?

INT7: Because I had just bought them online and I hadn't tried them on and they weren't suitable.

SL: Was there any other contact you had with the retailer other than the contact centre and the emails?

INT7: No.

SL: I want you to tell me about your emotional responses during that shopper journey. So you said you felt a bit annoyed and frustrated. Was there anything else, any other highs or lows.

INT7: Em, not really no.

SL: If we think about your typical journey can you talk me through your emotional responses during that journey.

INT7: Like I said before I kind of expect it to be completely flawless and when it's not I get a bit annoyed.

SL: And how do you feel at each of the stages?

INT7: Em I get kind of indifferent really. When I am searching for something it's kind of…

SL: I have noticed that you are using multiple channels of the same retailer, is there any reason why you do that?

INT7: I think it's just because I enjoy it, I enjoy kind of searching for things and just getting inspired and finding other things em so I think it's just quite good to just have a look at the Facebook, on the app, on the website to see what's going on I guess.

SL: And do you see different things on them or?

INT7: Em I mean obviously more Facebook and Instagram it's obviously good to be inspired by different outfits. Em the app I think the app can have a harder to see product whereas if you go on the online website on your laptop you get a full view of everything so you can see everything.

SL: Overall if you think about your Topshop journey and your typical journey how satisfied were you overall.

INT7: Yeah fairly satisfied I mean the only problem I had was returning and it wasn't that much of a problem it just took a really long time that's all.

SL: And has that influenced your view of the retailer in anyway?

INT7: Em no because it is Topshop and it's probably my favourite, but I think probably yeah. I think just because I like shopping there anyway I'll still shop there. It's the same with Zara like, I have had problems with returns with them before but I still shop there yep.

SL: Do you view your shopping journey as stages or do you see it as an overall journey?

INT7: Um, overall.

SL: Can you just tell me a wee bit more about that?

INT7: 'Cause I mean I think if I wanted to buy something it doesn't really enter my head that I need to look on Instagram. I just kind of do it.

SL: Anything else?

INT7: Em I think because I buy fashion so often as well I mean if it was going to be an expensive purchase I would probably see it in stages but because it is just fast fashion at the end of the day and I always change my mind it's just yeah.

SL: So if it was more expensive you would see it as stages?

INT7: Yeah.

SL: And why is that?

INT7: If I was parting with a lot more money then I would want to do a lot more research em before just buying things.

SL: And what would that do for you?

INT7: Just more reassurance.

SL: Obviously if I look at your typical journey versus your other ones you do seem to switch back and forth between channels. For example on your shoe journey you've got switching between online website and store and your typical journey moving about between social media quite frequently. Why do you do that rather than go through the channel consecutively?

INT7: I think it's because I like to know that I am making the right choice and getting the best thing.

SL: And what motivates you to move between channels? What drives you to do that?

INT7: Em especially with using Instagram and Facebook first that'll be getting inspired by a blogger or something I've seen and thinking oh I need to find out the rest from how much is it and then trying to find it.

SL: When you have your laptop open do you have lots of tabs open on your computer?

INT7: Yeah

SL: Do you ever use any channels simultaneously? So I mean using two channels at the same time? So it could be using two different websites or standing in the store on your mobile.

INT7: Yeah I've used two different website because I am quite impatient and if one is taking too long to load I'll get on that one, wait for it to load and flick between the two. I don't so much really use the phone in the store unless it's like taking a picture of the label if they haven't got my size.

SL: Have you done that a few times?

INT7: Not really I just try and remember the name of it and then search when I go home on the computer.

SL: Any other instances where you are using two channels at once?

INT7: Eh not that I can think of.

SL: Do you ever use your mobile when you have got your laptop open?

INT7: Not for shopping it would be more of the other.

SL: When you have got the channels open would your social media be open at the same time as you are looking at the websites?

INT7: Do you mean specifically on the brand social media or just any social media?

SL: No just any.

INT7: Yeah I sit on my phone on social media and surf websites on my laptop, yeah.

SL: You are using stuff at the same time but it's not specifically for fashion.

INT7: Yeah.

SL: Would you talk to your friends about fashion to your friends if you were on websites looking for fashion?

INT7: Yeah, yeah. Yeah like sending people links to clothes on Facebook.

SL: What's that for, is it to get their opinion or…?

INT7: Yeah.

SL: Do you get the same level of benefits from each of the different channels that you encounter or do you see some channels as offering bigger or littler benefits?

INT7: Em, I mean I think for me they are all the same level of benefits for me yeah.

SL: Can you tell me a little bit more about that, why do you think they are all the same?

INT7: Just because I don't think there is much benefit between the app and the website really. Yeah it's easier to see products on the web but you can still find the same amount of products on the app, hopefully most of the time.

SL: And you said obviously on the occasion with the shoes you bought them in store. Obviously you don't have store in your typical journey. Does store offer the same or different benefits?

INT7: Em, it's just the free delivery. That's the only thing. It's just because I don't like paying for anything and it's just easier to get it delivered to the store so I can go and pick it up rather than hanging around and waiting for it.

SL: Em same with devices, do you perceive them as offering similar benefits or one offering higher or lower benefits.

INT7: It depends what I'm using it for. So I mean obviously I'm not really using my laptop to go on the app, to go on Instagram, I would use my phone. Em but purchasing on the laptop has more benefits. It's just easier for entering details and things like that. It's so hard textual entry on phone. And it's like ASOS even

though I'm normally signed into their app if I try and save something, save an item. Sometimes it'll sign me out and then I have to login again and then I'm like ah forget it because I can't be bothered to enter my email address and password.

SL: By mixing and matching channels do you gain overall benefits say as opposed to just using one channel of that retailer?

INT7: I feel like I feel I have gained benefits, like being able to search for the best thing and obviously picking up for free in store rather than spending money on delivery.

SL: Are there any overall negatives that you encounter because you are using a combination as well?

INT7: Not really. I mean the only the only flaw is mainly returns. That's the only time I ever have problems. I mean especially Zara they used to be quite funny with if you bought things online they didn't really like you returning things in the store which they should.

SL: And how do you feel about that?

INT7: I mean it's just annoying as a consumer because I mean Zara you have to wait in for them to pick it up you can't just take it to the post office. You want to take it in store but then they are funny about it because it's online and that's their problem really like they need to fix that really. But they're not so bad anymore compared to when they used to be.

SL: Are there any combinations of fashion retail channels that you think work well together?

INT7: Phone and laptop I think.

SL: Phone and laptop work well together and app and website?

INT7: Yeah so hopefully they'll have some kind of synchronisation between the app and the website. There's nothing more annoying.

SL: So what sort of synchronisation?

INT7: Kind of like if you've tried to find a product and it's on the app and it's not on the website or it's on the website and not on the app. It just needs to be consistent.

SL: Synchronisation of consumer information across channels is a physical representation of consistency

INT7: Omni channel benefits outweigh the risks

SL: Has your experience in one channel ever affected your experience or use of another channel if it had an impact.

INT7: Em, no like I said before if it's like my favourite retailers then it doesn't really bother me. It's just I like the clothes.

SL: So even if it's bad service and you really like the clothes you'd still do it?

INT7: Especially with Zara and Topshop because it's not cheap at the end of the day it's still high street. So yeah it doesn't really matter. If I'm spending more money then yeah I would expect the service.

SL: Now this is a really broad question, so whatever comes to mind. How do you think that all the different retail channels that are available to you are becoming merged or blurred?

INT7: Em well I think with more retailers investing in apps than just like the unoptimised mobile website they're trying to kind of like integrate everything together. Em I don't know but I think with Instagram as well like I know ASOS posts like product codes and things on there so then you can go and search for that on your phone or laptop.

SL: Was it not like that before?

INT7: No like brands would put like pictures of clothes up but not really like say the name of it and like the product code and maybe… I don't know if they have any links on there I can't remember.

SL: Anything else about channels becoming merged or blurred?

INT7: Umm... I don't think so.

SL: Again a really broad question. In your opinion what represents a seamless fashion shopping experience?

INT7: Well obvsiouly I switch between channels a lot so just everything being consistent across channels and being easy for me.

SL: And being easy for you as in…

INT7: Em, purchasing, delivery – especially if I'm going to get it delivered to store.

SL: So if you think about the retailers that you have encountered do you find different shopping channels of the same retailers, are they consistent? Because I know you have mentioned a few discrepancies with ASOS.

INT7: Yeah. Em I mean now it's a lot better. I mean Zara and Topshop are really consistent. I think they are now, they didn't used to be. But obviously there's quite a lot of emphasis on m-commerce at the moment so I think they're getting better.

SL: What about your less favourite retailers, what are they doing?

INT7: I don't know 'cause it's hard. I don't really look on the apps or anything so I'm not sure.

SL: Was your impression of the Topshop brand consistent across the channels?

INT7: Yeah apart from the returns.

SL: And in what way was it not consistent with the brand?

INT7: Em just because normally I have good experiences with Topshop. They're normally quite em on the ball especially with confirmation emails like confirmation of returns.

SL: Do you like those kind of confirmations?

INT7: Yeah and I think that's why it threw me off a bit because they hadn't confirmed my return for like two weeks which was just strange for them, anyway....

SL: And what about the look and feel of the brand across the channels, is that consistent?

INT7: Yeah, especially the app and the website. It's pretty much the same.

SL: And are there any retailer that you think don't do it very consistently, that doesn't have the same look and feel?

INT7: Em, I can't think of any off the top of my head, just 'cause I haven't used any.

SL: How do you reassure yourself in making the right purchase decision?

INT7: Em I think again like the inspiration and research.

SL: Like inspiration and research stage two?

INT7: Yeah. I mean I bought this zebra print coat from Zara and I was unsure about it and I kind of googled it Millie Mackintosh [celebrity] had it so I was like I am going to keep it then.

SL: So did you feel better?

INT7: Yeah 'cause she had it and a few other bloggers had it so I was like yeah I'm going to keep it. I just 'googled' it just to get some inspiration as to what to wear it with because it was quite like, it's quite a statement so yeah. Especially with statement pieces then.

SL: And have you worn it a lot since.

INT7: Yeah all the time.

SL: So with your inspiration and research stage two you would go onto like Google as well?

INT7: Mmm.

SL: Would you do that before you go onto social media, is that before?

INT7: If it's something really like a statement piece and I'm like oh what will I wear this with. I will literally just type the description into Google.

SL: So will you just go from your laptop?

INT7: Just laptop straight onto Google. I just think it's quite interesting. Like even if I am sure of what I've bought and I am going to keep it, it's just quite interesting to see how people have styled it. Because I mean it's sometimes like they do things that you would never have thought to do.

SL: And is that part of the inspiration stage 2?

INT7: Yeah. Yeah Google is like a kind of reassurance as well.

SL: So will you literally type in the search Zebra print coat?

INT7: Yeah. I'd just type in Zara, zebra print coat and see what happens. Because nine times out of ten there's a blogger that's got something especially with things from Zara and it's just interesting to see what they wear it with.

SL: How does an omni channel journey affect your trust with Topshop?

INT7: I don't think it does. I don't really have any trust issues with shopping through different channels. So I think… I mean it does have to be consistent but it's not really an issue.

SL: So your trust is indifferent towards Topshop. What about your loyalty how is that affected by touching multiple points of a same retailer?

INT7: Um I mean like I said cause it's my favourite retailer I am not really bothered but if I had a really really bad experience then I'd probably be like the first to put it on Twitter. Em but then I'd still be quite loyal to Topshop just because I like the clothes.

SL: So you're loyal to Topshop not from your interaction with them but purely the clothes?

INT7: Em yeah I would say so. They don't offer great customer service it's pretty average. Em it's not like amazing, just normal.

SL: Then obviously if you're shopping across channels would that have any impact on your loyalty or would that increase it in anyway.

INT7: No, keep it the same.

SL: So it is really down to the clothes isn't it?

INT7: Yeah. But I mean then it is kind of expected for me that like it should be seamless across the channels. I just expect that.

SL: See when we did the research just there… just for the purposes of the recording can you tell me why did you pick up the cards over the devices?

INT7: Um I don't know I think, probably just easier.

SL: And why do you think it was just easier?

INT7: Just easier, they're bulkier.

SL: Do you have a set list of retailers who offer multiple channels in your head.

INT7: No because I use them all for everybody so I mean ASOS obviously they don't have a store so I have to go online. But I use all the channels for everyone.

SL: Do you have a set list of retailers?

INT7: Probably ASOS, Topshop and Zara they're probably my top three. Especially with ASOS as well because they just have all the different brands and see what's on there.

SL: As a fashion consumer what does the term connected consumer mean to you?
INT7: Em I like first associate that with being engaged and interactive with social media and the brand and blogs then, the different social media.

--Ends--

Interview VIII - INT8 Yasmin

SL: So first of all what drives you to use lots of channels as opposed to using just one shopping channel during your fashion shopping journey?

INT8: Em it's more convenience or like boredom. So it's more I use my phone. Can you repeat it again please?

SL: So what drives you to use many channels during your fashion shopping journey.

INT8: Ok em, it normally starts off with convenience, so just like out of boredom I'd use my phone em just sort of have a browse. Em but then I like to go into the actual store to see the product physically. I normally do my research say either on my phone or on my laptop em that kind of drives me to compare prices em but then again I like to go to the store and like physically try it on. But sometimes they have online discounts so I often see it online, go into the store try it on, go home, use the discount code and order it because sometimes they do it online and not instore.

SL: And how do you feel about that?

INT8: It's quite frustrating because there's the risk if you always go and wait, go into the store, try it on, get back, it might have gone out of stock online and then it's frustrating. I mean sometimes in store, Ark Clothing for example, em I went into their…because they had twenty percent off for students they offer that online. So I went into the store and tried on a shirt and I said, you don't by any chance offer student discount, because they like do online, and they were like oh no you have to have a special code. Em and I said well I haven't got that with me because I didn't know and they let me off that time 'cause I'd asked so nicely. Em but it is quite frustrating because if you can offer it online why can't you offer it in the store. I guess they are trying to encourage more people to use their… like more shopping channels.

SL: Would you say that you are confident in your ability to use such an array of channels when?

INT8: Yeah, I would say I am.

SL: And why is that?

INT8: I'm quite, I'm not scared of technology. I'm quite happy sort of browsing the internet and em, doing my research like price comparisons on different items and stuff. Em things for example…I've been looking at a pair of Hunter wellies and I sort of have been into store to have a look. Like Office have them for about eighty, eighty-five pound with student discount. But then it's like um… more confident to go into store, to try then on and then go away and order them from a completely different website.

SL: So what I want you to do is to think of your most recent shopping journey for high street fashion. It doesn't matter if you bought the item or not. Obviously you have mentioned the wellies but like clothing in particular.

INT8: Quite recently I follow, I am quite a fan of Ark. I follow them on Instagram and Twitter and they are really promoting their daisy range. They've got a lot of … clothing range like dresses and tops with daisy print on. I'm quite a big fan of that so em I did some research on. Like I saw that on Instagram then I went onto their website and had a look um and they had a really nice little tea dress with like daisy print on. I then, I think I sort of looked around for a bit and see what else was out there on various websites like Topshop, Miss Selfridge, New Look, all of those and River Island as well actually but none of them had what Ark had and it's quite a reasonable price. I sort of put it off and then I got an email from Ark and I hadn't ordered something from them for a long time, saying we miss you use this discount code, get twenty percent off. So I was like ok, that's just telling me to order em. So I ordered it em, I did em, click and collect so you get free delivery to the store. I had a bit of a night mare it said it was coming on Wednesday. So I went shopping on Wednesday to pick it up and it wasn't in then so I ended up just having a browse around and buying a skirt and top from New Look anyway. Em went back to town next day to pick it up got it home, tried it on and it didn't look quite as good as me as it did on the website. Em, so now I've got the hassle of taking it back, which is a bit annoying because I really like the style of the dress, but em so now I have got to package it up and I have got fourteen days to take it back to the…I think I'm going to take it back to the…new free returns to the store. You just do it all online, say you are returning it and which store and you get a sticker, you get like a little label to pop on the package and take it along to the store. Em but I still really want a daisy print dress so I ordered one this morning.

SL: And where did you order that one from?

INT8: It's from the same website but it's a completely different style, it's like a jersey material.

SL: So it's from Ark.

INT8: It's from Ark again, you can do click and collect again and I had another discount code so I used that. So that's what encourages me to buy, when they have like a promotional or something.

SL: So initially from that shopping journey what was the main trigger for you to begin that shopping journey?

INT8: Eh photos on Instagram. I think it's the way they put it all together. They had say like a cute little outfit with the shoes. You want all of it but I'll start with the dress and maybe work my way through.

SL: And at the end of that journey you made a purchase, returned it and made another purchase.

INT8: Yeah.

SL: So what I want you to do now is I've got some channel cards here, such as store mobile online. So that journey you have just talked about I want you to map it from left to right picking out which channels you used.

INT8: Ok.

SL: So we just want you to display the sequence of the journey.

INT8: So if I start here. Oh I forgot to include that I saw it… the dress I ordered today was on the mobile app. Ok so that would be at the end .

SL: OK so map your whole journey. So what did you do after you Instagramed it?

INT8: I went onto their online website. Em then went into the store to collect and then had to go back onto their website to say that I was returning it and then back into the store to return that, collect the other one.

SL: So that's your full journey there?

INT8: Yeah.

SL: What I want you to do now is, can you just write down which social media sites you went on I know you have said Ark already but just put a post-it down to say which ones you went on. So if it was Ark or Instagram etc.

INT8: Oh I went on other websites.

SL: That's fine just make a note of them. Why did you go on the other websites?

INT8: Just to see if it was a recurring trend. I mean River Island did have a few bits but nothing in the style that I liked that's why I didn't go for them. New Look didn't have any cause New Look often do discounts. I went into other shops as well that day. That was the day I went to collect it.

SL: So this was the journey for your dress ok and you used the store for the returning bit.

INT8: Yeah.

SL: Now is this a typical shopping journey for you?

INT8: I'd say if I'm buying online it is because I normally try and do it the cheapest way so I don't have to pay for delivery because that's always annoying. If you don't like the product and you have to return it you don't get the cost of delivery back.

SL: So see the returns bit on here did you start returning from the website by getting the label?

INT8: Yeah.

SL: Did you post the item.

INT8: Just took it back into the store with the printed label on it and they collect it and give you a receipt.

SL: What I am going to do is map your typical journey. So would it look like this or would it be slightly different?

INT8: I'd say this is a normal journey say other than the returns section so it would normally start on social media for inspiration and then on their website to compare, then I would normally go into their store and then if it's a correct item that's normally it.

SL: Do you use anything normally post purchase? You don't post anything, review anything or tweet or anything like that?

INT8: I've actually tweeted pictures of me wearing like my new River Island necklace and things like that or I would Instagram the outfits.

SL: So would you say this is your typical journey?

INT8: Yeah.

SL: So have you posted a picture of this outfit yet?

INT8: No because I haven't got it yet.

SL: Do you want to write down for me which social media, which websites for me.

INT8: Yep ok, it just depends normally on where and whether it's a successful purchase or not. I'll put down blogs as well because I have recently started following. Like 'In The Frow' Victoria's blog it's so good, I love it. I follow her Instagram as well, she's great. So I would just write these are typical stores that I would visit. Normally ASOS do free returns, student discount and free delivery so that is quite a key online site.

SL: Do you use your mobile or anything to access anything?

INT8: I have all the apps actually.

SL: Do you typically use mobile apps?

INT8: I prefer seeing things on the… if I'm on the go I'd use the app but normally if I'm looking at an item I'd rather see it on the website because it's a bigger screen.

SL: So just for the recording we're putting the website under the app.

INT8: Website is normally first.

SL: So put the website before the app?

INT8: Yeah. I've recently used Missguided as well but that is just an online retailer but that's annoying because there is no store you have to order it. What other apps have I got? I have a whole folder of them on my phone.

SL: Are they all of your favourite retailers?

INT8: They're just mainly high street ones but they're quite good, they're quite interactive. I normally just, when I'm in Manchester as well it's just mainly the stores that are in the Arndale so it's not anything out of the ordinary. I keep remembering more that I've used recently.

SL: So I can see there you're using lots of different channels of the same retailers.

INT8: Yeah.

SL: River Island your using the app, the website and the store.

INT8: It's really good. And social media...I normally tweet or Instagram it. I think that's all.

SL: So that's your typical journey then. Now what I want you to do is for your typical journey I have got some devices. So I have got some of them physically, so you can either pick up the device and move it next to the channel so you can pick up the phone, the laptop etc or you've got the device cards, whatever you prefer to do.

INT8: I think the cards because I just don't trust myself.

SL: In what way, why do you choose the cards.

INT8: I don't know really, I don't.

SL: That's ok, so what I want you to do is put the device or the card beneath the channel. So how do you usually access social media?

INT8: Em with my phone.

SL: Do you use an app, or is it just the website or the online website.

INT8: Most of the stores that I have listed have got apps.

SL: So social media, would you use apps?

INT8: Yeah.

SL: Online website?

INT8: On my mac.

SL: And then you're … so mobile app that's for the retailers again so would you use your…?

INT8: Smartphone

SL: Do you have an iPad or anything like that?

INT8: No.

SL: Store, you would just walk in?

INT8: Yeah ha ha.

SL: Social media?

INT8: Em that's normally on my phone.

SL: If it's on your phone how are you accessing social media?

INT8: Apps.

SL: And with your original journey was that quite similar to what you did here on your typical journey, or did you do anything different?

INT8: I'm trying to think…I saw the magazine there but for these particular ones I didn't. I get Vogue every month but that's just because I enjoy looking at the designs and things so I don't normally?

SL: What is that for, what purpose does it serve?

INT8: It's just sort of to keep up to date with what designers are doing, mainly for my degree actually it was a Christmas present a subscription. I just enjoy looking at what designers are doing and what the trends are doing and it's interesting to see how that filters down into the high street products that the majority can afford.

SL: Would you include that in your typical journey?

INT8: I wouldn't no because once a month I normally flick through it and just completely forget about it but em yeah it's mainly just on websites. I'm so dependent on technology now that I don't tend to use anything else.

SL: So with the dress journey up there were you using the same sort of devices?

INT8: Yeah.

SL: So with social media were you using the smartphone in that case.

INT8: Yep.

SL: With the store obviously you walked in.

INT8: Online website.

SL: So that was definitely on your…?

INT8: Mac.

SL: Mobile app was that through your smartphone?

INT8: Yep.

SL: And then store again.

INT8: Yeah.

SL: I've got one more task. Next task that I want you to do in your typical journey is I want you to identify the stages of your shopping journey. So I want you to give each stage a name. You can group channels together and or you can keep them separate using the post its for your typical journey.

INT8: That'd be one group, so that'd be my inspiration, what gives me ideas of what I want to buy. I'd say those two together are like my research and purchase because I normally research using different websites and then buy it normally online.

SL: Would you buy it on your app?

INT8: Em…I've bought one or two things on apps but I'd rather do it online because I of my card details and that being on my phone.

SL: So is the online website on your typical journey research and purchase?

INT8: Yeah.

SL: And what about that?

INT8: Perhaps that's just research then so if I just write research, but like additional research. So that's either collecting it or actually buying it – is that ok as one category?

SL: Yeah. Now what do you want to call this stage?

INT8: Hmm…

SL: Think about what you are doing in that stage and be honest as well.

INT8: I dunno it's like something like…you're not really promoting it…it's just sort of showing the world what I just bought, like my friends. It's kind of like because you tag the brand in it, it's sort of…it's not really advertising for them but it's sort of. It's almost like thanking them … this is what I bought I love it kind of thing.

SL: So there's almost two parts you've got the personal bit where you're showing your pals and you've got the retailer bit. So what would you call that stage? If you just give it a general word?

INT8: I can't think of the word it's like you're showcasing what you've bought. Showcasing, I might just go with that.

SL: Ok, showcasing.

INT8: Because it's nice when you get good comments on it like 'this is really cute.'

SL: Again if you just think back to your dress journey are they the same sorts of stages you would go through?

INT8: Eh, yep inspiration, online website was actually buying it, yeah that was like research and buying which is the same thing.

SL: The typical journey.

INT8: I mean there wasn't any additional research. I mean…well that was additional research but that was done all on the website. I didn't use my app for that one.

SL: So just for the recording the online website was for your research and purchase, you didn't do any additional mobile app research because you made your purchase. OK then store?

INT8: Store that's then collecting my parcel. But then that's returning.

SL: So see with the return was there a reason why you specifically used the laptop to do a return?

INT8: It's a lot easier. I haven't really tried to do it on my phone I think it'd…I don't know what the apps like. I've never really considered it because I always just use it for browsing or buying.

SL: But would you prefer to use your laptop for returning?

INT8: Yeah because my laptop is hooked up to my printer as well and prints off the label. I guess with my phone you can still send it to the printer but it's a lot easier to use my laptop.

SL: And you went back on the mobile app, was that just to look at other daisy print dresses?

INT8: Yeah.

SL: And then you will be going into store to collect it?

INT8: Yeah and hopefully that one will be ok.

SL: Do you think when you get it, if it fits well, do you think you would showcase it to the world?

INT8: Probably yeah 'cause … I'd been given the money for it for my birthday so I would want to be like this is what your birthday money got me, if that sort of makes sense? This is what you bought me ha ha.

SL: See with the channels obviously you use lots of like channels of the same retailer – so with Ark you've got the website, the store, the app and the same with like River Island you use the app, the online website. Why do you use multiple channels of the same retailer?

INT8: Em I normally only use my phone when I'm not near my laptop or sometimes laptops are a bit of an effort to set up online and em but eh I know the apps of those retailers are good. Some retailers still don't have apps.

SL: So why would you use the website and the mobile app as opposed to using just one of the channels?

INT8: Em…I think I use the website if I know that I'm going to buy something but I use the mobile app if I am just for browsing. Say if I'm sitting downstairs and my laptop's upstairs I'll just have a look and see what's on Ark or River Island at the moment, that'w when I use my phone and my apps.

SL: Do you use different channels of the same retailer because you choose to or because you have to?

INT8: Because I choose to.

SL: Why do you choose to?

INT8: Em, I just to get sort of different angles of the product really. I'd rather use the website for seeing it up close because the screen is a lot bigger. It's kind of half and half because if you see a product on your

phone I feel like I have to see it on the website to buy it or in store. I couldn't just buy something on the app.

SL: Why would you do that?

INT8: It's such a small screen you can't see the product properly. You can't get a description like you get on the website. But I'd just rather see it on a big screen or em physically.

SL: Ok take a seat and we'll move on to the next part, it's really interesting.

INT8: It's something that I never really think about.

SL: If you just think back to your dress journey, how did you get inspired to begin that journey?

INT8: Em I think it was seeing the photos on Instagram by the retailer Ark. I think it was when we had that weather as well and they said get inspired for spring and they were promoting. I just really liked the promotion and that's what really triggered my journey. Em and then I thought I really want to buy into this trend.

SL: And see that promotion where did that come from?

INT8: That was an email from Ark yeah. They just said, oh you haven't bought something in a long time and we've missed you.

SL: Was that even before you went on Instagram?

INT8: No that was after. It was like quite convenient because I had seen it and I was going to order it anyway but I was like, but with that was just like I've got to order it now.

SL: Are there any other kind of discounts that you would use?

INT8: Urban Outfitters – I'm always getting emails from them. I think I just wait for the retailer or if I see something I really like I would go on Unidays because they do discount for quite a few retailers. I think like Boohoo.com they use Unidays. So I've got an account and so get a code and type it in and you get ten percent normally.

SL: So is that typical in your shopping journey?

INT8: I usually get some form of discount cause that helps with the postage and packaging or just general.

SL: So think about your typical journey is that discount from the retailer or where does that offer come from?

INT8: I'd say normally from the retailer. Like if it's via email. I know New Look do quite a lot of because I get emails from them quite often. Normally it's an email discount with a code saying use this code to get this much off, skirts.

SL: Is that usually before or after your inspiration?

INT8: It sort of varies. Like sometimes, the dress journey was inspired by Instagram but if I haven't been on a website in a long time and I get an email saying get twenty percent off this weekend. I'll just have a look to see what's there. I think they are both equal in the sense of inspiration.

SL: So would you put that at the same time as the social media?

INT8: Yeah.

SL: So in a typical journey, if you think to kind of your most average journey what do you think would it be. Would it be social media first or would it be discount first?

INT8: I would say social media. Because I follow all my favourite retailers on Instagram anyway so.

SL: But the discount can inspire you as well.

INT8: Yeah. It just sort of pushes you to buy it.

SL: So is it pushing you to look or is it just pushing you to buy.

INT8: I've normally seen what I like already, like Instagram or twitter. Then when I get the email I'm like ok I'm going to buy it now.

SL: So it's pushing you to buy it.

INT8: Yeah.

SL: That's quite interesting because for a retailer to maybe change when they send you an email. Perhaps they should only send you an email when they have been looking.

INT8: Yeah. That's true, cause they can't they.

SL: So with the discount. With your typical journey would you get that before you get onto the website. Would you already know your code or would that come a bit later?

INT8: Normally the code. If say I didn't already have it with my email and if I was going to go on Unidays or something and look for one I would find the product first and get to the basket stage and be like let's find a promo code.

SL: So you get the email there, then you get a discount code there.

INT8: Yeah Unidays usually or like voucher codes often do things there as well.

SL: If you just think back to your actual dress journey, obviously before you returned it. What made you make your final purchase?

INT8: I really wanted something in that style and I thought maybe I've ordered that and the style doesn't really suit me. Perhaps I'll go for something else I that print but a different style and different fabric. That kind of pushed me because I really wanted to buy it and for this time of year it would be perfect. I don't know that just pushed me into buying.

SL: So see your final purchase, your newer dress did you pay full price for that one?

INT8: Em I just, I em. Well they sent me one saying we've missed you here's this discount code and I'm sure I used it for the original dress and I thought I'll just try it again and it worked. That was an inbox email, it just came through. They send me one, once a week on various brands that they stock or different categories of clothing so like twenty percent off dresses this weekend or twenty percent off knitwear for twenty four hours and things like that.

SL: And so you've told me about channels in the post purchase stage, we've covered that question. With your dress journey what was your motivation to use that particular combination of channels?

INT8: Em, I think. Well Instagram I use it every day just scrolling through, just to see what's going on and it's mixed in with favourite retailers, favourite celebs and friends so that sort of. And then I was encouraged to go on the website because I liked what I saw on Instagram and then the store I wanted to see what they had physically because sometimes they haven't got everything that they have got in the store, on the website or the other way round.

SL: And how do you feel about that?

INT8: Sometimes it's quite frustrating because if you see something in the store that you really like and you're like oh I'll get that off the website and you can't find it anywhere it's just really annoying. But sometimes they have online exclusives but actually they say that. I respect that a lot more when they say that. Like River Island do that. Or Topshop say online exclusive and only available in our London flagship. That's ok but it's just frustrating when they don't state that.

SL: OK in your typical journey what's your motivation to use these channels? Is it similar to that dress journey?

INT8: I'd say normally. One of the motivations is the email as well if it wasn't off of Instagram or Twitter. I'd say like the website is very similar and the motivations for using the mobile app is just out of convenience. So say I am on the bus to Uni or something and I'm like what can I do and I just think oh, well I'll just have a look at what that retailer is doing for the minute so that's my motivation for that.

SL: And in your journeys you have not really combined channels for as such but in your typical journey you've got the research and purchase phase then you've got an additional phase. Do you see them as the same phase or two different phases?

INT8: I see them as two different phases because I know for a fact that I wouldn't purchase something on the mobile app. Just cause they often crash. I mean I've tried once before and you get all the way through to your basket and it says click to place order and it just crashes and I'm has it charged my card? Am I going to get it? It's frustrating, so I'd say they are like isolated in that sense. Research phase I'd say they are combined but for purchasing I would say they are isolated because I would only purchase something off of the website.

SL: So why the research kind of theme, why would you combine the online website and mobile app on your typical journey?

INT8: Just because I feel you can't see a product as clearly on the mobile app as you can on the website. Like you can zoom on your phone and things but I still don't feel you get a really good feel for it and often on the website em I'm not sure I haven't seen it or mobile apps develop it but online websites like ASOS they do a catwalk so you can see how a product moves but I'm not entirely sure em if they do that on the app yet. I haven't checked.

SL: So on your typical journey would you go website first and then app. Is that how you normally work?

INT8: I would say normally the app. Most of the time I would be on the website first and then app just for browsing.

SL: Do you associate certain channels with certain purposes in your shopping journey?

INT8: Em as in like going to the store with the purpose of seeing the product physically?

SL: Yeah, so do you associate a purpose with social media, do you associate a different purpose with the website. Is it the same sort of things or do you associate different tasks with different channels.

INT8: Yeah I would. I associate the purchasing task with the website or sometimes in the store if I buy in the store or I would only every associate seeing a product physically with the store or when I've actually purchased it and I would only ever use the social media for em like with the purpose of being inspired or at the end of my shopping journey, showcasing what I've bought. So they're kind of combined but at completely opposite ends of the shopping journey.

SL: Now obviously I have asked you to do the grouping task to cover the stage so that has covered that question. Em my next question is, do you associate shopping channels with certain stages of the shopping journey?

INT8: For inspiration I would definitely only associate. Actually now that I am thinking about it. I get my inspiration because it's normally how they layout the products on Instagram or em Twitter, like they normally tweet photos and that's more sort of grouping a range together. But then also when you go onto the homepage of a website and they have different trends em, like Topshop do. They have say like they're different trends and it's more like an advertising campaign. They can be used for inspiration as well but I would mainly use the website. Em I don't know where I'm going with this, can you just repeat the question?

SL: No that's ok, sure. So do you associate certain channels with certain stages in the shopping process or journey?

INT8 Ok. Then I would associate the online website with the research em and purchasing, but then I would also associate going into the store as part of my research as well as getting a physical feel for my product and also purchasing as well. 'Cause like say if you've got, sometimes you can get discounts that are for the store as well that you can use so I'd go in and em... So the purchasing I would associate could either be with online or in the store as well. I would never associate it with the mobile app at the minute.

SL: So I might put another card beneath your research and purchase? So would I be accurate if I said that was your store trip? So would that be right if we put store as a kind of alternative to the other there?

INT8: Yeah 'cause if I'm just out shopping then I'd use that [store]. If I hadn't been shopping in a while then I would be more likely to use online.

SL: I've already asked you about post purchase channels. We'll probably focus a little bit more on your overall journey now. Overall how well to the channels align with the various stages of your journey? How well do they fit and provide for your needs at that stage?

INT8: Em I would say, at the minute in terms of retailers they're doing really well using all the different multi-channels. Em 'cause with Instagram it's all about sort of the photo and the layout and how they put… Like River Island for example they'll put an outfit together which I think's really good for like the purpose of Instagram, for the purpose of Inspiration em I've gone blank again sorry ha ha.

SL: No that's fine. So overall how well do the channels fit with your needs in the various steps of the journey?

INT8: Ok and then the website has got everything you need. See that [mobile app] doesn't contain any detail about, well sometimes on the comments it'll include but say like the price or the fabric composition things like that, which the website always does. And also the website also features reviews on that product which contributes a lot more to your decision and wanting to buy it. Which the inspiration doesn't. But then when you are just getting some inspiration you don't need all the details until you are doing the research and then obviously the store you see the product physically em and on mannequins and stuff it kind of links back to their Instagram. 'Cause you might see an outfit they've put on Instagram and you'll go into the store and see it on one of the mannequins and you're like more inclined to buy the whole outfit so they all link quite nicely. But there's always a continuous theme throughout. So like Instagram, going back to my Ark example of the Daisy dress and the collection em they've also incorporated that into the design of their store, 'cause em they tweeted a picture of one of their stores with like the Daisy displays in the window. So they've like incorporated like what they are promoting on Instagram on to their shop window displays.

SL: And how do you feel about that, that's quite interesting?

INT8: I quite like the fact that sort of they've just chosen a theme and they're really like promoting it at the minute. Obviously they are putting a lot of focus onto that range and they aren't loads and loads of clothes in that range so like are the other clothes being sold as well? I don't know because then they'll probably change it and this is going to be our trend for the next month, this is what we're going to promote. But I like the idea of the continuity between like their Instagram pictures and their physical stores.

SL: I mean that's really interesting can you just tell me more about that? I mean when you say the continuity what do you mean by that?

INT8: Em it just sort of makes them stronger as a brand and as a retailer because I just think like they're obviously committing to that brand and you start associating things with Ark. You think of the daisy print and you think, oh yeah Ark are doing that at the minute and because they're also doing it in their shop windows and it's quite fitting with the season that we are in so I just think they have done that really well at the minute.

SL: Now obviously I have got you to do some of these tasks early but you've picked out certain devices to access the channels. Do you associate different devices with different purposes when shopping?

INT8: Yeah I mean I would always associate them with the apps in terms of Instagram and Pinterest, but I don't use that too often, for like inspiration purposes. But then also like the physical shop mobile app just for looking more into the detail in terms of what I've already seen. But then my laptop I would obviously use for the website only. I would never use the website on my phone because they're not geared up for like the small screen and like websites don't work well on my phone.

SL: So then what about the store, you're not using a device to access that you're just going into the store. Is that right?

INT8: Yeah.

SL: Yeah I mean do you use any devices in the store?

INT8: No, I know that like some are getting iPads in. Like I haven't used any, I've just seen them.

SL: And why is that, em?

INT8: I don't know I have never had a reason too. I think like more if you are searching for a specific product em but no I've just never had a need to. I think once I've become more familiar with what they are using but now it's all quite new yeah but I think it will take off.

SL: And in terms of the devices, do you associate different devices with particular stages of the journey?

INT8: Yeah like my phone I would associate with the sort of inspiration. The social media, at the first stage of inspiration, looking at the app just to see what they've got and also like just the end stage where I'd take photos and Instagram them or tweet them. And then my laptop I would associate with the further research and the buying. Ooh they're like the only devices that I use.

SL: My next question is with the dress journey can you tell me about your overall experience of that shopping journey.

INT8: In one word I would say it's quite frustrating em because obviously I had seen the dress and I had the discount code and I was like right I'm going to buy it. Got into the store on the Wednesday and it was gonna be in and they said oh no it's not arrived yet. I got an email that night to say it had arrived in store. So the next day I had to go back into town, which is like inconvenience even though it's not far I've it's just like I've got other things to be doing when I was in town the day before. Em so then I collected it, got home, I was so excited I tried it on and I was just… I'm not happy with the fit of it. I could return it and get a different size but then I thought maybe it's just the style that I'm not happy with overall so I was like right I'd made the decision I was going to send it back but it was this morning they Instagrammed a photo of a blogger wearing this other daisy dress and I was like, this one is really nice that one would be like not quite so risky in terms of fit because it was like a stretch material so em, then I was quite happy and the discount code worked which made me feel so much better because it took it down to like fifteen pound. So I was like, that's so good em as a student but then obviously now I am going to go back to town but I am going to time it so as that dress comes in I can drop the other one off, but it's got to be returned within fourteen days. So I might have to go up there tomorrow or the day after which will be an inconvenience.

SL: Obviously that leads well on to my next question about your emotional responses during that journey. Is there anything else you want to add or does that quite cover it?

INT8: Well normally I am quite happy with the service that Ark provide, so I dunno I think it was frustrating because of obviously the fit of the dress but everything else like ran on time other than the dress saying it was going to be in on Wednesday and it wasn't. That was frustrating. Everything else was quite an easy process like the returns is such an easy process it's not too much of a hassle. Other than the fact that I've got to, you can take it to a local post office, but I thought it makes sense just to do it to the store because you know definitely it goes back to them. It's not too stressful because they have made it quite easy and you don't have to pay for it either.

SL: So see with these two questions I've asked about your overall experience and you mentioned some emotions there and I talked about your emotional experience and you talked about some customer experience aspects. Do you see those two elements of emotion as part of the same thing, interlinked?

INT8: Yeah definitely I think it's like important that the customer is satisfied em and I would say with that service, I am normally more than satisfied. It wasn't their fault that the dress was like perfect. Like there was nothing wrong with the dress, I mean that would have been the most frustrating thing if there had been something wrong with it. But I think, I just think that they're always just sending emails to keep you updated with your order as well. It's quite reassuring to know that like they care about their customers. They always send a follow up email afterwards like what did you think of our product.

SL: Have you done that before?

INT8: Em, I'm trying to think… I think I bought a pair of shoes from River Island and I was really happy with them so I did do it for those but I don't often, I just ignore them.

SL: In terms of your marketing communications, you mentioned emails, did you have any other communications or contact with the organisation at any point with Ark?

INT8: No I haven't. Previously say I think it was a couple of months ago I had a problem with an order and Em and I got straight on the phone to them.

SL: Was that Ark?

INT8: That was Ark ha ha but they were really really good. But they were like right ok really sorry about that. I think it was for this dress that I'm wearing now. They were like em, ah that's fine we'll send you another one. Or I rung the store to see if they had it in and they didn't em, so then I rung online and said. I've ordered this dress, you've sent me the wrong one but I wanted it for two days time and they were like right we'll get another one sent out to you now and it arrived and as long as I sent this one back with the receipt it's fine.

SL: So you would use like a contact centre, what purpose do you use that for?

INT8: Only if I need something urgently or if there was something I was really unhappy about then they're normally quite good. Yeah normally if I was unhappy with a service or there was a problem with the product I had ordered or they had sent me the wrong one it's quite frustrating. So I'd rather, instead of doing it over email because you have got to wait for a response you have got to just ring up, speak to someone direct and try and see what they can do for you.

SL: Overall how satisfied were you with that shopping journey?

INT8: Overall I would say I was pretty satisfied. Em because everything pretty much ran on time and there were no like major mess-ups. Yeah.

SL: I asked you obviously, for the purposes of the recording about your typical journey, and you have mapped out. There is a slight variation that you'd use a bit more social media at the end but it is all the same channels there which is good. Do you view your shopping journey as stages or as an overall experience?

INT8: I would say as an overall experience, em because they all link together quite nicely in terms of in the store and whatever they're doing on social media. It all just sort of links and I think like yeah. I'd say it is an overall experience because I don't tend to break it up and think right I need some inspiration, right now I'm going to do some research, it all just sort of flows, it happens.

SL: Does it happen at the same time?

INT8: I'd say it's like it normally happens in like the space of like a day, other than going to the store. That'd happen in a day or two, when I'm next free.

SL: And when you are shopping through channels do you go through channels consecutively, one after each other, or do you switch back and forth?

INT8: I normally flick back and forth. Normally, once I've seen something on social media I'm normally like, right that's done. But I normally flick back and forth between like the website and the mobile app. Like if I am out and about and I just need to double check how I feel about that dress and I'll perhaps look online or see if there is anything else I'd rather have.

SL: So in your typical journey would you have website, app and would you have another or do you think the typical journey you have got there is it?

INT8: Typical journey is like website, app but I do flick between the two.

SL: So would you go back to the website again?

INT8: If I hadn't ordered it I'd probably go back to the website. So I would probably stick another website card in there.

SL: I'll put that in to take note. And does that [additional website card] fit into the additional research stage or…?

INT8: That would normally be like the purchase stage, purely purchase stage because I've already done like the research bit here so yeah.

SL: So just for the recording you've got social media, then online website, then the app, then the website, then the store and then social media. Briefly what motivates you to move between channels?

INT8: I just like to get a different perspective, so the Instagram is more like, kind of like advertising almost. Em and then sorry could you repeat the question?

SL: What motivates you to move between different channels.

INT8: And then em I like to get a better feel for it, so that's what motivates me via like Instagram or Twitter, that's what motivates me to move to the website to actually get a better feel for it, a better understanding and then I am motivated to go to the store after I have seen it on the website because I want to actually physically see the product.

SL: Did you ever use any channels at the same time? I'll give you an example, for example standing in the store using your mobile.

INT8: On the research on the online website.

SL: For the dress one.

INT8: Yeah. I had like a few tabs open at the same time like River Island, Ark, flicking backwards and forwards but em I don't tend to use my phone in the store because I don't know, I'd just rather see the product.

SL: Do you get the same level of benefits from each of the channels that you encounter or do some channels five you greater or lesser benefits.

INT8: I would say the store offers the greatest amount of benefits because you can see the product, you can try it on, you can ask a member of staff for an opinion. Em you can always ask the staff to help you if they don't have your size you can be like find me one somewhere else. Whereas like on the website you can't interact with anyone. Often if I see anything I really like I will copy on paste the link to my friends on a Facebook message and say what do you think of this? I like to get an opinion on something before I buy it.

SL: Is that typical, would you do that regularly?

INT8: Hmm quite often, yeah.

SL: Would you say that is part of your typical journey?

INT8: I think I would, there is always one friend that I go to. She is quite good with fashion so I'll go what do you think of this?

SL: So at what point would you do that?

INT8: Somewhere in between here. After I have seen it on the website.

SL: Would you give that a separate stage name?

INT8: If it was that would be em dunno, getting an opinion. It would kind of come under research but as like a sub one. But I normally do that via Facebook, via a Facebook message.

SL: Your journey is long.

INT8: I didn't realise it was this long.

SL: No, no it's really interesting, that's cool. What about different devices do you see them as having similar benefits or? Some got more or less.

INT8: I'd always say my laptop's got more benefits because you can have different tabs open at the same time. You can have them side by side so you can compare directly whereas on your phone it's a bit difficult. Em and you can gain more information on the product on your laptop as opposed to your app.

SL: Em, by mixing and matching multiple channels of the same retailer do you gain any overall benefits as opposed to you just using one channel of that retailer? What extra benefits does that bring?

INT8: I think say like following them on Instagram it sort of makes it a bit more personal. Em, makes you feel like em, yeah, it makes you feel a bit closer to the retailer than you are. Whereas the websites a lot more corporate, like this is what we have to offer. Em, this is the price of it, order now kind of thing. Whereas their Instagram or their Twitter it's more sort of like what they're up to like River Island PR and stuff like it's always what they're up to. Like they take photos of photoshoots. You sort of see behind the retailer and to know a bit more about the retailer in depth which the website doesn't really offer or the store.

SL: Are there any combinations of fashion channels that you think work well together or that don't work well together.

INT8: I feel like their, say like their social media em sites like their Instagram or Twitter work really well with their em website. I just think it sort of encourages you to go on their website more cause they often link their website at the end of when they tweet or something and like go on this. So they work quite well together because it's sort of informal and then the formal.

SL: What about devices, do any of them work well together.

INT8: Em I'd say like my phone and my mac work well together cause with iCloud and stuff like that it saves your history and things anyway so.

SL: Has your experience in one channel ever affected your experience or use of another channel?

INT8: Em…I don't think so.

SL: So if you had a bad experience in one channel would that affect your use of another channel of the same retailer?

INT8: If say like their app was like not quite functioning, it would sort of disencourage me to go on the website. It would probably frustrate me. I mean I'd always give them the benefit of the doubt and go on their website and just see if that's better. 'Cause I know…before like apps became popular with retailers they were never really that great. I can't think of a direct example right now but they just didn't seem to, I dunno, some apps just aren't as great. Well Debenhams I don't like their app and I don't like their website so I am less inclined to shop on there.

SL: But would you still shop in the store?

INT8: I would still shop in the store but I don't like their website. I don't know why.

SL: Do you think that the different retail channels that are available to you are they becoming merged or blurred in anyway?

INT8: Em I think they are all still quite isolated, they all serve different purposes. Like going back to what I said earlier about their social media being quite informal. They're not that informal on their websites. That keeps them quite separate. But their apps and their websites merge because they are similar. They use like all of the same fonts, colours etc. I think that's quite good though because it keeps it in line.

SL: And why is that good? What is the point of that being kept in line?

INT8: It just forms like a stronger brand identity and what that brands about. I wouldn't like it if they use completely different fonts because then you'd be like actually is this actual retailer or is this a made up one?

SL: Do you find different shopping channels of the same retailer are consistent in things such as information?

INT8: Em as in like the price and things?

SL: Yeah just anything.

INT8: I would say like they are. I don't know how they do it but they are probably linked in some way so but they are. Their prices are consistent and they often have exactly the same on their app as what's on the website, in a similar order as well. So that's quite good it's easy to find something. So if you found a dress on like their third page it would be on the third page of their app as well.

SL: Was your impression of the brand Ark was that consistent across all channels?

INT8: Yeah I would say that was.

SL: Is that common when you think of your retail brands? Do they look consistent across the channels?

INT8: Yeah I would, I'd say they have a particular style.

SL: How do you reassure yourself in making the right purchase decision?

INT8: Yeah I normally get an opinion and and often if people say I like what you are wearing it makes you feel good and I'm like yeah I have made the right decision. Like even if I go shopping, try something on sometimes I ask the shop assistant, if I'm on my own, I'm like what do you think of this? Em yeah.

SL: How does your omni channel shopping journey affect your trust with the retailer?

INT8: It encourages me to make repeat purchases. Like if they messed me around and sent me the wrong product or a damaged product it would sort of disencourage me to buy from them again because it's a

waste of time. It's a waste of your money. Like if you wanted a dress for say the weekend. You ordered it on Wednesday for like faster delivery and it came and it was wrong or like they made the mistake. It's just frustrating and I'd be like I'm not shopping with you again. So I think it's really important for retailers to get it right.

SL: What about your loyalty, how is that affected by an omni-channel shopping journey?

INT8: Em as in like Ark. I'm constantly getting emails and stuff and like the email I mentioned earlier they've obviously like recognised me as a customer that makes repeat purchases, I am quite loyal to them I just love their style and their clothes really and they sent me like a personal message well it was obviously automated. But it was like: dear Yasmin, we miss you, you haven't shopped with us for ages here's a discount code and you've got til the end of March to use it. So I think that's quite good cause it, you're like oh yeah hang on a minute I am quite loyal to them and that's quite nice that they recognise that and they've given me a discount code to encourage me to keep buying from them.

SL: How is your loyalty affected by all these interactions with different channels?

INT8: What do you mean?

SL: Well em because you have shopped across lots of different channels with Ark what does that do to your loyalty, rather than just shopping on one?

INT8: Ok. I think it increases it because say like with their Instagram you get to see what they are up to all of the time. Em and then with their website and their store I think I just…I don't really know where I'm going with this?

SL: That's ok, that's fine. If anything comes to mind just say.

INT8: Yeah.

SL: Do you have a set list of omni-channel retailers which you shop from?

INT8: Ark obvsiously, River Island and obviously Warehouse. I have been using their app and website quite a lot recently and going into store and things. But they are like the main ones.

SL: As a fashion consumer, what does the term connected consumer mean to you?

INT8: Em, as in like they're connected to the brand or the store that they're buying into. They feel like they are part of the brand which is like they get that through following on Twitter or Instagram which is quite informal. I know personally I feel a lot more connected to say like River Island because I follow their PR which sort shows me behind the scenes on their photo shoots and things. So you feel a lot more in the loop with what is going on.

--Ends--

Interview IX – INT9 Anna

SL: So first question I want to ask you Anna is what drives you to use many retail channels when shopping for fashion, as opposed to say just using one?

INT9: Em ease and being able to look at different prices and see what the different shops offer. So if I was like going to go to the shop, if I was going to go to town. Like this stripey t-shirt I bought it last week and I was really looking for one. I… actually did I look on the internet? Yeah I think I did yeah and it just like helps you like cut down the time that you are going to be looking for different things em. It is a bit more interesting and a bit more tiring. Just less time as well and be more efficient in your shopping. It's also quite a good distraction.

SL: Are you confident in your ability to use such an array of channels?

INT9: Yeah. I use like website, I don't really use apps although I could. I have an iPhone but I don't use them because I think I get distracted too much. So if I have them on my phone I just get distracted. But I use, yeah, social media a little for fashion.

SL: So where does your confidence come from to use all these channels?

INT9: I think from university and like I did a module in ecommerce so I think that was helpful and I think like we have just been brought up with it. Like in the last few years and it's kind of a fashion thing, everyone wants to be doing it.

SL: So you've grown up around all this technology. Can you tell me a little bit more about that?

INT9: So like probably when. I remember the first thing I bought, I remember signing up for eBay when I was 17 but I remember like that was kind of buying experience online. I know that's old now but it's quite young. I don't know why I feel so confident about it. Because I am surrounded by fashion all the time and it's just really convenient. The more you use it the more you can get confident and comfortable using it.

SL: Ok. So the next thing is I want you to think of your most recent shopping so it might be the t-shirt you bought [aforementioned when participant came to interview room chatting with moderator]. It doesn't matter if you bought the item or not obviously you made a purchase in that case. Are you happy to discuss that one?

INT9: Yeah, yeah.

SL: What triggered you to begin that shopping journey?

INT9: The reason why… em I needed to go t-shirt shopping not for just this one but lots of others because I have some skirts. Basically I like making my own clothes but I like making skirts and em I just felt I was just a bit restricted with what I was wearing and think if you can mix and match you can have more variety with what you are wearing and so I wanted to get some more t-shirts to wear and em yeah.

SL: So what triggered you to begin your shopping journey?

INT9: Oh yeah, I just needed some more. I hadn't been shopping for ages before then probably like since Christmas. That's not really ages but like em yeah I just, I wanted some more up to date clothes as well. Like being around fashion people in uni they're all fashionable and you kind of want to feel nice as well when you are wearing new clothes so yeah.

SL: So did people in university trigger you to…?

INT9: Yeah I think that would be yeah because I keep seeing people wear stripey t-shirts and I'm like aaah cool. I don't really mind.

SL: How do you feel about that if you see other people wearing?

INT9: Alright because I probably like copy what other people wear so I think that's ok. I might wear something a bit similar to something I've seen elsewhere and like it goes around doesn't it.

SL: So at the end of that journey you bought the t-shirt. Ok so what I want you to do I want to map out the channels that you used to get to the point where you bought the t-shirt and anything you did afterwards. So if you want to come over here. We've got lots of different channels that you use and basically I want you to do a journey from left to right mapping the channels you used. So what started your journey first of all.

INT9: Looking at people… but there isn't one of those is there?

SL: No I'll note that one down as it isn't a channel per se.

INT9: Yeah, so looking at people and em feeling a bit restricted by the clothes in my wardrobe. Do you know like when you have like a you know this item would be complete if I found this I was like that. If I had this then I could finish it off and wear so many more different outfits.

SL: So we'll just put a note there of that. So looking at people and restricted with your current wardrobe. So what happened after that part?

INT9: Then my friend, we went out for dinner and she said I have voucher for H&M and I was like cool, ok lets go to H&M.

SL: So it was like an offer voucher?

INT9: Yeah it was like twenty five percent off from Grazia magazine.

SL: So we'll put the magazine down if you want to put that one next to.

INT9: So I was like oh that's really good so I can get that cheaper. Then em, I looked online.

SL: So a website?

INT9: Yeah I looked on Zara, I didn't look on ASOS.

SL: So these retailers on the cards are just examples of retailers.

INT9: Ok. So then I went on, I don't know whether I did use Pinterest is always like there because I always use that so I think I was probably inspired by that as well. That might be a bit more. I don't know if that was…

SL: So was that before say the magazine?

INT9: It's quite like constant though I think. I go on Pinterest a lot so it is always there. So looking online and then?

SL: Did you go to a store?

INT9: I think we looked online at the shops and then like we went into the shops. I didn't look at catalogues or mobile website.

SL: You don't need to look at them all. It's just to map out your personal journey.

INT9: And then… Well it was H&M so we went to H&M and found a few things. There were quite a few different shops and then I bought some.

SL: And you bought it in H&M.

INT9: Yeah that's fine.

SL: So what I want you to do is obviously I've put here your stages so looking at people, feeling a little bit constricted with your current wardrobe then social media like Pinterest and things then the offer. So we'll put that from your friend as a tear out kind of voucher. Is that right?

INT9: Yes it was.

SL: Then you went on the website and went to the store?

INT9: Yep.

SL: Did you do anything post purchase? Like Instagram it or WhatsApp it.

INT9: No, although I probably could but I don't always like that. I don't like selfies.

SL: So if you put the social media sites, which websites which stores just put a post it under each.

INT9: So I use loads of these [social media] but I don't really use Facebook for fashion.

SL: So you just write down the ones you used for that journey.

INT9: Pinterest, I think it was just Pinterest. It's quite hard to remember but maybe Instagram too because I do follow some people who post pictures of their fashion style.

SL: Ok.

INT9: And then I'm pretty sure it was Grazia, it was twenty five percent off. Em and then there were quite a lot of website, so Zara, H&M, Topshop, Gap. Oh I went into the shop before I looked online as well. I went into Gap for some research when I was there but I saw some when I was there.

SL: So you did you just go to Gap when you went to the store at this point and then you went to other shops later?

INT9: Yeah.

SL: So I'll put another store card there.

INT9: It's funny like remembering things. I actually did that as well. I think that was it for that and then online it was pretty much the same. The shops that I looked at on the internet these were the ones that we went to so we didn't really go round. Did we go to any others? No we didn't yeah.

SL: You might have answered these things already but how did you get inspired for this journey.

INT9: Em looking at other people at uni and thinking that what they were wearing was really nice and using Pinterest and having like people's… just looking at what they're wearing and thinking that would be really nice or that would be a really easy way to update my wardrobe. Looking at what they're having.

SL: And when you said you felt a bit constricted with what you've got, did you just rummage through your wardrobe at this point or what did you do.

INT9: Yeah well I was looking through my wardrobe and also felt like I was wearing a similar thing a lot.

SL: Or was that after you were saying you got lots of ideas from other people?

INT9: I don't know, maybe a similar time. Actually probably looking at other people first yeah because then you think oh actually that would be nice and yeah. Then actually I took a photo of all the skirts I have in my wardrobe so I could take a photo with me shopping.

SL: Did you take that on your phone?

INT9: Yep. But I didn't share it I just kept that [photo] on my phone.

SL: Was that to inspire you during your journey?

INT9: Yeah so that I could see things matched. See if the colours would go or the patterns would go with what I was gonna buy. Yeah, it's mainly just those skirts really.

SL: That's fine. So I'll just note that you took images on your iphone for shopping.

INT9: Yeah that was really good because it was really easy.

SL: What made you make your final purchase in the end for that stripey t-shirt, what made you go for that?

INT9: Em the shape of it. I really liked the slash neck of it and quality. It's really soft as well and it's got detailing on the top on here, little buttons. I think mainly price, quality and design. They're quite massive ones aren't they but they're quite important ones.

SL: Did you use any channels in the post-purchase stage.

INT9: No.

SL: So I can see here I have got a question about using multiple channels of the same retailer. So I can see with H&M, Topshop and Gap you have used online website and store for each of those retailers so I can see that you are using them multiple times. Em my next question is, what was your motivation to use this range of channels for this journey?

INT9: Why did I use the range? Em I think variety and also time wise.

SL: Can you tell me a little bit more about variety?

INT9: Just so that, because em, when you go into different shops in town they don't always have what you want and it's often easier to look for certain things on the online shop because you can just filter it. That's a lot better otherwise, because they do it in collections in lots of shops so it's actually quite difficult. You have to look round the whole shop whereas it's just like a few clicks and you have got all of the similar products in front of you and you can refine if you really want to by anything like size or style or colour or anything and also it's so much easier to look at price. Price is massive for me I have to feel like it's good value for money. Em and then yeah I think well I didn't look in the magazine but my friend did. I like going in the shop because you can feel the products. You can look at them and touch them and feel what they're like and see what they're made of as well because I quite like having nice quality clothes. It doesn't matter if it is from H&M but you can tell this kind of t-shirt from even any other tshirt they have in H&M is a bit thinner.

SL: Do you associate certain channels with certain pursoses? In the shopping journey?

INT9: I think online I do more for research. I do buy some things online but probably slightly more expensive. Like I was looking for a coat recently and I think I kind of know what kind of fabric it's going to be like and what kind of quality. But for t-shirts I feel like I just like to go in and try it.

SL: So are there any other channels you associate with certain purposes?

INT9: Hmm I probably go into the shop to buy. Hmm other channels like, I think – does it have to be the ones I've used?

SL: Em, which other ones were you thinking?

INT9: Just like social media, because I think social media is like more promotional style and promoting the concept of the products and I know that website can do that too but it's more like focus on that.

SL: Now what I want you to do is I've got another task. So I want you to identify the stages of your shopping journey for me. So take a post-it. You might want to put some channels together or keep them on their own but just make sure you give that stage a name.

INT9: Like do you mean like time stage?

SL: Say I used this particular group of channels for a particular stage so it might be research. I used that channel for this stage then I used this channel for another stage. So I just want you to give the stages a name.

INT9: Ok, so. Can I move them round?

SL: Yeah, I'll take a picture before you do that.

INT9: Probably like, it's definitely research but it's more like…

SL: If you have got different bits of research that's fine as well.

INT9: Yeah probably. I'd say like that's more tactile that's the main reason to buy it in the shop because it's quicker but also to touch feel and evaluate it. Em and then sorry I keep moving it.

SL: If you need to move them around do that, if you don't need to then leave them as they are.

INT9: Ok. Em.

SL: Or if you have two of the same stage you can always give them research one research two if that helps.

INT9: I'd probably say more like factual. So learning more about the product in terms of what properties it has, whereas this one [store] is more like tactile and touch. Em that one would probably be the same as well. Em and that's like style inspiration.

SL: Does that cover most of those I think it probably much.

INT9: I don't know what that would be

SL: With the magazine voucher that you got from a friend? Well did it inspire you to shop?

INT9: Yeah no it did. It was like incentive. It kind of gave me like oh I need to do that quick, time sensitive I think.

SL: So do you associate certain channels with certain stages of the shopping journey?

INT9: Em yeah.

SL: You've got channels and you've put stages so would you associate that channel with that stage particularly.

INT9: Yeah I probably would. Well yeah so I'd say style inspiration I would look for online at different social media. More than going into a shop because I don't go into shops just to browse. I think I'd always have a bit of a mission to go into a shop so probably. I think for me style inspiration is more of a kind of everyday

I'll pick up on it in little chunks. Like I might go on Pinterest for five minutes or i'll see people round whereas I wouldn't purposely go into a shop to look at different ideas. Em and then…

SL: Do you associate any other channels with certain stages?

INT9: I would…I think these two tactile research and go into the shop I would say. Well you can't go do it any other way I think, you can't really feel anything. Is that what you mean?

SL: It's just whatever you think.

INT9: I wouldn't really ever go into a shop unless I was going to buy something or if I had did a bit of background knowledge or. So I think going online would be to find out more about it. I just generally don't really go into the shops casually as I go round town. Like I normally have a bit of a mission. I dunno.

SL: Ok, that's fine. So you didn't really combine any.

INT9: Well say I'd say like these two but they're just stores aren't they. I do really like for example on the Zara website that's probably style inspiration too because they have the look book and ...

SL: So have you almost got like two functions for a website, a retailer's website. One you've got inspiration and two you've got actual research and filtering and things like that.

INT9: Yeah, yeah.

SL: Was it two different approaches?

INT9: Yeah i'd say that. Yeah em I think so like I like on the Zara website it pieces an outfit together and on the bottom it identifies the other items in that website. Which I think is definitely really good, so that is style inspiration. Em normally I do, yeah I really like em to know what things are made of, now I know all about it from my degree. So I will look on there and say price wise as well online I will look on there.

SL: So you would combine the website for the research and inspiration stage.

INT9: Yeah.

SL: Overall how well do these channels fit with each of your stages in your shopping journey? Do they give you what you need at that particular stage?

INT9: Do you mean like in any of them?

SL: How well does say that channel, the store fit with tactile research? Does it give you what you need at that stage?

INT9: Yeah definitely because you can go in and see exactly what...well if they've got the product in there's always a bit of a rift between the store and online sometimes. But if they have it in then yeah because you can see what it's like and try it on. Whereas you can't do that, so I think I would still go into the store for that. I think that does that well and then I think style inspiration I think that's really for Pinterest, I think that works really well.

SL: Can you tell me does this represent a typical shopping journey for you?

INT9: Yeah, I don't normally...it was a bit of an exception having an offer but it did make me want to shop quicker. 'Cause if I hadn't had that then I would've been like aw maybe in the next month I'll go shopping but actually we went the next week.

SL: So if we take out the magazine offer would that represent a typical journey? So would you have a look at some people, would you have a look at your wardrobe and then...

INT9: Yeah I think so. Em maybe not always going into the shop before the online website.

SL: Ok, so what I might do is we'll maybe map out your typical shopping journey. So the bits on the post-its, like looking at people, looking through your wardrobe.

INT9: I'd say the same to here that's the same.

SL: Then you'd still do your social media?

INT9: On my smartphone yeah.

SL: What would you do next, would you hit the store or online?

INT9: Probably look online. I think actually I would probably take out the store because often with social media it links straight through to the website. So I think I would probably go to the online store and then to the shop, yeah.

SL: Can you just write down which retailers you usually go for? Just so I can get an impression of how similar the journey actually is.

INT9: It's quite similar really.

SL: That's ok

INT9: Where else I shop, I don't normally shop in Gap that much. The reason I went in first was for university research and then I saw it and thought ooh that skirt. But they had like this offer, fifty percent off promotion for their new season which I think is ridiculous that they're already in sale. I think this is definitely... if a shop has an online website this would be it but if it doesnt it would just be that without the online.

SL: So just to get this right, if a shop had a website you would go onto the website after the social media but if not you would go straight from social media to the store.

INT9: Yeah.

SL: In the majority of cases do most of the retailers that you deal with have a website?

INT9: Yep. It's mainly just like those shops in the northern quarter.

SL: So do you want to just write down which social media you use just for your typical journey.
INT9: Ok. Just those two really just Pinterest and Instagram they're really English focused and I think that's what I like
SL: So you'd still have the inspiration just like in there. Would you ever have an incentive or things like that?
INT9: Yeah sometimes.
SL: Would that be typical?
INT9: Not very often.
SL: And then like when you research is that still factual research?
INT9: Yeah and also a bit of style inspiration.
SL: And the store on tactile research.
INT9: Yeah.
SL: Would you do anything post purchase on in a typical journey?
INT9: No I know lots of people who do but no.
SL: And why not, if you don't me asking?
INT9: Because, why not, I forget often. I just want to wear what I am wearing and not like record it. Also I don't always, this is a bit selfish I guess, but I sometimes I want to wear something new and when I meet people them actually be like oh that's really nice instead of be like oh yeah I saw that on Instagram or something which is a bit selfish.
SL: So tell me a bit more about that?
INT9: So like when we were at school you used to have non uniform day it was always like, what you gonna wear that's new so that people are gonna be like, so you can make a good impression. I like it when people say I like what you're wearing so I can think oh that's new. If they've already seen it then there's less of that.
SL: So you want to be the first one to wear?
INT9: Not always the first person to wear a specific style but I think it's quite nice when you have a completely new outfit, you feel quite fresh and you premiere it.
SL: So ok and you mean premiere-ing it, what do you mean by that?
INT9: Showing it for the first time to other people. It's like when you buy a new dress you don't want to be wearing it just watching tv.
SL: So when you're wearing it what other words would signify to say what you are trying to do there?
INT9: Just show part of my identity. I guess like portray. I guess like clothing is like a reflection of who you are or who you want people to see you as.
SL: When you have a purchase, I mean, do you want to go out and premiere it but just to other people.
INT9: Yeah so I think it's probably a similar thing to social media - you want to show off your new clothes on social media but I just don't want to do that.
SL: You still want to show off the clothes?
INT9: Yeah just not on social media.
SL: Do you want to call that a stage in your shopping journey?
INT9: I probably would.
SL: Because if it didn't go well, that premiere so to speak, what would happen?
INT9: Well I don't think I would take it back because i'd already worn it, but like. I probably would not wear it?
SL: Would you class that as a stage in your journey then?
INT9: I probably I would
SL: Thinking of a typical journey?
INT9: Yeah.
SL: Is that an important part of?
INT9: Yeah, no it is approval from what other people think. Yeah it is definitely then.
SL: So we'll put that as a stage of your journey so what do you want to call that?
INT9: Premiere.
SL: And you said about getting approval as well.
INT9: Yeah like I think if no one said anything it's ok but if someone said hmm not sure if that goes with that. I would either change what I was wearing with something else or I would if it was awful I would be like, what on earth are you wearing which probably wouldn't happen but then I would think twice about wearing it ever again.
SL: In your original t-shirt journey would you have a similar? Would you still have the premiere-ing?
INT9: Yeah.
SL: Have you premiere'd your t-shirt?
INT9: Yeah, isn't that funny. It's such a strange thing but yeah. But that's what people do yeah.
SL: That's really interesting. So with your t-shirt did that go well?
INT9: Yeah. I've worn it today.

SL: Have you worn it again since?

INT9: But yeah it was really good. It felt really good. That sounds so vain. But it works really well with how I wanted it to look with my outfit with one of the skirts that I had made and then I also got a denim jacket on eBay and thought this looks cool, this all looks really cool together. You know when you see a picture on Pinterest and you're like aw yeah this looks like a good outfit. I felt confident.

SL: So did you recreate an outift you saw on Pinterest?

INT9: No, just like, no not specifically.

SL: The next thing I want to do is I want to understand what devices you used to access these channels. Obviously we only need to do it for one of these journeys because they are both repeating themselves. So how did you, so looking at people, I take it that was just in person, just people out on the street?

INT9: Yeah.

SL: Your wardrobe pictures, did you do that on a camera?

INT9: I did that on my iPhone.

SL: You didn't use any sort of app or anything?

INT9: No it just was the camera. Do you want me to put that on top?

SL: Just put that sideways. So social media, how did you access that?

INT9: On my laptop and also probably on my iPhone too, on my Pinterest app.

SL: Ok, so you used both.

INT9: Yeah.

SL: Magazine, but that was in person with a friend?

INT9: Yep and the website I looked on my laptop at home and that was it I think.

SL: And again here it would be the same thing as well?

INT9: Yeah same thing as well.

SL: Now just to ask the question, I had the cards but I also have these devices. Do you prefer to use when you are doing this customer journey mapping?

INT9: What do you mean?

SL: Would you rather place a card there or place the actual device?

INT9: Oh no card I think.

SL: Just why?

INT9: 'Cause they're all the same.

SL: Do you mean like having to have multiple laptops?

INT9: Yeah, yeah and also like if I had a laptop on the side I would forget that it's part of the thing. Like I might just be like, oh it's just a laptop on the side. Well I might not but I think it's easier with the cards.

SL: I'm just going to take a snap. So now em I just want to ask you a question about the devices you've been using. So do you associate different devices with different purposes when shopping for fashion?

INT9: Yeah. Well I'd say using well for me, the mobile apps, I don't have the retailer apps on my phone I just find them a bit distracting, but then other apps are really distracting

SL: What do you mean by distracting for those ones then?

INT9: I think they have more risk that I'm going to buy something [retailer app] whereas Pinterest like I can just have ideas and that's totally fine. Whereas Pinterest has loads of craft tutorials so that is really cool. It's not necessarily have a direct link with buying in my mind.

SL: Do you associate the smartphone with a particular purpose?

INT9: Researching on the go. So I would look on, actually I'd probably look on websites when I'm looking on social media and on here [mobile as well]. It's probably when I'm on the bus or in between doing things.

SL: What about the laptop then?

INT9: That's for a bit more serious research it's bigger and quicker and less fiddly so I'd use that.

SL: See the app versus mobile website, do you have different purposes for them?

INT9: Yeah I like using apps better. I usually have the app for Pinterest and Instagram whereas actually I would probably use the website for doing a bit more research like this?

SL: So do you mean retailers website? And any particular reason for that?

INT9: I just, I don't know. Why do I use…? The Pinterest app is so much easier to use than the website

SL: Think when you go on mobile websites what do you usually go on them for?

INT9: To do this kind of research.

SL: To do the…

INT9: Online research.

SL: So the factual research and style inspiration?

INT9: Yeah.

SL: Is it more factual based?

INT9: Yeah, yeah. So actually I'll take this away because using the mobile app would be more for inspiration whereas the mobile website would be kind of like a little bit before I look on my computer.

SL: So just for the recording so the research factual and the style inspiration is a wee bit of both but you used mobile website for…

INT9: As a precursor to the laptop.

SL: So with that stage you have got research factual and style inspiration. Would you still call them, are they both research factual and style inspiration?

INT9: I'd say yeah. I'd say they're both in the research factual and style inspiration category but it's more primarily research and style inspiration on the side. So as I'm looking through the website I might… for example this Zara like homepage it's got fashion ideas on the front of it so it's kind of less of the primary reason I would look at that.

SL: So what does research factual actually mean?

INT9: So I would find the product that I like.

SL: So would you do the style inspiration first? So if we were going to put style inspiration and research factual in order, which one would go first do you think?

INT9: Probably research first then style. I would look for a product first then when I click on that first then I would look at the images below it. So I think that would be the order.

SL: So if you said research factual first, you would use all of these for, so online website and mobile website, all for research factual?

INT9: Yeah.

SL: And you would still use the laptop and the smartphone? Yeah?

INT9: Yeah I would probably just use it for both. So when I would go and look at the research.

SL: So you would be doing both at the same time?

INT9: Yeah. Research factual would be the reason I did it. Style inspiration would just be something comes up on the website as they have put it on there to inspire me.

SL: You know how you are using a laptop and a iPhone at that point are you using them together at the same time?

INT9: No the mobile first, like I say on the bus or on the go and then I get home and I use my laptop.

SL: Do you associate different devices with different stages of your shopping journey?

INT9: Yeah so I think I probably would. With Pinterest I definitely use my app far more than my computer because I think it is a lot easier. Actually I don't know whether that would be even be there.

SL: That's fine you can take that out.

INT9: So I would definitely say my smartphone would be used for looking at social media and researching style inspiration.

SL: I can see from what you've got there, at research factual, style inspiration and preliminary style inspiration you're using smartphones and laptop.

INT9: Yeah.

SL: Whereas the other stages you are going in in person doing something. Therefore would it be fair to say you associate this technology, a phone or a laptop with the more inspirational stages?

INT9: Yeah.

SL: Would that be accurate?

INT9: Yeah I think so.

SL: And you associate walking into store? Is that a more kind of purchase stage?

INT9: Yeah I've kind of put… I've got more of a purchase intent with the shop. Although I would probably go in and see something I liked that I hadn't even thought about and pick that up but that's not the main reason. Well I don't know would that be the main reason? But then yeah. I'm not like restricted when I go into a shop and see something that I haven't thought about then I would pick it up. It depends on who I'm with because if they are like try this Anna I'm like ok.

SL: Can you tell me about your overall shopping experience during either journey?

INT9: Good I think it's quite, what's the word, compact's not the word, quite…informative. I have quite a lot of purpose in my shopping because I don't have enough money just to spend money on clothes whenever I want to so I think when I do shop I want to make sure I have thought about it and thought this is worth me buying it. So I think quite purposeful. It's like good as well I enjoy the style inspiration the best.

SL: So the social media style inspiration.

INT9: Yeah.

SL: Are there any marketing communications you encounter during your shopping journey?

INT9: So whatever?

SL: Any sorts of communications or contact with the retailer?

INT9: Emails, not so much with…I don't get emails from the shops that I shop in. I get emails from other shops that I have signed up for uni but also. Do you mean electronic?

SL: I mean just anything or any contact you had with the retailer. It could be interacting with people from the store.

INT9: Yeah definitely. I like shopping online but I would definitely rather go in the shop because I can talk to people, get their advice. Definitely shop sales assistants em I always, always ask people for help.

SL: Are you satisfied with what they tell you?

INT9: Often.

SL: Do you struggle with anything?

INT9: Sometimes they do, sometimes it depends on what kind of shop it is, how big it is and what they sell.

SL: So what would they struggle on?

INT9: Like if I saw a product online or just had an idea in my head I would ask them and actually they might not know because they had so many products in.

SL: So do they not know online?

INT9: Yeah, or they might just not have say something like a red dress like with a peplum skirt or something. Imagine if that was the case. I might go and ask someone in H&M or Topshop for example and they would be like oh not sure actually. Just cause it's 'out of the blue' so they're not always knowledgeable.

SL: Knowledgeable about what specifically.

INT9: Products.

SL: Did they have good knowledge of each of their channels?

INT9: Not always no?

SL: Can you tell me about that a little?

INT9: Sometimes I go in and I say I have seen this online and describe it to them and say how much it is and say do you have it or do you know about it and they'll be like oh, I'm not sure. They're never, yes I've seen that. It's never very cohesive. Never like on it on it and I know because I was a sales assistant and I would not in my spare time go and like watch the French Connection website so I don't think that they would. I think the customer expects them to but actually, realistically who's going to do that?

SL: And how do you feel about that from a customer perspective?

INT9: I think from a customer perspective they should but it's hard when you're a sales assistant to do that. Em but in general when I go into the shop and talk to them they're very friendly and very able to help me and if they aren't able to then I'm just really impressed by how friendly and approachable they are and that they can help in other ways.

SL: I want you to tell me about your shopping journey either your typical journey or your actual journey. Just a jist of what's your emotional responses during your shopping journey?

INT9: I think let's go for the typical journey. I think excitement when I'm on social media and kind of what's the word, I think I'm quite excited and quite exploratory. Like I'm quite open to lots of ideas. That's why I like Pinterest because you can see lots of ideas that come in front of you and kind of choose the ones you want and save them for later. The online website I don't know whether I would say excited too it's probably not as extreme as that. I probably would, I feel quite happy when I find something and think ooh that would suit 'cause sometimes I just can't find what I'm looking for em and sometimes I'm a bit disappointed. Like when I was looking for t-shirts on the Topshop website, I just couldn't find any that I liked and I was quite disappointed. I thought that they'd have a good basic range but they didn't and when I go into the shop I think, em …

SL: Do you feel better or worse than the social media stage?

INT9: I feel a bit, em not questioning, just a bit hmm this might not… the link between the online website and the shop might be an issue.

SL: What do you mean?

INT9: So if there's something which I see online which is not in the shop or if I see something online then I see it in the shop then it's not what I expected, say if the quality isn't good then I'm a bit disappointed. But generally I think I'm quite like, I'm quite open when I go into the shop. I find things on the website and then I try and look for them. So I looked online for different t-shirts and things like that when I went to buy a t-shirt. When I went to the shop I don't know whether I found exactly what I was looking for but I think I had got a general idea of what they offered.

SL: So with your customer experience would you say you start off, for the purposes of the recording, really high up there you're all excited you're already to go and then does it gradually decrease down?

INT9: No I think it kind of goes in a bit of a v-shape.

SL: So from social media you are feeling quite high and excited?

INT9: Yeah.

SL: And where are you feeling at the website?

INT9: The website is a bit more practically how is this going to look?

SL: So it's the reality.

INT9: Yeah and then when I go to shop it's a bit more em like spontaneous, oh what will I actually find I've done a bit of looking around but it's a bit more fun.

SL: So is it like finding a match to your expectations?

INT9: Yeah, that's a good way of putting it. Yeah so I guess we could rearrange this and put social media here and then, not in terms of the way I do it but this would be quite excited [social media], this would be a bit more realistic [online website] and like happy medium with the shops.

SL: So just for the recording you've put social media as the top bit, then you go a bit lower down online and then the store is like a happy balance of these two things.

INT9: Yeah.

SL: So you've got a bit of a hierarchy almost haven't you?

INT9: Yeah or it goes into one, into the store. Yeah yeah.

SL: How satisfied are you with your say with your t-shirt shopping journey or your typical journey?

INT9: I'll go for the t-shirt one as the typical journey is a bit standard. Just really pleased with how it went.

SL: And would that be the same in your typical journey?

INT9: Not always because sometimes I can get to the store and not find anything that I like even though I've seen something or been inspired.

SL: But would you be satisfied with the experience?

INT9: Yeah.

SL: We've done all the task questions so I'm just going to ask some general questions. So when shopping for fashion does your journey consist of you going through channels consecutively, one after the other or will you switch back and forth?

INT9: I would probably say it is more kind of a linear process. So I probably would go with social media, online then store.

SL: In your typical journey but in your t-shirt journey you flicked back and forth so was there a reason for that? Do you flick back and forth because you have to rather than because you want to.

INT9: No I think I wanted…like normally I don't normally go into the shop before. Normally it's quite consecutive.

SL: Can you just tell me in general, what motivates you to move from one channel to another?

INT9: Lack of information, so whether that's written information or when I am going into the shop to feel it, so tactile.

SL: So would you say you move channels because you choose to or because you have to.

INT9: Probably both.

SL: Say if you had to choose one or the other?

INT9: Eh I'd say have to, I wouldn't choose to buy anything off the internet really if I. I do buy things on the internet, but it's a bit of a risk so I think I would have to go to the shop.

SL: If you could get everything in the shop would you go to the shop?

INT9: Yeah, I'd rather go to the shop because it's there.

SL: In any of the journeys we have talked about have you ever used channels at the same time? So I mean having lots of tabs open.

INT9: Yeah. I have, not very often, but when I'm in the shop I look on my phone to see if…once I was in H&M and I couldn't find something in H&M and I thought right I'll look on another retailers website and see if they have it so I can go to their… So I don't get there and have a waste of a journey.

SL: Another thing you mentioned, I mean I am backtracking a bit but when you talked earlier you mentioned the word cohesive, what did you mean by that?

INT9: So like there being a consistent, a consistency between the online website and the shop. Like stocking the same items, or like you were saying with customer service they know about the items on the online store and the layout being similar and the branding being similar and having. Like we studied this a bit in our e-commerce a bit, Gap have a massive problem with this, because their shop is so different to their website and it's really muddled and gives a muddled appearance. So like having a similar appearance.

SL: And how does that affect you if it is muddled?

INT9: Makes me just a bit confused, like less trusting of the shop because I think oh they look a bit like different companies like I wonder what they are doing.

SL: Do you get the same level of benefits from each of the different channels that you encounter? What intrigues me you put social media above say the website, so that suggest that you have a bit of a hierarchy to the different channels that you use. Do they all give you the same benefits or do some give you higher benefits or lower benefits?

INT9: I think they're all similar in the level of benefits are all different. So like I wouldn't really be able to go to social media and you know and be able to know how much it costs or what it's made of. In the same way that I wouldn't be able to go to the website and know what it feels like.

SL: So do you feel like they all have equal benefits but that they're different.

INT9: Different ones yeah. Which is probably why I feel like I have to use each of them because without one then my shopping journey is not complete.

SL: Do you perceive different devices, so like the laptop and the phone, do they have similar benefits or is one better than the other?

INT9: I think going on my iPhone would be, I think I would find exactly the same amount of information from either but I think it's just about how functional they are. So like using an iPhone or a phone just when I'm out and about is just easier. Whereas it's easier for quick information but actually using a laptop is actually a lot easier if I'm having lots of tabs up and comparing so yeah.

SL: So do you think phones have higher benefits or would you still say equal but just different?

INT9: Equal but different.

SL: By mixing and matching channels, do you get any overall benefits or overall disadvantages that you wouldn't have got say if you just used one channel?

INT9: So if we're talking about channels and even going like into the store.

SL: Uh huh, all of them.

INT9: I think it saves me a lot of time looking on social media. Well not so much social media, I think online website and using my smartphone rather than going the shop. Like when I was saying I would look on my phone when I was in the shop sometimes otherwise you could spend hours or a whole day shopping and actually not find very much. So it saves time but it's also good for comparing em, prices as well. So when I'm going onto the website I can compare prices whereas if you were in the shop you would have to go somewhere and actually think no maybe not and then go to another place and then compare them. Then if you wanted the one from the first shop you'd have to go back and it's a lot of time I think.

SL: Any disadvantages you think from using a combination of channels? Are there any overall disadvantages?

INT9: All of them, together?

SL: Yeah so using a combination of them? Are there any negative points that that brings?

INT9: I guess you have a lot of options and em a lot of variety which just takes a long time to filter through. So you could be on Pinterest for hours and like.

SL: Is that something you do?

INT9: Yeah and pin loads which I guess, but then I really enjoy it so that's not really a negative. Em I dunno I'd say it does take more time but I think it's not as negative as spending a lot. Because I think for me I can go online quickly and on the bus it's using time which I wouldn't use before. Whereas if I was spending a whole day, it doesn't have to be a whole day but an afternoon shopping then I can do something else. Whereas when I'm on the bus I'm not really doing anything else.

SL: Are there any combinations of fashion retail channels that you think work really well together or that don't work well together? I'm just trying to explore patterns to your usage.

INT9: Yeah I think Pinterest, I go on Pinterest all the time.

SL: So social media in general?

INT9: Yeah social media and Pinterest and linking to the website works really good. Not so much Instagram because Instagram you can't really click through but with Pinterest you can so I think that really helps. Also Pinterest when you click on the image it doesn't always go to the website but it goes to like a blog so I think that kind of continues the social media.

SL: Right. Any other combinations that work well or that don't work so well?

INT9: I think a bit of a rift sometimes between the store and the website.

SL: Ok tell me a bit more about that.

INT9: Just like I was saying before with em like with the inconsistency between the products that they offer on the website and the ones they have in the shop and also the quality and how they look and how they fit.

SL: That rift with the website and the store, is there any rift between the app and the mobile website and the store.

INT9: Sometimes the mobile website is awful, and I don't know whether a rift with the mobile website and the store.

SL: So if you put the mobile website and the app there?

INT9: Yeah cause they're all kind of similar aren't they.

SL: Would you say they have got a rift as well or do they work ok?

INT9: I definitely would.

SL: Cause say you use a mobile in the store does that work better or?

INT9: Well you can use the mobile in the shop but then I don't really know.

SL: If not it doesn't like matter either way.

INT9: It depends on what shop it is. I think shops like… like the Topshop we have got in town and the website I think they're probably quite good and with M&S as well you can look on the website in the shop so I think sometimes that works but sometimes it just doesn't.

SL: Is it more website and store there's a rift?

INT9: Yeah.

SL: Has your experience in one channel ever affected your experience or use of another channel?

INT9: Yeah. Like for Gap for example the website's awful and it's just hard to use and it puts me off from going to the shop completely.

SL: Is it because it's hard to use or is it because it is inconsistent like you mentioned earlier?

INT9: Both. It's very like… it is inconsistent like I mentioned before but also it's hard to use, it's hard to get your head around it 'cause you have lots of different sections on one side and you just think all I want to do is find a dress. But on their Pinterest account and on their Instagram their styling is really good.

SL: And does that encourage you to go to the shop?

INT9: It makes me think I wish that the online website and the shop were better?

SL: In what way?

INT9: Like just more fashionable and less…Like the shop they have scuffed floors and it's just not a very nice atmosphere and not very inspirational. Like when you go into Topshop you see lots of different lovely mannequins all dressed up and it's really aspirational.

SL: So is the website like nicer than the store? Does it give you a better impression of the brand?

INT9: No I'd say worse than the shop.

SL: So in terms of consistency and cohesiveness how would that affect your Gap experience of say the store and the website?

INT9: I don't shop there very often so that's probably why. Their clothes are actually quite good and like their ideas on Pinterest are good.

SL: So if it was more cohesive how would that affect you?

INT9: I would probably want to shop there more.

SL: And why would that be?

INT9: They give better style… basically they're just really rubbish at styling their clothes and I think if they did better styling I'd be more inspired to shop with them I think. That's not really as cohesive?

SL: So what would you mean by cohesive then? How would that influence you?

INT9: So that would be like the shop and the website and the social media and the app. They do have an have an app and they have a website. I mean on the mobile website they are all similar looking.

SL: Similar looking, and how would that affect you?

INT9: It would make me want to shop more …

SL: So if it looks and feels the same why would you shop more?

INT9: I think because em…

SL: What does that do?

INT9: I think I would feel not more proud of the brand but feel more like it was something more that I wanted to be part of. So how they present themselves.

SL: Would you be more connected to them?

INT9: Yeah I would be more connected to them. I would not feel a bit ashamed of wearing their clothes or ashamed of going into their shop cause they're out of date and...

SL: Would that tie in then with the première section and your approval?

INT9: Yeah.

SL: If someone then asked you, so like Gap's not very cohesive, and if someone said where did you buy that from and you said Gap, how would you feel then?

INT9: Not as good as if.. said Topshop or Zara or somewhere.

SL: So is that to do with how you are connected to the brand and how you feel

INT9: So how I feel and how I view the brand I think yeah. I still shop there but not.

SL: That's really interesting so if something is more connected you might feel at that approval stage [premiere] you might be more likely to get a good response.

INT9: Yeah. It's so funny isn't it. It's definitely true that if it was more cohesive I would want to shop there and I think they had a cooler brand image as well then I would want to.

SL: So you'd still need to have a good brand image to begin with but if it's cohesive...

INT9: It would just back that up. I think I'd want to be part of it more.

SL: And what do you mean by being part of it more?

INT9: So em probably shop with them more, probably follow them on social media.

SL: And would you do that?

INT9: Yeah I think I would.

SL: The next question again is really broad, em how do you think that all the different retail channels that are available to you are becoming merged or blurred?

INT9: Oh definitely, especially… well they're all linked together. I think the website is definitely separate but it is always linked to Facebook, always linked to Twitter and there's always like little buttons you can press but… I think the website is definitely separate but has little links I think when you are talking about Twitter and Facebook it's a lot more… how am I describing this?

SL: So I'll repeat the question again just to prompt you. How do you think all the different retail channels that are available to you are becoming merged or blurred? You can even think of a retailer if that helps you.

INT9: I think they're definitely becoming very similar. There's always links between the different em channels, do you call them channels?

SL: Yeah.

INT9: There's always buttons which you can press which go to Facebook or to Twitter and in the same way when you are on Twitter they have like links to the website and like photos of the store and discount codes so it's all very similar. They're definitely different but I think there's just so many of them they're all kind of linked in.

SL: And do you think all retailers are doing that to the same level? Are they all equally as good as that?

INT9: No. Some definitely aren't like some.

SL: Are there any other retailers that are good at doing all that merging and blurring?

INT9: Who else is good at it? Yeah I think ASOS and Urban Outfitters are good at it. They're the ones I looked at on my course and there's a lot of linking between. They have lots of blogs and links to Facebook and Twitter and they have lots of images and ideas about styles and then links to their shops as well. Urban outfitters are really cool because they have their blog on their site, like whole blogs and blog posts about different shops as well probably helps to join the store and the website together I think they're really good.

SL: And in your opinion what represents a seamless fashion shopping experience?

INT9: I think when you don't have to jump from one to another. So for example when you're going on social media and then you can click through to the website that's very easy and if you find something on the website that you think great or I think is great I'll just buy it of the website. For something which I can see clearly. Like I said before like a coat like a rain anorak I can guess pretty well how that's going to be because I know what the fabric's like but then if it's something else that's different then I would go to the shop and it would be there and I'd be like this fit's perfectly great.

SL: So what represents a seamless experience between different channels?

INT9: Quick and easy, not very complicated and quite enjoyable and not like time consuming and stressful.

SL: What about the look and feel of the channels, what represents a seamless experience?

INT9: They all look the same. Well I know they don't all look exactly the same because obviously it's a website and it's a social media platform but they have the same feel or they have the same logo or the same imagery. Definitely that imagery that's important.

SL: You've mentioned Topshop and H&M where you have shopped across channels with those retailers em was your impression of the brand consistent across all of the channels. Obviously you said Gap no, not particularly. But can you tell me what makes you think H&M and Topshop are consistent? What gave you that impression.

INT9: I think the, do you mean between the channels?

SL: Yeah. So what makes Topshop consistent?

INT9: The logo's always the same on every single channel and the images are either the same or very similar, same feel and they're updated at similar times so it's not like you walk into, they're not but they should be, not like you walk into a shop and it's completely different all the imagery that you see. It's not like the shop's like three weeks behind the website. It shouldn't be like that. They should be similar. Em I think the amount of information you can get from both I think you should be able to find a product on the internet and also be able to find it on the website.

SL: In general how do you reassure yourself that you're making the right purchase decision? So if you think maybe back to your t-shirt if that helps, what reassured you?

INT9: The brand I shop from so someone that I trust that I've bought things from before. So that reassured me they're a good retailer, I know that the quality is good and the price is good. Also if you can take things back after a certain amount of days. If you take it home and think oh I'm not sure about this. That reassures you because you think actually that might be completely different when I get home or I might have a completely different change of heart.

SL: How does your omni channel shopping journey affect your trust with the retailer?

INT9: I think if they are all very similar and they are all linked I think that makes me trust them more.

SL: What do you mean by linked.

INT9: Like being able to go from one to another and then having the, I keep saying cohesive, but you know what I mean between them.

SL: Being linked to one another what would that be specifically, is it a button to click?

INT9: Linked with a button but, obviously you can't like a website to a shop so linked with image and presentation.

SL: And how does an omni channel shopping journey affect your loyalty?

INT9: Em towards the brand?

SL: Yeah.

INT9: I think it was a really easy simplistic journey then I'm likely to shop with them again because you wouldn't if it all goes horrendously wrong. You're gonna think oh what's the point it's all that effort and time and it didn't even turn out right.

SL: Do you have a set list of omni channel retailers off the top of your head?

INT9: That I know of or that I shop from?

SL: That you go for, and do you go for them because they have lots of channels?

INT9: Yeah. So just the ones that I shop from normally H&M, Topshop, Zara I think.

SL: And do you use all of them across the different channels?

INT9: Yeah 'cause when I do my journey using the website and the shop.

SL: And are they all quite good at being cohesive and linked?

INT9: Yeah.

SL: Would that make you like them more?

INT9: Yeah.

SL: Final question is, as a fashion consumer what does the term connected consumer mean to you?

INT9: Someone who is linked with what the brand, or whatever the company is doing and regularly shops with them. Their linked with what their doing via social media or?

SL: So when you mean linked do you mean updated or?

Anna: Keeping in touch with them. Like yeah it doesn't always have to be buying things.

--Ends--

Interview X - INT10 Megan

SL: So why do you use lots of different channels when you're shopping, why do you do that?

INT10: Em I guess sometimes it's more convenient to do it online or em some like online shops they have like specific offers that are just online. Like some stores have brands that they only have online and I'm like oh.

SL: And how do you feel about that when it's just on in the online store?

INT10: Eh, it's kind of annoying sometimes 'cause I wanna see them in real life as well. I suppose that is what makes you go back and look more.

SL: Would you say you are confident in your ability to use such an array of channels for fashion shopping

INT10: Yeah.

SL: So what makes you confident? Can you tell me a bit more as to why you would say yes to be confident in using such an array of channels?

INT10: Well em, I don't know like.

SL: I understand we're talking about things you do unconsciously so take your time.

INT10: I suppose because you are like familiar with the brand so they've got lots of different channels. Then you like… you know you're going to be confident using them online, you know them in store. Sometimes you can get stuff from a retailer online, like you can buy something that is only online or something and maybe you have a little less confidence in that I think.

SL: What makes you confident using all these channels?

INT10: That they have all these like em, what am I trying to say? That they're like service is still quite good. That they say you know you can still return it and they have all those sections online that you can… Also, like, this isn't about fashion but it's from today. Em I was gonna buy my mum a book from Waterstones that was in town the other day. It didn't have a price on it, I was just like oh. I knew it was going to be expensive anyway and then I looked online today and it was thirty quid and em then there was like a discount for students like using Unidays. I was like ah, I wouldn't have got that if I was in store, like I'm quite pleased now that I did that online. So that was quite good.

SL: Now what I want you to do now is I want you to think of your most recent shopping journey for high street fashion apparel. It doesn't matter if you bought the item or not. Do you have a journey in mind that you can think of?

INT10: I've got two. I can't remember which one was first, one was online and one wasn't.

SL: Whichever one you prefer is fine. Can you just tell me what triggered you to begin that shopping journey?

INT10: Ok I'll go for the one that was on ASOS and I've never really bought anything from ASOS and I know everyone does it and then yeah. There's just so much choice that it overwhelms me sometimes. Em well my friends were like, there is a twenty percent discount from like the already sixty percent sale so I was like oh. Then em it was only available for like a few days so it was literally so crazy I had like so many things in the basket and then, then I just thought to myself you don't… like I didn't even need to buy anything and then I had so many things save and I was like oh it'll be cheaper. Then I narrowed it down to a dress, out of like ten items.

SL: At the end of the journey did you buy the dress?

INT10: Yep.

SL: Did you keep it?

INT10: Although like it felt it was a bit long and I can never be bothered to send stuff back when it's online so I kept it, even although it's never been on. It's like it'll do.

SL: So I have got a task for you to do. So that shopping journey for the dress I want you to map that journey going through the sequence of channels that you used. So the first thing you said it was an offer, how did you know about that offer?

INT10: Em there was emails about it but I hadn't really looked at it then my friend said about it.

SL: How did you friend let you know, did she tell you in person or?

INT10: Yeah. But everyone has it on email so.

SL: So you then checked your email?

INT10: Yeah.

SL: Ok so we can put a note of that one even although it's not necessarily a channel it does still form part of your journey. Was it an email from Unidays or an email from ASOS itself.

INT10: Oh no the Unidays was the Waterstones thing.

SL: Oh yeah, so it was an ASOS email?

INT10: Yeah. My friend's got the premium thing so maybe he knew about it before me. I'm not sure.

SL: And what did you do next after you knew about the discount?

INT10: Just looked on the website.

SL: Now was it a mobile website? Was it the actual website?

INT10: The actual website.

SL: And then what did you do after that?

INT10: Em just looked at all the clothes that were in the sale.

SL: And then what did you do after that?

INT10: Em like saved loads of them in the bag. Then I was annoyed because one of them it said it wasn't available anymore so probably there was a bit of a rush and then I just kind of minimised it down. I kept like looking at the videos of them walking wearing the dress and kept going hmm that looks nice.

SL: Then obviously once you had done that, what happened next?

INT10: I just bought it.

SL: What about post-purchase did you do anything there? Did you let your friends know, did you tweet, did you Instagram, did you review it?

INT10: No.

SL: Now I take it that you just looked at the ASOS website? You didn't look at anything else?

INT10: Yeah.

SL: Was that a bit of an impulse journey?

INT10: Yeah.

SL: So next question I am going to ask you does that represent your typical shopping journey?

INT10: Hmm no.

SL: Ok so next thing I want you to do is to map out your typical shopping journey for fashion clothing.

INT10: OK.

SL: So how would it start?

INT10: Hmm. Eh well I have got a list on my phone. I need to like what people are wearing and then I'm like ok, I need to remember …because I need to get a bomber jacket. I keep seeing people them and I'm like ok yeah. So I've got a list on my phone, like a main list of like main clothes that I wanna get. I'll probably be going into town for something else, like I always kind of like multi-task with that. So like later I'll buy some food I'll probably end up looking at some clothes. But I need to take back a jumper actually.

SL: So to begin with before you make that list how would do you know what to put on that list? So are you looking at people?

INT10: Yeah like people on the street. Em like, I guess Instagram there is some blogs on Instagram that I kind of follow. It's stuff that I like to see regularly but I'm thinking yeah or just like what the main trends are and think oh yeah I haven't actually bought that yet I should probably get that.

SL: And how would you find out about the main trends?

INT10: Em I dunno I just guess it's what people are wearing, what I see in store anyway. Like so yeah when I get in store I'll just like forget my list and see what looks good.

SL: So you'd have your Instagram stuff and would the next stage in your typical journey be the store or? You can change it as we go as well.

INT10: Yeah. Like this is what annoys me because I've got this plan of things I want to get so when I have got something in mind. Like normally when I am dead set on just getting the jacket. I would look online and be like compare all things online and then get the best one. But like I never do that really I just go into town and I think at the back of my mind I'm like.

SL: So if we're thinking about your typical journey – you might see some people on the street?

INT10: Yeah.

SL: Then you'll move on and do a bit of social media Instagram.

INT10: Yeah

SL: So what would you do next?

INT10: Em, just…

SL: Would you go straight to the store, would you do something online?

INT10: I think like I see comparing things as like a different, like online, shopping. I would do that at the same time.

SL: When would you do that?

INT10: I don't know like.

SL: What I want to do is map your average typical kind of journey.

INT10: Actually yeah cause I do check like what the stores have already before I go in again.

SL: So would you go on their website to do that or?

INT10: Yeah.

SL: How would you access the web site?

INT10: Just the normal one.

SL: So the regular website.

INT10: Yeah

SL: So, so far we've got that you'd maybe see some people in the street, you'd Instagram, you would have a look on the websites. What would you do next?

INT10: Em just go in store.

SL: Go in store ok.

INT10: I don't know what other options there are to do ha ha.

SL: And then what would you do with in store when you are there?

INT10: Em look around, try on some things. I feel like I always pick up so many things but then I don't know I think about how much things are going to cost and then I think how much do I really need it and just kind of maybe buy something but maybe not.

SL: And then after that would you… do you do anything post purchase? Do you tweet, do you Facebook your friends? Do you do anything like that or... post a review?

INT10: I wouldn't really like Facebook my friends I wouldn't think, unless we were going somewhere and they were like, what are you wearing? Then, yeah and I don't think I would tweet about it. Occasionally I might Instagram something.

SL: Would you say that is kind of typical?

INT10: Not really not all the time just maybe occasionally for something really good. Like people do it a lot with like shoes and stuff.

SL: Ok so that would be your typical journey and you would occasionally do a bit of Instagram now and again.

INT10: Yeah.

SL: So if we look at each channel. So social media - is it just Instagram that you use at the beginning?

INT10: Em, Facebook as well and like people's blogs.

SL: Which online websites would you usually go to?

INT10: Loads.

SL: Think of your most regular ones.

INT10: Eh Topshop, Zara. I feel like I never really buy anything from the Zara website I use Zara as like… I feel like the pictures are really like 'magaziney' kind of but they're like more inspirational and then I go into the shop.

SL: So website. Do you read any magazines during your journey or?

INT10: Eh, I dunno. I can never be bothered to spend money on them really. I have a few at the moment but only from going on holiday.

SL: And any other websites you think you would go to on your typical journey?

INT10: Em, Urban Outfitters, ASOS I go I guess. I feel like I look at ASOS but I never really buy. I think Topshop is the only.

SL: And which stores would you visit?

INT10: Em yeah, like Topshop, Urban Outfitters, Zara eh, River Island, anything like literally all the shops ha ha.

SL: And then social media would it just be occasional Instagram-ing?

INT10: Yeah.

SL: Do you do anything else post purchase?

INT10: Don't think so.

SL: Would you say your first inspiration is seeing people on the street or…?

INT10: Eh yeah I'd say like friends on my Facebook like what they're wearing. Like I can never think what to wear on a night out so sometimes I might look at the club website and people that are tagged and be like ok yeah and blogs as well.

SL: It's quite interesting because obviously looking at people it's not really a channel but it's really interesting that it forms a part of your journey as well. If you think about your last journey, that ASOS journey what made you make the purchase in the end?

INT10: Em well I really liked what it looked like but that it was a limited time deal I think is the main reason that I did it because I felt like everyone was talking about that and felt I better get on that one.

SL: And obviously post purchase you didn't do anything for that journey with ASOS.

INT10: I was thinking about returning it.

SL: What made you not return it?

INT10: It's just like hassle, wrapping it up, going to the post office. Yes.

SL: If you think about the dress journey what was reason to go to the website?

INT10: They only have a website so yeah.

SL: What's your motivation to use these typical channels on your typical journey?

INT10: Em, dunno I need to think about it. Eh well what other channels are there?

SL: You've got like mobile app, catalogues, in store kiosks. Or tell me what motivated you to use these channels?

INT10: Just because it's the easiest ones.

SL: Ok anything else.

INT10: Just familiar with it I guess. I mean I like they also change quite a lot so if you want to see what's new on it you can see the trends really easily. It's always being updated.

SL: Do you associate certain channels with certain purposes in your shopping journey.

INT10: Yeah. Well like as I said with online when I've got something specific in mind trying to get the best deal. Em whereas like in store is just kind of like enjoyment, I've got a lot of time, wander round, take it all in.

SL: And what about the social media, do you associate a certain purpose with that?

INT10: Em, yeah like bloggers I guess are like more inspirational, the top end like the fashion could be like. So I look at them but I also look at people in the street. So the blogs are wearing it, but how are people actually wearing it.

SL: So on the street, in real-life?

INT10: Yeah. I actually use Pinterest quite a lot as well. I've got like a wish list thing on there of like stuff that I'd like to look like. But obviously it doesn't.

SL: Now what I want you to do is, I'll get you to do it for both your journeys because that one's quite short any way. I want you to group the channels that you use and give them a name for that particular stage of that part of the journey. You don't have to specifically group but I just want to identify the stages of you journey. If you just put a post-it above each of the stages. Is that clear? I know that is a bit of a tricky task.

INT10: Yeah.

SL: Ok, so that's the first stage. Then you have got comparison I can see.

INT10: This one is just buying.

SL: If you call it buying then if that's what the stage is. Now I know this is just occasional but just out of interest what would you call that stage where you are maybe posting to Instagram?

INT10: Maybe just like sharing.

SL: So say out of… just so I can understand how typical that is or how untypical. Say out of ten shopping journeys how many times would you Instagram? Is it something that is typical.

INT10: No, like one I would say. Like I do wanna start I've tried to start blogging and stuff and I wanna do that more so I think I will start to do it more. I think I like, I feel like my friends would like laugh at me if I did it on Facebook or something like that but like when people are specifically looking for that sort of thing on Blogger then it's fine to do it.

SL: So you have got your stages there [typical]. Would you give this journey [actual] any different stages? Because you've got your email from your friend and then the website.

INT10: Eh I dunno. Well there's not like really any research going on there I mean I was just like searching.

SL: Would it be like researching of trends?

INT10: No that wasn't even happening there to be honest. It's a really bad example of shopping. I dunno I was just doing like price, like low to high and it was in the sale. I was just picking whichever one looks best. I suppose the seeing how it looks in real life thing was like with me looking at, they were walking on the catwalk and I looked at that quite a lot. I kept flicking so.

SL: So would you say, it's quite a difference because you've got quite a long shopping journey there and quite a short one there. Would you still say the long one is typical?

INT10: I wouldn't say this is one trip it can take quite a while before get what I want.

SL: So really in that journey [actual] were you combining lots of these [typical] stages into one area or? Because you've got research awareness, comparison. Was it just a general…?

INT10: I think it was just comparison and like seeing how they looked like. It was just like price and how they look in real life. It wasn't really thinking about the trends that much it was just.

SL: And did that email trigger the journey?

INT10: I wouldn't have been searching online like generally. I think that's some of the difference I don't just general look online. I have to be after something. But I can look in store with nothing in mind.

SL: You also mentioned the word inspiration, where does that fit in on these [typical] stages?

INT10: Em I dunno, all of them really. Mainly here.

SL: Mainly in the social media awareness.

INT10: But also here.

SL: In the store.

INT10: But also here [website]. But mainly there [inspiration].

SL: So we'll put them in order. So mainly there [social media] and then which one would be the next level of inspiration, store or?

INT10: I think it would be here actually.

SL: So store and then website.

INT10: Yeah.

SL: Do you associate certain channels with certain stages in your shopping journey? So do you associate that channel with this stage and that channel with this stage?

INT10: Em yeah.

SL: So can you tell me a little bit more about that, so why do you associate these channels with these stages? You can talk me through each of them if you want.

INT10: What do you mean.

SL: So do you associate certain channels with certain stages of your shopping journey. So you said yes, so why do you associate that channel with that stage for example? Just so I can understand why what your doing.

INT10: I dunno it's just easier like em. Why do I associate that with research? Because I just feel like that's, like a lot blogs especially that's what people are using them for like.

SL: Ok so why do you associate the online websites with comparison?

INT10: Because you can like really easily filter down like the price and the styles. Like you can't be in more than one shop at the same time but you can like online. Em so then it's just really easy to flick past and be like no. But when it's in front of you, you are just stuck in one shop and you're like there's more choice.

SL: With the store channel for buying why do that?

INT10: Because you just feel like a bit more 'sucked' into the brand in the shop and be like.

SL: And the showing occasional stage?

INT10: Yeah 'cause I dunno why else you'd. Unless you wanted to complain or something. I don't know why you'd share…

SL: Is it different, because you could just go to a friend and go this is what I've bought physically. But then you are doing it online. What is that for? Is it because you are interested in blogging or because you've just seen other people do it or…?

INT10: I guess with like blogging and Instagram and stuff because you get like, you know like people like, what you, you get this recognition I bought something good.

SL: And how does that make you feel, yeah it makes you feel good, the more likes you get?

INT10: Em I dunno, just makes you feel, I dunno validating you bought something good I suppose. So kind of validating what you are doing.

SL: Now I might be repeating myself but just go with me. On your journey you didn't combine any channels for a particular stage, it was quite clear. How well do you think the channels fit with the various steps in your shopping journey, how well do they align?

INT10: Em, how does the online align with comparison?

SL: So how do these channels fit with each of these stages, do they fit well, do they fulfil your needs at that stage in your journey or are they not so good?

INT10: Em, let me think…

SL: That's ok take your time. So I'll read the question again. How well do the channels align with the various steps in your journey?

INT10: Well.

SL: So why do they fit well.

INT10: Well there's so many different social media ways so you can get like different. I dunno like… sorry I'm useless. Em…

SL: So I'll read the question again, how well do you think the channels align with the various steps in your journey?

INT10: Em…yeah good but the research one you do actually need to search for what you're looking for sometimes.

SL: It's just to explain it because it's hard for me to understand without having an explanation.

INT10: I dunno, buying fits well because you are in the shops, it's just easier, it's just there you can just hand it over.

SL: What about the comparison bit, how well does the online channel fit that stage?

INT10: Em, it's good. I dunno like I said before you can just have different tabs open so you can just like flick. Whereas like if you were doing on like an app, you can still compare you'd have to remember what you had seen whereas you can…

SL: Keep your tabs open.

INT10: Yeah.

SL: Now I've got another task for you, hopefully this wont be too tricky. I want you to tell me about the devices you used to access these channels ok. So devices are almost like a physical route you have to access channels. So how did you access social media at that first stage in your journey?

INT10: Eh using my laptop or phone.

SL: So you can either take the laptop and put it next to it or the laptop card.

INT10: It's just easier.

SL: So you've taken the card because it's easier ok.

INT10: Where shall I put it?

SL: And you said you might use the phone as well?

INT10: Where shall I put that?

SL: Just put that beneath [social media]. Now on your phone is it through an app, the mobile website, the normal website?

INT10: Em, Instagram's through app. I'm trying to get blogger on my phone, I haven't done that yet. Pinterest I've got that. Twitter like I never really use Twitter or Instagram on my laptop it's just on my phone.

SL: Ok so that's mainly apps so we're just saying kind of typically. Online website how do you access that?

INT10: Em yeah on my laptop or my phone.

SL: On your laptop or your phone ok and that's just the regular website or would that be an app.

INT10: Like I downloaded some of the websites but I dunno I prefer the website.

SL: So you'd go on the website on your laptop and then go onto the normal website on your phone ok. Is it a mobile website or is it an actual desktop website you would look at?

INT10: Mobile website.

SL: Mobile website ok. So would you do both would you go on the online website and then go on say the mobile website on your phone.

INT10: No, either or. Like I just use the mobile one when I'm on the bus or something.

SL: So on your typical journey would you just go on the online website, would you just go on the phone or would you use both of them?

INT10: I'd say I use both equally. I would say when I am using the mobile website, I'm never like gonna buy something off my phone I don't think. I'm just kind of killing time, looking at what they've got. Whereas I'm doing it online on the website and either wanting to buy something or…

SL: So if you think of your typical journey, what would you use first? Would you use the mobile website first or the online website first?

INT10: Em, well I dunno I don't really see it in like a sequential way. It's just every now and then I might look at it. I swear the only time I use it is when I'm on the bus.

SL: So you use them at the same time or either or. But do you ever use them before or after each other?

INT10: Maybe that afterwards. Like say I was on the bus into town just to like.

SL: But sometimes you would use a mix of them. Do you flick back and forth between these between the online website and the mobile website.

INT10: I just mainly use the website online but occasionally.

SL: It's just so I can understand the sequence of your journey. So are you saying you use this in place of that one? Think about your last few shopping journeys.

INT10: Hmm… I dunno, I don't use the mobile website that much. It's just kind of just.

SL: What do you use it for?

INT10: I just like dunno, just looking at… It's only in a small space of time I don't wanna be sitting there.

SL: What do you use the mobile website for.

INT10: Just to look at it. I mean I looked at ASOS a while ago, looking at clothes.

SL: Are you still doing research and stuff at that stage?

INT10: Like research I guess yeah.

SL: Would that be typical of your journey? So you might have a look on social media, then go on your phone, then go onto the website?

INT10: Yeah.

SL: Definitely?

INT10: Yep.

SL: Typical?

INT10: Yep.

SL: But again you might go back and forth between them.

INT10: Yeah.

SL: So for the social media, you've got the laptop and the smartphone then you'll use the app. Then you might do a bit of mobile 'nosey'ing' around and then you'll go onto the website to start comparing. Is that accurate?

INT10: Yeah. I keep saying but like that's the only time I use mobile. Then it's just like if I'm going somewhere. So I'm not going to go… like I'm going somewhere with my phone - I'm not going to go to town and come back and go online. I kind of see shopping online and instore as slightly like different like. It depends, sometimes I'll look online first to do the comparison thing then sometimes I just see them as like two separate things.

SL: Ok, and would you say in general do you mostly go on the mobile website first and then go onto the main website? Or?

INT10: No I would say mainly the website and then if I've got nothing to do I'll just look at the …do you get me.

SL: Yeah, yeah I understand it's just trying to understand where it fits in your typical journey. So think of your past three shopping journeys so you have seen some people in the street, you've been on a bit of social media, what would you do next? Would you go straight to the website…

INT10: Em I would just go to town really ha ha. I dunno it's like different for different things I'm shopping for. That's why it's like confusing for me to think about.

SL: So think about fashion clothing.

INT10: So I mean even with that it's like different.

SL: So why is it different?

INT10: Em, just as I said like if I've got something really specific in mind and I'm actually focused on getting it then I will spend like a lot longer like narrowing it down online and then probably going to store.

SL: So is that [mobile] not typical?

INT10: No, not really that is just kind a side.

SL: And you'd use that for more research and when would you do more research would it be here at this part or?

INT10: Yeah.

SL: Ok. And you still want to call that part of the resesearch awareness of trends?

INT10: Yep.

SL: Because a lot of the questions are based around your route. We can change it around.

INT10: It's confusing me now I dunno.

SL: So you've got your research and awareness, then your comparison, then your buying then your occasional showing off. Does that accurately reflect a typical shopping journey for fashion?

INT10: Yeah.

SL: Ok. If you want to change things as we go through the questions. Do you associate different devices with different purposes when shopping for fashion? So you've got the mobile device and the laptop.

INT10: Em so mobile is just searching for stuff. I'm not gonna buy anything through my phone. But laptop is. It's like searching again but I'd probably buy.

SL: We might need to hop back and forth between journey's. Tell me about your overall experience of your shopping journey for that ASOS dress?

INT10: Em, it was alright. I like that you can see them walking and stuff but because it was on such a tight schedule of this sale, even though I thought I had a few days it then said it was out of stock the thing I wanted so. So it kind of made me feel under a bit of pressure to quickly choose something.

SL: See if you knew it wasn't under time pressure would you react different to the journey?

INT10: Em yeah, yeah like I might have ended up not even getting anything to be honest. Because I choose loads of things and then I filter it down. I might have just been like you know what, I don't need anything.

SL: Do you associate different devices with different stages of your journey?

INT10: I feel like the laptop is the most 'researchy' one and like being more aware of the trends like on the laptop.

SL: So do you associate this device with a particular stage, the mobile.

INT10: I think that's like, when I look on my phone I'm just kind of like using instagram and I look at celebrities and what they're wearing on their Instagrams. So I think like kind of accidentally come across stuff on my phone. I might not be searching for it necessarily. I'll just be looking on Instagram like hmm, whereas on my laptop I might be specifically searching for stuff.

SL: So quite interesting there with the mobile website would that be the mobile website of the retailer?

INT10: Yeah.

SL: So you'd do your Instagram bits and go onto the mobile website of the retailer.

INT10: Yeah.

SL: On your shopping journey you said you encountered an email from ASOS after being prompted by a friend. During your typical shopping journey, are there any other marketing communications or contact with the retailer that you receive?

INT10: What during like this?

SL: Yeah so like during the whole typical journey

INT10: Em, yeah like sometimes you see like things on Facebook. Oh yeah I always think I might have actually done it. It was about Topshop I think. You share this picture on Pinterest. You pin it to a board and write why you like this thing and then you had to pin it to your board and they chose the winner from that. So like I used facebook to find out about that and then went on Pinterest and did it. I didn't actually win it. I dunno if that was to like make you look in the shop or anything it was just kind of to win something maybe.

SL: Anything else, any other communications or contact with the retailer that you would experience normally.

INT10: Where there is loads of emails all the time. I feel like I can never be bothered to read them. This is like why I skipped over, I didn't realise that email was from ASOS. I didn't see it first thing because they send so many that I just can't be bothered to look at them ever.

SL: Anything else like in store? Like staff do you interact with them?

INT10: No not really, just maybe to ask them where something is. I just look at what they are wearing as well. Because my friend works in Topshop and they have to like be really on the trend. They get given trends for the week so they have to choose. They're definitely going to be on trend.

SL: Thinking about this shopping journey here [dress], can you just tell me about your emotional responses during that journey?

INT10: Em I dunno, it was quite rushed it wasn't that good. I felt like because that's not very typical of the way I shop. I was just doing it quite quickly.

SL: So think maybe of a typical shopping journey.

INT10: Online?

SL: Just any journey at all. Can you tell me about your emotional responses? What emotions do you experience as you are going through the journey?

INT10: Ok, em so if you see a blogger and she's like wearing something from Topshop you can see how good it can look and you are like aw yeah. So then I'd like maybe you know, you'll see them and it will look really good and you'll see it's from like Topshop I can get that that's good.

SL: How do you feel at that point?

INT10: I dunno.

SL: Happy, sad?

INT10: Happy that you can afford it and you can go and look for it yourself.

SL: Ok and as you go further through the journey?

INT10: Em….ahh

SL: How would you feel?

INT10: Em… Online like I dunno I need to think like… I feel like I always prefer stores the most. I do like online as well as you can get to know the brand a bit better. Especially if you don't know them that well it's quite good.

SL: How do you feel when you are online?

INT10: Em happy I guess?

SL: How do you feel when you are in the store?

INT10: Happy as well. Sometimes when I'm online, when I'm shopping online I feel like I should probably be doing other things though. I feel like it's a bit easier to be tricked into buying things though when I'm in store, whereas online it's just a bit more focused.

SL: Are there any points on your journey you feel negative or, any other points that you feel anything else other than happy? Because at the moment that means you are consistently happy all the way through.

INT10: I just love shopping. Em, well I guess if there is like a bad staff member in store sometimes that can affect it a bit or if you've got to wait ages in line. Just annoyed if you've got to wait ages in line and if they're not really friendly at the till that's kind of like oh well.

SL: For that ASOS journey shopping for your dress, how satisfied were you with that?

INT10: Not very.

SL: Not very, why not?

INT10: I dunno like it arrived quite quickly I guess. I just felt like I was buying something for the sake of it really. Like I feel a bit better after I have searched for it a bit longer. Yeah I've got like a good thing. Whereas I just bought something really quickly. That's another thing about in store, the music makes you feel a bit happier and I guess.

SL: With that typical journey how satisfied do you think you might be from that shopping experience?

INT10: Yeah satisfied 'cause like I know that I've filtered it down I've looked at a lot of different aspects and yeah. Oh also I just thought of something after you buy something and it stays in store for like a long time after you bought it, and you see it start to pop up after you bought it, you see it. You feel like, oh you've made a good choice.

SL: The next question is do you view your journey as stages or as an overall journey?

INT10: Em overall it's always in the back of my mind like the research and stuff. I'm always thinking about that. And so like I might not, as I said earlier, it's not going to happen like quickly. It's all part of the same thing like to the end goal.

SL: When shopping for fashion does your journey, you might have answered this but I'll ask again. Does your journey consist of you going through channels consecutively or do you switch back and forth?

INT10: I'll switch back and forth I think.

SL: Any particular channels you do that with?

INT10: Em I guess the shop and online I think. And like all of it really social media. I think I've always got in my mind what I want, I know what looks good but I'm getting swayed by what I'm seeing all the time and it blurs my vision.

SL: What motivates you to move between channels, so what motivates you to move from one channel to the next one.

INT10: Eh like either what I am looking for or ease I guess.

SL: Would the next channel be easier, is that why you would choose it?

INT10: Eh well I dunno like this is the easiest one as well like. Eh a lot of it online is to do when I'm bored searching for stuff.

SL: And in any of the journey's you mentioned did you use any of the channels simultaneously, at the same time? So you mentioned that you keep tabs open on the website? Do you do anything else? Like take a mobile in the store or use your mobile and your laptop at the same time.

INT10: Yeah like sometimes I take. I'll make a list of what I have seen online and take it into store. So have a picture, take screenshots of stuff. Take it into store sometimes but then sometimes it's hard to find it in store so I just kind of forget about it. What you like see online is different to what you buy in the store I think.

SL: Do you get the same level of benefits from the different channels that you encounter? Or do you perceive some have higher benefits or lower benefits? So do you view them all equally?

INT10: I think online has bigger benefit than a mobile because it has a wider screen it's bigger like that. Em, it's really just like looking at individual pieces on the mobile whereas you can view loads of stuff at once on just the one website and like the website's got stuff like blogs and selects it all into trends. I'm sure it has it all on mobile but it's just easier to see online.

SL: What about the store?

INT10: Eh, what was the question again I completely forgot?

SL: So do you perceive each of the different channels have the same benefits or do they offer higher or lower benefits?

INT10: Em, yeah and I think stores just the bigger representation of online. When the trends always changing like. You can see like how different people react to the clothes as well in store, not just you. I mean I dunno if I really like care what other people think but you can see like what's popular.

SL: So if you were going to rank the channels in order what do you perceive as the best channel?

INT10: Em, store. I just like, I feel like that's the most enjoyable.

SL: And what's the second best channel?

INT10: Hmm, maybe like social media.

SL: Then the third one?

INT10: Online.

SL: Fourth one

INT10: Website, I mean mobile website.

SL: Where would that fall in?

INT10: See like I've downloaded lots of apps but I haven't really used. I think I've got the topshop app but I think I just google it on my phone.

SL: I mean with the devices, do you perceive that they have the same level of benefits or do some have higher benefits than others?

INT10: Em, smartphone you can be like out and about em for research I think is good for out and about. You can make notes of things you see. Looking on Instagram like I'm always doing that.

SL: If you're going to say your number one device for fashion shopping, what would it be?

INT10: I'd say laptop because I wanna buy stuff. Because I wouldn't buy stuff on my phone. I'd say phone is more research. Phone is like I would come across fashion stuff on my phone em but em I might not be searching for it like on Instagram. On a laptop like if I wanna search for stuff I'll search for it.

SL: By mixing and matching channels do you gain any overall benefits? By mixing and matching channels I mean by the same retailer. So is there any overall benefit you get from going onto Topshop's lots of different channels as opposed to just sticking with one channel?

INT10: Em I suppose if you like see it online first you already have preconceived like what's going to be in store. So like em I dunno I guess like you can get it delivered in store. Maybe just feel a bit more connected to the brand if you engage across channels.

SL: Are there any combinations of fashion retail channel that you think work well together?

INT10: Em yeah like social media and website work well. I mean like the Facebook is just like really offers and pictures and always links back to like online. Em I don't see the link that much between online and store though. I dunno. I see them as two different shopping like ways of buying.

SL: In what way?

INT10: Because there is not that much mention of like in store online or like there's like no like… I mean they probably have cards at the till and look online. But…

SL: I mean how do you feel about that do you know that they don't communicate the other channels?

INT10: Em, well sometimes if you have seen something online and I know I have gone into Topshop and been like I saw this online have you got it in and they are like, no sorry we ran out of stock or oh that's only online. So like that's annoying.

SL: And has you experience of one channel ever affected your experience or use of another channel?

INT10: Em yeah I think it would but I haven't had that many bad experiences but I think it probably would.

SL: In what way do you think it might affect you?

INT10: Em well like I suppose like customer service. If they took ages to like deliver to you you'd think oh is it in store and are they not going to be as attentive to you and stuff maybe or they're not going to replenish their stock as quickly I don't know.

SL: How do you think all the different retail channels are becoming merged or blurred?

INT10: Em, well like em the like online shops. It's not just for buying they've got their blogs online so that's like you're doing the research as well at the same time.

SL: So the retailer is doing a blog itself.

INT10: Yeah. Like loads of them seem to do that. Em.

SL: How else are they becoming like merged or blurred

INT10: Oh like when you're in like the changing rooms and stuff I'll take a picture and like Instagram it. Em so that's kind of like merging again.

SL: Anything else?

INT10: Em I'm trying to think of examples like I'm sure I've seen loads of stuff. I'm just…Em or like. Well I suppose like with the sharing thing if you Instagram and you share it or something.

SL: In your opinion what represents a seamless fashion shopping experience?

INT10: Em it's just easy. You like just get what you want, you don't have to search really hard to find what you want. Em just get like good service I guess.

SL: Do you find different shopping channels of the same retailer, so maybe Topshop are they consistent in terms of things such as information?

INT10: Yeah I think so em, I see like Zara like what's on here. I think like Topshop is quite good like their website is really similar to in store. Zara I feel is a bit more… it always looks so fashionable on Zara and I mean I love Zara anyway and the Zara here's good but the Zara at home is a bit smaller and I think it never looks that fashionable. Like the clothes I think they are good quality but I never think they look as good instore.

SL: So they don't look as good in store as they do online?

INT10: Yep.

SL: Again my next question is quite similar is you impression of the brand quite similar across all the channels say for Topshop and Zara. Do you get the same impression of the brand?

INT10: Em yeah I think so. Yeah but I think it does depend which shop it is. There is differences between the shops like where they are. I mean the Zara at home is like not that elegant. It's still fine but the Zara here in Manchester it's like much better. It's nice and elegant and like fashionable like it is online. Like the one at home isn't that good.

SL: Is it different to your perception of the brand online?

INT10: Yeah.

SL: Like in what way?

INT10: Online I think of Zara being like quite high end obviously it's a high street store but it does look really fashionable quite high end fashionable. Em whereas in store, I'm just talking about at home here, in store I always think of Zara being like cheaper, like not cheap but I just think that's the main thing like I can go in there and pick up a new top or whatever. Rather than think like ooh that's really classy.

SL: How do you reassure yourself in making the right purchase decision?

INT10: I always have such a battle in the changing rooms. Em like it's about price, is like a main thing and then how many different things I can wear it with. Yeah like how versatile it is, is now like a big thing. Em and also how others are going to perceive it. As recently the thing that I'm returning today is like this white fluffy cardigan thing but the size is a bit too big, but peole are going to, but I quite liked it when I tried it on but I'm going to get a smaller size as people are going to think it's like a dressing gown or something. I was like I can't be dealing with that.

SL: So it's how people validate you as well.

INT10: Yeah.

SL: And thinking about your omni channel shopping journey. How does you omni channel shopping journey affect your trust with the retailer?

INT10: Em I suppose there's higher trust I suppose if it's really consistent between all the channels if they've got like the key items in store like the first ones you see in store are the first ones on the website as well.

SL: Anything else about that because that is really interesting.

INT10: What with the products or with?

SL: Anything. I'll repeat the question, how does your omni channel shopping journey affect the trust with the retailer?

INT10: I guess yeah. Well you like you know how I was saying before in the other thing [focus group d] about Urban Outfitters, I dunno I just saw their website and it's changed. It's just not consistent with the shop any more. I don't know why they have done it.

SL: And how do you feel about that?

INT10: It makes me not want to go to the website really. Well yeah it just looks really standard. You want every like shop to be different. The stores still really exciting and good and really colourful but I feel like loads are trying to copy Topshop a bit with the standard writing and yeah it just makes me think of like BHS like copying. It doesn't look like there's that much personality on the website any more which is not good.

SL: If you think about your loyalty how is that affected by all of your interactions with all the different channels of the same retailer, this omni channel journey? If you're interacting with Topshop say across two or three channels how is your loyalty affected?

INT10: Like if you see like on Pinterest or something you're gonna have more loyalty by like repining their things. Em and I think if they interact with you a bit so if you tweeted them and they retweeted you or something you'd definitely feel a bit more appreciated so you'd probably. Em…

SL: So the question is how is your loyalty affected by an omni channel shopping journey?

INT10: Yeah it's just higher I think just 'cause you've gone through different stages. So you've like filtered it down like at this stage, the comparison bit so then I know that I've definitely gonna go into that shop. Like when you go into a shopping centre you know which shops you are going to go to.

SL: So you've done your homework.

INT10: Yeah, so I mean like some shops if it wasn't like the standard Topshop stuff that I'd go to anyway, like if I'd seen something on social media. Like when Mango started using Kate Moss and stuff and there was a bit of hype about that and I never really used them like that much before so that was like linking it so I'd seen it on social media. I probably wouldn't have before.

SL: Do you have a set list of omni channel retailers in your head? These retailers with like lots of different channels a kind of list of your top ones.

INT10: Yeah like Topshop, Urban Outfitters I always thought was good but now I don't know so much. Yeah cause like they use to have a blog and like a music section obviously they will still have that but it looked more creative.

SL: What does that do for your shopping journey engaging with the music, and the blogs.

INT10: Eh it just makes you feel like you are fitting in with the brand and stuff. They're quite cool.

SL: As a fashion consumer what does the term connected consumer mean to you? Again it's a really general question so whatever you think that means?

INT10: Connected consumer, like you really know what's going on in fashion, like connected.

SL: So what does the term connected consumer mean to you?

INT10: Like I guess just the linking of all these things. Like you're not just in town, you've already thought about lots of things, you've connected to different aspects.

SL: So different aspects what do you mean by that?

INT10: Like different channels. Mainly like social media is what I think of and like interacting with like with the …maybe I'm not as connected as I should be right now.

SL: Why is that?

INT10: 'Cause like some people they might like leave comments or ask peoples' opinions and stuff. I don't really like leave comments or anything or like tweet about clothes.

SL: See that occasional showing stage, when you do do it, what is the purpose of that?

INT10: Em, just… I dunno. I want to start like doing blogging stuff so I want to think that I guess. Em it's kind of like, it kind of links it back to the beginning I guess. You're like you are serving as some kind of inspiration for someone else. People that blog, like my friend that blogs she gets loads of people, so like then you're getting loads of like admiration from people which I suppose is good and also so you're like kind of helping people.

SL: So what does that do for what you have purchased? How does that make you feel towards your purchase?

INT10: Yeah it just really validates if you've bought something good. 'Cause bloggers sometimes I'm looking at their clothes they're really not brilliant, they're fine like they made it look really good and everyone's like I really want that even though it could be like a really standard like piece. You're just kind of like getting praise for it I guess.

--Ends--

Interview XI - INT11 Lydia

SL: So first question is, what drives you to use many shopping channels during your fashion shopping journey? For example like a retail store, a mobile, a website?

INT11: What drives me?

SL: Yeah.

INT11: Inspiration I think. Like pricing so I'd look on different websites and stuff and different like websites and apps to see who's got the best deals and offers. Where I can get the best value for money.

SL: And would you say that your are confident in your ability to use such a kind of array of channels for fashion shopping?

INT11: Not as good as some because I don't use it as often as most people but I think it's quite easy and straight-forward really.

SL: So in terms of not as good as some, tell me a bit more bout that? How do you feel about your confidence with them?

INT11: I've got a friend who's a blogger, who like she'll buy something in a lecture and I just wouldn't do that. I need to sit down and go through it in more detail and make sure it's like one hundred percent.

SL: And how would you do that?

INT11: I look at like the fabric like composition and everything. Em maybe some online reviews and stuff because they have them on the Topshop website which is quite useful.

SL: Is that one of your main go to stores?

INT11: Mm.

SL: Anything else that kind of helps you overcome any anxieties or… ?

INT11: I think if someone else has bought something from them before. So with ASOS being really well known you kind of trust it and you know what you're gonna get. Whereas things like Boohoo and stuff with them being quite new, not new but newer and less advanced as Asos you kind of don't expect to be as good quality.

SL: Anything else that puts you off or makes you more heistant?

INT11: Em I think who they have to model it all. Like the face of the brand kind of puts me off.

SL: Does the fact that Boohoo for example, they don't have a store, you can't do say click and collect. Does that affect your confidence with them?

INT11: Yeah, definitely.

SL: So if you compare Boohoo to Topshop what would be the key kind of distinctions in terms of…do you feel confident towards Topshop?

INT11: Yeah because it's more well-known. You know what you're gonna get at the end of the day because you can go into the store and see what's available.

SL: So in terms of Topshop versus Boohoo, the fact that Topshop has got a lot of channels how does that make you feel? Do you engage with it more?

INT11: You kind of feel because they're advanced in what they do, because they're like front of their game you trust them a bit more than you would with Boohoo.

SL: Whereas Boohoo if they did all of those things that Topshop did the Instagram, do some of the other channels would you feel any different?

INT11: I think so. I think you'd feel differently if you knew that they were more advanced like in their social media kind of thing you'd kind of feel the clothing would be more advanced – they kind of go hand in hand.

SL: So what I want you to do is I want you to think about your most recent shopping journey for high street fashion apparel. It doesn't matter if you bought the item or not. First of all what triggered you to begin that journey?

INT11: It was an event that I needed a top for. So that was the initial trigger of the thing. Then it needed to be a sparkly top, that was all I needed.

SL: At the end of the journey what was the outcome? Did you make a purchase?

INT11: Yep.

SL: And where did you make the purchase?

INT11: Miss Selfridge.

SL: And what I want you to do is I have got a task here. So what I've got here… so just ignore these ones for the moment. We've got lots of different shopping channels. So I want you to map your journey from left to right selecting the channels that you used for me. You don't need to use them all just the ones that were relevant and talk me through it as you do it. So how did you start the journey?

INT11: I think I'll start with that one.

SL: So the magazine, yep. Then social media.

INT11: Yep. Then going on the website. Then going to buy it.

SL: Ok. Now would you say that's a typical shopping journey for you?

INT11: Yes!

SL: Is that very typical?

INT11: Yes.

SL: What I want you to do now is can you just give me the names of the magazines, the names of the social media and the blogs and websites and stores and put a post it underneath each one.

INT11: Is that how you spell Marie Claire?

SL: Yeah… So I can see there, just for the recording you've actually put that you've been looking at Topshop on the website, on the store. What about Instagram was that just bloggers that you were looking at there?

INT11: It was like magazine on the Instagram as well.

SL: And which magazines were they?

INT11: It was Vogue and Glamour and the same photos would come up on Facebook as well.

SL: On their sites?

INT11: Yeah because I get them in their news feed as well.

SL: So can you just tell me about this particular point when you said you used some womens' magazines? Can you just tell me a little bit about what you did there?

INT11: I was just flicking through them because I was trying to find, like it was my friends twenty first and I needed like either a posh dress or like a nice outfit. So I looked through magazines and stuff because we have loads in our house and em saw a picture of Angelina Jolie in a suit and thought that that's what I'm gonna wear.

SL: What made you make the final purchase in the end, when you got to the store?

INT11: Well I've not found one. I've been looking for a month and it was the day before and I really needed a top and I had been looking for ages and I just thought that the one in Miss Selfridge was the coolest one available. It was still quite expensive and it all fell apart but it was the best one at the time.

SL: Yeah. After this part of the journey did you use any channels afterwards? Did you WhatsApp, did you Instagram did you Tweet, did you return the item? Did anything like that happen?

INT11: There were lots of photos on Facebook and a couple of people asked me where it's from and I think…

SL: Did you post the photos to Facebook?

INT11: Yes.

SL: Was that about posting the clothes as well as the…

INT11: ….Event?….. Yeah kind of I think it was like at the start it was what we were wearing but then it had photos of the event and they were just obviously there.

SL: With social media would you regularly post picture of what you are wearing?

INT11: No. Unless its Instagram where you don't need to like put your whole outfit on, you can just show your shoes or like a bag or something.

SL: So do you do that sometimes, is that a typical thing?

INT11: Yeah.

SL: OK, that's interesting. What was your motivation to use say these particular channels for your journey?

INT11: Just to make sure that I got the best of what was out there. I was just really comparing everything that was available.

SL: So is that the function of using lots of channels.

INT11: Yeah.

SL: Was there any other functions you got from using lots of channels?

INT11: It could change my mind, like I saw the picture of Angelina Jolie in a suit and then went on Zara and saw someone in a really nice playsuit kind of thing like that would inspire me a bit kind of.

SL: So I can see just for the recording you have used multiple channels of the same retailer. Do you associate certain channels with certain purposes in the shopping journey? Do you think particular channels do particular things or have a specific purpose?

INT11: I think so. I think things like social media and stuff do help to like make you make a purchase. Because if you do see a blogger that looks really nice in like an outfit or something it might drive you to go onto their website because if they have links in the bottom of their pictures and stuff you can then go through. It then just makes the buying process much more straightforward.

SL: And how does it do that, what specifically – is it just because you like the look of the outfit on them or is it anything else?

INT11: Yeah. I think like you can just see an outfit and like the next day you could be wearing it as well. I think, I dunno, who's wearing it as well like drives you to buy it too.

SL: And what do you mean by that?

INT11: Like if they've got a cool style or I don't know if they were famous or something and if you really liked them.

SL: Any other channels serve a particular purpose for you?

INT11: I think the shops themselves they are quite good actually because if you go in and like feel everything and like see the different things. Because sometimes on the website they have like different things like exclusives so that's better sometimes.

SL: Better to have exclusives?

INT11: Yeah.

SL: And do you mean exclusives to the websites say?

INT11: Mm.

SL: And why is that better?

INT11: Because nobody, it's not just available on the high street it's like exclusive and it's being delivered to you kind of thing. It makes you feel more exclusive kind of.

SL: Online website, does that serve any particular purpose for you?

INT11: Just comparison really.

SL: And what about the magazine what does that do?

INT11: That's [magazine] the starter, that's the inspiration. But then that can be combined with the social media as well because with the Vogue being on Facebook and Instagram you see them in the magazines but you also see them on the social media as well.

SL: So do you think they work well together?

INT11: I think they go hand in hand for like inspiration in like buying stuff.

SL: Now what I want you to do is I want you to identify the stages of your journey. You can either group channels together so if you think two perform a function, or you keep them all individual and I want you to just stick a post-it above the channel. So to give the stage a name so that I can identify the stages in your journey.

INT11: So just like that?

SL: Yep.

INT11: Inspiration stage.

SL: Ok.

INT11: Comparison stage.

SL: Comparison.

INT11: Final purchase and then…

SL: What would you call that stage? Now just be as honest as you can about it as well.

INT11: Whether it worked kind of thing, whether other like it. I don't really know how to phrase that.

SL: Or even if you have just a couple of words that come into your head.

INT11: Probably call it approval.

SL: And how do you feel if you get good approval. If you get lots of likes for example or lots of people asking you where did you get that from, how do you feel?

INT11: Good.

SL: If someone made a comment if it was not particularly positive?

INT11: I wouldn't be particularly bothered but I think you would hope that if someone didn't like the outfit choice that you would probably not go back to the shop. Either you'd take the, I know this is really far-fetched but, you'd either take the clothing back or like not go back to the retailer.

SL: Next question is, overall how well do the channels fit with the stages? Do they give you what you need at each of those stages? So does the online website does that give you the comparison that you need.

INT11: Yeah I think so because you can have all the different tabs open at the same time and you can narrow it all down into categories and clothing and you can just look at that particular page on each website and make sure you're getting the nicest that there is on the high street kind of thing.

SL: Will you have lots of tabs open?

INT11: Yep.

SL: So what sort of tabs would you have?

INT11: Em pretty much all of these shops on here.

SL: So all the website and would you have tabs for social media or anything?

INT11: Yep. So probably always Facebook and probably Pinterest as well.

SL: And at the inspiration stage you've combined two different channels there. Why did you combine them, as opposed to just using one of them?

INT11: I think they both go hand in hand. You can like see other people comments and oppinions and stuff on the different clothes and stuff that they put on Facebook or Instagram and see the feedback that they are getting. It's more personal I suppose if they upload something on Instagram. This is what we're showing your personally instead of just printing it in a magazine and it's for everyone.

SL: So again is coming around to that exclusivity thing again.

INT11: I think so yeah.

SL: Now what I want you to do now. I want you to identify the different devices you've used to access the channels. So obviously I presume with store you have just walked into it.

INT11: Yeah, just gone in.

SL: So how did you access social media?

INT11: Either a computer or a laptop, possibly a phone. Social media will always be on a phone like all of those different ones on there.

SL: So these ones here which one did you use for social media on a typical journey? Now you can put either the tablet itself or the cards there.

INT11: The phone.

SL: So you can put the phone there or the card, whichever's easiest... What about the magazine, how did you access?

INT11: My friend gets it delivered.

SL: Can I ask you a randomn question, I've asked this in other interviews. Why did you prefer to pick up the phone instead of the cards, just out of interest?

INT11: I didn't see the phone.

SL: You didn't see the phone.

INT11: No. I don't know.

SL: For the social media were there any other devices that you would have used?

INT11: Probably a computer as well.

SL: A desktop computer or a laptop?

INT11: A laptop.

SL: Access the website?

INT11: Laptop or computer.

SL: Cool. Store you walked in. Social media again?

INT11: Phone, laptop and computer.

SL: With the social media were you using apps?

INT11: Yeah.

SL: So not mobile website. So is that for both at the start and at the end?

INT11: Yeah.

SL: That's cool. Next question is do you associate different devices with different purposes when shopping for fashion?

INT11: The phone's too small to look at the clothes properly and in as much detail as you want to. You want to keep flicking over making it bigger and scrolling and stuff. So it's so much easier to just go on a laptop mouse to just be able to click about and have a look.

SL: And then why would you use the mobile phone?

INT11: Eh, just 'cause you can always have it with you. Like you could just go on Pinterest or something and have a flick if you were just on a train or a bus or something. Have a look on Instagram as well. It's just easier to have it in your hand if there's a minute that you're bored.

SL: Em, what I want you to do now is just tell me with the magazines, that's not really a shopping channel so I'm trying to identify what that as to you. Is there anything you would call it, any medium, or would you call that a device itself?

INT11: Em I'd use it as like inspiration, probably not Harpers Bazaar. A bit more like look like is showing you what's going to be next, big next season. So you can identify from that.

SL: Cause you said you look at Vogue so you said you maybe go on Look magazine so do you have like two...

INT11: The version of like the expensive like really lovely version and the more down to earth normal version and then you go shopping the actual product.

SL: So do you almost see like two levels of magazine?

INT11: Yep. You can see where like all the high street shops get their inspiration if you look at the more expensive ones first.

SL: How did you find that overall experience for that shopping journey?

INT11: This part was ok.

SL: From social media, magazine and website bit was all ok.

INT11: And then going into the shop there was either a different size, there wasn't the right sizes out or you'd try on three mediums. One would be really small, one would be really big or one would be broken. So I suppose with doing it online you should get good quality because no one else has tried it on or like ripped it or got foundation all over it when they've tried it on.

SL: And tell me about the marketing communications that you received or any contact you had with the retailers along this journey?

INT11: I didn't have any from social media apart from the contact of their pictures that they were showing me. And then the websites I suppose was like discounts and offers and stuff like that they had. Topshop or something they've usually got quite a lot. In the store I don't really know what the marketing was in store I think it's just the way they lay it out. Like store layout worked.

SL: Did you deal with any of the staff at any point other than purchase?

INT11: I did a little bit I asked for sizes and stuff. I asked if they had other things in stock that they had seen on the website.

SL: How did they get on with that?

INT11: They offered to use the tablet and go through it and order it in and stuff but I needed it the day after so it wouldn't have been much good.

SL: But did you find that they were confident in kind of helping you with that.

INT11: Yeah

SL: See because they offered to do that, how does that make you feel towards them as a retailer?

INT11: Makes you feel that you can trust them more and you're more valued if you're willing to track down an item for you. So you're probably more likely to shop there again because of the good service.

SL: At the approval stage, again you used the same devices such as laptop, computer, mobile app. Why do you choose a mobile app over a website?

INT11: Because you can just click on it and it just comes straight up, you don't have to type any websites and you've already go your account saved on your phone anyway so it's just all your things there, ready for you.

SL: I want you to tell me about your shopping journey in terms of your emotional responses during the journey? So just talk me through them.

INT11: Well I liked all of the social media, that was really nice and stuff and then the online one was fine. It just got a bit stressful when I couldn't find anything in the all of the different shops that I'd looked at online and then into the store and just couldn't find anything. That was a bit annoying. But then this stage was fine, everyone really liked it so.

SL: So the social media, you felt was worthwhile?

INT11: Yeah. [laughs]

SL: What about the magazine how did you feel when you were looking through the magazine?

INT11: Jealous. Em quite relaxed at the same time because you're just sitting in front of the TV and just flicking through, it's quite enjoyable yeah.

SL: And overall how satisfied were you with this omni-channel shopping experience?

INT11: I think yeah it was all fine just because at the end like obviously the approval. This part was annoying.

SL: The store.

INT11: By having the approval it was just kind of like you said just felt worthwhile. Everyone liked it.

SL: Do you kind of enjoy the hardwork element of it?

INT11: Mmm, the chase!

SL: Obviously just to recap, is this a typical shopping journey you would go through.

INT11: Yeah.

SL: That's the end of the task bit I've just got some general questions. Do you view your shopping journey as stages or is it an overall experience? I know you have written these down but how do you view these yourself?

INT11: I think I view it as more of an overall experience 'cause this would prompt a purchase.

SL: So the social media and magazines.

INT11: Yeah if I saw something I liked I'd then want to have a look and it all kind of… It's like a circle. 'Cause like if I saw someone at the approval stage that was like oh I have one but in this colour. You'd go back to the start, it's kind of like a cycle.

SL: And do you kind of go round that cycle kind of a few times before you make that purchase or? Do you usually quite?

INT11: Usually quite straight-forward. Usually from social media to social media yeah.

SL: So if I'm going to ask you that question kind of outright, do you go through channels consecutively or do you switch back and forth?

INT11: I switch back and forth.

SL: Any particular ones?

INT11: Em probably if you go in store and back to the website. If you've seen something in store that you liked and your not sure about it go back, look at it online, decide whether or not you want it and probably go back into the store and buy it then.

SL: Are there any combinations of channels that you think work well together? I know we've covered social media and the magazines but is there any other combinations that you think that works quite well?

INT11: Well I suppose in the store like with the lady that used em the tablet, that worked well because that meant that she could just order it in for me if I needed it. So that worked quite well.

SL: What do you think motivates you to move from one channel to another? Why don't you just say when you get to store or the website why don't you just stay in that channel; what drives you to go to the store or go from the website to the store?

INT11: Em I think you get to see everything there is via social media and see what's in fashion and get the ideas to begin with and the magazines. And then at the end I like seeing what the clothes look like when I try them on. I don't really like taking them back. So if it's like an online purchase it's just effort to take it back. So I'd rather try it on and see it than just buying it online.

SL: So would you typically purchase more in store?

INT11: Definitely.

SL: But would you still use the websites?

INT11: Yeah, like for things like ASOS and Boohoo for example for not having a shop, like actual stores. Like I dunno I trust them as well.

SL: And why is that?

INT11: Think because they're well-known and their websites' are quite similar to Topshop's.

SL: And you say well known, what do you mean by that.

INT11: Quite popular and everyone knows that it's a good company. Like you know what you're gonna get and it's probably a little bit cheaper than Topshop. With the websites being similar to Topshop and ASOS, like you kind of know the level and the standard of the product that you're gonna get.

SL: So with ASOS do you engage in any other channels with them, like their social media, Instagram or anything?

INT11: Yeah, I've got them on Instagram and on Facebook as well.

SL: Does that have an affect on your view of ASOS because you are connecting with their other channels?

INT11: I think so, it makes it like more like human in a way because they'll upload a picture of an outfit choice that they'll have just with different shoes and stuff and you're just kind of like yeah, that's quite nice. So they've created their own kind of style for their brand.

SL: And do you feel that by having those channels that is useful to you?

INT11: Yeah, it is.

SL: Obviously you have mentioned that you have lots of tabs up on your computer so you're using a couple of things at the same time. Are there any other channels that you use simultaneously? So I'll give you an example could be standing in a store using your mobile, standing in a store speaking to an employee who's using an iPad or a kiosk or it could be lookin at a Topshop magazine in the Topshop store. Do you do anything like that?

INT11: Em I probably have my phone out all the time anyway, if I'm out shopping. So I'd have a flick through Instagram or go on Facebook and see what's going on.

SL: As you're walking around the store?

INT11: Yeah.

SL: And how does that help you?

INT11: Em it puts you in your own little world. So when you're walking around and you've got everyone that you know just like talking to you and stuff and you're like looking at everything you want to look at. Just keep your head down and just shop, yeah.

SL: And when you say Instagram would you be looking at Topshop's Instagram?

INT11: Not if I'm in the store. I'd probably look like I was in Schuh the other day and I was on the New Look shoes website so I don't know. I think I'd like probably compare different shops, if I was in a shop I'd compare on my iPhone.

SL: You'd be looking at other stores. Would you check stock of an item on your phone for the same shop.

INT11: No, I'd go ask an employee if they could do that for me.

SL: Get them to do it. Do you get the same level of benefits from all the different channels that you're using here? Do you see them all as equal benefits or do some give you higher benefits than others?

INT11: Think the websites give me higher benefits just because I can see and compare prices. For example if it's like cheaper on ASOS to buy like a pair of trousers than it is for Topshop then I'd go with them.

SL: So you value the website benefits higher than the store?

INT11: Yeah.

SL: Any other channels you see having different or equal benefits?

INT11: No.

SL: By mixing and matching the channels are there any other overall collective benefits or any collective negatives you get as a result of going through this omni-channel experience?

INT11: I think, I don't know if it's a draw back.

SL: Ok.

INT11: Like if there's nice things online like I said the exclusive but then you go into store and they've either ran out of something you just thought they would have. Then that could be like a draw back like if you could have bought it on the website a couple of days earlier and you would have had it by the time you went into store kinda thing.

SL: So would you rather see, although you kind of talked about exclusivity, so would you prefer items in the store or…?

INT11: I don't know because they kind of have exclusive instore and they kind of have exclusive online for some things. So either way you would get the exclusivity I expect.

SL: But if you can't get that top that you really want and it's an online exclusive?

INT11: Then the store is a drawback.

SL: But do you still like the idea of an online exclusive?

INT11: Yeah.

SL: Any kind of overall benefits you get by say for example with Topshop or Miss Selfridge, interacting with different channels belonging to those retailers? So rather than just focusing on the Topshop store, going on their Instagram, their Facebook what does that do, does that provide any additional benefit for you?

INT11: That creates more of an outfit. So if you go on the Topshop website and look at a top you can see what they've put it with or what other people have purchased with this item or what they would put with this item and then when you go into the store you can buy more than one piece online or you can go into store and just see that they've paired it with a pair of trousers like layout and design kind of thing.

SL: And does that, with the store, help you in the store if you see things paired or do you more come into the store with idea?

INT11: I go into the store with more of an idea. Especially if you've seen it on the website and they've paired it with a nice pair of sunglasses, you'd probably buy then as well.

SL: Ok. Has your experience of one channel ever affected your experience or use of another channel? Have you carried anything over?

INT11: I think so. I bought a pair of shoes that weren't the same colour when they came so that kind of like made me not want to go back to the original retailer 'cause it was not what they had on the website, it was completely different.

SL: So how did you feel about that?

INT11: A bit let-down.

SL: Then how's that affected your later interactions with that retailer?

INT11: It's made me want to go back into the store instead of just buying it straight online. That's what the cycle is again. I'd want to research it in store and go and see what it's like and see if it's actually.

SL: And is it just for that particular item or would it be for tops or dresses, would it be the same sort of thing?

INT11: It was New Look, you can kind of trust everything else but I'd still want to go into the store anyway, with that one bad experience.

SL: And what was the product?

INT11: Initially it was a pair of shoes.

SL: With shoes do you tend to buy them in store?

INT11: I can buy them online usually because I'm the same size everywhere really. So that's fine to do online.

SL: My next question is how do you think all the different retail channels that are available to you are becoming merged or blurred?

INT11: I think it's becoming blurred because they've all kind of got their own personality and you're always throughout the process it's always social media and there's always like an app or a phone involved, or a piece of technology. So they're all kind of blurring together because they're all like on this same like feed of your Instagram so you can see all of the different retailers in just like a scroll of on one page kind of thing.

SL: And with the technology you said you are using phones and laptops all the way through the journey. I mean why is that? What's kind of made you so kind of technologically savvy?

INT11: I think it's just the ease of it and the fact that we've grown up with it. The need to always know what's going on.

SL: Is that something you find quite in built in you now?

INT11: Yeah always constantly having something to do. Think so.

SL: In your opinion, again another wide open questions so just whatever you think, what represents a seamless fashion shopping experience?

INT11: I think if you're on social media or in a magazine and you see something there you go online, make sure they've got it, you go in store, try it on and then either buy it from in store or buy it online. That would be seamless.

SL: What specifically about it would be seamless?

INT11: Just like the flow from inspiration - straight forward, having a look at it, if they've got it in store trying it on, getting it a week later.

SL: If you think about Miss Selfridge, Topshop or any other retailer really was your impression of those retail brands, was it consistent across all the different channels.

INT11: Em I think so.

SL: Any ones that were really definitely consistent and any that really weren't consistent.

INT11: I think the Miss Selfridge website isn't really good. I think it's getting better.

SL: In what way?

INT11: It used to be really like, I don't know if it was just my phone, but it used to not work very well. Especially on my laptop. That let me down, but when you go into store it's fine.

SL: If you think of Miss Selfridge, their Instagram, their Facebook, their store, their website. Do they all kind of seem consistent? Do they look and feel consistent do you know it's Miss Selfridge when you go in?

INT11: No cause I think the store for Miss Selfridge can look quite tacky but then when you see all of the items just individually all on their own they look so much better.

SL: Because of how it's a bit differentiated across the channels, how does that make you feel towards Miss Selfridge. Do you feel more positive or more negative.

INT11: More negative I'd like more consistency. I like that some brands like the ASOS one, the Instagram and the Facebook and everything it has like an identity and then it's hard to familiarise with Miss Selfridge but you can see ASOS' like personality kind of thing.

SL: So if you can see personality, you have quite a good grasp of identity how does that make you view the retailer?

INT11: It sounds really weird but you kind of see them as more like a friend kind of thing.

SL: More humanising?

INT11: Yeah. 'Cause if you've got the app you can just, especially if you like that style, it's just so much easier for you.

SL: And are you loyal to Miss Selfridge?

INT11: No.

SL: Are you loyal to ASOS?

INT11: Yeah.

SL: How do you find different shopping channels of the same retailer, if you think about the consistency, what sort of consistency do you mean? Do you mean information, do you mean the branding, the way they say something?

INT11: I think branding. It's all about the different styles that they have cause the Boohoo one could have a rocky, like indie kind of look on their Instagram but usually it's quite tacky.

SL: On their website?

INT11: Yeah, so they have like a different kind of mix.

SL: Is that a good thing or a bad thing?

INT11: Bad thing.

SL: Ok and with Miss Selfridge was that consistent in terms of information?

INT11: I didn't really look at Miss Selfridge much, you kind of know that Miss Selfridge will offer a sparkly top, that was kind of a last resort sort kind of thing. I'd rather get it from Zara because it just seems more sophisticated and that the website and instore and stuff is so much more tidy and more consistent.

SL: So do you feel that reflects your personality?

INT11: I'd like to feel that I'm classy and sophisticated but no no.

SL: Whereas Miss Selfridge…

INT11: You know what you're gonna get at the end of the day. It's just gonna be like a sparkly top.

SL: How do you reassure yourself in making the right purchase decision?

INT11: I think opinions of other people, like if they liked it. I'd probably send a photo as well by email or Snapchat to like a friend.

SL: Is that what you do typically?

INT11: Yes most of the time. I did that especially for this.

SL: Did you do that in store or did you do that later?

INT11: I did that in store with like loads of different tops and then when the purchase was made I'd send a photo of an outfit choice and then another photo of another outfit choice to see what other people thought especially my mum.

SL: So see with that particular stage I've put that into the stages you have got. Would you give that stage a particular name or does that go with an existing stage?

INT11: I think it goes with approval and purchase. But this is the final approval and this is the approval before the purchase kind of thing. So I'd put it here.

SL: What would you want to call that one, do you want to give that one a name?

INT11: [pauses to write down name of stage]

SL: Was it the phone that you used?

INT11: Yep.

SL: And was it an app?

INT11: Ok that's fine.

SL: So at that point what is the name of that stage for that pre-purchase approval? What does that help you do as part of the shopping task.

INT11: It helps me like if someone doesn't like or if someone is not sure about what I've put together then it would probably sway me to like keep looking.

SL: Or if they said they really liked it, what would that do?

INT11: It'd probably prompt a purchase.

SL: When I mean omni-channel I mean interacting with lots of different channels of retailers so like Miss Selfridge. How does that affect your loyalty?

INT11: I think if you get the approval at the end from a product that you have maybe seen on someone's Instagram.

SL: At the beginning?

INT11: Yeah. Then you're reassured and especially like we said with the seamless thing. If it is all seamless and it's all just straight forward, you get the product, people like it then that makes you feel so much better. I did that with a coat. I saw one similar on Pinterest then one on I think it must have been on Instagram, then I bought it online, I got the approval that's made me feel good.

SL: And who did you buy that with?

INT11: ASOS.

SL: So if you think of, who are your top two retailers?

INT11: Zara, ASOS or H&M.

SL: Do you interact with different channels of those retailers?

INT11: I use different apps for them all.

SL: And do you go to the store?

INT11: Yeah.

SL: Ok so by using the different channels, so the app and the store and things like that how does that affect your trust? Does it enhance your trust, does it not have any effect?

INT11: Again it depends on who it is. H&M they've got quite a lot of their own catalogues and stuff and when you get them all the clothes look really nice. When you go in store they are actually completely different like they've just been unpackaged and they have got like creases in them. That could let you down. Especially when you see them on the website as well and then go in store and they are a different shade of red.

SL: And obviously we said about loyalty. If you are interacting with the same retailer with lots of different channels, say like Topshop, Miss Selfridge, H&M, Zara how's that affecting your loyalty?

INT11: I think if you... there's some you would just ignore like some on the social media because if they email too many times, that let's you down because you will just get bogged down with too many junk emails. New Look do that which lessens your opinion of them.

SL: Overall?

INT11: Because you just can't be bothered with any of it. If you've chosen to follow someone on Instagram like ASOS or Topshop and then you go in store and you've got what you thought to begin with that strengthens it.

SL: Do you have a set list of retailers that you shop from in your head?

INT11: Yeah.

SL: Do they have lots of different channels each of them?

INT11: Yes.

SL: Is there a reason why you prefer them over retailers that don't have lots of channels?

INT11: Yes I think the ones with different channels are more based for me, they're targeting me by having all of these kind of social media things and websites. If you think of Fat Face it's not really got anything like that. It doesn't really appeal to me as much. All of the places with social media and different kind of channels I don't know like they have kind of grown up with me in a way. Like websites and stuff growing up when I do and then now like they've got personalities and stuff. Like it's weird but they're like people.

SL: As a fashion consumer, again quite a wide open question, what does the term connected consumer mean to you?

INT11: I think if you've got social media and if you've got all different technologies and stuff and your just connected with retailers kind of thing. I don't know how to explain it really.

SL: What do you mean by connected with retailers?

INT11: If you follow their Instagram or something, then go on their website and buy it or go in store and buy it you are connected to them. They've shown you what they have and you've bought it. I don't know.

--Ends--

10.8 Photo Elicitation

This appendix features images of the photo-elicitation cards used during the data collection.
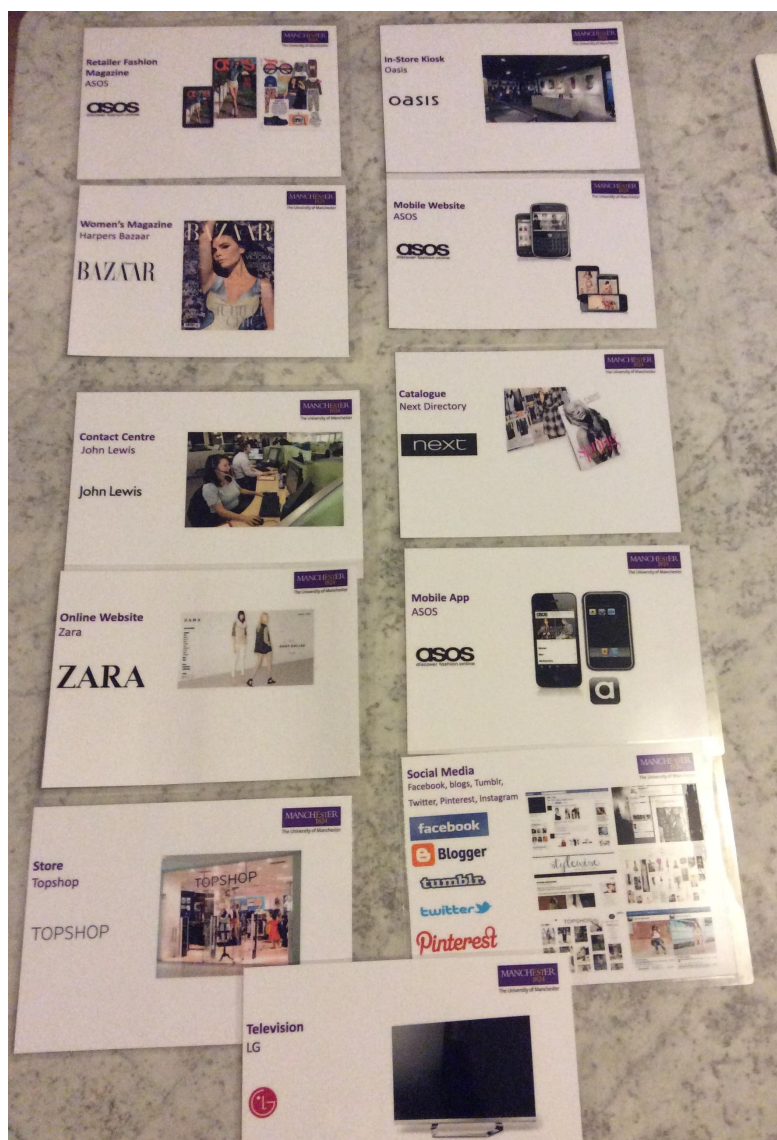
Photo-Elicitation Cards – Channels

Photo-Elicitation Cards – Devices

Photo-Elicitation Journey Mapping

10.9 Omnichannel Decision-Making Journey Map

INT1 Journey 1	Stages	Inspiration/Style Information	Comparison	Inspiration/Style Information	Practical Action	
	Channels	Magazines	Online Website	Magazine	Store	
	Devices	Laptop	Laptop	--	--	
INT1 Journey 2	Stages	Inspiration/Style Information	Comparison	Practical Action	Confirmation	
	Channels	Online Website	Online Website	Store	Social Media	
	Devices	Laptop	Laptop	--	Phone	
INT2 Journey 1	Stages	Identification	Research	Purchase	After Purchase	
	Channels	Social Media, Blogs	Store, Online Website, Mobile, App, Magazine	Online Website	Social Media	
	Devices	Laptop, Phone	Laptop, Phone	Laptop	Phone	
INT2 Journey 2	Stages	Identification	Research	Purchase	After Purchase	
	Channels	Social Media	Mobile App, Store	Online Website	Social Media	
	Devices	Laptop, Phone	Phone	Laptop	Phone	
INT3 Journey 1	Stages	Research & Entertaining	Browsing	Experience	Show	
	Channels	Magazine, Social Media, Mobile App	Online Website, Mobile Website	Store	Social Media	
	Devices	Laptop	Mobile	--	Phone	
INT3 Journey 2	Stages	Research & Entertaining	Experience	Show		
	Channels	Magazine, Online Website, Social Media	Store	Social Media		
	Devices	Laptop	--	Phone		
INT4 Journey 1	Stages	Inspiration	Search for Information	Selection & Shortlist	Additional Outfit Building	
	Channels	Blog, Social Media, Magazine	Online Website	Online Website	Online Website	
	Devices	Laptop, Phone	Laptop, Phone	Laptop, Phone	Laptop	
INT4 Journey 2	Stages	Inspiration	Information	Enjoyment/Visualisation	Showing Off	
	Channels	Social Media, Magazine	Online Website	Store	Social Media	
	Devices	Laptop	Laptop	--	Mobile	
INT5 Journey 1	Stages	Research	Plan to Purchase	Actual Purchase		
	Channels	Magazines, People	Mobile Website, Mobile App	Store		
	Devices	Phone, Laptop	Phone	--		
INT5 Journey 2	Stages	Research	Actual Purchase			
	Channels	Mobile App	Online Website, Mobile Website, Mobile App			
	Devices	Phone	Tablet, Phone			
INT6 Journey 1	Stages	Inspiration	Purchasing	Showing Off		
	Channels	SocialMedia, Mobile Website	Online Website, Store	Social Media		
	Devices	Phone	Netbook	Phone		
INT6 Journey 2	Stages	Inspiration	Purchasing	Showing Off		
	Channels	Social Media, Mobile Website	Store, Online Website	Social Media		
	Devices	Phone	Netbook	Mobile		

INT7 Journey 1	Stages	Researching	Purchase						
	Channels	Online Website, Store	Online Website						
	Devices	Smartphone	Laptop						
INT7 Journey 2	Stages	Inspiration	First Research Stage	Second Research Stage & Purchase	Inspiration 2	Acceptance			
	Channels	Magazine, Social Media, Blogs	Mobile App	Online Website	Online Website, Social Media	Social Media			
	Devices	Mobile	Mobile	Laptop	Laptop	Mobile			
INT8 Journey 1	Stages	Inspiration	Incentive	Purchase	Collect & Browse	Return	Purchase	Collect	Showcasing & Competition
	Channels	Social Media	Online Discount Website	Online Website	Store	Store, Online Website	Mobile App	Store	Social Media
	Devices	Phone	Laptop	Laptop	--	--	Phone	--	Phone
INT8 Journey 2	Stages	Inspiration	Incentive	Research & Purchase	Oppinion	Additional Research	Purchase	Collecting & Buying	Showcasing
	Channels	Social Media, Emails	Emails	Store	Social Media	Mobile App	Online Website	Store	Social Media
	Devices	Mobile	Mobile	--	Laptop	Phone	Laptop	--	Laptop
INT9 Journey 1	Stages	Style Inspiration	Incentive to Shop	Tactile Research	Factual Style Information	Intent	Premiere/Validation		
	Channels	Seeing People	Magazine	Store	Online Website	Store	--		
	Devices	Phone, Laptop	--	--	Laptop	--	--		
INT9 Journey 2	Stages	Style Inspiration	Research Factual	Tactile Research	Premiere/Approval				
	Channels	Seeing People, Social Media	Online Website	Store	Wearing the Product Other People				
	Devices	Phone, Laptop	Laptop	--	--				
INT10 Journey 1	Stages	Research & Awareness of Trends / Inspiration	Comparison						
	Channels	Friends, Email	Website						
	Devices	Laptop	Phone, Laptop						
INT10 Journey 2	Stages	Research & Awareness of Trends / Inspiration	Comparison Price/ Style & Inspiration/ Inspiration	Buying Seeing How clothes Look in Real Life	Sharing				
	Channels	Consumer, Social Media	Online Website	Store	Social Media				
	Devices	Laptop, Phone	Laptop, Phone	--	Phone				
INT11 Journey 1	Stages	Inspiration	Comparison	Pre-Purchase Approval	Purchase	Approval			
	Channels	Social Media, Magazine	Website	Social Media	Store	Social Media			
	Devices	Laptop, Phone	Laptop, Desktop	Phone	--	Laptop, Desktop, Phone			

10.10 Shopper Diary Participant Briefing

Thank you for participating in this University of Manchester research study. The project seeks to learn about the stages of your omnichannel shopping journey for fashion and explore the different channels and devices that you use.

The task: We ask you to keep a diary for a period of four weeks to track your shopping journey for fashion (specifically clothing products). The four-week period will commence from the date that you post on the blog. During your recordings make sure you talk about your journey from start to finish so that will include for example what you did after purchase e.g. returns, Instagram, tweets. If you decide to not make a purchase that is absolutely fine too, we want this to be an accurate and honest account. Within the diary you can include images/links or any sort of additional info as well as standard text entry.

Specifically the diary should consider the following key things along with any other things you want to add or discuss:
- Tell us about the stages of your journey
- Identify the devices you use e.g. mobile, tablet, desktop etc.
- Identify the channels that you use e.g. in-store, mobile app, online website, mobile website etc.
- Tell us about your motivations/situations and factors that affected your journey
- Talk about your shopping process from beginning to end
- Tell us about how you felt along the way
- Identify instances where you have maybe used channels at the same time e.g. mobile in-store or had multiple tabs open on your internet browser whilst shopping
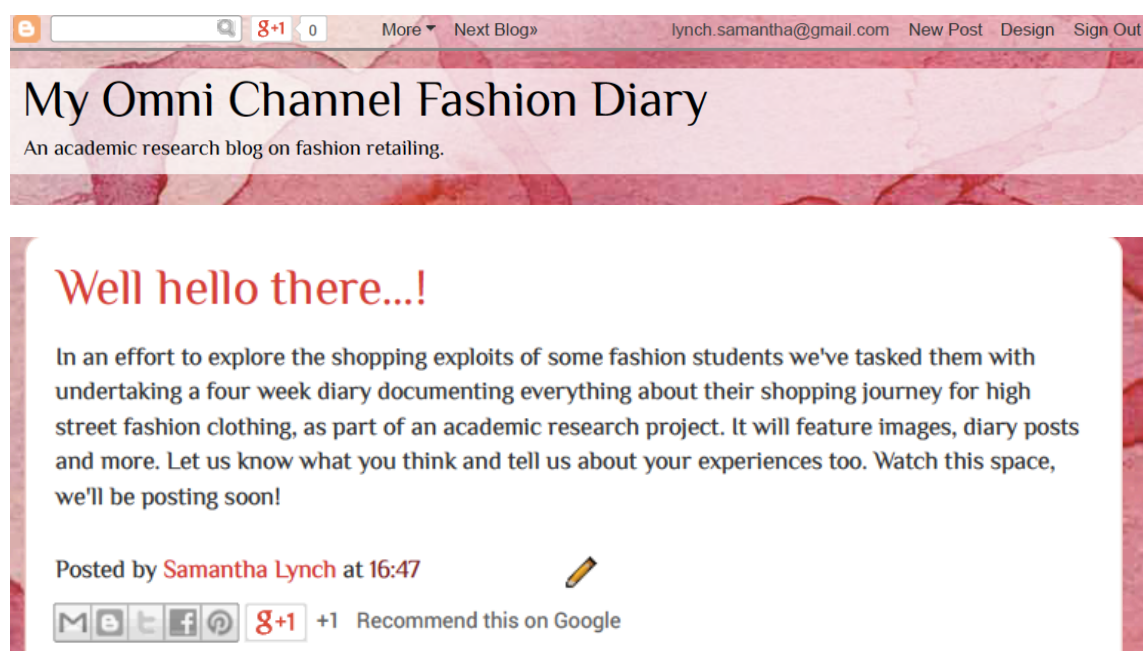
We ask that you record your diary digitally by logging onto our research blog: myomnichannelfashiondiary.blogspot.co.uk this is also available as an app for your mobile phone called "Blogger".

Following completion of the diary we may invite you for a short follow-up interview.

If you have any further questions please get in touch lynch.samantha@gmail.com
Once you have completed you 4-week diary, please email Samantha to confirm completion and to receive your shopping voucher for £15.

10.11 Blog Archive

My Omni Channel Fashion Diary

An academic research blog on fashion retailing.

Well hello there...!

In an effort to explore the shopping exploits of some fashion students we've tasked them with undertaking a four week diary documenting everything about their shopping journey for high street fashion clothing, as part of an academic research project. It will feature images, diary posts and more. Let us know what you think and tell us about your experiences too. Watch this space, we'll be posting soon!

Posted by Samantha Lynch at 16:47

+1 Recommend this on Google

This is the first shopping journey I will be recording for this four week period.

The motivation for the journey came whilst being forced to watch the football with my housemates. I was scrolling through my Instagram app on my phone when I saw a post from American Apparel.

I loved the shoes I saw in the post, and as I have an American apparel gift card I got really excited! This motivated me to reach for my netbook to do some more browsing on their website, opening multiple tabs as I saw a range of products which peaked my interest. Whilst I was online I decided to browse Topshops online site, but nothing in the 'Just in' section excited me so I closed the tab after five minutes.

The initial inspiration from American Apparel's Instagram has led me to decide to visit the store as soon as possible to try on the products (as I find their sizes differ greatly on me).

I'll keep you posted as my journey progresses!

My first shopping experience came as a form of procrastination! After staring for several hours at my dissertation I started thinking about Graduation (which is on my birthday) and what I'd like to ask for as a birthday present!

I love jewellery and have been after a gold watch for a while, I already own a Michael Kors watch so I thought I'd start my journey by opening multiple tabs and visiting retailers websites that I know stock Michael Kors- House of Fraser, John Lewis and ASOS.

Obviously these retailers stock many other brands as well, so I began to also browse through these. After several tabs and lots of different brands I narrowed my selection down to two watches I really liked (see below).

As the watches are an investment piece and both stocked in John Lewis, I will definitely be heading into store to try them on before considering purchasing them.

If I don't like either of them I will come back online and start my search again!

Wish me luck,

Whirlwind Fashion Journey 1

I thought I would start by recording a purchase I made yesterday as usually I take a long time from the beginning to purchase. Whereas this purchase I made very quickly.

It started of, as usual on blogs, instagram and magazines. I am on these regularly and usually don't even realise that the start of a shopping journey has begun. Many of the bloggers I read such as weworewhat (below instagram photo) styled sweatshirts so i subconsciously started searching for one on the internet and in store.

I then found a sweatshirt I liked on Topshop's website and also my friend owned it in a different colour so it prompted me to go online. After this I blogged about it on my blog as I really liked it.

The day after I was shopping in Topshop, just browsing but I saw the sweatshirt so I tried it on and liked it. I decided not to purchase though as it was too expensive. Although as soon as I got home I looked it up online (below picture), looked at other colours and what it was styled with. If there was reviews I would have read them as well.
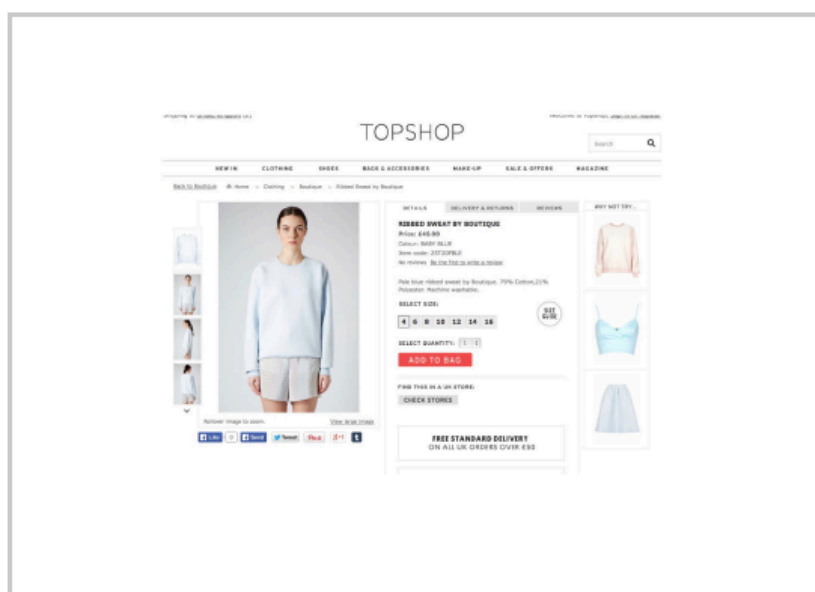
Then, l decided as my friend happens to have 25% of Topshop l would ask her to buy it for me that day. So yesterday she bought it for me from the store.

Today l have started a new fashion journey with my daily rounds of blogs and retailer websites: ASOS, Topshop, ZARA. l'm not too sure what my next purchase will be yet.

On Sunday l was challenged by a friend to find some holiday shorts for her l went on ASOS and saw there was a sale; at this point l was on my iPad. l decided then that it would be rude of me not to at least look around the site to see if there was anything l wanted to buy. On the way home from her house l started looking at the app on my phone and it had saved the items l originally chose, l then moved to the mobile site to see if the images changed and to scroll through items quicker.

The next day while writing an assignment on my laptop l ended up back on ASOS (l had a mass clothes clear out - inspired by a friend - that morning, so felt a replenishment shop was necessary). At this point l was also using the mobile site (and app) to check that both my 'saved items' sections were the same, they were so l eventually made the purchase yesterday on my laptop. Due to the empty wardrobe l also looked on the gap website knowing they have a sale on, on my iPad and purchased some items from there. All clothes purchased were based on personal tsars and previous styles l have purchased. There were no external influences such as magazines.

While at work last night l discovered there is a price match on John Lewis, so on the way home l used the app on my phone to have a brief look too see if there was anything l wanted. When l got home while watching television and browsing on my iPad l could see my basket had saved items in it, so l added to it. l left the items in my basket over night, because l know they will stay there l am happy to leave a purchase to think about it, and go back to it later.

Finally today l went into town (early to make sure it was quiet) to purchase a laptop, the store didn't have the laptop l wanted so l browsed around TK Maxx for a while and purchased two items and a present for my mum, completely unplanned, and with no research which is unusual for me.

Journey 2- Mixing Channels

Today I got an email of topshop (below), inviting me to shop in the sale. As it was on my phone I couldn't be bothered to open it. So I went to lectures.
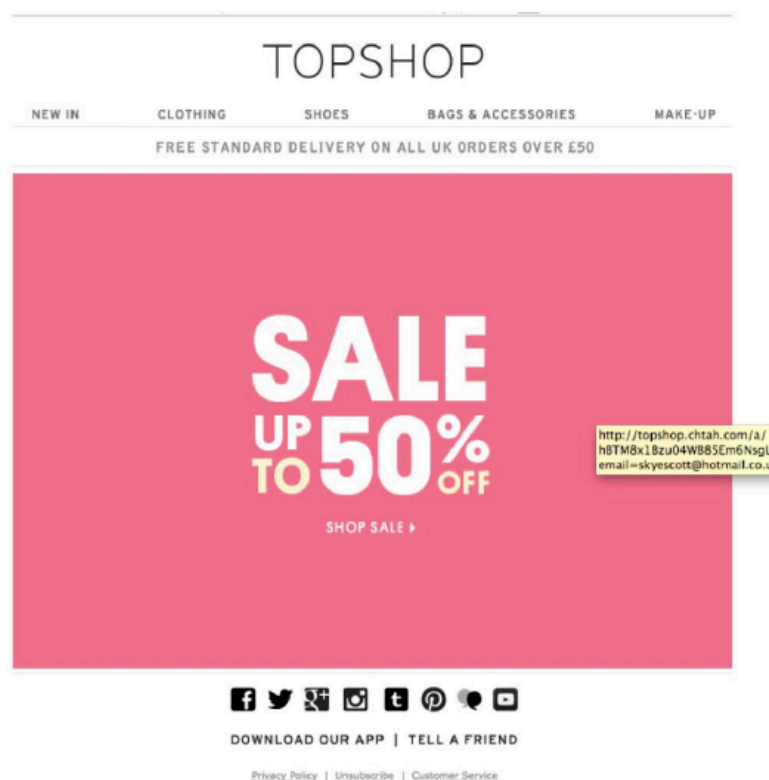
When I came back, ASOS magazine was waiting for me so I immediately flicked through that. It reminded me of the email I was sent earlier by Topshop so I ended up on the Topshop website on my laptop. Although many products are already out of stock so I have not purchased anything.

This shopping journey was completely unplanned and began when I was browsing Facebook on my netbook after getting tired of writing my essay.

I stumbled upon an image from a group I follow called 'Student Money Saver' which had a link to the Boohoo sale. Seeing that it was up to 60% off I was very excited at the prospect of finding a bargain!

When I was browsing the sale section I set the size to my own and decided to view products from the cheapest first. I had 13 pages to go through and by the time I had reached page 6 and had found noting nice I began to lose hope and was about to close the website. But on page 7 I found a dress which appealed to me, however I was unsure if the style would be flattering. I read the 3 product reviews which all stated the dress was flattering so I kept the product open in a tab. This find peaked my interest in the site once again and I countinued searching till page 13, opening more products in tabs. After comparing the 4 products I had selected on price, style and fit I decided to order the first dress I found in two sizes, anticipating to return one or both.

When I began checking out I realised that Boohoo didn't have free delivery. This initially put me off but I searched for a discount code and found a 20% off voucher. After applying this delivery only cost around 30p which I found acceptable.

I then paid with my paypal account as my card was in another room to me. I am now awaiting the delivery of my two dresses and I'll let you know how my journey countinues when I receive them!

After my initial excitement over my American Apparel journey I have now lost interest in visiting the store.

Whilst waiting for my netbook to restart I visited their web page on my phone and browsed the sale section (which had an extra 20% off code).
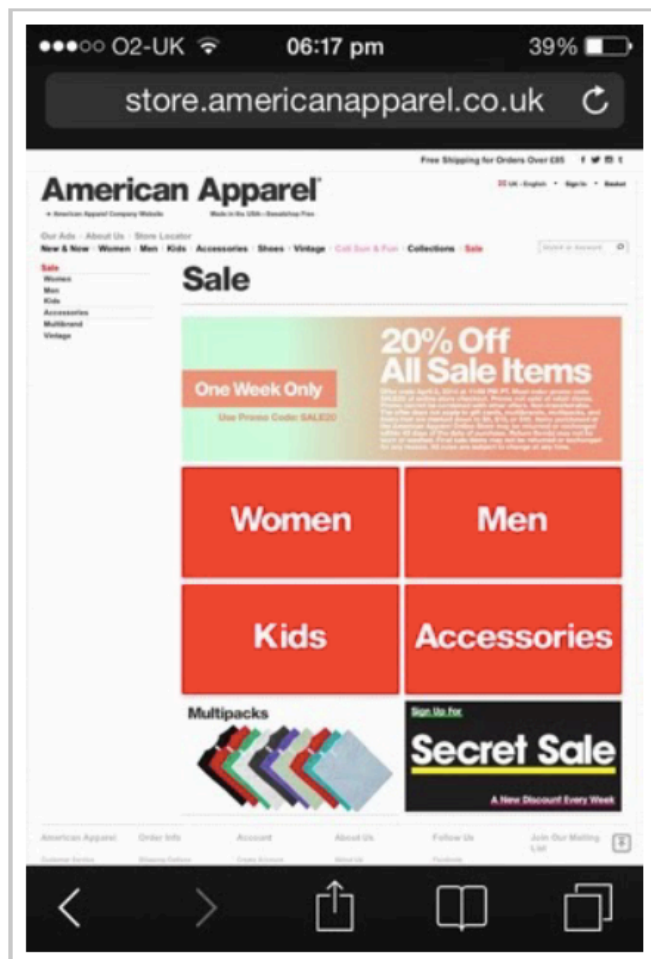
I found no items of interest and became frustrated at having to click the super small links.

Trying to look at the shoe section on the site was extremely difficult as there were no clear links to the pair I was searching for. This made me give up on the search and abandon this journey.
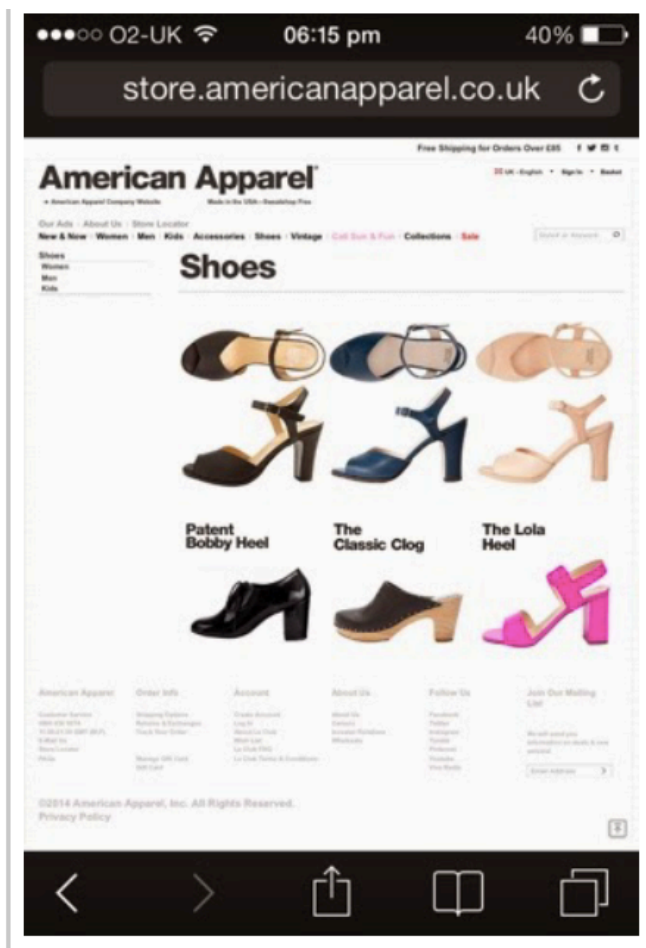
I believe that my Boohoo journey filled my need of shopping for the week. This journey was much easier as I completed the purchasing on my netbook which is much larger than my phone and holds my concentration better.

If I visited the store straight after seeing the inspiration I think I would have been more likely to purchase from the store.

My first shopping journey was initiated by a picture I saw on Missguided's Instagram page this morning whilst procrastinating as usual! I've been thinking about investing in a number of smarter items recently due to starting my work placement in June, and with my birthday last week and receiving numerous vouchers and birthday money now seems like the right time!

I was encouraged to take a browse through the missguided site this morning after seeing this picture on their instagram. Free Saturday delivery is something that just can't be ignored!
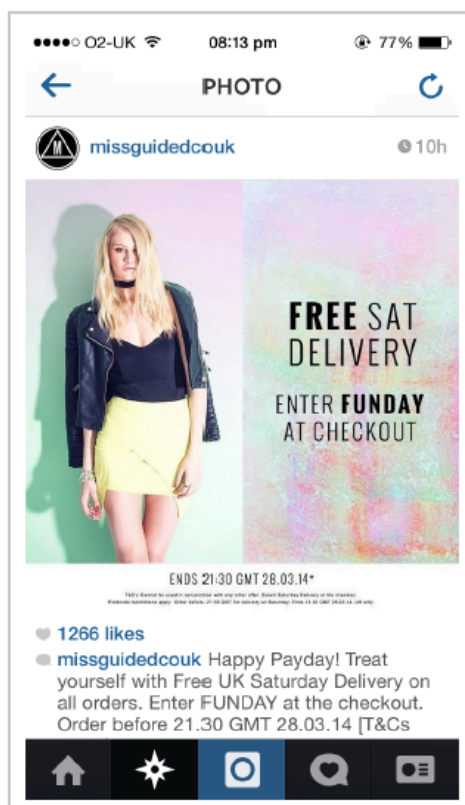

I already knew they had a sale on so decided to start there and narrow it down to items just in my size. In my head I had an idea of what I was looking for after seeing a high neck shift dress in Topshop for £45 but deciding it was a bit pricey for my student budget!

After scanning through the first page of sale items with no inspiration I then came across the perfect item on the second page. The dress I found was absolutely perfect for what I was looking for, and at only £13.99 as well as free delivery could I really say no?
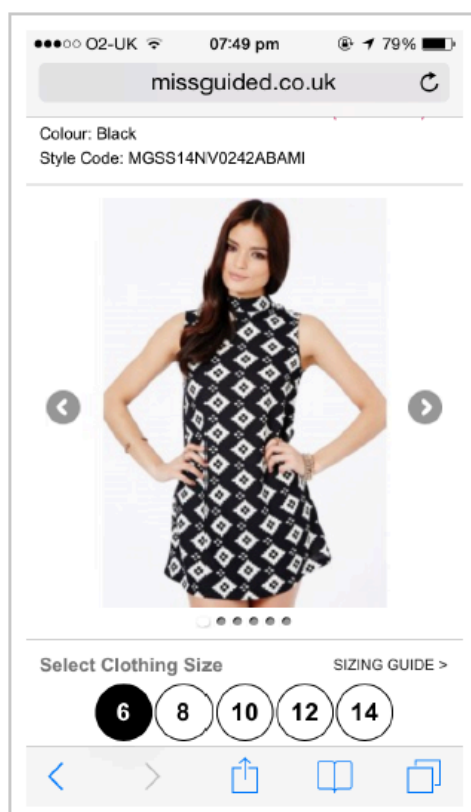
Having had major issues before whilst trying to view the Missguided site on my iphone you can imagine my joy when they released their mobile site earlier this week. This is what I used to order my dress and I have to say I was a lot happier with the overall experience using a mobile site rather than trying to view their normal site on my little phone screen. They've even added in a note to allow users to add a bookmark for the site to their iphone home-screen.
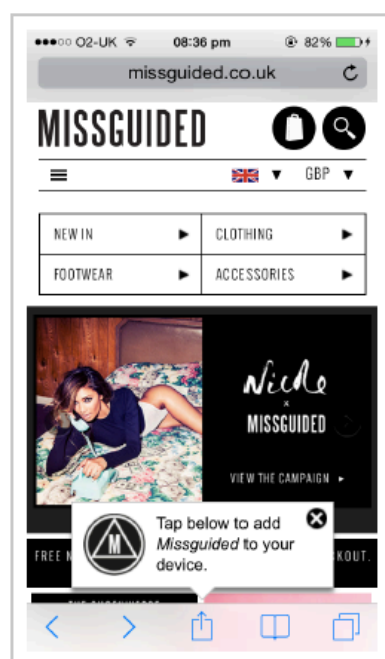

Anyway my dress has been dispatched and is expected for delivery tomorrow, lets hope its what I imagined, I'll keep you all updated!

I can't seem to stop shopping at the moment!

Whilst looking through my Instagram app on my phone (when watching Goggle Box) I came across a picture of my friend wearing a co-ordinating gingham skirt and top.

I've been lusting after co-ordinating sets for a whole now but this is the best I've seen!

I managed to find the items from a google search on my phone, which took me to Topshops mobile site. I like shopping on Topshop's mobile site when your searching for something specific as it has a very easy search setting and large pictures. However I would never use the mobile site to browse as it takes too long to load all of the products!
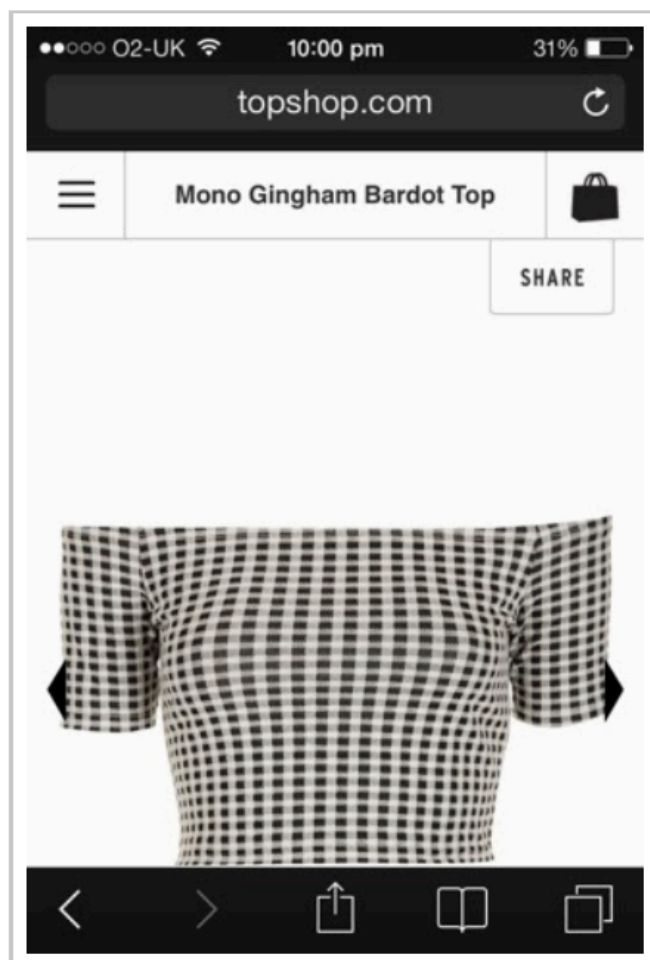
The two items are sold separately and total £40 together, which is slightly out of my budget. However I love them so much I may have to make an 'investment buy'. I asked my boyfriend what he thought about the set, he told me just to buy the top... But I'm not sure I can resist the skirt!

I've decided to go to town ASAP to try both on and hopefully convince myself that it's worth the money.

I'll keep you posted!

I recieved my Boohoo parcel yesterday and tried on the dresses straight away as I couldn't hold my anticipation!

Unfortunatly (as expected) the products did not fit nicely on me so I will be returning them via. the post office tomorrow.

If I were keeping the dresses I would have snapped a picture of my new dress on my phone and sent it to Instagram and Twitter. But alas, my showing off will have to wait till I find the right garment.

Let's hope my third shopping journey is a successful one!

Hi Rhona, how did you find the returns process with this journey? Also, did you engage in any channels post-purchase in relation to this journey? How do you view the retailer after that experience?

I found the return process very easy with boohoo as they provide free post stickers (unlike Missguided who only cover part of the postage). As I am always in town I didn't find it a hassle to return the parcel with the post office, but if I was having a busy week I would have returned the item with collect plus as it is more convenient.

Post purchase I was sent an email from Boohoo asking me to leave feedback for the product on the site. I didn't follow up on this email as I read it just before dinner. If I was sent it at a more sensible time, or when I was on my laptop I would have engaged with this.

After this experience I have been slightly put off shopping with Boohoo because I feel like their products don't fit my body shape. However it is likely that I will forget about this experience, or require some low cost clothes soon and still buy from the site.

After still having numerous vouchers and gift cards left over from my birthday l decided to take a much needed trip to the Trafford centre this weekend.

Before going l had already been having a breif look through a number of retailers mobile apps on my iphone such as Topshop, Miss Selfridge and River Island. l also recently installed the Dorothy Perkins app on my phone for my Mum. Dorothy Perkins isn't usually somewhere l shop however after receiving a push notification on my mobile informing me of their Spring fashion event with up to 30% off everything l thought l'd take a browse.
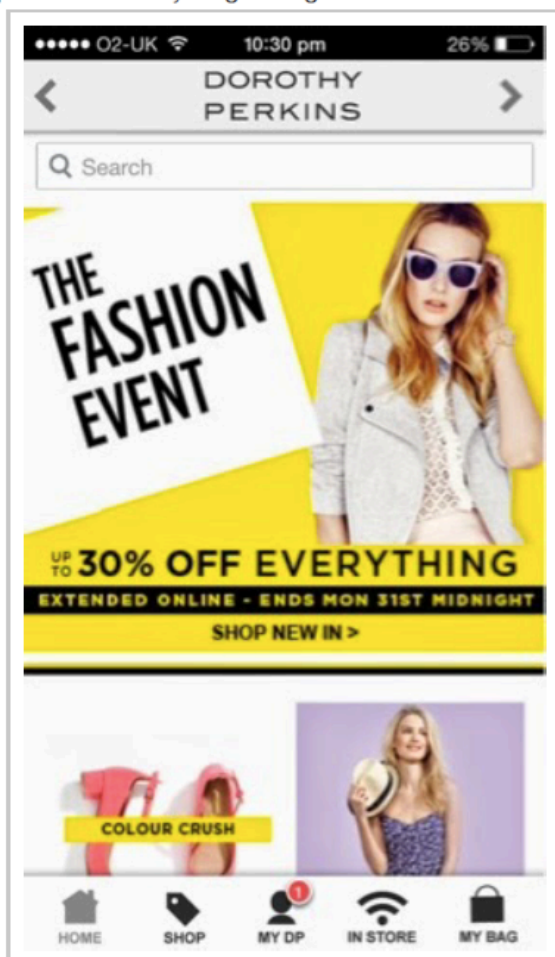
After looking through the app l came across a skirt l thought would be brilliant for the summer. Rather than ordering it online l decided to check whether the skirt was in stock in the Trafford Centre store using the apps 'Check Store' feature.
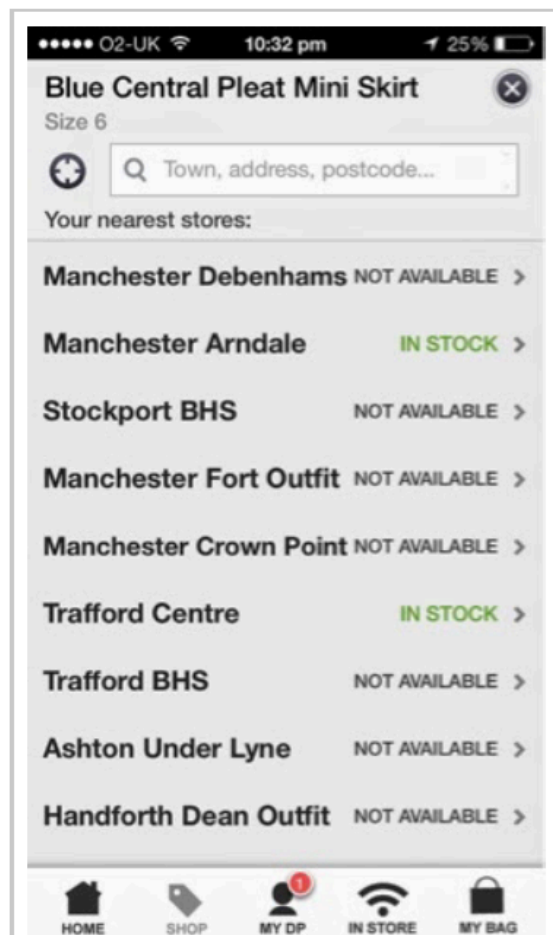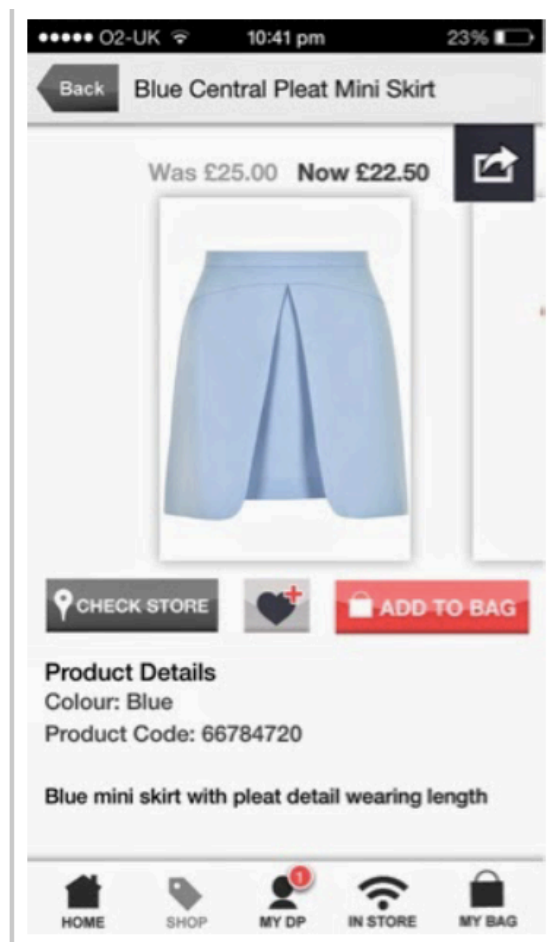
After seeing that the skirt was available in the Trafford Centre in my size I decided to put off ordering it to give me the chance to try it in store. The benefit of using the online app first meant that I could ensure the product was in stock before visiting the store and potentially being let down! I also used the Dorothy Perkins website on my laptop alongside this to get a clearer view of the product. Both the app and website work well together and are clearly integrated and easy to use. The consistency of the layout between the two channels makes it easy to find what you're looking for!

I visited the store this weekend and ended up buying the skirt (as shown below) the description of the skirt on the app fitted the product perfectly and with 10% off it was even better!

Hi Abi, did you interact with any channels post purchase ? E.g. instagram, twitter, whats app etc.

Yes I interacted with a number of channels post purchase, mainly whataspp to send a picture of my purchase to both my friends and Mum to get their opinion! I also used snapchat to send pictures to friends. I did see the purchase as a seamless process as the multiple channels I used were consistent and very closely linked in terms of the products available and the marketing/advertising.

Thanks Abi, Great post! By the way I know in the interview you talked about mostly purchasing online but this purchase was done in store. If retailers were to more reguarly show store stock on their apps/websites do you think that would reduce the amount of online shopping you do and encourage you to go to the store?

I often shop online more regularly as I find it less complicated than visiting a retailers store and potentially being disappointed that a product is not in stock. If a retailer could make what is accessible in store available to view prior to going I would definitely be encouraged to go to the store more often than ordering online.

Today I went into Topshop as I have been longing to do since I saw the gingham combo.

Unfortunately after trying the items on they were not as nice as they had seemed on screen (with the white being more yellow). This made me very happy that I had not impulsively bought them on the Topshop mobile site, as I would have done if I had more money in my account!

Using two of Topshop's channels, mobile and instore was a very seamless experience. The branding on both is consistent and campaigns you see online feature instore, making it a very holistic brand experience.

I believe that using these two channels has added benefits as I was able to find the products quickly instore as I knew what I was looking for thanks to my prior research online.

Even through I didn't purchase the product I have enjoyed this shopping journey. As the two channels I used compliment each other to create a whole shopping experience.

Hi Rhona, although you abandoned he purchase have you discussed it any further with friends or used any channels since then in relation to that shopping journey that you have mentioned?

Hi Sam, I have discussed my disappointment with my boyfriend and he suggested finding an alternative. I have gone back to the inspiration stage and whilst I am on pinterest and instagram I am unconsciously looking at coordinating pieces, but haven't clicked onto any retail websites yet!

I've not actually needed or wanted anything for a specific journey for quite some while. Except for a camel coat which I still cannot find- unsatisfied journey. But I decided I want something for the two christenings which I'm going to in easter.

My first port of call was ASOS, as I know this is an easy and quick way of finding information and I don't need to spend any money. After seeing a few midi skirts it reminded me of bloggers I had seen, this made the purchase seem better. As I can't really afford it at the moment I began to 'save for later' the skirts which I liked. Which I will look at to see if they go into the sale or if I change my mind.

As I said before, I had been reading the ASOS magazine. I think the ASOS website is a lot better for a quick look. The 'save for later' function serves as an actual purpose of doing something with the items to look back later without buying. The magazine seems more of a leisure activity to me. The two channels: magazine and website seem quite disjointed, as I think they serve very different purposes.

As I don't have much money or time at the moment, I will not go in store, I will probably just 'save for later' until I decide to buy.

Today I was on Vogue.com and saw several people wearing culottes in their style section so it has made me want to look for them.

Hi Skye, you say the website and store are rather disjointed - can you tell me more about that? What specifically gives you that impression and how does the fact it is disjointed make you feel towards the retailer?

I think it is because of the different purposes they have, magazine is a leisure activity for me whereas the internet is for a quick browse or for a specific item. Also although I may directly go from the magazine to the website when I first get the magazine, after that I will mix and match in between the two with no specific link.

Shopping Journey 4

I've used a mix of channels today so I thought it relevant. I got an email this morning from Topshop advertising the Topshop and Kate moss collection. It had a link to a behind the scenes video on the website.

I first viewed the email on my phone but then as I saw it was a video and was also on my laptop anyway. I viewed the email on my laptop and clicked the link so I could watch it on my laptop.

Later on in the day, I was on Facebook and the telegraph and posted a photo of the Kate Moss Vogue cover in which the Topshop collection is first seen. I clicked to read about this (on my phone). I then took a screen shot of the Vogue cover and put it on Instagram along with the hashtag that was on the website with the video.

Now that I know more about the collection and have been taken in by the hype. I can't wait to see it when it launches on 30th April.

I had a (sort of) impulse purchase today. I went shopping just to browse, but I saw some running leggings which I had previously tried on in H&M. I am taking up running in Easter so decided they would be a good purchase. I decided to try them on again and decided to buy them shortly after. Whilst in the changing room I did take a photo with my phone to send to my friend (as I was very happy with them), but didn't send the photo till I got wi-fi at home.

After trying on, I looked at the sportswear section again (as i felt inspired) and saw a top which I liked so I picked that up as well. At this stage I also picked up a copy of the H&M printed magazine.

I took both the top and the leggings to the checkout but as the queue was long I got distracted by some swimwear, got out of the queue to look at it and also decided I no longer needed the top. The queue would have made me put down all items but I really wanted to leggings so the queue seemed worth it.

It is likely I will probably return for the top and swimsuit I saw if I still like them. If I do, it will be in store as I don't like H&M website.

So ultimately, I just bought the leggings. But I think this shows that the purpose of the store is for impulse purchasing, I find myself buying into a section or story whereas I tend not to online. Or if I do online I easily send it back when I have thought about it.

Having taken the printed magazine home, my H&M journey will continue.

It was the University of Manchester's School of Materials end of year ball last night, I didn't attend due to financial reasons, but I was inspired by everybody posting pictures on Facebook to start looking for my dress for the end of year ball in June.

I started searching on the Topshop website on my laptop, as this is always my first port of call. I refined my options to just search for white dresses, as this is what I have in mind for the ball. I got distracted by the sale and started browsing for other things. I found a dress that I liked in the sale which was sold out and used the store locator to check if it was available in Manchester. It wasn't available so I felt disappointed and opened a new tab to search for dresses from Aqua, which is another favourite of mine, particularly for evening wear. In the meantime I also opened a new tab for ASOS to search through all brands; again refining my search options to just white dresses. My mind often gets sidetracked when searching for clothes as I think of different ideas and brands to check out, I often have multiple tabs open at one time.

I then couldn't see anything I liked and after a few minutes of searching I gave up. This will be an ongoing process over the course of the next few months in the search for my perfect dress so I will keep you posted on here!

Looking for 2 products ended up buying 6 things!

In my last purchase at ASOS I bought this tie dye dress ...

I love this dress, and as such have spent the last couple of days looking for more summery tie dye outfits. Alongside this I have a pale blue jumper that used to be my mum's. It's a baby blue colour that I thought wouldn't suit me but really does. As this is a perfect colour for spring, and is very on trend. Therefore, I have been looking for the perfect pale blue spring outfits. I have been scouring ASOS, John Lewis and GAP my three favourite retailers for the perfect spring blues. During my search I found that John Lewis is now selling True Decandence, a brand I sort of fell into liking, I first noticed this dress on the John Lewis website at work, I then researched further on the app on the way home...

Today travelling home on the train I was using the ASOS app, where I discovered a further discount on the sale on the app. I then used both the app and the website (on my laptop) once home to view items that had been saved in my basket. It was while using the app and website together I ended up purchasing 6 items that I found including a pair of deck shoes I already have (so I have a spare for when the current ones fall apart).

I found that the website and the app for ASOS are very easy to use, they communicate well with each other...any items I save into basket on the website or app are remembered which is really helpful. This blurring of channels keeps me a loyal customer.

Net-a-Porter Shopping Journey

I mentioned in my interview about my love for Net-a-Porter and my thoughts that they are one of the best retailers for multi channel retailing. I thought this was a prime example.

Firstly, I was sent the Porter magazine, which I had previously subscribed to and have already had the first issue (this was the second). I began reading the magazine almost immediately. Many magazines have links and apps that you can view extra material on but I tend to ignore these unless I already have the app on my phone.

I have the net-a-porter app, this app can be used for both shopping the website direct and now for scanning the magazine to shop and view extra content.

Porter is one of the only magazines in my opinion that actively encourages the use of other channels. Many magazines have just a short bit in the editors letter. Porter has 'shop porter with the net-a-porter app' written on every single page next to the page number.

The editors letter automatically makes me want to shop with them as the editor offers her favourite things for the season. These can be scanned: See below.

The app is really easy to use and you are given many options. I decided to click shop on the dress- this took my straight to the website where it could be purchased: See below.

Usually, I find that apps are an additional annoyance when I'd rather be on my laptop on a website. But as I already had the shopping app there was nothing else I needed to download, so it was easier to use my phone to look straight away rather than open my laptop.

I would consider this one of the most seamless shopping journeys, as there was no stopping to download something or no need to extra search, it was very direct. So although I did not make a purchase as unfortunately I cannot spend £7,020 on a casual summer dress I did enjoy the experience and if I was one day rich enough I would definitely be loyal to Net-a-Porter because of the ease of the experience.

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Post-purchase activity and my 3rd shopping adventure

Following on from my previous posts in which I talked about both the Dorothy Perkins skirt and missguided dress I thought I would share my usual post-purchase routine.
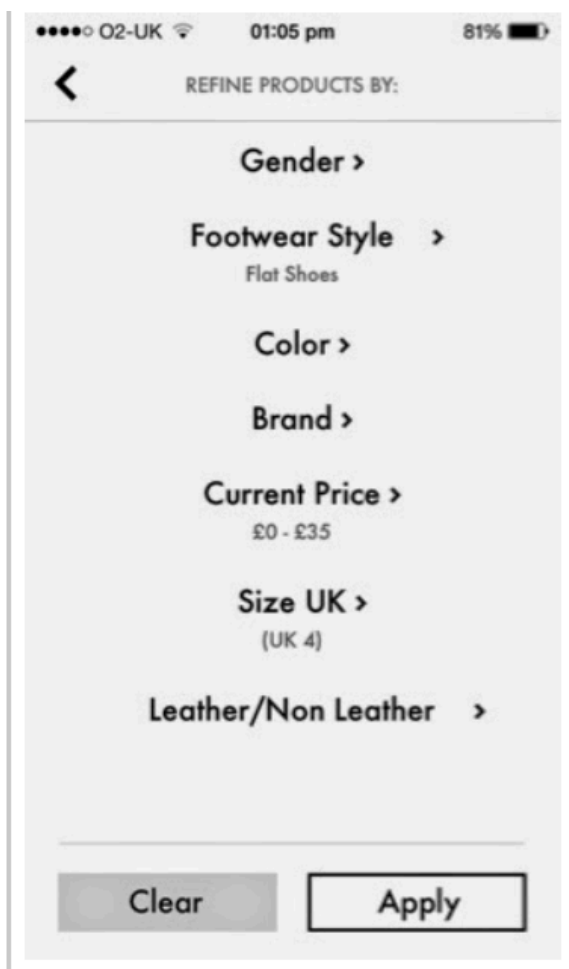
As I live with friends at Uni my first move is to show all of the girls in my house the product on to get their opinion. I often also use both what'sapp and snapchat to send images of my purchases to friends at home. As well as this I use FaceTime to video call my Mum and get her opinion.

Onto my third shopping adventure!

After reading this months closer magazine (rubbish I know - it's my Mums!) I spotted a style of shoe I'd been considering getting for a few weeks. Seeing the shoe in the magazine prompted me to visit the dune website as this is where the shoe advertised was from.

The shoe I had originally seen was not available on the website however there were a number of similar styles avalaible. Unfortunately being a student £69-£99 for a simple slip on shoe is way out of my price range! Therefore I decided to look at a number of my favourite retailers for alternatives. I started with the asos mobile app. I used the apps refine feature to search for products only in my size and with a maximum price of £35.

●●●●○ O2-UK 🛜   01:05 pm   81% ▬▬▷

⟨   REFINE PRODUCTS BY:

Gender >

Footwear Style   >
Flat Shoes

Color >

Brand >

Current Price >
£0 - £35

Size UK >
(UK 4)

Leather/Non Leather   >

Clear   Apply

After having no luck here I turned to my trusted Topshop mobile app. Once again I refined the search to products only in my size and less than £35. I found an alternative from the dune version for only £20. I used the apps check in store option to see if they were available in my local store to give me the chance to try them on and avoid delivery charges.

●●●●● O2-UK 🛜   01:08 pm   80% 🔋

DETAILS

TIKA2 EMBOSSED SNAKE SKATERS   SHARE

Price: £20.00

ADD TO NOTEBOOK   ADD TO BAG   CHECK IN STORE

WE LOVE   SHOP   SCAN   NOTEBOOK   MY BAG

I went into store yesterday and tried the shoes which fitted perfectly and were exactly what I wanted and were highly consistent with the pictures and description on the app. Since buying them I've used snapchat to send images to my Uni friends back in manchester as well as what'sapp to send a photo to my Dad. I'm also thinking of sharing my purchase on Instagram when I wear them later today!

Hi Abi, Nice shoes! Are you pretty similar in terms of your post purchase routine for shoes when compared to clothing? Sam

Hi Sam,
I would say that my post purchase routines differ quite a lot when it comes to shoes. This is because I don't buy shoes as often therefore when I do I know exactly what I'm looking for and want. This is completely different from when I buy clothes as this is often involves spontaneous purchases therefore I am more inclined to use post purchase actives such as whatsapp and snapchat to gain reassurance and opinions from my friends and family!

Shopping Journey 4- continued.

In my shopping journey 4 i mentioned about the hype of the Kate Moss x Topshop collection. Yesterday l was reminded of the launch in many ways:

1. Faceboook- the telegraph fashion
It was posted on my newsfeed as l follow telegraph fashion that they had the collection to view. l clicked the link which took me to the telegraph website and viewed the collection on my laptop.

2. Elle UK
l was just browsing on Elle's website and one of their main features was the Kate Moss collection. l found this more influential as l value Elle more than the telegraph. Also it featured the elle staff wearing the collection so it made it look more wearable.

3. Net-a-Porter Email
Later on in the day l got an email from net-a-porter, advertising the collection again. But also they were offering a competition to win their edit of the collection. Also when you sign up you can sometimes get to view the collection first to shop it. So l viewed the email on my phone, clicked the link and signed up by entering my email address for my net-a-porter account.

l think this journey shows the differences between my use of laptop or phone. The phone was used to make a very quick and almost impulse decision to sign up. Whereas l used my laptop to browse leisurely.

After viewing the prices in the Elle feature it will be unlikely that l make a purchase. However it is just after l get my loan so it could be hopeful! Anyway l am still excited about the collection launching and love some of the items which l have seen so far.

Trainer Expedition

I started this journey casually browsing on the ASOS website on my laptop, I wasn't looking for anything in particular but I came across a pair of Nike air max 1 trainers which I liked the look of. I saved them to my basket and then sent the link to 2 friends on Facebook to ask for their opinion, as they were £95 and I wasn't sure if I could justify spending that amount of money.

I then googled the trainer on my laptop to see if anywhere else stocked them. Office had a sale on and they were £65, so I then spoke to a friend on Facebook again to ask if I should buy them as I was still unsure.

Later that week I was discussing with a friend how trainers have come back into fashion which reminded me that I had been looking at this specific pair of Nikes. This time I checked on the office app on my mobile and was disappointed that they had sold out. I then checked the ASOS app to see if they were still full price or if they had been reduced. They were still full price so at this point I was annoyed that I didn't buy them from Office in the sale.

I then went online on my laptop to check the Office website to make sure I hadn't missed them on my phone and they weren't there. I then checked eBay as Office have an eBay store and to my disappointment they weren't there either. I then spent a little while searching for them on google but again, didn't see them.

Overall, I am annoyed at myself for not buying them when they were in the sale. Now that I know they were £30 cheaper at Office I will not pay the full price on ASOS, I will probably keep checking my saved items to see if they will be reduced in the future.

http://www.asos.com/pgeproduct.aspx?iid=3121443

Hi Rozi, how does your journey for items such as trainers differ to fashion? Also how big a role do offers play when you are purchasing fashion whether clothes or shoes?

I would actually consider these types of trainers to be fashion over sportswear as there has been a huge revival in the air max which have come back almost as a trend. I would wear these trainers as a 'fashion' item rather than for sports activities for example, so I do not think my journey differs to the way I would search for fashion products. As a student, offers are really important to me when buying online. I would choose to purchase from ASOS as opposed to River Island for example, as ASOS offer student discount on all of their brands, whereas River Island does not. In the past I have bought items from ASOS, they have then had a 25% off event and I have returned the items and repurchased. Student discount is also a big factor, if I want something such as trainers I would search

for the best website to buy them on that has the best student discount offer at the time.

A key part of omni channel is about how information is used, whether that be how your information is used or how you get information from the retailer about a product.

Questions I would like to put forward to our bloggers this week are:

1. How standardised is your brand experience with a fashion retailer across all channels?
here are some things to consider but just answer what comes to mind
- so does it look and feel the same
- is the pricing the same
- is the customer service standardised to the same degree
- is stock information available and integrated across all the channels you use
- are you able to find out availability of stock elsewhere in another channel quickly and easily

2. How is your information integrated across channels?
Again this is a really important question so we're interested to hear your views

- do you find your information is transferred across the channels? So what I mean is ...when you go on the app can you see your basket from the website, are your emails personalised in any way, will you see the same product reccomendations transferred from the app to the online site etc, can you view your orders across the different channels with ease?

2. How do you find the process of returns?

3. Do you prefer to shop with a retailer that has a physical store as well as other channels like Topshop or do you prefer online only retailers like ASOS, Missguided.

Simply pop your questions in the comments section or just include them in your next post.

1. I feel like most brands are extremely standardised across their mediums particularly when it comes to instore vs online. I sometimes find however that different Social Media channels can be portrayed slightly differently, whether this is because different Social Media channels access different social groups I'm not sure. I find there are always differences between Facebook and Instagram, however a lot of retailers are now linking their Instagram feeds to their Facebook's to stop this inconsistency! I'd also say customer service is sometimes better online through Twitter for example than instore, retailers respond really quickly on Twitter if you do voice a complaint due to the fear of negative WOM spreading whereas instore sometimes sales assistants can be unhelpful.

2. For style information I would look more to retailer Blogs or Instagram. Facebook often has a lot of offers and discount that the retailer has on at the moment. The website has important information on returns, stores, new product and exclusive ranges and instore is all about collecting tangible product information as you can better examine the fit, sizing and fabric of the garment.

2. Returns is always a hassle, fear of having to return something is the main reason why I wouldn't shop online. Online returns policies can also be misleading, for example Missguided provide you with free postage return but then take the posting charge off the return money you expect to recieve back from purchasing the garment! Returning in store is easier but time consuming, buying online and being able to return in store is a useful policy.

3. I'd definitely prefer to shop with a retailer that has a physical store because trying on the garment will always be the most important part of my shopping journey. However, ASOS as a pureplayer retailer provide enough tools and policies (e.g. Catwalk, easy returns, variety of brands, interactive website) to make up for their lack of physical stores. Their catwalk tool and easy returns policy is reassuring in the search for an item.

Hope this helps!

1. I think that almost all brands are standardised across their channels. I think a very good example is net-a-porter as across all apps they seem to still be able to portray the exclusivity and their high priced goods although the magazine allows more people to access the brand. However, I think the only time it can change is when brands have magazines. They can sometimes be a lot more aspirational than the brand itself but I guess this is the purpose of them. So it does work as it makes me think of their products in a different way. (H&M is key for that). Topshop I think that the customer service is higher in store than online as there is not much help online or much inspiration. Also the delivery charge puts me off.

2. Thats interesting because when I've been on the ASOS app and saved things for later. I'm sure it isn't added to my list on the website which is a bit of an annoyance. Also there is a net-a-porter app called the netbook where you can select things you love but none of this is linked to the website.

It is easy to view orders on the phone though, as you can usually get the link through an email or maybe a text which is useful when I'm out. I think the same products are recommended. Although a few days ago I went on H&M app and the product selection seemed so much nicer than the website. I don't know whether this is because I hadn't been on the website or I've just changed taste or whether they were reorganised.

3. Returns:
I will only every shop at retailers with a good returns policy unless I love the item. For example: Topshop I will not buy online as the delivery charge is a bit much. I would rather pick up in store and than I can decided then and there whether to return. I think ASOS is

one of the best, as it's all free and you only need to pop to the post office. The only time I've ever not been bothered about the returns is in Primark- I would never return anything because I don't think it is worth it. Office only offers exchange only but I love some of their shoes- it will usually take a few visits to make a purchase though.

4. For this question my answer is I really don't mind. If they have product I like and free delivery and returns I will buy. I love ASOS and think it's brand really appeals to my age even though it doesn't have a store. I think now that Topshop needs the store as its so hyped up and part of the brand image with 'cool' sales assistants. So if they got rid of it I would probably not shop their at all.

1. I think there is increasingly more standardisation between channels now. I have found that when I add items to my basket on ASOS or John Lewis on the app have been transferred to my basket in the online store also. Retailers such as these two also tailor the emails they send to me, and both offer me products they believe I will like, although I do not use this service I like that they consider my purchases. As previously mentioned I believe there are big links emerging with retailers and their social media accounts. Customers can link their Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter all together, so anything they post to one account with a hashtag shows up on all accounts, therefore any bad reviews can be even more dangerous than before considering how quickly things can go viral. However many retailers do even save the items in your basket, such as Gap, they do not keep the items in your basket for any longer than necessary, this puts me off shopping with them online as I like to add items to my basket and then view them again later before purchasing. However in general pricing and stock remains the same between the mobile site, the app and the website for all of the above. The only thing I find frustrating is when items you see in store are not available online.

2. With ASOS all of my details are saved, including the items I've looked at previously or added to my basket. John Lewis likewise save my address details, previous products looked at, previous orders, items in my basket, and the stores that I have previously click and collected from. I am essentially lazy therefore I like stores to remember me when I use any channels so when I come back I don't need to enter the details over again. As such I like ASOS, as all my details are saved in all channels, it saes all my previous orders in the order they were placed too which I like.

2. Returns are a massive hassle and I try my best to avoid them by sticking to retailers I know, and trust and only purchasing the sizes I trust. If something is too large I won't send it back I will try my best to alter it myself, or I have a friend that is a tailer who will alter things for me. If too small I tend to palm it off on a friend rather than return it. I like to be able to purchase online but return to a store so I can get an immediate refund or exchange. Mango do not offer this therefore I will not purchase online from them.

3. I love ASOS it seems to have become a bit of a past time for me to trawl through it. I have ASOS prime so I know if I order today I will receive it tomorrow which is great! I love the selection of products, and I know that I will always find something that suits me, and that I like. There is such a large range of products that I can often find something unusual that none of my friends will have. I like to ease of ASOS and the personalisation they offer to me, and the student discount and offers they have. Alongside this I personally like to browse websites and add loads of products to my basket and then leave it for a couple of days, go back to it and review the items I chose to see if I still like them, and then purchase.

However for many young people, 16-24 year olds shopping is an experience, it can become a day out. Young people of a high school age especially will make a day of going to town and shopping. Therefore, in general I think it is important to keep high street stores alongside online and other channels. People want the reassurance of trying garments on, and aftersales care. Alongside the immediate gratification of getting a product.

Hi Sam,

In reply to your question I definitely find that my emails are tailored to trends or similar products or the product I may have been viewing on the particular website.

Also any item that I have looked at on a retailers website tends to pop up on adverts on my Social Media sites e.g. Facebook for at least a couple of weeks, keeping the item on my mind and tempting me even more to buy it!

Sorry I can't write more about the apps, I have a rubbish phone!

1. I am going to use River Island as my example retailer as this is who I have had my most recent shopping journey with. The website which I usually use my Mac to view and the app which I use my phone to view look and feel very similar to each other which makes them both very simple to navigate and switch between the two when searching for a product. The images available to view the product, the product information and the pricing is all the same across these two channels. I feel that you will always get better customer service in store as the shopping assistants are there and trained to help you (some stores more helpful than others). I really like that on both the App and Website there is the accessibility to check the stock availability in-store on their products; of course this is much clearer on the website as it is a bigger screen and so the link is next to the product. On the app, you have to find the link as the product takes up the majority of the screen, but even then it's quite straight forward.

2. Information such as card details, delivery address etc and saved across the App and the Website of River Island. However, I just saved an item to my Wishlist on the app and then logged in to the website to see if I could view it there only to find that there was no Wishlist at all. This obviously isn't a feature on their website so there is a slight inconsistency across the channels.

I just tried something very similar with putting a product into my bag on the app and then seeing if I could view it on their website, however, it said 'Bag Empty'. I am however, able to view my order history across both the channels with ease by logging in to my account on the app and on the website, both provide the same information.

3. I find the process of returns easier for some retailers than others, particularly online sales. With certain retailers such as Ark, Topshop and ASOS, they use Collect+ where all you have to do is print off a label and drop off the parcel to the nearest Collect+ point free of charge. It would however be much easier if returns could be done to store, Ark have introduced this and I have used it a few times myself. You have to log on to the website, find your recent order, log that you are to return it and then drop it off in the store - easy!

4. I much prefer to shop with a retailer that has a physical store as there is the opportunity to try on an item before you purchase it; this way you can try on different sizes etc. However, with online retailers such as ASOS and Missguided, I often find myself ordering two sizes and sending one of them back; this isn't too much trouble as they offer free returns, however, if I had the option, I'd rather go in store. Also, the only way ASOS and Missguided can portray their brand identity is through their website, social media accounts and email whereas physical stores such as Topshop and River Island can set the mood of their retailer through store layout and window/mannequin displays which creates more of a solid brand identity.

1. How standardised is your brand experience with a fashion retailer across all channels?
Hi Sam, the standardisation of brand experience really depends on the retailers. I often find that some particular companies are much more aware and alert to the need to link together their apps, social media pages and websites. For example, Topshop are a company who do really well in terms of keeping a high level of consistency through their various channels. Their instagram often features new in products and bestsellers which can be easily spotted on either the app or the website. Stock availability is really easy to check across all channels, and products are always true to their online descriptions. However in contrast to this retailers such as New Look and H&M fail to do so quite so well. Often their websites are difficult to navigate due to a large amount of styles and it is difficult to see products you may have seen instore. In addition to this customer service in both stores is often lacking, this impacts upon whether I choose to visit these stores when I'm out shopping.

2. How is your information integrated across channels?
Again with topshop they integrate their channels really well. My card details remain saved against my account on both my mobile app and the online site making it easier to process an order. My shopping basket also remains consistent across both channels and products remain in their until you remove them. I also use the wishlist tool to add products to a list of items I am considering buying. This also appears consistent on both the app and the website.

2. How do you find the process of returns?

I much prefer the process of returns to a retailer with a physical store, purely because the process is an awful lot simpler and does not require me to pay postage fees. With almost all retailers I visit on a regular basis (Topshop, Miss Selfridge, River Island ect) I find the returns process simple and efficient. Even when I have ordered products online from and retailer with a physical store I tend to go into the shop to return the products as I feel more comfortable with the fact the return is processed right there and then in front of me.

3. Do you prefer to shop with a retailer that has a physical store as well as other channels like Topshop or do you prefer online only retailers like ASOS, Missguided.

I do prefer to shop with retailers who have physical stores to allow me to try a product on before I buy it. This is purely because the hassle of returning products often stresses me out! For example, Missguided allow you to return products via a number of methods such as collect+ drop off points where you are not purchased, however the cost of the return comes off of your refund, meaning that you have then paid for both delivery and return of a product you are not keeping. With this in mind I do have to say that although I prefer retailers who offer physical stores I do not avoid using online only retailers.

My Spontaneous Shopping Journey

Last Saturday, (12th April) a friend of mine decided that she wanted to browse at a local retail park for bikinis, maxis, flip-flops etc for her holiday and invited me along for company. I would never say no to a shopping trip because I love physically seeing the products and having the option to try something on so I went with her. We started off in Primark; this is one of the very few shops I cannot stand being in, especially on a busy Saturday as it was over crowded and a total mess which really didn't inspire me to want to buy anything. We swiftly moved on to New Look, I'm not normally a fan but on this occassion I saw the perfect jumpsuit; it was black with a ditsy print, ideal for summer! However, I didn't try it on as I persuaded myself that I didn't need it (even though it was only £22.99!). We visited other stores such as River Island and Outfit where I also saw ditsy print jumpsuits, confirming to me that they are potentially going to be on trend for SS14. When I got home, I got straight on to my laptop and found the jumpsuit on the New Look Website and added it to my 'Wishlist'; I already have an online account with New Look and receive regular updates via email for promotions and new ranges they have to offer (sometimes I delete before reading, others that capture my interest such as discount codes I read).

I still haven't ordered the jumpsuit as I have no real reason too; however, I may treat myself with some of my wages from working over this Easter as I know that New Look offer 10% student discount (online and in-store) and free 'Click and Collect' on all orders over £19.99; which will make it even more of a bargain!

Hi Yasmin, thanks for your post. Just a quick question. You said you already have an online account and that you added the item to your wishlist. Is it easy to view that wishlist across different channels such as mobile and online? Did you use your mobile at any point during your shopping journey when you were actually out and about in the stores?

Reply Delete

I've just signed in to my account on the New Look App on my phone to see if I could view my Wishlist but I can't seem to find it anywhere so perhaps this isn't a feature on their app yet. This is quite frustrating as it shows inconsistency across the channels; If I was out and decided I wanted to look at my Wishlist on my phone, I would have to search for the item again which is time consuming. I didn't use my mobile during this particular shopping journey.

Shopping Journey Number Two

This journey also began on my spontaneous shopping trip but I only decided to pursue it yesterday. I spotted a pair of shoes in River Island that I really loved but they were quite expensive and I didn't have the money for them at the time. However, I received wages that I hadn't collected and received more than I had expected, so got straight on to the River Island website on my laptop. I had a browse and immediately found the shoes I liked; I was just about to order them when I remembered that ASOS.com also stock River Island. I thought it was worth a shot as ASOS offer student discount unlike River Island. I was in luck, ASOS had the shoes I wanted! I added them to my basket and then opened a new tab so I could get my student discount code off of Unidays for 10% off my purchase. I really wanted them for this weekend as I have a 21st to go to and so paid an additional £5.95 to have them next day delivery (The student discount cancelled this out so I didn't feel like I was spending more).

Upon placing my order, I received an email first to say thank you for my order, then a second about an hour later confirming that my order was due for delivery today. In my excitement I told a friend that I had ordered a new pair of shoes and she really wanted to see what they looked like. I used the River Island app on my phone which is incredibly easy to navigate around and found the shoes; I took a screenshot of the image and then sent it to her via Whatsapp.

I woke up to an email on my phone from ASOS to tell me that my order was on its way to me and gave me the option of tracking my order online; I liked the idea of this so followed the link to see my orders progress on my phone. Shortly after this email came through, I received another email that told me my parcel is going to be delivered between 10.17am and 11.17am; I was very impressed with this as it means that I don't have to wait in all day for my package, just as long as I am at home between these times it should be delivered within the hour. Not long to wait now, let's just see if it actually does get delivered within this time slot...

Shopping Journey 2 complete!

They have arrived! I received my delivery at around 10.30am which was great as this was quite early on in the time slot they had emailed me. I was so excited I took photos of them, first I sent one to my Mum via Whatsapp to show her and then I put the photo on Instagram to share with my followers (see attached photo). In my caption, I tagged @Riverislandpr so that my followers knew what brand they were. About half an hour after my shoes were delivered, I received an email asking for feedback on the delivery service; as I was so impressed I followed the link they included and completed the short survey to express my satisfaction! I believe it is little touches such as these, follow up emails and keeping the customer up to date via email that keeps them loyal as I know that I will certainly make repeat purchases with ASOS in the future.

Hi Yasmin, By sharing your post on Instagram how did you feel?

I got a lot of likes and that made me feel even happier about my purchase! I don't think I would have felt any less happy if no one had liked it as I knew how much I loved my new shoes but the likes just made me love them even more!

Hi everyone,

Another question we want to discuss is how does your omni-channel activity affect how you view the brand?

Pop a reply in the comments section or in your next post.

My omni-channel experience has a great impact on my view of a particular retailer. If the app/website/store don't look like they are in sync with one another by following the same concept I begin to question whether they are aware of their own brand identity. I feel that brands that demonstrate more consistency I am more likely to trust them. I was quite frustrated with ASOS because on their app they were showing that they only had a handbag in black or nude so I ordered nude, but when I later on logged on to their website, they also had it in Lilac! It's this type of inconsistency that reduces the chances in me staying loyal to a brand.

Easter Shopping!

So unfortunately due to dissertation work and lack of funds shopping has been put on the back burner for a while until l received some much needed Easter cash! As part of procrastination l check Topshop's New ln page almost every day (sad l know) and also follow them on Twitter where they post new items fairly regularly. This gives me an idea of what is in the store and l always have in mind some key items l want when l go in there!

When l embarked on a spontaneous shopping trip earlier today Topshop was the first store l tried. l had seen (and saved in favourites) the below dress on the online site, and thought it could be an appropriate graduation dress. However when l tried the item on instore l was really disappointed with the fit and this for me reinforces the reasons why l always try on garments instore rather than ordering online.
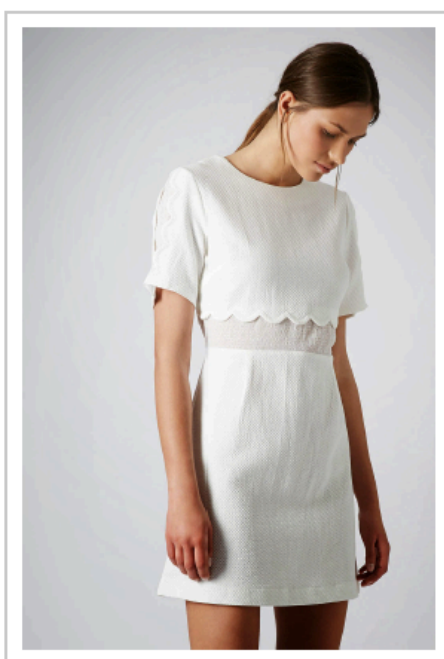

Determined to spend my money l then went to Zara where weeks before l had tried on some beautiful heels, after trying them on l went home and looked at them online, saving them in my growing favourites list to purchase when l had some more money! After trying them on instore again today l decided to buy them and when l got home l tweeted Zara to say how happy l was with my purchase, l'll let you know if they reply!
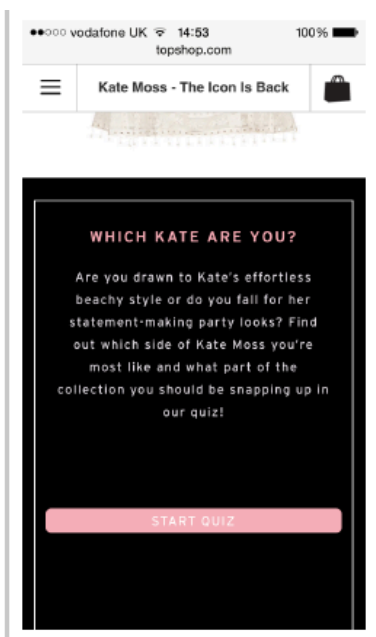
I also explored a little further around the topshop website on my phone. There was mood boards of the collection which I was interested in. This furthered my want to buy from the collection.

Overall, although I haven't made a purchase YET I feel that this journey has been very successful and it has made me feel more positive about shopping at Topshop (which I had previously gone off). The collection has made it seem more elite and exclusive whereas I previously thought it was quite mainstream. Being part of the hype through email and on the internet has definitely
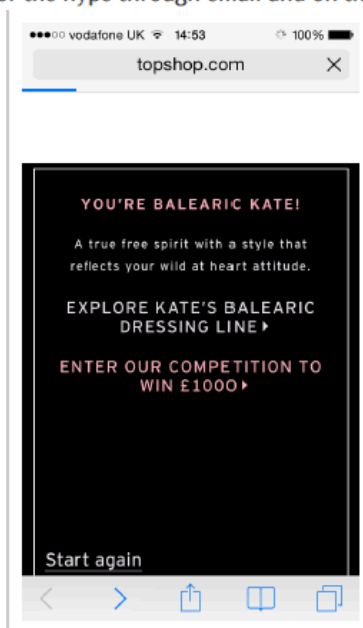
encouraged me to find the money somewhere.

I was also thinking about where I would buy it from as it is not just stocked in Topshop. As it is stocked in Net-a-Porter I would probably buy it from there, even though I am not able to try it on and see it in person. This is because I feel the Net-a-Porter brand is more exclusive (and I love the packaging). It would make me feel more individual than buying it from the Topshop store. Also I am confident with the Net-a-Porter service that I can return it easily.

Although I would probably go into the Topshop store at a later date to view the whole collection in store.

Journey Number 3

This shopping journey was triggered by a late Birthday present I received last weekend from my Auntie, a River Island gift card. I was in the middle of doing a piece of coursework when I remembered I had £25 to spend in River Island, as I was already on my laptop I went straight on to their website and browsed the 'Just In' collection to see what I could potentially put my gift card towards. I saw a few things but as I'm not looking for anything in specific, I gave up and thought I'd just pop into a store at a later date. I prefer to browse in store if I am not looking for anything in particular as sometime I see things that may not necessarily have caught my eye on the website. Yesterday afternoon I had a spare hour or two so as I was watching TV, I opened up the River Island App on my phone and continued to browse for inspiration; it wasn't until I was on Facebook talking to one of my friends later on that she told me RI have currently got 20% off for students - a rarity! She sent me a link to a pair of shoes she had bought which then got me looking on their website again! I saw that this 20% offer for students is only for 2 more days, so if I get bored of coursework later, I may just go to the shops to have a browse; I'll let you know if I find anything!

How loyal are you to a fashion retailer?

Ok so we all know how much you love to shop. But how loyal are you and how much do you trust the retailers that you have talked about in the blog?

Does the fact that you are interacting with the channels of the same retailers have an effect? Does the consistency/ or lack of consistency and the look and feel of the brand across channels affect your loyalty and trust in any way?

I would say I am very loyal as once I am happy with something I will usually shop there again. I find this especially with just online retailers as I am less likely to want to try a product from an online retailer as I have no idea of the quality and sizing so it seems a bigger risk.
Whilst using the store as a channel I am less loyal because If I see a product I like I can also try it on and test it before buying.

I think I am more loyal to brands which do have consistent image over the channels because there are so many ways that make me feel part of the brand e.g. Topshop. By reading the magazine and looking online they all have the same image and it makes me want to be a part of their loyal followers both online and by buying product.

I would say I'm very loyal to some retailers more than others. A retailer that I have made repeat purchases with for years has been Ark; I've always found their website easy to use and would say I've made more purchases online than in store with them. There are only a few stores in the UK, which is why I think I am drawn to it so much as there is a slight sense of exclusivity and it is very rare that when I wear a product someone else is wearing it too. I don't mind ordering off their website as they have free delivery when you spend a certain amount, free click and collect and free returns which are hardly a hassle.

With River Island on the other hand, I really enjoy using their various channels as I feel that their app and their website are very much in sync and reflect the mood that is set in store. This increases my trust for the brand because I see it as having a strong brand identity and really recognising who its target market is. I also receive email updates from River Island which makes me feel even more involved with the brand and also reminds me to go on their app to see what's new from time to time. With River Island I am more likely to go in store if I am planning on making a purchase as sometimes the fit of their products can vary so I like to try different sizes; this then saves me the hassle of ordering a product and then needing to return it when it doesn't fit and then re-ordering it in a different size.

I am very loyal to my favourite retailers: Zara, Topshop and ASOS. This is mainly due to the variety and range of products on offer. If I was to have a bad experience with any of these retailers I would still be inclined to purchase from them again as I love the products. The consistency across all 3 of these retailer's channels makes me more inclined to shop with them as I know I will have an enjoyable experience, regardless of whether it is through the mobile app or online website.

If I was shopping with a not so well known retailer that did not have consistency across channels it would have a negative impact on my opinions about the retailer; thus reducing my confidence.

As a demanding consumer, I would expect there to be consistency across all channels. Topshop especially are very good at ensuring channel consistency and making me feel part of the brand universe. My loyalty is increased with Topshop through their Instagram account as it is inspiring and trend led; making me want to shop when they post pictures of products and trends etc.

I would say that my loyalty towards my favourite retailers is reasonably high (Topshop, River Island, Missguided) This is mainly due to the fact that I enjoy my shopping experience with them whether it be in store, online or in the mobile app. I would have to agree with others and say that even after a bad experience with any of these retailers my loyalty to them doesn't change. This is due to the fact that I am consistently drawn to their styles and the shopping experience linked to the retailer. Even following from bad customer service in store I often return the retailer but potentially to another branch or using an online channel.

Retailers who lack consistency do tend to put me off. This is often because I feel mislead by retailers social media pages such as New Looks Instagram page. This is often because they feature their most popular trends on their social media which you can rarely find when you go in store or are out of stock online! This puts me off shopping with the retailer as I am given a preconceived image of not being satisfied with the shopping experience offered.

I would also say I am very loyal to my favourite retailers (Topshop and Zara), this is not only down to their product designs and consistency across channels but also because a strong level of trust has been built, often due to this consistency. I consistently buy from these retailers because I know exactly what size will fit me and also because I know how long the garment will last! Because this trust/relationship has been built they will be the first places I look online or in store when searching for a product I have in mind. Similar to the other feedback, if I had a bad experience with the brand I would continue to shop there because of the trust that has been built and because more often than not it is a one off experience.

It is even more important for pure player retailers to ensure there is consistency across channels, because I can't try on the clothing I need to be able to trust the retailer and understand entirely what they are offering as I don't want the hassle of returns. Inconsistency across channels can lead to confusion that will often make me navigate away.

I am very loyal to Topshop and River Island and trust them greatly due to the many levels of communication I have with them. I am constantly seeing updates from these retailers on Instagram, Facebook and email so I am very familiar with what they sell and feel like

we are 'friends' in a way. The consistency of both of these retailers with their online and store presence heightens my experience with each brand as I feel part of it when I am shopping on either channel. Thereby increasing my loyalty to the brand as if I have a good experience when shopping online, I will remember this when out shopping and likely visit the store.

To me retailers like Boohoo, who do not have a store presence, feel like they have less of a brand identity as I struggle to see it without an instore shopping experience. This definitely decreases my loyalty and trust as I do not build the positive associations with the brand and bad experiences online cannot be improved by a successful store visit. This lack of brand identity (that I can't identify) gives Boohoo's posts on social media less impact as I tend to scroll over them without realising it is a retailers post. This decreases my loyalty further, to the point that I may consider un-following the brand!

Brand Experience

How do you view the brand as a result of interacting with a brand across so many channels? How does it affect your relationship with the brand?

I feel that interacting with the brand across so many channels such as Apps, Websites, In-store, Email and following them on social media sites such as Twitter and Instagram strengthens my relationship with the brand. By following retailers such as Ark and River Island on Instagram and Twitter, I am constantly being reminded of the brand whenever I see a post and if I see something I like I am likely to follow it up by either finding the product on their app or on their website. I like that many retail brands have got so many ways of communicating with me and how accessible they make it to view their products as it makes me feel much more involved with that brand. I feel that the stronger the connection between a brands app, website and in-store look, the more likely I am to have confidence in the brand and see it as a trustworthy retailer that has a strong brand identity and really knows how to capture the attention of their target market.

I think interacting with the brand across so many channels means you are constantly part of and can quickly access the brand experience. It is so important for retailers to ensure they are consistent across all channels so they communication a seamless brand experience and therefore don't bombard or isolate consumers with confusing messages.

Constant interaction with the brand develops trust and a relationship as you feel you are part of something exclusive when they post new products and offers! Also the more consistent they are the better you understand the brand and what it has to offer.

I definitely feel closer to brands which I interact with across many channels. The constant stream of information you receive from the many, from emails to pictures on Instagram, keep you informed on new products and trends the store is covering. I believe that River Island and Topshop do this very well as I see content daily from these retailers on various channels which keeps them in my mind.

I view a brand as being more trustworthy, in terms of their product quality, communication and delivery if they sell and advertise over various platforms. This is hard to explain but I trust Topshop more than I do Boohoo as they have a store presence which gives greater security if an item is faulty as you can easily return it and not worry about getting to the post office to send a parcel.

Interacting with a brand across multiple channels definitely has a positive effect on the way I view the brand as I feel more connected to them. Following a brand on social media sites gives you a constant update on the retailers stock and any new ranges such as Topshop's most recent Kate Moss range. Therefore I see stock from the retailers on a daily basis. In addition to this interactions with customer services across various channels increases my trust in a retailer, such as getting fast responses with regards to faulty products via sites such as twitter. A brand with various channels is far more attractive than brands such as Boohoo who are limited to just the internet as it gives me more choice in how I shop with them.

Consistency between channels gives me more incentive to visit a retailers store of website as they are constantly advertising and gaining my attention.

I don't really think it changes my view of the brand but I definitely feel more involved with retailers that have lots of channels like in store magazine and instagram and online.

I guess I would think that a retailer without online would be old and pretty useless as I like to find out information online.

Overall retailers with other channels have a bigger chance of getting my purchase I think because they are always in my mind. Also when I have things in my mind when i am emailed or contacted by the retailer with a promotion it almost instantly forms a purchase.

Journey 3... Complete

As I said in my previous post I was going to head to the shopping centre yesterday afternoon to see what River Island had to offer, especially as they had 20% off for students. Before I left, I was browsing Instagram on my phone and saw that the @RiverIslandPR account had posted an image of two members of staff against a Students 20% off poster; I noticed it said that to get 20% In Store, a code was needed from Unidays. I downloaded the free app on my phone and registered my account so that when I got to the checkout I could present this to them to retrieve my discount.

The image above is blurred to hide personal participant information regarding this Unidays account.

As I walked in to the shopping centre, one of the first shops I came to was Topshop, I was enticed into the store by their new store look and the interesting window displays. I told myself I wouldn't buy anything, just browse - but I came across so many nice things! So I grabbed a few items to try on and when I was in the changing room I noticed a flyer that said Topshop were also doing 20% off for students. I couldn't resist, I had to buy the floral top I tried on, so I took it to the till and redeemed my 20% discount! That's the effect shopping in store has, impulse purchases that you may not have necessarily pursued online.

I made my way up to River Island, after browsing their website and app several times I thought I was quite familiar with what they would have to offer. There were certain products that I didn't recollect seeing on their website and some that I did recognise but looked completely different in real life to what they did on the screen of my Mac. Seeing products that I didn't recognise from their website was quite exciting as I always feel that if it's not on their website, not as many people will have it! However, seeing the products physically also put me off some of the items I had seen as they looked slightly different or they had details on that weren't really made clear by the images on the website and app. I wondered round and found a few things I liked the look of, although quite a few things I was interested in trying on didn't have my size! I always find this frustrating and a risk with shopping in store; they only have the sizes they have delivered however on their website it isn't very often that sizes are out of stock. Another thing that frustrated me with my in store experience was the fact that the staff were obviously getting the shop ready for either a new delivery or just the weekend and they kept moving things around; every time I went back to look at a certain product it had moved!

Other than those little things, I really enjoyed my experience in store of River Island and I felt that they key trends which they featured on their mannequins and in their window displays reflected what the themes of their website/moblie apps. I also like that in store they have the ability to group items into their ranges whereas on their website it is mainly divided up into product type

such as trousers/skirts/tops etc; they do have pages with key looks on but it's not something I go to straight away on their website.

I found a dress in the River Island store, tried it on and fell in love with it. I took it to the till and got my phone out ready to show the member of staff my Unidays, however.. I didn't have 3G! It's great using cross-channels until you run out of signal or the app fails to work. However, I did explain this to the girl and she said that's fine, if I can see your student card (which luckily I had) - this was slightly misleading as it stated on their website that it would only work with an NUS Extra card which I didn't have but this didn't matter - I had a new dress!

Out of interest I went onto the River Island App on my phone when I got home to see if I had already seen this dress; I didn't remember seeing it and I think that if I hadn't have seen it in store I wouldn't have bought it as it doesn't look very exciting or flatting in the image that features on the app:

I showed my mum my new purchases to get her opinion (as she know's best) and whilst they were laid out on my bed I decided to take a photo of them. I edited this and put it on my Instagram to share with my followers...
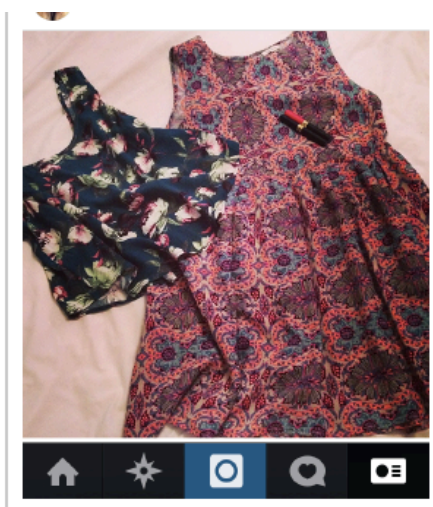
Hi Yasmin can you tell me a little bit about why you decided to do a post on instagram? Also what effect does that have on you?

I decided to post this on Instagram because I just wanted to show my followers what I had bought; I used hashtags such as #fashion #florals #shopping #Topshop #RiverIsland to spark interest from others that may not necessarily be following me. I received likes on the image and even a comment from a blogger to say that she loved what I'd bought. This made me feel good about my purchases and even happier with them! I felt it was important to tag the retailers from who I had bought my new clothes from to show appreciation and let others know where they could find these great pieces.

In-store Shopping Experience

So today I decided to head to the Arndale for a 'revision break' for a bit of retail therapy; if you can call it that. I found the experience nothing but stressful because of how busy the shops were and how long the queues were. As off-putting as this was, I did actually end up buying something; the floral jumpsuit I mentioned in my very first post. I received an email this morning from New Look to inform me that it was their last day of 20% off for students so I thought it was worth a shot seeing if they still had the jumpsuit in stock. It didn't take me long to find it but when I went to try it on, the queue for the changing rooms was ridiculous so I decided against it and just paid for it - using my student card to redeem my discount.

I've come to the realisation that I much prefer shopping from my laptop or my iPhone at home as I don't have to stand in any ridiculously long queues or compete with other shoppers who were also frantically trying to find their size. Mid-week shopping is definitely an exception though, the shops are quiet and tidy and they are nowhere near as busy as they are at the weekend - a definite mistake on my behalf!

I did say I would probably end up buying that jumpsuit though; and with 20% I found it very hard to say no to!

10.12 Follow-Up Interview Transcripts

Follow-Up Interview 1

SL: So first thing I wanted to ask was, I'll just go through these as quickly as I can. You mentioned that em we talked about brands across different. See being so involved with a brand across lots of channels, how does that make you perceive the retailer – because you are interacting across channels?
FINT1: I think as long as the retailer is consistent across all the channels, then it makes me view them in a lot more positive way.
SL: And why?
FINT1: Cause you get more choice of how you can view things. So it's a lot different to just walking into a shop and seeing something there when you've got like social media and things. You see it worn by someone exactly like yourself whether that be a fashion blogger or something like that. Because it's all on social media you can see how things look rather than just them just being piled up on a shelf.
SL: To make it almost a bit more real?
FINT1: Yeah there's kind of a better kind of view of the whole overall, and it's more of a, not really like a retailer, it's more of a like of an actual interest, like. Rather than just going there to buy something you're actually interested in it. Like they do different collections with em celebrities and things like that so.
SL: So when you say it's more kind of an interest rather than a retailer can you just tell me a bit more about that?
FINT1: So I mean in terms of following blogs about them, like the Topshop blog things like that, social media pages. It's more kind of actually interested in, I think from my perspective as well with that I study, like actually being interested in the retailer and how they do in the market, and actually their collaborations and things.
SL: And with the brand, because you are interacting across channels do you almost view them in a kind of human like way?
FINT1: Yeah it's almost like there's a person, because especially social media and things like that and instagram things like that. So it's kind of more someone you can interact with rather than going in store, buying something and leaving.
SL: So you're calling it almost like someone in a way?
FINT1: Yeah.
SL: Ok. In terms of returns and deliveries – are they like the biggest overall issues you have with omnichannel?
FINT1: Yeah, probably. Em, I think that's probably my main problem because for example, things like Missguided and stuff, like I really like their products and things like that but it is just so difficult in terms of returns and for me like it's just so much hassle and things like that. I just would rather, if I can find it elsewhere and avoid having the kind of waiting three days for delivery, things like that.
SL: You said about interacting with the brand across multiple channels you felt that you're more connected to them as a brand. Could you tell me a bit more about that?
FINT1: Yeah em, so that's kind of in terms of like you see more of brands. So you kind of see some of like the behind the scenes and things like that. I know with ASOS and their Instagram and things, they're quite, they give you quite a lot of what they do behind the scenes. Like on their Twitter they post a lot. Like I know when I was doing like assessment centres for them, they were tweeting about things like that. It's like there's more to it than just going in, having products and leaving. You get more a sense of involvement in like what the business actually does.
SL: So is it more experiential in a way?
FINT1: Yeah.
SL: Ok and you talked a bit in your blog about consistency of layout. What specific elements of all the channels should be consistent? I want to pinpoint what those elements are?
FINT1: For me the most important thing is the actual products. So going in store, seeing things that you've seen on tv or in ad campaigns in the store, on the apps, on the website. Everything where it should be. Sometimes with some retailers like H&M they're very good at, they do all these big advertisement campaigns on tv and then when you go into store and you're like where's that? Online nothing ever matches. So I think for me, the main thing with that is product. I think layout is important to, kind of like knowing where you're going and for the actual brand look to be very similar. But the main thing would be product.
SL: So anything else in terms of, obviously if you think about these different channels you will always have the product, any other things you think…
FINT1: I think another thing that I find really helpful is like on Topshop and things. Where if you go on the app and you save something, you've got your saved items, when you log in on a website you go in and it can still be there. I mean I don't know if you can access that in store, I know you can check products in

store for you but I don't know whether you can access kind of your own online account. But yeah that's kind of big for me, because a lot of the time I am just scrolling through my phone and find something I like, save it for later to look at on my laptop. Em so that's really important for me to just log in and have it there rather than having to search again for it.

SL: You said that you were loyal to retailers such as Topshop, River Island, Missguided. Em, is that because you interact with them across these channels, does that have an affect on your loyalty?

FINT1: Yeah, that has a real affect for me. I prefer them because I can interact with them across a number of channels and it's always the same experience and I'm always satisfied with it. Whereas like I said, with H&M who is very inconsistent that puts me off shoping with them because if I see something in store and they don't have my size I know that I will never find it again on the website. I know that it's just not even worth looking. So that kind of puts me off. But I think being able to interact well between the different channels is really important.

SL: What are your favourite top three retailers? Is it those?

FINT1: Probably those three.

SL: So if they are at the top of your list in your head is that because you are so involved with them?

FINT1: Probably yeah, because they're my first port of call. There is other retailers that I do like. Because I only realistically see their products if I am in their store in the Arndale or if I am looking for something in particular and I think where else can I look online and go to their website because I don't really interact with them through social media. I wouldn't go to their page to just have a browse and see what's new in. Whereas the others, kind of Topshop and things because I interact with them all the time they'll post something on Instagram which will click a button in my head to go on the app and its starts this whole kind of challenge to just keep looking.

SL: So do you see it as like a challenge, like a goal to kind of…

FINT1: It's kind of like an incentive almost because you see like when they're posting new in stock or like best sellers this week on Instagram and things like that you're like oh wow.

SL: Ok and obviously we talked about deliveries and returns as being a key issue in omnichannel. If we're thinking of omnichannel so interacting with lots of retailers would you say that brand is the key kind of positive thing in all of that?

FINT1: Yeah I think the actual way you view the brand I think that is one of the biggest positives of it all. The way you see a brand and the way you kind of involve yourself with them. If that makes sense. I think there's a lot now about public image and things. Like I think people can be not judgemental, but people can be very where are they from or what's that, where did you get that. I think brand image is so bigg'ed up by everyone important.

SL: And because you have grown up around technology and all of those sorts of things, is that a kind of key thing for you? Do you feel as if you are missing out if you don't check your brands everday.

FINT1: Yeah, probably, yeah. I feel like you could be behind on something. I think especially with like what I do, like everyone's so conscious of like nowadays everyone is kind of like checking – oh have you seen what's just come in or have you seen this collection that's just launched. If you haven't seen it you're like hmmm so.

SL: How do you feel?

FINT1: It's a bit like…it depends who it is. Sometimes if it's people on my course I'll be like I've seen that when I haven't. But it really does depend. A lot of people are really forthcoming with it.

SL: You said you shared images of shoes on Snapchat. Do you do that with any other products? Do you do that with clothes?

FINT1: Yeah I do that quite a lot because I'm kind of with my clothes. I am quite confident with what I wear but I often do seek someone to be like, yeah, yeah go for it, get that. So I use Snapchat, WhatsApp quite a lot to send pictures to either like my mum or friends and things just for them to kind of say…

SL: To help you justify it.

FINT1: Yeah, just for them to say oh no that's nice or no that's not too expensive. Definitely, I use it for all sorts of kinds of products.

SL: So what we'll do now I just need to check, I've typed up your interview got lots of interesting data. So I have just got a few things I wanted to check. So when we mapped out your journey, remember we had the cards with all the stages?

FINT1: Yeah.

SL: So I just wrote it all down here. So this was your pastel coat journey so when I asked you on your typical journey you said yeah, then later on you said well actually I would do my identification and then I would just go straght to a mobile app. Whereas here you were going into the store and I just mapped out that typical journey and I wanted to make sure that was accurate.

FINT1: Yeah.

SL: So if you think of your most common journeys would you still start off with your identification stage?

FINT1: Yeah definitely.

SL: So social media, what devices would you use for your social media? Is it the same as before?

FINT1: So yeah my iPhone and Laptop.

SL: Would you use one more than others? Would smartphone be more important? What would your first preference be?

FINT1: Em probably laptop.

SL: And them smartphone.

FINT1: Yeah.

SL: And then apps would that be right?

FINT1: Yeah.

SL: And then you've got a couple of stages here for research so would that be right?

FINT1: Yeah.

SL: So the next phase for your stuff. And then mobile app I take it that would be a smartphone?

FINT1: Yep.

SL: And then you went to store. And then you had more research again, you had magazines would you still do that on a typical journey or was that more so for the coat.

FINT1: No, more for when I was looking for something in particular and I was looking for exactly.

SL: Ok and then once you've done your mobile app and then you've went to the store would you have the purchase stage would that be the same again? Would you do that?

FINT1: Yeah.

SL: And then you would purchase it on the…website?

FINT1: Yep.

SL: And what device would you use?

FINT1: Laptop.

SL: And with your after-purchase you've got your social media, would that be your phone?

FINT1: Yep.

SL: You said you use Snapchat. What else do you use?

FINT1: Snapchat, WhatsApp, Instagram.

SL: So just to summarise, I just want to make this as accurate as I can be. So your pastel coat you had identification, then research a few times, then purchase then after purchase. And then you've got your stages are repeated again.

FINT1: Yep.

SL: You've got identification and research, but then straight to mobile app, made your purchase online and then social media.

FINT1: Yep.

Follow-Up Interview 2

SL: See this stage here, I think you Whatsapp'd was it your sister?
FINT2: Yeah, yeah I sent it.
SL: So see that stage that you're using social media what would you call it?
FINT2: Yeah, it's almost like a debrief in a way, it's like sharing.
SL: Because if you are sharing, why would you like do that?
FINT2: It's almost like confirmation isn't it, in a way that you've got the right… it's extra confirmation that you've done the right thing and made the right decision.
SL: So would you give it that name, confirmation?
FINT2: Yeah I'd say confirmation, yeah.
SL: And the next thing was, we talked about that journey for your ball dress. Would you say that's still quite a typical journey for you?
FINT2: I would say it was more detailed than usual, because it was an expensive item and I wanted to make sure that I had got the right thing. But it would follow a similar process normally.
SL: A similar process.
FINT2: But maybe not many of these clicking back and forth.
SL: What I'll do is I'll go through each of the stages and map your typical one.
FINT2: Uh huh.
SL: So would you still have stage one inspiration and style information?
FINT2: Yep.
SL: At that stage would you still use women's magazines?
FINT2: Eh, no I don't think so.
SL: So what would you use instead?
FINT2: It would be more like features on the site so if they have like on the site, something like new in dresses I would go on that offer to look at what trends they have got going on.
SL: Ok and what about do you use any retailer magazines like the ASOS mag?
FINT2: No. I don't think so.
SL: So what sort of retailers would you visit there?
FINT2: Topshop, Zara, Missguided.
SL: So that would be inspiration/style information. Then on your original journey you had comparison, would you still do that again?
FINT2: Yeah normally I would across mainly those three websites is all I'd say because sometimes Missguided would do cheaper things than Topshop but be similar, so I'd wanna check.
SL: Would you still use online websites there? Would that be your normal process?
FINT2: Yeah.
SL: And you'd still be on your laptop?
FINT2: Yep.
SL: Ok, and then on this original journey you had inspiration and style information is that?
FINT2: No I would normally miss out that stage yeah.
SL: And then you went back to comparison?
FINT2: I wouldn't no. It just short, I don't flick between it anymore.
SL: Because you said you go through it quite logically.
FINT2: Yeah.
SL: And then you had your practical action stage and you would go to the store.
FINT2: Yeah.
SL: So that is still the same.
FINT2: Mmhmm.
SL: And would you still do a bit of confirmation?
FINT2: Yes I think so yeah because you want to share what you have bought with other people.
SL: So you would do Whatsapp, is there anything else you would want to do?
FINT2: I would tweet sometimes.
SL: So that would be your typical journey.
FINT2: Mmhmm.
SL: And you would use again all of the devices again?
FINT2: Yes, definitely.
SL: For the shoes journey what I was going to say there was can you tell me a little bit about why you shared your purchase on Twitter?
FINT2: Yeah. It's a little bit of confirmation, just to be like to my followers look what I have bought, I am really proud of it kind of thing. But then it would also be to try and interact with the brand and get something back from them maybe.
SL: So what would you want back from them?

FINT2: It makes you feel like you've been noticed. It makes you feel a bit more excited and you feel like a valued customer.

SL: And why would you want to be noticed or feel like a valued customer.

FINT2: I think you then feel like a bit more included in the brand experience don't you think? It kind of adds to your overall shopping journey.

SL: Em, the other question I wanted to ask was how does the fact that you are interacting with all these channels how does that affect your view of the brand.

FINT2: Em I would say it definetly gives a stronger overall experience and you feel like you are more immersed in the brand because you are constantly getting messages from them on a lot of channels. So that's why its important that it's consistent because if it's not it can become really confusing and can really isolate you as a consumer like you don't want to be a part of something that isn't quite clear.

SL: So what I did notice was, in your posts you don't talk about any stages in your journey you talked about overall.

FINT2: Yeah.

SL: So although you said in your original interview you said your do your journey quite rigidly, when you recount a journey you don't mention stages. Does that mean that you just don't, you're not just not consciously thinking of the stages?

FINT2: Yep. I think when I break it down like that it's different and I can see how logical I am but at the same time when you are buying a product it is not at the forefront of your mind all the stages you go through. It's kind of something that's set that you don't need to think about.

SL: So is it like more of like an overall thing, that you have got this massive goal.

FINT2: Yeah, it's not conscious what I'm doing. But when I break it down I can see that, I can definitely say that I always follow that pattern.

SL: And also the fact your mentioned that like some of your favourite retailers like Zara and Topshop, they are omnichannel retailers. Does that make them more prominent in your mind over other retailers because they've got this consistent…

FINT2: This consistency yeah. I think like as well I was saying about the reason why they're my favourite retailers because you build up trust with them as well. You build up a relationship because you're interacting with them over a lot of channels.

SL: In terms of thinking of returns, I think you mentioned it once – you didn't return anything but you just mentioned it - is that the biggest problem with omnichannel shopping journeys?

FINT2: Yeah and not being able to see the product clearly that's why I'd always go into the store because. Em because as well, I guess if you look at things like on an app and stuff it can be quite difficult to clearly see the product when you're on a mobile or something. Like even when you're online it's difficult to see. I mean the only tool that helps it is the catwalk tool to see how it moves on a person. But apart from that I find it really difficult to get to grips with.

SL: Because you want to see things in store.

FINT2: Like that dress that I tried on it looks amazing on the model, but when you put it on it's a horrible fit.

SL: Now you talked about a consistent brand experience, but what specifically do you mean? What should be consistent? What particular things?

FINT2: The messages it's sending in forms of like advertising and offers, I'd say the kind of product it shows because it does get kind of frustrating if the app shows one thing, online shows something else and you go in store and you can't find that item. It can be quite frustrating and it makes the search journey harder doesn't it.

SL: Is there anything else? Although we talk about brand – but what do you specifically see as the brand, is it the logo?

FINT2: The look. So like on a website there's stuff like the logo, the fonts, the homepage background, the colours they use. It all comes together to create a brand image doesn't it. You want that same logo, the colours, the images I know Zara are quite photography based, so their look books are quite sharp and they're all about the picture and stuff. And you want that to be consistent across everything.

SL: And then if you go into store, what sort of brand things do you want to be consistent?

FINT2: Em stuff like the shopfront, the visual merchandising, the pictures of the models in the store.

SL: What about social media?

FINT2: Social media, I guess it's more when you are interacting with the brand so things like when they tweet. You want to make sure that they are keeping up with the brand image and that the things they say or the models they post about like Kate Moss for Topshop for example.

SL: What about colours, logos?

FINT2: Yeah.

SL: Anything else that you want to see that is a specific thing that you would want to see as consistent?

FINT2: I guess like style features, so like a blogger edit for example to have – this is how bloggers where it. You'd want that on the blog and the social media, like online on the actual store online and then in store, then you have instore magazines and stuff you kind of wanna see that consistency.
SL: A bit of continuity?
FINT2: Yeah.
SL: Ok, all done.

Follow-Up Interview 3

SL: Em so thank you for coming I just want to go through some questions about your blogs. To pick up on a few things you talked about. Em one thing you did mention was about constantly engaging with other channels, so do you feel you would miss out if you didn't constantly keep up to date with these channels?

FINT3: Yeah, kind of, like miss out in a way that, so when you keep up to date it takes less research on the website. So like if you're just browsing on instagram you see lots of things and you kinda know what's on the website. If you don't, you'll go on the website like clueless you'll have to scan through everything.

SL: Ok and why do you view a brand as being more, trustworthy if they operate across lots of channels? I was really interested in that.

FINT3: I'm not too sure, when I wrote that I was like ooh. I think…

SL: I really want to explore why you think that way.

FINT3: Yeah. I think just because you've got more kind of points of contact so if something kinda goes wrong, say with ASOS you can go on their Twitter and say like oh I've not got my parcel yet. Like Missguided they have loads of channels but for me, I only use their web channel so.

SL: So why do you view a brand as being more trustworthy if they operate across lots of channels? What about that makes it more trustworthy.

FINT3: I think it shows that they care about the customer as well because they're thinking of all the things they do and show you as well. So that builds my trust and just like seeing them everyday.

SL: So just like seeing them everyday…

FINT3: I just feel closer to them.

SL: In what way do you feel closer to them?

FINT3: Like I said a bit like, not like your friends, but when you see them like constantly, the brands like become like part of you. So like when you see Topshop you're like oh yeah I am kind of Topshop.

SL: So is it almost like humanising the brand a little bit?

FINT3: Yeah.

SL: Is that a good way to describe it.

FINT3: Yeah, definitely.

SL: Now you mentioned the word consistent quite often. When you say consistent or consistency, what do you mean by that?

FINT3: Just kind of keeping up the same. The same design on each channel. Like even just like the same font throughout things.

SL: What other elements do you think need to be consistent? So you mentioned like fonts, is there anything else across all these different channels?

FINT3: So like Boohoo I think that their Instagram isn't consistent with their website so it just kind of, sometimes when they use like filters and like some filters are, sounds silly but kind of like boho and stuff. I don't think Boohoo is very boho more kind of statement. So I think when they use a filter that kind of contrasts it just doesn't feel like right.

SL: It doesn't feel like it's visually right. And any other elements that need to be consistent, if you want to look at these important elements or things? So if you go from a website to social media or from the website to the store what things are you looking at to see if they are the same.

FINT3: Like Topshop they do their like promotional kind of campaigns where they've got the same like on the emails and the store. So when you kind of go to the store you subsconsciously remember oh that email and go check out the jeans. So that definitely helps like link.

SL: Anything else?

FINT3: That's all I can think of now.

SL: You also mentioned that if you have a good experience online you will remember this when you are out and about shopping. So do you transfer experiences from one channel to another, do you take feelings and experiences with you?

FINT3: Yeah definitely because em, like I used to shop in H&M loads like five years ago but now I've like started doing shopping online more and more. Like I'll go on the H&M website and just 'cause it's just rubbish and you can't find anything you just feel like… Probably 'cause I don't know what's instore either cause on the website I'm just a bit lost I don't want to really go in the store and it's like a mission to go through everthing. Whereas like Topshop I get constant emails and I know whats there so that will make me feel like better about going to Topshop and just kind of be like yeah I know that, I know that yeah. And like yeah.

SL: Obviously we talked about omnichannel how does your omnichannel activity, so those interactions with brands, being engaged with the brand, being involved. How does that affect how you view a brand? If you're interacting across all these channels and keeping up to date with them everyday, how does that make you view the brand?

FINT3: Like as a better brand. I view Topshop as a better brand than H&M cause I have all the interactions and I don't know why.

SL: So I'll repeat the question. How does your omnichannel activity so engaging with all these channels, and keeping engaged with them, how does that make you view the brand?

FINT3: Yeah just cause I am so engaged with it, like we said humanise it, it's more like my friend than H&M cause when I get emails and see ooh what's going on in Topshop. People like Boohoo if I see them on Instagram I just kind of scroll past them because I don't get emails from them. I don't have like a strong relationship with them.

SL: And you said with Topshop you see the brand as better, why do you see it as better with all the interactions?

FINT3: I think it's cause I can interact on loads of levels. So I've said that's more, like they think about their customer more, like they want to get you into the brand a bit more. It seems like they want to be friends with you more. Whereas H&M's like oh you can come if you like, but we don't care.

SL: Continuing on the theme of Topshop you mentioned that Topshop is a very holistic brand experience, what did you mean by that?

FINT3: Just cause all their channels really link well together. So when I get an email from them it's got like the same kind of logo, like I said all the promotional stuff is all there. So like even if you don't read and you're just on a picture you know it's like Topshop. So it kind of brings it all together, like you're on their Instagram and I think they use their filters well and like relate it to the brand.

SL: And you mentioned in your blog as well that channels complemented each other can you tell me a bit about that?

FINT3: So I can't remember who does it, I think it's American Apparel but on their Instagram, River Island I think they do it, they put the product codes in a link so you can click on it and go to the website and it will link to the website which is really good. So it's like speedy shopping.

SL: So by using the product codes and sharing the information. Anything else, about you say that channels complement each other, is there anything else they do?

FINT3: Yeah on emails as well they've got the link to get you in.

SL: Is that just another link to the product or?

FINT3: What's the question again, how they complement each other?

SL: Yeah, you say the channels complement each other so can you tell me more about that?

FINT3: I don't think I can sorry.

SL: Ok. Now we obviously talked a little bit about if you have a good experience how things transfer over but on one of your blogs you say you'll forget about a bad experience with Boohoos products if they were poor fit. Can you just tell me about that because you said before if it's a good experience you will take that with you when you go shopping but if it's a bad experience you will forget about it.

FINT3: Yeah. The problem with Boohoo is cause it's like cheaper you kinda know it won't be as good. So I always keep trusting them just hoping that one product will fit me. But I keep having like bad experiences. But I think it's like the price that kind of…

SL: That makes it ok.

FINT3: So I'm like ok I can return it as well. So it's like ok I'll try again and just kind of keep trying to forgive them but I should just give up but I'm too price aware.

SL: Ok so would you say the transfer of experiences whether it's good or bad, is that dependent upon the price?

FINT3: Yeah. I think so. Like if I was shopping at Net-a-Porter or something and I found something that just didn't fit me and was of horrible quality I don't think I'd go back. Yeah, it feels like when you're giving them all your money you kind of want something good in return. Whereas if it's a tenner to Boohoo, you're like ok fair enough.

SL: And then with like Topshop you said em, what was it you said, I think with Topshop or another retailer you mentioned if you have a good experience online you'll remember this when you are out shopping. So is that because it is a certain level of brand, because it was a good quality brand and you had a good quality experience or does it matter with price if you take that good experience with you to the store?

FINT3: I think it doesn't really matter on price cause …isn't your brain kind of wired to remember… oh it remembers bad things more.

SL: So that's what I'm saying since you'll drop the bad experience with Boohoo because of price but if it's a good experience that you've had online and you go to a store, you'll remember that?

FINT3: I do feel that if I go to Topshop and had a bad experience I would remember it more but probably my good experiences if it was with a cheaper website it would be just yeah, this is the product.

SL: If you had a good experience on the Topshop website, how would that affect you in the store?

FINT3: I think it would make me definitely want to go there more, 'cause I'd be like oh yeah, remember that time I got a really nice pair of jeans. That's the thing like I feel with one good product it kind of leads you to go there more 'cause then you're like oh yeah I can get a top for like the same quality, it'll fit so nicely.

SL: You also mentioned that your netbook holds your concentration better, why is that?

FINT3: Yeah, compared to my phone 'cause on my phone like I am usually on it when I am like watching tv like in the breaks and things. Like if I get a notification while I am on my phone shopping I will just click on that without thinking and forget that I've got a tab open like on Topshop or something and then just lock

my phone sometimes, put it down and I'm like ok I need to just watch tele. Whereas if I'm like on my laptop I don't know it's harder to get distracted from the page and I'm generally on it when I have like nothing to do and I'm just online shopping.

SL: So that's like with a phone you are more multi-tasking.

FINT3: Yeah.

SL: Whereas with the laptop you are more like focused.

FINT3: Focused, yeah. I got my netbook about two years ago before tablets came out em and now everyone just got tablets and you know you can like buy the keyboard as well to put on it. So it basically makes it into a netbook but it's kind of more portable as well, which is good

Follow-Up Interview 4

SL: So I've got yours here, now on there do you remember we talked about, you had a, I think you were buying some shoes, you were looking for some shoes.

FINT4: Yep.

SL: Then you had a bit of a bulk buy at Topshop and then you had your typical journey. So on the typical journey you said you've got these stages like inspiration there, then you said you've got your first research stage. So what I want to do, I just want to check, with the multiple items do you want to give those stages a name – are they similar to them.

FINT4: I'm just trying to think?

SL: So stage one when you're out buying a bulk load of stuff at Topshop what would you call that? Would it still be inspiration again or…?

FINT4: Probably yeah if i'm going to buy loads of stuff it's probably because I've seen outfits on bloggers or something like that or whole outfits.

SL: Ok, so I think you went on the mobile app for Topshop.

FINT4: Yep.

SL: And then you went over to the online website.

FINT4: That's what I would normally do.

SL: Would that be inspiration again or…?

FINT4: It depends if I know that I have seen something specific then it's probably not inspiration it's probably more like starting to research, the first stage.

SL: So the first stage research.

FINT4: And then I just tend to just like add loads of things from baskets like hundreds of pounds worth of stuff and kind of like narrow that down a bit.

SL: And then you said you went on to social media when you were doing that bulk buy, looking at lots of different items. So what would you call that stage? They don't need to be the same, it's just from what you can remember.

FINT4: Social media is really about looking for inspiration especially on Instagram.

SL: And then I think with Topshop you phoned up the contact centre.

FINT4: Yeah cause I was waiting ages for my refund because they had not confirmed that they had got the package back.

SL: So what would you call that stage?

FINT4: Enquiries. Yeah because I had already emailed them, they hadn't responded em it was just taking ages so. 'Cause I try and avoid calling if possible cause obviously it's quite expensive.

SL: Yeah, and then if you think back to your shoes, so again you had the online website – what stage would you call that one?

FINT4: Em that was researching, yeah.

SL: And then you went to… store.

FINT4: Zara.

SL: And had a look in Zara.

FINT4: em yeah that was mainly because I had seen them online and wanted try them on before buying them online.

SL: And what stage?

FINT4: 'Cause it is still kind of research because I just want to see how they look on before buying them.

SL: And then you went to website and that's where you journey ended?

FINT4: I bought them yeah.

SL: So what would you call that stage?

FINT4: Purchase. Yeah, cause if they have them online I'd rather buy them online 'cause then I know they haven't been in the store and tried on lots of times.

SL: So that's that bit covered obviously. So, are there any changes you want to make there?

FINT4: No, I think that's everything correct yeah.

SL: Cool. So a couple of questions about the blog and some of your entries there, em that I just came up with as well, its just from some of the things that have been posted so I'll just kind of ask them. So first question is… how standardised is your brand experience em, across different channels of the same fashion retailer?

FINT4: Like my shopping journey?

SL: Yeah. Whatever you think that means so, how standardised is your brand experience?

FINT4: Em, I'd say fairly standardised. I always do the same kind of processes, I always kind of like research and then if I've seen something that I like then try to find it online and then looking around. Seeing kind of like which store's got the best thing that I want and then maybe looking in store sometimes, if not just buying it online.

SL: And you mentioned about consistency there can you just tell me a wee bit about that?

FINT4: Em, so like I probably expect brand consistency throughout everywhere. Like if I see something in store obviously I expect it to be online and if it's not then it's a bit annoying 'cause it's kind of like you've got to go back in store.

SL: And what sort of consistency specifically?

FINT4: Em, just with products mainly.

SL: So what sort of thing? Is it like the range of products?

FINT4: Yeah. If I've seen something in there or say if they've got like a marketing campaign of something online. Like Topshop especially, you click on it and then like that product's not there; the one that they're advertising, that's really annoying.

SL: And anything else about consistency?

FINT4: Em, pricing as well I guess. You don't want to really find, like Zara they do that special pricing online and it's a bit annoying if you've bought something in store for full price and then they do that special price online. So I guess you kind of expect there to be consistency for that.

SL: What about the different look and feel between the different channels and brand.

FINT4: Em, yeah I think it's important for the app and the website but with in store like not so much that really wouldn't deter me from buying.

SL: So if it wouldn't deter you from buying what sort of effect does it have on you? So if the brand's really consistent what does that do for you.

FINT4: I think it [consistent brand] just makes you feel like em positive in your purchasing choices I guess.

SL: And why do you feel positive?

FINT4: Em, I don't really know.

SL: If it wasn't consistent or really inconsistent what would that do?

FINT4: I guess that would make you question like what they're trying to do, like who they're targeting or what they're trying to sell.

SL: What about your trust and loyalty would that be affected?

FINT4: Em like I said before because I am so loyal to like Topshop and Zara. For me that doesn't really matter with those kind of brands because I already trust them, I know what they are. But if it was a new brand, for example, if a website was completely different to the app then it's a bit confusing.

SL: My next question is, how is your information integrated across all the different shopping channels? So again, all the different shopping channels of the same retailer, how is your information – is it similar in each channel? Do you keep having to sign into things? Are you able to see the same information like your basket?

FINT4: Yeah, so for me if I save something to a basked I'd like to have it still there. So Zara if you put something in your basket it just disappears, whereas Topshop you can now save I think it's not save for later like ASOS but you can see what you have recently viewed and things like that.

SL: On any device?

FINT4: Yeah. So ASOS I like to have my saved items on my phone and the laptop. Especially if I've seen something like on my phone on the bus and then I save it then obviously I want it on the computer when I get home.

SL: Do you find that your information is transferred across channels?

FINT4: Usually yeah.

SL: Any retailer that doesn't do it so well.

FINT4: I can't think of any off the top of my head, any one's I can think of any off the top of my head. All the ones I use are pretty good 'cause they normally keep you logged in so you don't have to log in.

SL: And is that helpful?

FINT4: Yeah, it's really annoying on phone putting in your email address and password all the time. Like it is fine to do once, but I think you should be able to save it and have it there for every-time.

SL: Ok and obviously when we recapped on your shopper journey about your returns process, I think that was with the Topshop items. How do you find within these kind of omnichannel experiences?

FINT4: Normally fine, like ASOS I normally don't have problems with, especially with them because there are so many ways to return like their em collect plus take it to the store. Zara I find really annoying cause you have to wait in for someone to come and collect your delivery. Em Topshop, usually fine it's just this one time I had a problem.

SL: And see when you do have a problem how do you prefer to interact with Topshop?

FINT4: Em, it would probably, if it was a really big problem and I was really annoyed I would probably address it on Twitter, because you know they're always going to respond. Em, if it's just a general enquiry I do it via email or their like customer contact thing on the website and then phone.

SL: And do you prefer to shop with a retailer that has a physical store as well as other channels or do you prefer the online only retailers like Missguided or…

FINT4: Em, I'd say it is a bit of both because I do really enjoy shopping on ASOS and Missguided. Like for a longtime I would just buy from ASOS. Em but it's quite nice to just go and have a look in Topshop sometimes because I think you see a lot more of the product if its out whereas if you are online you're kind of like confined to one category, like if you are searching for dresses you only see dresses, whereas if you are in the shop you get it with the shoes and the bags and everything together.

SL: That's quite interesting that you are restrained more in one channel.

FINT4: I kind of find for inspiration because in the shop obviously you can see things on mannequins and ways that you probably wouldn't style things. Whereas if you're looking online you don't really get that.

SL: How do you a fashion retail brand as a result of interacting with a brand across so many channels? Like how do you view a fashion retailer if you're engaging in their website, going on their Twitter, going on maybe like a blog and stuff like that. How does that make you view the brand of that retailer?

FINT4: Em I think I would be more loyal to a brand like Topshop who is, does offer lots of different channels. So you've got Tumblr, the blog and Twitter and everything and they're really consistent across everything so I guess that would kind of enhance my loyalty towards them.

SL: How does it affect your relationship with the brand? So you said you were more loyal because of these lots of different channels. If they don't have lots of these different channels, does that have a detrimental effect?

FINT4: Not really detrimental, but I would be inclined to buy with someone with all of those channels because you can kind of get inspired from different angles. Like on Facebook or Twitter if they're posting outfits of the day or whatever em and then on like the Tumblr once where they have street style it would make me want to buy more if I had seen different product on different people.

SL: And just in general. Because of your generation, you have grown up around all this technology do you feel if you don't engage with these channels are you missing out if you don't check Topshop's new in everyday?

FINT4: Em, yeah. Especially in Zara because obviously their products just sell out and that's it. I mean I wouldn't say everyday, but I do like to check once a week. It depends how much time I have obviously like now I have lots of time so I check every day.

SL: That's all the questions.

Follow-Up Interview 5

SL: So I've got a few questions, just from some things you posted in your blog. So one thing that you said was you talked about being consistent between different channels, what elements make up the consistency? What were the particular things that need to be consistent?

FINT5: Em it was like the colour schemes, so like the header. Em so like the River Island one's green and it's green on their website so that sort of shows consistency there. And also they often have like a big feature on their main page. Em, like River Island do it and I know Topshop do it. I think that if they've got that on the main feature of their app as well obviously shows that they're in sync and up to date because if one was, say like a couple of weeks like oh have they got all their products on the app, if that's not up to date with the website. And obviously its just like the aesthetics, like the font and the products as well. I ordered em, did I put this in my blog as well? Hmm, I don't think so. I ordered a handbag off of ASOS, off the app and they only had it in nude and black.

SL: Oh and there was the lilac one?

FINT5: I think I did and there was lilac on the website and I was so angry. I needed it for this Friday but to be fair my shoes are like nude anyway so it's ok. But still, that's annoying.

SL: Ok. Em, also another thing that came up was being more involved with a retailer. Em the more involved you are how does that make you view them or how you perceive them?

FINT5: Em, I think like obviously the more involved, as in like I feel more involved when I like Instagram them and tag them and things like that.

SL: So when you do that how does that make you view the retailer?

FINT5: It's sort of em, obviously I don't really know how to describe it. It makes me like respect them more. If they respond, well it's not very often that they do, but because they respond to like top bloggers and things like that. Then if they respond that obviously makes you feel amazing but even still I am really happy with the products they have given me. So I feel like I should tag where I have got the product from as like a thank you to them and sort of advertise for them almost.

SL: To promote them?

FINT5: Yeah, because I am happy about that brand.

SL: And do you view them in a better or worse light because you are so involved with them?

FINT5: I'd say definitely better. Em definitely in a better light because you just feel more like connected with the brand whereas… and you can only do that really through channels like the app, Instagram and social media because like obviously you go into the store, you're just a customer. Whereas on the internet you can be a lot more involved than when you're just in the store.

SL: Another question was, em you've mentioned offers quite a lot as have some of the students as well. Is that a key part of an omni journey or is just because you are a student or…?

FINT5: Do you know what I've realised that I very rarely buy a product that's full price anymore. Because I know that most retailers – with unidays the app you can get like ten percent off. Recently, a lot of them have been doing 20 percent off, tying in with the student loan coming in which can be dangerous. I think that just because I know there are always offers like free delivery, free returns, things like that sort of entice me to buy it but yeah it is very rare now that I buy a full price product.

SL: So is that quite a normal part of your journey now?

FINT5: Yeah, I'm always on the look out for… I always get email updates and things like that but I'm always on the lookout. Like if I see something, like a jumpsuit, em that I saw at first and then New Look had twenty percent off and I thought like oh ok.

SL: So does it almost change the direction of your shop a bit, if an offer comes into play?

FINT5: Yeah, because I liked the jumpsuit that I bought on Sunday but I was like I can live without that but with like 20 percent off that is like four or five pound and I was like well that's not so bad and that that takes it under 20 pound and for a student that's amazing. So

SL: You said that some of the key trends were featured on River Island's mannequins, the window display, the website and mobile apps. Em obviously again is that a bit about consistency?

FINT5: Yeah.

SL: Because they've done that how does that make you feel about River Island?

FINT5: It sort of like makes me feel like they really know like what the trends are, so that's obviously quite reassuring. And it also like it shows that they have a stronger brand identity, I think I've mentioned brand identity across like a few and really know who their target market are and it's just a lot more reassuring for the brand I think.

SL: And would you say with omnichannel, is brand really a key bit of that – of omnichannel shopping? Is it all about the brand really?

FINT5: Em, what do you mean?

SL: So if you think about omnichannel shopping so shopping with lots of different channels – is the key thing in that you are following a brand through it or is it more important about price or product quality?

FINT5: Yeah. I think they all sort of tie in I see shared quality with different types of brands em like I would say River Island is good quality whereas New Look is slightly less because New Look is cheaper.

SL: What I am trying to do is trying to define what omnichannel means, so that's like what you're saying with things linking to the brand are you following a brand through these different channels or are you just kind of going on to a channel and seeing what pops up?

FINT5: I would like follow a brand through like all the different channels like an app and then I use the app for like browsing. I often use my laptop more to like buy things, if it's accessible.

SL: Cool. You said that you liked how the store groups products into ranges and on the website it's more kind of divided by product type. Would you like to see a website or channel that has a functional search filter by product type but then if you click on it you can see it in a more inspirational style where things are grouped together and so you can switch dependent upon your mood.

FINT5: Yeah. I think that would be, I think they do, do some of those pages but say the trend is florals for examples you click view the trend, click florals but then it's just the products again, they're not paired and they are not like going into the store and seeing it on mannequins it's sort of like; you put together an outfit I am more inclined to buy the whole outifit when I see it put actually together, rather than individual because then you have got to put the outfit together yourself.

SL: If you could get a whole outfit on one of these more remote channels would you be more likely to.

FINT5: Yeah. I think Next do that, Next do do that because they have their online directory and they have their products.

SL: Em, you mentioned you love shopping with different channels but obviously if you don't get the 3G signal in store then that kind of goes out the window, is that important for you in your shopping?

FINT5: Yeah, well I think it is because especially with say like the Unidays offer that River Island just had. They were like, oh can we see you use Unidays and I went to the till and I was like oh it won't work and they said I can see your student card that's fine. I don't often, it's not very often I do like use my phone in store more like on the bus on the way home.

SL: You said that you like sharing some of your posts on Instagram, you get likes. If you don't get the likes, do you just feel the same as you did originally about the product, is it only if you get more appreciation that you feel even better.

FINT5: It wouldn't have lower my…I wouldn't have bought it if I wasn't sure about it.

SL: So would it enhance?

FINT5: It would only enhance it wouldn't lower it if I didn't get the likes.

SL: Do you make more repeat purchases from those retailers that you interact with across lots of channels.

FINT5: I would say yes definitely, like there's a few retailers that I like really stick to.

SL: Are they ones in your head where you have a set list?

FINT5: Yeah, it's like River Island, Ark. ASOS at the moment but I think that's because I have been getting emails from them and… I don't know. I went into town the other day and didn't see anything I liked so I thought I'll try ASOS and they had the shoes and the bag it was just there, it was so much easier.

SL: So with that set list in your head, are you more likely to remember the ones that you are shopping with across lots of different channels? Are those ones more likely to be in your head because you have all these interactions with them?

FINT5: I would say so because it's a lot more so of like there. You go to your phone the apps are there, you go to your laptop it's on my favourites and like Instagram they are constantly posting because I have chosen to follow them. H&M I often forget about because I don't like their website and I just don't feel like that they are that good with the whole omnichannel. And if someone said what is your favourite retailer I wouldn't say H&M 'cause I forget about it.

SL: And say with those favourite retailers when you are interacting with them across these channels do they almost become like more human kind of?

FINT5: Yeah it's kind of weird because if you follow their PR its just more of an insight into the brand it makes it almost like exclusive and makes you feel a bit more like involved, like I said earlier.

SL: So is it a more personal relationship?

FINT5: Definitely I would say it is, whereas like I will use H&M as an example again. It's just go in H&M to buy clothes, whereas with River Island I am interested in what they are doing behind the scenes and Ark as well.

SL: And you talked about exclusivity being important to you, why is that?

FINT5: It sort of makes you feel like… em...

SL: I think you just said about just things being more exclusive just in general.

FINT5: Perhaps like I just mentioned before like seeing behind the scenes of their offices and photoshoots behind the scenes it makes it seem a little bit more like when you have seen that photoshoot printed you know how they did that or I saw a photo of them styling that model. It just makes it a little bit more, makes you feel more involved like we said and more personally involved.

SL: You talked about River Island being in sync across their channels, what do you specifically mean by 'in sync'?

FINT5: Again like the consistency, always having the same products. Also I've noticed with the River Island website that they have em like all their products are in exactly the same order to what they are on the internet. I don't spend much time on there honest. I did pick it up though because I have been thinking

about it and that sort of shows that they are really like in sync. I tried the whole wish list thing , like trying to like it on my phone and looking at it online and I think it was that website that hasn't got on one or the other. Like New Look didn't have it on one or the other so that was a bit. Obviously that would be really great if they were. But they are in sync in terms of like if you log into your account all their details are there. Like payment details and things like that.

SL: And is that a good thing?

FINT5: Yeah.

SL: If a brand is in sync does that increase your trust for the brand.

FINT5: Yeah I'd say it would. Em, I am trying to think why…Like with the products and things like that I just and going back to the whole ASOS thing and not having the other handbag that's on their app, I don't know…

SL: How do you view ASOS as a result of that?

FINT5: It's just I don't know I don't think it changes my opinion. But eh I forgot what I was going to say.

SL: In terms of your trust the brand as a result of them more as a result of them being in sync and consistent? Do you trust them more would you say?

FINT5: Yeah, em.

SL: If it is consistent across each of the channels.

FINT5: Yeah I think it just seems more reliable as a more reliable source of like way of shopping and with your details and things like that.

SL: And you said you like to Whatsapp your friends is it just to get approval or?

FINT5: Yeah I find it sometimes when I'm on my own when I'm shopping and I think I see something and oh I'm not sure or I see something. I don't like verging away from clothes that don't represent me, like I don't like wearing ridiculously fashionable clothes. I just buy clothes that I like. So like I get scared if I see a pair of shoes and they are really on trend and I think oh are they me?

SL: So is it more just with your friend what did you Whatsapp her for?

FINT5: Em, I just took the photo and said what do you think about these and she said love them. So I was like get them. She's one of my friends who I trust with like everything.

SL: See like deliveries and returns, we've talked about brands being really important in omnichannel, is delivery and returns is that a real key issue within an omnichannel journey.

FINT5: It is yeah. You've always got to consider it when you order online off or off the app because I there are the chances if you order it online you are going to have to take it back and em. I mean that Ark do collect plus where it's free, you print of the label and drop it off that's quite easy but like it puts me off if its not free returns and you have to find a post office and wrap it up again and that's just annoying especially if you have paid like £5 for postage as well.

SL: So what I've got here is I just mapped out some of the channels you were using remember when we laid out all the cards out. So you've got your typical journey. So you had inspiration, a bit more inspiration again with the emails and the discounts. Actually would you have called that stage where you get a discount code inspiration or something else.

FINT5: It's more of sort of like a prompt.

SL: Would you call that the name for the stage or something else?

FINT5: I feel like it needs a bit more… it's like an..

SL: Like an incentive?

FINT5: Yeah that's what I am looking for.

SL: So your dress journey, remember you got your daisy print dress your second one. I just need to map the stage names for that journey, just like I did for your typical journey. So for stage one was that the same, was that inspiration?

FINT5: Yeah it was on Instagram that I saw it, the trend.

SL: And was that on your phone when you did that?

FINT5: Yeah.

SL: And then stage two you went on the website what would you call that stage.

FINT5: That was the actual purchasing of it.

SL: Were you on your laptop again?

FINT5: Yeah that was laptop.

SL: Did you have any incentives there?

FINT5: I think I probably did actually, there's always ten percent off Unidays anyway, so that was probably it. I think the first one I had more of an incentive like 20 percent but that one I really liked and I just got ten percent but it was free delivery with Ark, to store anyway.

SL: So did you get the ten percent discount from unidays?

FINT5: [Nods].

SL: So that was an incentive and were you on your laptop or your phone?

FINT5: Laptop.

SL: And then stage three was your purchase yeah?

FINT5: Yeah.

SL: Then you went into the store and you looked at Ark, River Island, New Look and things. What do you want to call that stage?

FINT5: Em.

SL: Just looking on your original one, your typical journey you had inspiration, incentive, research and purchase then opinion.

FINT5: See it was more to collect it and to browse as well.

SL: What do you want to call that, just whatever you think – there is no right or wrong answer.

FINT5: Yeah, em, I dunno like collect and browse as its not very original.

SL: And then you went back on the online website, was that to do your return?

FINT5: I can't remember it was so long ago.

SL: So you had inspiration, incentive, you made a purchase, you collected it and did you go back to the store to return?

FINT5: Yeah because you can drop it off in the store.

SL: So stage four was return? Would you call that a stage name return?

FINT5: Yeah.

SL: And you went back to the store?

FINT5: Yeah, I didn't shop that day.

SL: And then you went on the website again was that to make another purchase?

FINT5: That was to purchase the second dress.

SL: And then was it collect again?

FINT5: Collect from store.

SL: Did you do anything afterwards with that one?

FINT5: Actually Ark had hashtag Ark selfie on Instagram and it was over the weekend and you had a chance to win £50. So em I like Instagrammed a photo of me wearing that dress. I didn't win but it was worth a try though but yeah that was.

SL: Did you do that on your phone.

FINT5: Yeah.

SL: Would you call that channel like your typical one, showcasing? Or would you want to call it anything else?

FINT5: I would say showcasing. 'Cause it was also showing other people my dress as well.

SL: Would you call it showcasing and something else because it was a competition?

FINT5: Yeah because it was a competition so showcasing and …

SL: That's fine. In your typical journey you've got inspiration, you've got incentive because you like your deals, research and purchase.

FINT5: Yep

SL: Then a bit more research and purchase but this time in store.

FINT5: Mmhmm.

SL: Then you have opinion seeking.

FINT5: Yep

SL: Additional research, then purchase, then showcasing. I remember your journey kept getting bigger.

FINT5: Yeah I remember we were like oh no I do that. That sounds like me.

SL: Right that's you all done.

Follow-Up Interview 6

SL: So we are just doing the follow up interview. So I just had a couple of questions just from some of the things that you posted. So I just wanted to ask you how does being involved with retailer across lots of different channels affect you? They're just general questions.

FINT6: I guess it affects me more because it's just keeping in touch with them and I think if I have something in mind, if I then get an email which says there's an offer on that will make me then make the purchase. Em so I think it is just they make me aware of them.

SL: Cool em now you said something in your blogs saying about em if retailers have lots of channels there's a bigger chance of getting your purchase sort of thing. So why do retailers with lots of different channels have a bigger chance of getting a purchase from you than say retailers without those channels?

FINT6: I think it is 'cause I'm more aware of them and I think 'cause I am in this technology thing, like I'm always on my phone and stuff so it's an easy way of them to remind me of them. Whereas if a retailer doesn't have Instagram or Twitter or anything I am not really aware of them. But if, if they didn't have like a website at all I would think oh they are a bit 'fuddy duddy' and wouldn't really be bothered about them.

SL: Ok and do they have a massive chance of increasing your purchase, are you a lot more likely to purchase?

FINT6: I think when it's offers I am but I think also it is ones that I am loyal to like Topshop, ASOS. It's those really. But say if I got an email from Missguided I'd have a look but I wouldn't automatically think oh I know there is something I like because I am not really on there as often.

SL: See these retailers with lots of different channels are they more easy to remember?

FINT6: Yeah I think so.

SL: And why is that?

FINT6: 'Cause it is 'cause I'm on my phone all the time and everyday I am reminded of them even if I am not going shopping, or even if I am not going on the website I'm reminded of them.

SL: And see this thing about you're constantly engaging with them. Is that a feeling of if you don't constantly engage with them you're going to miss out on something? Is that a part of the thing.

FINT6: I guess, especially with brands like Topshop where it's very like in the 'Topshop gang' like it's sort of aspirational but not. It's like you want to be in the gang but it's not like a luxury or above you gang. It's a gang that you can get in. So I guess… I've lost the question.

SL: I mean is it about the need for approval and being scared of missing out on things. Are you are scared that you will look bad in front of your friends?

FINT6: Yeah 'cause I think especially doing fashion obviously you want to wear the newest things not like the things everyone is already wearing. By using the channels you can get the newest things. Whereas 'cause they can put new things online more easily than taking things into the store because obviously it's going to take a while to get there. Online through Instagram and stuff is like instant new things.

SL: And is it about getting approval for the choices that you make and what you wear eventually? Does that form part of it?

FINT6: I think sometimes it's about profile but that's less like the retailer but more like bloggers. Maybe I'd look for something I'd bought and try and see how to styled it and stuff but that would probably be post-purchase.

SL: And is that typical in journey remember we did the map of the stages of your journey?

FINT6: I wouldn't say that I do that very often.

SL: Just if you are struggling maybe?

FINT6: If i've just bought an item and I have no idea how to style it.

SL: Now obviously, in your, in some of your blog posts you mentioned offers is that quite a key part of an omnichannel journey for you? Like discounts, offers.

FINT6: Yeah, think so.

SL: Why is that?

FINT6: Because I don't have a lot of money being a student.

SL: Yep.

FINT6: And there always is offers on so I kind of think why buy something full price when I can buy it on offer.

SL: Would you always buy something through omnichannel if you were, would you do it without an offer or would you always do it with an offer?

FINT6: Em, no I wouldn't always have an offer. If I really like something I'm going to buy it anyway.

SL: Just buy it anyway.

FINT6: But if I know it's coming up to the start of the year I know there's going to be a big student discount on so I'd probably wait til that's on.

SL: When I asked a question on the post about how loyal you are you said that you're more loyal to brands that have a consistent image? Why is that? Why are you more loyal to brands that have a consistent image?

FINT6: I think it is the thing about being in the gang and I think if they are inconsistent they sort of lose their image and then you sort of lose what they're doing or what they're about. But if they are really consistent you know exactly what they are about.

SL: And when you say consistent image what do you mean by that? What particular elements need to be consistent?

FINT6: I don't really know.

SL: When you think maybe a brand's consistent what sort of things are they consistent with?

FINT6: Em I guess just the overall thing. With Net-a-Porter I know it's so recognisable to me because of the black logo-ing and the packaging and everythings is all consistent with that sort of branding element. But then with Topshop I think it's more so that sort of style and inspiration behind it. Like the girl behind it rather than like a logo.

SL: And the girl behind it, what do you mean by that?

FINT6: 'Cause I think there's sort of like a girl that is the Topshop girl and she is the girl you want to be. Because like the things on Topshop like the features and stuff are maybe stuff that the Topshop girl would like. And the Instagram accounts are maybe what the Topshop girl would like.

SL: So do you view the Topshop brand more as a person?

FINT6: Yeah I think I do. Cause it is like I said just then. The Net-a-Porter they say there is one but I don't really one I see the black packaging and stuff like that. But with Topshop girl or like the Topshop gang a few girls.

SL: That was really interesting. The next question is, when I talk about omnichannel information do you see the purpose of magazines as being aspirational even more so than the retail brand? You mentioned a post saying that you see magazines as more aspirational. Can you tell me a bit more about that?

Sky: I think em, 'cause I picked up a magazine from H&M.

SL: Was it their own, the retailer magazine.

FINT6: Yeah it was in the store and em I just think things look so much better in glossy magazines. 'Cause say if there was a shirt on the rack I wouldn't notice but if it was in the magazine or with a feature or something like that makes me look at it in a different way, like a aspirational way.

SL: Next question is, customer service is poorer online than in store with Topshop, can you tell me about that?

FINT6: What did I say sorry?

SL: You said customer service is poorer online than in store with Topshop.

FINT6: Oh that's a thing about the Topshop girl I think. In Topshop the staff are very like the Topshop girl like come to life. So I don't think you really get that interaction when you are just checking out online. Whereas when you check out at Topshop and they're talking about oh I've got this, I'll wear this with this, they're talking about styling it and stuff like that.

SL: And with other retailers not just Topshop do you see their service as poor online and better in store?

FINT6: Em, I think Topshop is one because they do interact with you and they are so like the brand but also I found that Zara their service is rubbish. But then I don't really think their online one is any better really.

SL: Ok and you said its annoying when you save things on your ASOS app wish list and then you go on the ASOS website and it's not on your wish list there. Did you say it was annoying?

FINT6: Yeah it is annoying.

SL: And why is it annoying?

FINT6: Because it's such like quick and instant on the phone and I wouldn't do it very often on my phone but say I'd do it for like five minutes and then I'd be annoyed if I'd then went on the internet and I'd be annoyed because I'd be like I have to go and find it again.

SL: And would it be better if they were synchronised?

FINT6: Yeah definitely.

SL: You have mentioned a bit about returning items would you say returns is the biggest issue with omnichannel shopping or is there anything else that's more important?

FINT6: Eh, I think so like for returns and delivery 'cause like Topshop I'd rather go in the store 'cause I can get there easily enough and that saves me what four pounds extra. It's just really saving money. And also I think free returns sort of reduces the risk of it. Whereas if I really really liked something, maybe I would get something where I am going to have to pay for returning it, but usually not.

SL: Ok, do you prefer or what do you prefer, like online retailers like ASOS or store based retailers like Topshop?

FINT6: Ah, that's a hard question I don't really know. That's sort of even.

SL: Even ok. You said Net-a-Porter now obviously that's more of a luxury retailer, is one of the only retailers that actively encourage you to use the other channels. Can you tell me a little bit more how they do that?

FINT6: So basically, cause they started off online, but they've only just got the magazine but they have the app here you can scan the pages. But a lot of magazines already had that but I think they sort of really actively make you do it because every page says scan the page, scan the page. They'll sort of talk about what you can get when you scan the page. So it makes me want to scan the page.

SL: And do you like things like that.

FINT6: I usually wouldn't. Elle's had it before and I just scanned it just to find out but I was just like and I oh yeah this is rubbish. But with Net-a-Porter I want to do it to find out more 'cause they're are so into the online.

SL: Can you just tell me what you do post-purchase in terms of the channels that you use? For example I know you had a jumper did you share that with anyone?

FINT6: Instagram maybe.

SL: The leopard print jumper?

FINT6: That wasn't me, was it?

SL: It was a kind of v-shaped leopard print jumper. I'll see if I can find it, give me two seconds.

FINT6: I bought a sweatshirt but it wasn't leopard print though.

SL: Let's have a look…

SL: Can you tell me about the channels that you use post-purchase, whether you abandon or …

FINT6: So if I buy a product it's probably Instagram.

SL: And why do you do that?

FINT6: Em, I don't really know why I do that. I guess it's just the thing to do. Yeah I don't really have a reason for it and then if I don't buy then, I don't really have a post-purchase if I don't buy. I may maybe blog about it I guess say maybe if it was something I did like but I just couldn't afford so that was the reason I didn't buy it so maybe I would blog about it.

SL: Is that it there? [referring to jumper on blog]

FINT6: Oh yeah, that was like the inspiration for it. So that was the actual one I bought.

SL: Ah right so that was the one that you bought, the new jumper and did you blog about it on your blog?

FINT6: I'd actually blogged about this before I bought it. Em but I hadn't really thought I'd buy it then. I only really wanted to buy it when I saw in the store.

SL: And you bought the blue jumper in the end. Another thing you said was that the ASOS magazine and the website were a bit dis-jointed in some way? In what way were they dis-jointed, the ASOS magazine and the website?

FINT6: Was it cause, I think it may have been because they are not quite linked. Like the Net-a-Porter is linking things to online and stuff. Whereas the ASOS magazine it has item codes but I'm not gonna go onto the website to start typing in all these codes to get the picture up. Like maybe an app like scanning the page would probably be a good thing for that.

SL: And how does, because that's dis-jointed, how does that affect your view of ASOS as a retailer.

FINT6: Eh I don't really think it affects it.

SL: No, not positive or negative. If it was more joined together would that be any better or any lesser?

FINT6: I guess if it was more joined together I'd think it was better yeah.

SL: But if they don't do it it's not a big deal.

FINT6: Yeah, it's not a big deal if they don't.

SL: Ok. You also said that the magazine and the web serve two very different purposes. What purposes do they serve.

FINT6: That's like what I was saying earlier about them being aspirational. So magazines are about, it's getting across the best that they've got and getting me to want to shop with them. What was the other one sorry?

SL: The magazine and the web.

FINT6: Em, after the magazine I think uh huh I want to buy something from here and then I start looking on the web and it sort of links to other things. I think the magazine's like the first port of call.

SL: Do you mean just a normal women's magazine or do you mean a retailer magazine?

FINT6: Any, both.

SL: Em now I wanted to ask you was brand – is that the key thing in an omnichannel journey? Is it about engaging with the brand, would that be a fair thing to say?

FINT6: I think it's about brand, like the Topshop girl. 'Cause I think it's all about the brand. On Instagram I'd only follow the brands that I like whereas I wouldn't follow Tesco. I'm not going to follow those on Instagram.

SL: So see with the other retailers do you seem kind of like friends in a way.

FINT6: I think Topshop's like the only one I see that about. Like I find ASOS quite hard to put a face to it 'cause I think because it doesn't have a store that's the reason why being online and it has such a vast range of products it's hard to sort of pinpoint exactly who or what ASOS is.

SL: And the more involved you are with a retailer how does that make you view them? The more and more involved that you become?

FINT6: Em, I don't really know.

SL: That's ok. I was just going to ask about the website because obviously we talked about the different ways of doing things on a website. Would you find it useful if a website had two faces say a functional face where you can do all your filtering and searching and an inspirational face? So you could choose which view you want of the website?

FINT6: Yeah I think that would be good. Because I think now most of them [online websites] are going more inspirational because they're all like doing features and stuff which I prefer.
SL: But you still sometimes prefer the functional do you?
FINT6: But yeah I think so sometimes it can go a bit over the top and you are a bit lost on the website and it's more about the features than the actual shopping. So you get a bit lost and a bit annoyed.