

Speciale

(Cand.it. webkommunikation)

Forside til specialet

Afleveringsfrist (sæt x)	Januar 2020:	Juni 2019: X	Andet:
Vejleder: Kristian Mortensen		Institut: IDK	

Titel, dansk: Fysiske tøjbutikker i e-handelens tidsalder: Et observationsstudie af forbrugeradfærd og brugeroplevelse i fysiske og online tøjbutikker.

Titel, engelsk: Physical clothing stores in the age of e-commerce: An Observational study of consumer behavior and user experience in physical and online clothing stores.

Min./max. antal typeenheder pr. studerende:

144.000 – 192.000 = 60 – 80 normalsider eksklusive forside, indholdsfortegnelse, abstract (resumé), litteraturlisten samt bilag.

Ved 2 studerendes øges omfanget med 50%.

Resumé pr. studerende: 1-2 normalsider.

(1 normalside = 2400 typeenheder)

Din besvarelses antal typeenheder¹:

171.461

Du skal være opmærksom på, såfremt din besvarelse ikke lever op til det angivne (min./max) antal typeenheder (normalsider) vil din opgave blive afvist, og du har brugt et forsøg.

Tro og love-erklæring

Det erklæres herved på tro og love, at undertegnede egenhændigt og selvstændigt har udformet denne eksamensopgave. Alle citater i teksten er markeret som sådanne, og eksamensopgaven, eller væsentlige dele af den, har ikke tidligere været fremlagt i anden bedømmelsessammenhæng.

Læs mere her: http://www.sdu.dk/Information_til/Studerende_ved_SDU/Eksamen.aspx

Afleveret af: Andreas Ølgaard

Fornavn: Andreas	Efternavn: Ølgaard	Fødselsdato: 24-02-1994
----------------------------	------------------------------	-----------------------------------

¹ Tælles fra første tegn i indledningen til sidste tegn i konklusionen, inkl. fodnoter. Tabeller tælles med deres antal typeenheder. Følgende tælles *ikke* med: resumé, indholdsfortegnelse, litteraturliste og bilag. Se i øvrigt eksamensbestemmelserne for disciplinen i studieordningen.

Physical clothing stores in the age of e-commerce:

An observational study of consumer behavior and user experience in
physical and online clothing stores

Master's Thesis

by

Andreas Ølgaard



University of
Southern Denmark

Supervisor: Kristian Mortensen

Department of Design and Communication

University of Southern Denmark

Handed in: May 29th, 2019

Abstract	1
Problem formulation	3
1. Introduction	3
1.1 <i>The Motivation for This Master's Thesis</i>	3
1.1 Literature Review	4
2. Theory	8
2.1 <i>Understanding Shopping</i>	8
2.2 <i>How Consumers Shop Today</i>	9
3. Methodology	11
3.1 <i>Methodological Reasoning</i>	11
3.2 <i>Participant Observation as a Method</i>	13
4. The Methodological Application	18
4.1 <i>Complete Observation</i>	18
4.2 <i>Observant Participation</i>	19
4.3 <i>Web Observation</i>	21
5. Findings	22
5.1 <i>Complete Observation – Physical Clothing Store</i>	22
5.2 <i>Observant Participation – Physical Clothing Stores</i>	25
5.3 <i>Web Observation – Online Clothing Stores</i>	29
5.4 <i>User Scenarios</i>	33
5.4.1 <i>Complete Observation Scenario</i>	33
5.4.2 <i>Observant Participation Scenario</i>	34
5.4.3 <i>Web Observation Scenario</i>	35
6. Physical Clothing Stores vs. Online Clothing Stores Analysis	37
6.1 <i>How Physical and Online Clothing Stores Differentiates Themselves – Based on Data Collection</i>	37
6.2 <i>The Five Significant Points in Depth</i>	38
6.3 <i>Takeaways from the Analysis</i>	44
7. Looking Towards the Future of Physical Clothing Stores	46
7.1 <i>What are Current Initiatives Taken by Physical Stores to Improve the User Experience</i>	46
7.2 <i>Short-term Initiatives for Improved User Experience in Physical Clothing Stores</i>	49
7.3 <i>Futuristic Initiatives for Improved User Experience in Physical Clothing Stores</i>	55
7.3.1 <i>Speculative Design – Design Fiction & Critical Design</i>	55
7.3.2 <i>Futuristic Shopping Scenario</i>	56
8. Critique, Limitations, and Suggestions for Further Research	58
8.1 <i>Critique and Limitations</i>	58
8.1.1 <i>Methodological and Data Collection Critique</i>	58
8.2 <i>Suggestions for Further Research</i>	60
9. Conclusion	61
10. Literature	65
11. Appendixes	68
Appendix A - <i>Complete Observation Fieldnotes</i>	68
Appendix B - <i>Observant Participation Fieldnotes</i>	73
Appendix C - <i>Web Observation Screen Recordings</i>	77

Abstract

This thesis explores how physical clothing stores can rethink their user experience and what new initiatives might be implemented in order to maintain relevance in the retail landscape in the age of e-commerce.

Through an observational study of consumer behavior in physical and online clothing stores, based primarily on literature by R.H. Bernard (2006) and K.M. DeWalt & B.R. DeWalt (2011), three observational studies are carried out, respectively complete observation, observant participation, and web observation.

Complete observation accounted for 17 informant episodes and observant participation accounted for 7 informants. Both were carried out in physical stores. Web observation accounted for 7 informants and was carried out by the informants themselves by the use of screen recordings on their personal computers.

The data collected were analyzed and differences and similarities were compared in order to extract the five most significant points shared among the two shopping modes: The first point of contact between physical and online stores and the customer, the first action taken when entering a store/visiting an online store, navigational differences in physical vs. online stores, how products are being evaluated and inspected, and lastly how product-specific a physical shopping trip is compared to an online shopping session.

The analysis of the five most significant points shows that the first contact between customers and a physical clothing store often takes place before the customer has entered the store. Upon entering, the customer typically expresses confusion and/or disorientation in gaining an overview of the store. Furthermore, the analysis showed that online stores excel in terms of navigation, and physical stores should particularly take note of this attribute of online stores. A lot of interaction between customer and product take place in physical clothing stores and is perhaps the most significant attribute of physical shopping. Lastly, physical shopping appeared to be more product-specific than online shopping.

Based on the analysis of the five most significant points and the conclusions thereof, the thesis presents suggestions of initiatives in the form of two user scenarios. The first user scenario is based upon what initiatives can be taken by physical clothing stores in the near future, in order to improve the user experience on the points that need improvement based on the data analysis. The second user scenario takes an outset in the two design practices, design fiction and critical design, and presents a futuristic user scenario – a user scenario that

illustrates my take on the most optimal physical user experience, but one which incorporates technology that might not be technologically feasible yet.

Critique and limitations of the methodological application and the data collection are provided, including the potential need for a bigger number of informants, a wider variety of stores, and the ability to conduct video observation in similar future studies. Furthermore, future researchers in the same field should generally look into conducting data collection in a more qualitative rather than quantitative matter and look more into the social aspect of shopping.

The thesis concludes that the time for physical clothing stores to innovate and make new initiatives is now, whether these initiatives involve looking towards online clothing stores and what is working for them or creating improvements of the user experience in relation to navigation and customer-product interaction. More specifically, the thesis suggests for physical clothing stores to implement technological initiatives, that can help the customer navigate the store and find the products he/she is looking for. It furthermore suggests for physical stores to look at how customers navigate online clothing stores, which to a high degree consists of utilizing filters to categorize the clothing the customers are looking at. Therefore, physical stores should consider dividing the clothing into categories and make navigating these categories easy by clear labeling of the categories. Lastly, one of the suggestions is for physical stores to put more emphasis on product characteristics such as materials, in order to create a more collected tactile experience by combining the tactile attributes with product-specific details.

The above is some of the suggestions based on the results of this thesis' observation. By extracting the five most significant points of a shopping session, this thesis has already provided a foundation for physical clothing stores to base their own initiatives on.

Problem formulation

Based on an observational study of consumer behavior in physical and online clothing stores, the thesis aims at answering the following question:

How can physical clothing stores rethink their user experience and what new initiatives might be taken in order to maintain relevance in the retail landscape in the age of e-commerce?

1. Introduction

1.1 The Motivation for This Master's Thesis

Whether we want to admit it or not, consumerism is one of the major sources of income that keeps the wheels turning in our society, and every one of us plays a vital part in it. Whether we shop online or in physical stores, many of us spend a considerable amount of our income on consumer goods – here among shopping for clothes. However, recent years have seen a significant shift in the shopping habits of consumers. An ever-growing group of consumers is turning away from the traditional way of shopping, in physical stores, and instead, they are turning towards online shopping (Richter, 2017). That is not to say, that physical retail shopping is dead or struggling to stay above water, but the ever-growing competition of e-commerce has proven to be a drag on the success of many physical stores. Companies being able to provide a very sophisticated and user-friendly shopping experience in the comfort of the consumers' homes have contributed to the shift in shopping habits. Among other things, the user experience of e-commerce has simply outperformed the user experience found in physical stores, resulting in the need for physical clothing stores to rethink their user experience in order to maintain their position in the market.

In spite of this, many physical stores do not seem to be aware of the need for innovation in regard to the user experience. If we turn back time 10, or even 20 years, there is really not much of a difference in how clothing stores were presented and arranged back then and how they are presented today. Most stores are basically arranged the same in terms of the floor layout and the function of the shop assistants, and the only things that really sets these stores apart are the brand-specific clothing and the branding decorations. On the contrary, online stores have seen a significant change in usability, user experience, and overall design. Online stores are getting easier to use and more streamlined, with the ability to purchase almost anything from anywhere just a few clicks away by using one's computer or smartphone, while also getting better at providing a fulfilling user experience for the consumers.

Thus, in order for physical clothing stores to stay relevant and not remain just an alternative, but a necessary supplement to online stores in the eyes of the consumer, these stores need to start venturing outside of their comfort zone and explore new initiatives and rethink the user experience, just as it has been done by online stores.

In order to answer the problem formulation, this thesis will start by examining some of the prior research done in the field of physical versus online shopping in the form of a literature review, with the focus being on what methods have primarily been used prior to this thesis.

Hereafter, the thesis will look into the phenomenon of shopping itself and how consumers shop today, as a means to achieve a basic understanding of what shopping entails. In order to create a sufficient user experience, a solid understanding of what draws consumers into stores, and how they make their purchase decisions, is necessary. With the purpose of doing so, the thesis will draw on a rarely used method in this research topic, stemming from anthropology, for understanding consumer habits in the field of retail stores – the method of observation. The observation will collect data on how consumers shop and shed light on some of the conscious and unconscious actions taken by consumers in a shopping scenario, which are vital for physical stores to understand, in order to maintain their position in the retail market.

At this point, after understanding and researching consumers in various shopping situations, a foundation has been constructed on which the user experience of physical stores can be rethought.

1.1 Literature Review

In the field of researching physical and online shopping consumer behavior, there has been a tendency to approach this field using quantitative methods, whether the focus of the research is time valuation or the consequences of the lack of intangibility in online stores. Jiang, Yang & Jun (2013) examine convenience – more specifically online shopping from the aspect of key convenience dimensions. Utilizing the methods of focus group interviews and a web-based questionnaire survey, and through coding and various analyses, Jiang et al. were able to conclude the five most important factors in relation to convenience dimensions of online shopping, them being access, search, evaluation transaction, and possession/post-purchase convenience.

Hsiao (2009) made use of similar methods as Jiang et al., by collecting data through personal interviews with questionnaires. The data was used to examine how consumers value their time, among these the travel time and delivery time, when choosing whether to shop in physical or online stores. Hsiao processed the data through a mathematical formula, the binary logit, and found that what shopping mode consumers choose is indeed dependent in some cases on how the consumer values his/her time in the shopping situation.

Laroche, Yang, McDougall, and Bergeron (2005) also utilize questionnaires for their data collection. Laroche et al. examine the significance of the lack of intangibility of online retailers and the consequences thereof. Yang et al. presents various hypotheses and tries to prove them by the use of various questionnaires. It was found that as for the physical intangibility - perceived risk relationship in an offline setting, there were no significant negative associations. However, such negative associations did exist in an online setting. It was also found that even though intangibility does influence the perceived risks of consumers in an online setting, it might not be the only factor influencing the perceived risk. Other factors include concerns for security and privacy, as online stores do not provide the same tangible assurance of transaction security as physical stores.

Maat and Konings (2018) set out to answer in which areas consumers will replace physical shopping with online shopping. They do so by taking an outset in two hypotheses: The diffusion of innovation hypothesis, suggesting that people who are more willing to adopt new technology will shop more online, and the efficiency hypothesis, suggesting that the matter of whether people shop online or not is a result of the accessibility to physical shops and/or their willingness to adopt new technology. The results were based on a personal survey where respondents selected in representative residential areas were asked to complete a questionnaire at home. It was found that the people most likely to shop clothes online were the people with the greatest accessibility to stores, thereby debunking the hypothesis of efficiency in relation to accessibility. As Maat and Konings note, this is most likely due to the demographic and overall profile of people living in the city center, oftentimes being younger, higher educated, and tech-savvy. It was also found that consumers who are willing to shop online but have low access to physical stores, will shop more online thus confirming the efficiency hypothesis. They conclude, based on their research, that Internet shopping behavior is primarily shaped by people or households willing to adopt new technologies and only partly shaped by the matter of efficiency.

Schramm-Klein, Swoboda, and Morschett (2007) investigates whether or not consumers who shop online differ contrary to consumers who shop in physical stores, in terms of, among other things, motivational factors. Schramm-Klein et al. collected the data in a very similar way to Maat and Konings (2018). Schramm-Klein et al. collected data through a survey distributed through popular websites and through newsletters. The study suggests, that consumers who prefer to shop in physical stores are actually slightly more price-oriented than consumers who shop online and that there is, in fact, no significant difference in how consumers choose to shop, whether it is in physical stores or online, in relation to how they value the assortment variety. Lastly, the study support arguments that the most significant aspects of shopping, separating the shopping orientation of physical shoppers and online shoppers, are the aspects of tangibility, communication, and personal contact.

Rajamma, Paswan, and Ganesh (2007) examine the shopping motivation of consumers by investigating their perception of the correlation between shopping mode choice, i.e. online versus physical store, and service category. The data collected in this study were also based on a mail survey presented to various households. Based on their findings, Rajamma et al. conclude that consumers who prefer to shop at brick and mortar stores generally value the sense of security, and the "fun" aspect of shopping, when compared to consumers who primarily shop online. Furthermore, they conclude that generally, consumers associate tangible products primarily with physical stores and services with online stores.

Plenty of literature, as illustrated in the above section, has dealt with the current state of retail and the correlation between physical and online shopping. A few pieces of research have also dealt with the future of shopping. Common to them all is, that the methodological focus is primarily quantitative oriented with few researchers focusing on collecting data in a qualitative manner.

Blázquez (2014) explores the role of technology in the multichannel-shopping experience and how the channels, physical and online stores, crossover and the effect hereof. Blázquez conducts her investigation and collects data by the use of a questionnaire based on the framework of hedonic and utilitarian shopping values. Blázquez concludes that multichannel behavior is indeed an aspect of shopping not to be overlooked, in that a large part of her sample searched for information, compared prices, or looked for inspiration online before visiting a physical store. Meanwhile, before the respondents shopped online, about a fifth of

the sample went to a store beforehand to see and touch the product and to try it on. Furthermore, Blázquez concludes that the physical in-store perception of consumers of the shopping experience does not differ whether the consumer has a high or low degree of experience shopping online – it does online, however. Lastly, she concludes that there is no difference in the motivation of shopping in-store, whether the consumer has a high or low degree of experience shopping online.

Papagiannidis et al. (2017) explore the idea of a 3D online shopping environment, in contrast to the traditional 2D online store, by utilizing the capabilities of virtual reality. The purpose was to examine the impact of such a 3D environment on the satisfaction and enjoyment of the customer in a shopping situation. In order to conduct the experiment, Papagiannidis et al. constructed an immersive digital model of a retail store, which was to be navigated by the use of 3D goggles and a data glove capable of examining products in the virtual store. To investigate the significance of immersion, the experiment was conducted both in the aforementioned version and in a desktop version, in which the participants viewed the virtual store on a typical computer screen and navigated by the use of a joystick. The participants were put to several tasks and asked to fill in a questionnaire of their experience afterward. It was found, that the immersive environment had a positive effect on the shopping experience in terms of engagement and enjoyment, which in return leads to greater purchase intention. Papagiannidis et al. conclude that this concept of an immersive 3D environment should not be overlooked as a potential to compete with traditional shopping in regard to the customer experience.

An example of a research paper utilizing a qualitative approach stems from Pantano and Gandini (2017). Pantano and Gandini explore the new socialites emerging as a result of the increasing use of technology in retail settings, that are slowly but steady substituting human-to-human interaction. Pantano and Gandini conducted qualitative research in the form of 20 interviews of consumers in the age of 18-23 years old. Pantano and Gandini conclude, that shopping seems to be a very individualized action. Social interaction is low in intensity and is only approached when absolutely necessary. The respondents in this study primarily seek out advice from friends – an action closely related to the aspect of trust. The study further concludes that shopping, in these cases, tends to be closely connected with intimacy and having access to friends digitally, e.g. on mobile phones, is almost a routine of many shopping trips. According to Pantano and Gandini, retailers need to acknowledge this change

in the social activities of consumers and work on the service of the store assistants conforming to the consumers' social relations. The main point here is to overcome the trust-barrier of the consumers' current shopping routines.

Common to the above literature is, that despite the fact that the articles deal with various topics in the field of physical and online shopping only a single article, Pantano and Gandini (2017), take a qualitative approach to the topic. The lack of articles taking a qualitative approach indicates a need for further qualitative studies in the field of physical versus online stores.

2. Theory

2.1 Understanding Shopping

Not a day goes by where the majority of people do not think about shopping to some degree whether it is about groceries, electronics, clothes, or something else. In fact, as Paco Underhill states, “You almost have to make an effort to avoid shopping today. Stay out of stores and museums and theme restaurants and you still are face-to-face with Internet shopping twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week...” (2009, p. 24). The exposure to shopping possibilities and incentives to buy and spend our hard-earned money are everywhere, and it is nearly impossible to avoid.

The actual act of trading something of ours, like for instance money, for something else in return, which has been driving society for centuries, is an act we practice so often, that for many of us it has become muscle memory to swipe our credit card or place a couple of bills on the counter to finalize a transaction. Several new technologies have made this aspect of everyday life easier, as for instance the development of credit cards and credit card terminals, but the essence of it all is still the same. Broadly speaking, we still go and earn money almost every single day, at least most of us do, just so that we can trade them in order to own something we want or need in order to fulfill our utilitarian and hedonic needs. The process is the same by and large, no matter if we are buying a pack of chewing gum or a fancy car. Trading is deep-rooted in our culture, so to speak, which of course leaves this aspect of our consumer society needing more and more attention, particularly from the shops offering the goods and services.

The complexity of shopping and everything this discipline entails is a discipline, which can be investigated from many different angles. As Paco Underhill puts it, “The science of

shopping is a hybrid discipline – part physical science, part social science, and only part science at all, for it is also partly an art.” (2009, p. 282).

The angle investigated in this thesis is not the situation as it is seen directly from the consumers' point of view, but how the actions, thoughts, and emotions expressed of the consumers through observation might be able to inform the retailers of how to meet the demands of the consumers in the future. Thoughts and emotions are key points here, as there are so much more happening inside our minds as we shop than we would like to admit. Sometimes it is a sensory overload composed of pictures, messages, sounds, and smells attacking us from all angles, urging us to make that purchase decision we have considered for days. Sometimes the things we do when shopping appears to not even be conscious actions. This will be touched upon later in this thesis.

At the end of the day, retailers need to sell their products in order for their business to survive. For them to succeed in doing so, it is important for clothing stores to realize, that they are not only competing against other stores – they are competing against every other aspect of the consumers' life, which takes up time. In today's society where we as people are so focused on what is the quickest possible way to get from point A to B, and where we can get the item we want for the cheapest possible price, it is important for retailers to acknowledge that, as Underhill state, they "...compete with every other demand on consumer time and money" (2009, p. 283).

2.2 How Consumers Shop Today

Nobody can deny the fact that e-commerce has taken the retail market by storm, and that is true for several markets including the clothing/apparel market. It is safe to say, that consumers have acquired a taste for online shopping, and this development is showing no signs of slowing down. According to Statista, online stores accounted for 9% of all apparel and footwear sold in the United States in 2011. In 2016, this number had almost doubled, accounting for 17% of all sales. The number is estimated to reach 28% by 2021 – a testimony to the rapid advancement of e-commerce. When most people hear the words online shopping, e-commerce, or the like, the first association that comes to mind is likely convenience and the ability to buy almost anything, from anywhere, at any time. Especially the ability to access shopping opportunities at any time of day from any location is what differentiates online stores from physical retail stores and gains them a huge advantage. We live in the age of convenience, which makes us that much more inclined to pick online stores over physical stores. We are getting accustomed to having services of all categories available to us at our

fingertips on our computers and smartphones and being able to order almost everything imaginable online at any time. The demands of physical interaction put on us to get through day-to-day life are getting less and less and we want to get as much stuff done in as little time as possible. This is why online shopping is fitting so perfectly into our everyday lives today. Online stores provide us with an almost incomprehensible selection of goods ranging from rubber bands to even cars. It is hard to think of something that cannot be ordered online and delivered to your doorstep, which does not make it hard to understand the current scope of e-commerce and the power this retail option holds.

The 2017 Global Online Consumer Report by KPMG presents some interesting statistics on consumer shopping behavior. According to the report (KPMG, 2017), the top three factors driving the consumers to shop online is the flexibility of being able to shop at any time, easy comparison of prices, and the saving and/or better prices often found online (p. 27). The top three factors driving consumers to shop in physical stores are the ability to physically inspect the item, try it on, and see the looks and fit in real life before buying (KPMG, p. 29). It can be said, that the three factors driving online shopping can be labeled as convenience and rational characteristics, whereas the three factors driving physical shopping are more tactile and emotional characteristics. Keeping in mind the notion of 'the age of convenience', and the fact that e-commerce has become such a highly valued shopping mode among many consumers, we get a clear picture of what consumers prioritize in their shopping experiences as of today.

However, it is too early to declare the physical store segment for dead. Even though physical stores have definitely taken a hit in popularity and preference by the consumers, a look through many city centers reveals that plenty of activity can still be found in stores. The question is how long the situation will stay like this if e-commerce continues its dominating progress. It is quite obvious, that the user experience found online is highly valued among today's consumers, and this can largely be attributed to the rapid development of online stores. Most medium to larger sized online stores today offers free delivery and/or free returns making it a hassle-free process to order something online, even if the consumers are unsure whether or not the product is the right one for him/her. At the same time, various filters, chat-systems providing live assistance, video clips of products, and more are constantly being added as features to enhance the user experience for the consumer. On the contrary, physical clothing stores have seen little advancements since their origin, and this plays a significant role as to why the popularity of these stores is on a decline. Indeed, some stores have incorporated self-service checkout desks and some stores are trying harder to

incorporate technology, for instance in the form of digital mirrors, as touched upon later on in this thesis. Still, even some brands, which have a highly regarded online store, are lacking in the physical store department. Many of these brands are not considering that clothing is an excellent omnichannel category and is utilized this way by consumers. Therefore, increasing the user experience and usability of online stores and neglecting physical stores might in many cases prove to be a bad move for business. An improved user experience both online and offline improves the user experience overall, thus creating a larger incentive for people who primarily utilize online stores to visit physical stores more often.

3. Methodology

3.1 Methodological Reasoning

In the time period where physical and online retail stores have been studied, there has been a tendency to collect one's primary data either by the use of a survey method such as e.g. a questionnaire or interviews and sometimes even combined, as illustrated in the literature review. The main concern that may arise, when making use of a survey style method when researching this field is, that the data collection of all the methods are based on what the informants are saying. In other words, it is the informants who explicitly provides the researcher with answers to his/her questions, whether these answers might be true or false. The researchers in those cases and their findings are dependent on, that what the respondents say are true, and this proves a problem. The probability of what an informant tells to be true about his/her behavior, and what is in fact reality and factually true about his/her behavior, is not always 100% reliable. That is just human nature. It is a tricky line to walk, as so many factors play a part in collecting the 'right' result i.e. a set of data that is the real truth, or at least as truthful as humanly possible, and not a truth constructed by the respondents themselves. This being said even before considering whether some respondents might be swayed to state something specific, or being led in a specific direction, by the wording of, for instance, a questionnaire.

As a result, this area of study needs a gap filled by conducting investigations by the means of new methods, as although the current studies seem to reach a common ground in terms of results in the majority of cases by making use of questionnaires and interviews, these results should be questioned simply because of the methods used.

Looking back towards the literature review of this thesis, it is obvious that surveys and questionnaires are widespread methods among researchers researching the field of retail

and commerce, both physically and online, and the relationship between these two shopping modes, and that these methods among many researchers are considered to be valid and sufficient research methods in this area of study. Of course, surveys, questionnaires, and other research methods of this primarily quantitative nature have their raison. But when the main objective is to understand and analyze behavior in a qualitative matter, and the purpose is not to gather statistics and quantitative data, the stance this master's thesis takes is, that observing this behavior is a far better means to an end than asking the people facilitating the behavior, what they are doing. Imagine being asked how you shop for clothes. This is probably a question you have never been asked before and are therefore unsure of how to answer. We all probably have some kind of idea of how we shop. But we do so many unconscious actions throughout a shopping trip, whether physical or online, that will simply not be highlighted through the use of surveys, questionnaires, and the like. Many of these unconscious actions can only be spotted by an external observer, who is unbiased and determined to look for them.

This master's thesis aims to tackle the question of how people shop in physical and online clothing stores by making use of methods originating from the field of anthropology – more specifically the method of observation. The decisive factor behind choosing this method is the idea, that the best way of learning about what people do in specific situations, is to observe them in the situations in the field. Making use of this method is consistent with the main focus of user experience in how the shopping experiences differ. In this thesis, the focus is not so much on how consumers experience the shopping situation on a psychological level, or how they themselves perceive the experience, but on the contrary, it is on how consumers experience – or act – on a physical, tactile, and navigational level when shopping for clothes. In other words, this thesis aims to investigate the use of physical space and physical attributes in shopping situations. Therefore, a questionnaire asking people how and why they shop would not be sufficient. Conducting such an investigation would not be able to answer the research question in this case. The chance of the informants' answers being a hundred percent correct and truthful is far too slim, and thus taking such an approach to this study would not be optimal.

The main data collected in this case will therefore not be based on words and statements by consumers of what consumers do, but the visual expressions and actions of consumers. In order to do so, the thesis question will be approached from a methodological tripartition consisting of complete observation, observant participation, and web observation through screen recordings. These three observational methods all stem from under the same

methodological umbrella originating from the field of anthropology, participant observation, the essence being to observe actions rather than to ask questions about actions.

3.2 Participant Observation as a Method

Participant observation is a method, which has been practiced for well over a hundred years (Bernard, 2006, p. 347). The method has long been regarded as the defining method in cultural anthropological and ethnographic studies (Bernard, p. 342). However, during the last decades, the method has been used for qualitative studies in various different fields (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011, p. 9).

Participant observation is a method in which a researcher takes part in the daily life, daily activities, events, routines, and what else, of an informant or informants as a means of gaining an understanding for the group of people or the culture he/she is studying. The name of the method is pretty self-explanatory, in that the researcher participates in a specific setting in order to observe what is happening in this setting. In essence, this method derives from the state of mind that what people say they do, and what they actually do, are two opposites. In order to gain a thorough understanding of physical actions, emotions, activities, etc. that is beyond our consciousness, the researcher needs to be present and experience these actions first hand. As Bernard states: "Participant observation involves immersing yourself in a culture and learning to remove yourself every day from that immersion so you can intellectualize what you've seen and heard, put it into perspective, and write about it convincingly" (p. 344). Of course, this description of participatory observation sounds very grand and likely refers to some of the greater fieldworks carried out using this method. However, the use of the method in the case of this thesis should be seen as a serious, albeit at some points limited, attempt at utilizing the said method in a specific field rarely associated with anthropological fieldwork and methods.

Participant observation as a method is generally discussed in relation to three different roles, one can choose as the researcher: complete participant, participant observer, or complete observer. The role as complete participant involves participating in the actions, or the like, of a group or individual, without the ones observed being aware, that the researcher is there with the purpose of observing. Participant observer encompasses two practices under this term, those being the participating observers or observing participants. Observing participant is the term used if the researcher is an insider of a group who observes and records life around him/her. The different phrasing indicates that the observer is already either a partial or full member of the group/culture that he/she observes, which might in return affect

the access that is granted to the researcher and other factors. Participant observers, on the other hand, is the term used if the researcher is a complete outsider who participates, observes, and records the action of a group or the like. Lastly, the complete observer involves being present in a setting and observing without any interaction or participation. The most often used role of the abovementioned, when it comes to observation as a method, is that of the participant observer (Bernard, 2006, p. 347).

Observation as a method, and thereby gaining access and acceptance to a group and staying in this group long enough to make sufficient observations, is a time consuming one. Usually, such a research study is not carried out in a matter of days, but most of the time, such a study may take months or even years to complete. One might even ask if such a study can ever be finalized, as a group and culture is ever evolving – even when the researcher finishes his/her observations. However, the nature of this master's thesis prevents such a timespan for conducting observations. The field of shopping, consumer behavior, and user experience, which this thesis is investigating – an everyday activity most people are familiar with – does, however, open up to the possibility of conducting research in a much shorter time span, albeit a longer observation period would be preferable. As Bernard suggests, it is possible to conduct useful participant observation in a matter of days (p. 349). Bernard states that, “The reason you could do this is because you already speak the native language and have already picked up the nuances of etiquette from previous experience. Participant observation would help you intellectualize what you already know” (p. 350). Shopping for clothes in physical retail stores is an activity, that many of us have been familiar with for most of our lives. From a very early age, we are dragged into stores, many of us by our parents, and before we know it, we are participating in the activity of shopping. I can testify, that for me, this was the case. The familiarity and established knowledge of the activity, and what it entails, made it possible to collect the data for this thesis in a matter of days. Had the activity or group observed been alien and completely unfamiliar, the likeliness of it being possible to conduct the research in such a short time span, at least with a somewhat decent data collection, is slim to none. Nonetheless, it is important to emphasize, that had the observations been conducted over a longer period of time, without the obstructions of a set deadline, the data collected would, of course, have been more in depth and the results more accurate. The main point to take away from this self-critique of the data-collection is, that it would have been preferable, and of course more precise, to collect the data over a longer period of time. However, it was necessary due to the nature of the master's thesis to limit the period in which the data collection could be conducted. Therefore, it was a necessity to be

very specific in what data was necessary to collect. Therefore, the data collection for this thesis made use of the technique by the name Rapid Assessment.

When applying ethnographic research methods as the case for this thesis, a technique often used is that of PRA – short for Participatory Rapid Assessment. The most defining part of this technique is, that you do not stay in the field for a long period of time collecting data, but the data is collected within a short time frame. As Bernard states, rapid assessment “...means going into a field situation armed with a list of questions that you want to answer and perhaps a checklist of data that you need to collect” (2006, p. 352). In contrast to a typical long-term ethnographic study, where you approach the study with a broader research question in mind or a certain goal of understanding a culture, PRA is about focusing one's field study to specific questions or areas, so that the data collection is narrowed down to the essentials. Expecting to be able to perform a full-blown ethnographic study in a short time span is far too optimistic. Therefore, it is important to attune one's expectations when commencing an ethnographic study.

The research part of this thesis, in relation to the aspect of physical retail clothing stores, combines two practices under the method of participatory observation. One is the role of complete observer. The other is that of observing participant, given my already established knowledge and inclusion in the phenomena of shopping, and the fact that the thesis makes use of a convenience sample – the latter, which will be touched upon later in this section. In many cases, a researcher would choose to make use of just one observational method. However, after serious consideration, it was found, that for this particular study, a combination of methodological applications would be beneficial. The complete observation was able to provide pure observational data, showcasing exactly how consumers behave in a shopping situation from an outside perspective. The observant participation, on the other hand, provided an opportunity to go more in-depth with the shopping experience and experience the user experience of selected consumers up close. The idea behind the combination of these two methods was, that taking into consideration the sparse timeframe for data-collection, the combination of methodological approaches would provide a more nuanced picture to build upon later in this thesis when discussing new initiatives for physical stores. A case could be made, that combining methods would result in not being able to direct one's full attention to both methods. However, I believe this is not the case. On the contrary, combining methods explores the experience the customers may have in stores from different angles – one from a distance, which explores the pure tactile and physical elements of

shopping, and one from up close, which can provide additional understanding of what has been observed during complete observation while also providing new insights.

The complete observation was carried out, with permission from the store, in a medium-sized fashion clothing store located inside a shopping mall. The store sells both men's and women's clothing but focuses on the segment from older teenagers to people in their early to mid-thirties. However, during the observation, it was found that consumers in almost every age group visited the store. The choice of the store was based on the fact that the store catered to both genders, was divided in half – men's department on the left side and women's department on the right side of the store – and the layout, surroundings, and amount of stock directed at both genders was very similar. Having a very similar layout for both genders provided an almost neutral setting for observing how both genders inspect, interact, and experience when shopping. Both genders have the same premises in this specific store, in terms of the presentation in store and the amount of stock.

The complete observation was carried out with specific focuses in mind during the observation. As there was no direct interaction during the observation, the observation was focused on observing body language, interaction among members of groups shopping together, interaction between customers and shopping assistant, how customers inspect the clothes' price, quality, and material, how customers navigate the store, and what directs their attention inside and outside the store. The observation had the purpose of highlighting how we actually shop in the sense of what we as consumers say, do, and how we act unconsciously. The goal was to extract patterns and similarities, which could be grouped and used as generalizations as to how people behave and utilize physical clothing stores for a later comparison of how people shop using online clothing stores.

I was granted access into the store on the specific date and was able to blend in for several hours while masking my presence as a researcher. It was important not to draw unnecessary attention or seem out of place in order to not affect the behavior of the people being victims of observations. It is self-evident, that being only a single researcher in the field, it was not possible to observe every single person entering the store in detail. Therefore, when one person of interest entered the store, the focus was on this particular person or groups' entire journey through the store. When the informants would leave the store, the attention was shifted to a new person or group entering the store. This was necessary as the method of observation presupposes that the researcher is focused on capturing every detail necessary for his/her research.

The fieldwork of observing participant was carried out in various stores, due to the nature of this observational method. As a participant who observes, it is not the role of the researcher, or observer, to dictate what is happening or where it should happen. Doing so would naturally impact the behavior and choices made by the informant. The aim is to observe while being involved in the action of the informant but leaving as small a trace as possible in the data produced from the observation. This is especially true when observing a phenomenon such as shopping, as it is typically an activity, which behavior is dictated by past experiences, present needs, and personal preferences.

Being an observing participant opened up for the possibility to learn more about how people shop for clothes up-close, in comparison to the distanced observational nature of complete observation. Being in the action, so to speak, makes it possible to observe more nuances in the informant's behavior and also verbal and audible characteristics of the customer experience.

The fieldwork sessions were arranged in the way, that the informants were asked beforehand if willing to participate in this study. They were briefly told that the study was focused on user experience in physical clothing stores versus online clothing stores and that for the purpose of data collection, it was necessary to follow along on a number of shopping trips. It was not disclosed exactly what parts of the journey were being observed, as to not influence the behavior of the informants in any way if possible. Several people agreed to participate, and it was arranged so that when the opportunity presented itself for me to join them on a shopping trip, they would contact me, and we would set it up. Again, the time frame restrictions for this thesis entailed that making contact with possible informants was done as quickly and effectively as possible. Therefore, this part of the data collection was based on a convenience sample. Making use of a convenience sample was after serious consideration chosen as the most effective way to gather informants in this specific case. As Bernard states, "Convenience sampling is a glorified term for grabbing whoever will stand still long enough to answer your questions. Sometimes, convenience samples are all that's available, and you just have to make do" (2006, pp. 191-192).

When conducting a study such as this thesis, one has to keep in mind the scope of the study and the time frame. In order to get the most out of observing participation, it is necessary for the researcher first to gain the trust of the informant. But how does one gain the trust of his/her informants, if selecting complete strangers to participate in the study, in a matter of hours or days? This is an almost impossible task. Therefore, convenience sampling, in this

case, should be understood as the informants being either already established personal relations or people related to already established personal relations. Choosing the informants this way ensures that it is not the question of trust that will affect the data collection. By being able to skip the step of gaining the informants' trust, one has already gained a significant head start in the data collection process. That is not to say, that by using a convenience sample the data collected is not in any way affected by the potential personal relationships or the like. The main problem with sampling in the way of this thesis is, like with almost any sampling method, the issue of the informants portraying themselves in a not factual truthful way or in other ways acting out of the ordinary. Bernard also touches on this point (2006, p. 199). Acting out the ordinary is however not necessarily a deliberate action, but an informant can have his/her reasons to portray themselves and their activities in a specific way, for instance in order to please the researcher and provide the results he/she thinks the researcher is looking for. This is also true when utilizing a convenience sample of established personal relations or people related to already established personal relations, as mentioned above. But this is the risk taken when practicing observant participation or participant observation.

4. The Methodological Application

4.1 Complete Observation

In order to observe the phenomena of shopping in physical clothing stores and collect data, which was not in any way affected by the presence of a researcher, the complete observation was decided on as being the most effective way of doing so. This meant being present in a shopping environment and observing the people interacting with the store environment. Of course, observing people without their knowledge might pose some ethical questions such as, is it ethically viable to observe what people do and spectate from a distance without them knowing, that they are unwillingly contributing to a data collection? This should for many observations be a serious consideration. But the most deciding factor in helping determine whether the observation is ethically correct is to consider what is being observed. If the observation takes place in a private setting or is in any way dealing with matters, which may be held private for the people observed, or in any way is not seen as something publicly available, or as an activity that in itself, from the eyes of the general society, holds little to no value, the questions of ethics needs to be carefully considered. However, in this case, the observations were not aimed at what specific individuals were

doing as such, and the activity was of such a nature that it was not intruding the informant's private sphere. Furthermore, the activity of selecting, judging, inspecting, buying clothes, etc. is an everyday activity that happens in public space all the time every day.

As touched upon earlier in this thesis, this method was carried out using the technique of PRA. The observation was conducted in a short time frame in comparison to the conventional use of the method, which entails that observation is to be done over a longer period of time. Furthermore, the optimal use of this technique suggests, that the researcher approach the observation with a set amount of questions, that needs to be answered, and a pinned down focus on the data in need of being collected. As Bernard states, “The key to high-quality, quick ethnography, according to Handwerker (2001), is to go into a study with a clear question and to limit your study to five focus variables” (2006, p. 353).

Five focus variables needing answers were constructed before commencing the observation, and they were as follows:

- 1. What does the first point of contact between customer and store look like?
- 2. What is the first thing that catches/attracts a customer's attention when in contact with the store?
- 3. How do customers navigate a clothing store?
- 4. How do customers utilize the characteristics of a physical clothing store, e.g. the ability to physically inspect the clothes before buying?
- 5. Is shopping primarily done individually or collectively, and what significance does it have whether or not is it done individually or collectively?

Having created a list of focus variables before commencing the observation made it a lot easier to narrow down the focus during the observation and maintain an overview of what actions to pay extra attention to.

4.2 Observant Participation

The observant participation was carried out after the complete observation was done. It was assessed that doing so would make the most sense so that any unexpected phenomena or actions observed in the complete observation was able to be scrutinized in the observant participation. For the research question dealt with in this particular thesis, it was important that the data collection was as neutral as possible. What needed to be answered was not a

matter of personal opinion but rather a matter of unconscious actions. However, at the same time, all of the actions were not necessarily self-explanatory from a distance, and that is why observant participation worked out as being a great supplement to complete observation.

As mentioned in a prior segment of this thesis, the observant participation was carried out by the use of a convenience sample, meaning that the informants were chosen based on the most convenient way to recruit suitable participants. As mentioned, this ended up being either already established relations or people related to already established relations. Seven people in total were recruited and willing to participate in me joining them on a shopping trip. In an attempt to collect as nuanced data as possible, the group of informants consisted of four males and three females while also being representative of various age groups from 22-63 years old. Three informants, one female, and two males were shopping individually, while two males were shopping together, and two females were shopping together. The aim was to get as broad a representation of the general shopping ‘community’ as possible, even though the number of people observed was in the lower end. Including informants of various ages is very important, as the user experience of clothing stores, both physically and online, often has to cater to various demographics and ages. Although a store might cater primarily to, for instance, teenagers, those teenagers might shop together with their parents, or the grandparents of the teenagers might visit the store to buy a gift. A store, whether a physical or online store, often serves consumers of various kinds even though the store itself is catered towards a specific demographic.

When an informant reached out and informed that I was able to join on a shopping trip we would agree upon a time and place so that I was able to accompany them. The choice of making use of a convenience sample proved itself very useful in this case, as the informants who reached out to me already were comfortable of my presence, thus eliminating any need for them to first size me up. Furthermore, it felt very natural to be on a shopping trip together.

Upon meeting, the informants were yet again briefed on the purpose of me tagging along and how it was not them as an individual, which was subject to observation and analyzation, but their actions in a shopping situation. It was very important for me to emphasize to the informants that they should not think of the shopping situation as different from any other shopping situation they had been in before. The participant was not asked to visit any specific stores for their shopping trip. They were however asked beforehand, that the shopping trip be a shopping trip with clothing in focus. The observation would end whenever the participant decided that he/she was done with the shopping trip.

4.3 Web Observation

Deciding on what approach to take in regard to conducting a study of online shopping behavior gave cause for serious consideration. The conditions under which this takes place does not allow for complete observation like a physical clothing store does. Online shopping typically takes place much more spontaneously than a physical shopping trip, and thanks to smartphones, tablets, and laptops it can take place anywhere at any time. This results in a couple of hindrances: How does one examine the nature of online shopping without being in the near proximity of the informants 24 hours a day? And how does one carry out said observation, when not wanting to hear how consumers shop from the consumers themselves, but rather watch it unfold?

Several approaches were considered. One of those was to simply ask for people to visit an online clothing store while being present and then observe while they look around the online store, pretending as if they were shopping as normal while explaining their thoughts and feelings in the process. It would almost be a sort of think-aloud situation. However, this approach felt unnatural, and it was not likely, that the informants would behave as they normally would when shopping for clothes online. The second, most ideal and unbiased method for collecting this data, would have been to have some kind of software installed on the informant's electronic devices, which would be able to track and record their behavior when visiting certain online clothes stores. Doing so, however, would prove both very difficult to set up and would also pose an ethical question, as it would, in essence, be an act of surveillance and go against GDPR laws. It would also entail that either one, the informants did not know the software was installed, thus providing the most unbiased data, but at the same time pose a question of legality, or two, the informants would agree to have the software installed, but the thought of having their actions being logged, without knowing exactly when, would influence their behavior.

The method chosen ended up being one where the informants would be instructed to create a screen recording themselves the next time they were shopping for clothes online. The instructions were clear: The informants were told how to do a screen recording on their computer if they were unaware how to do this, and then asked if they would record their actions the next time they started a shopping session online. This method was chosen based on the fact that it was possible to analyze the informant's behavior and navigation on online clothing stores in detail later on, as it was recorded on video. It was also less of an intrusion on their private life, as it was not necessary for a researcher to be present while the data was

collected. These things combined, it was assessed as being the most ethical correct approach and the best way to collect as unbiased results as possible given the observational nature of this part of the data collection. Web observation accounted for seven informants in total consisting of three males and four females in the age group 20 – 65 years old. All informants were familiar with operating a computer and shopping online.

It is self-evident, that as with any observational data-collection method, in which the informants are aware that they are being observed, the likelihood of the data being affected by this is always present. This is not something that can be completely avoided and is a natural hindrance to studying human behavior. The most important thing in the case of this thesis, as mentioned earlier, and the basis for the entire data collection was to collect as neutral data as possible in the most ethical way possible.

5. Findings

The following section deals with the findings of each observational method with the focus being on the most repetitive and prominent actions observed. The review of the findings will be followed by a user scenario based on the data collected for each of the three observational methods.

5.1 Complete Observation – Physical Clothing Store

Fieldnotes were used to document the data collected in the complete observation of a physical clothing store (Appx. A). A thorough review of the field notes was carried out afterward focusing on patterns, repetitive actions, what caught the attention first, and more. The review made it possible to extract and group the most prominent observations. The prominent observations can be divided into two groups. The first group is related to the interaction between the customer and store, and customer and products, in a tactile manner. The second group is related to how customers navigate and advance through the store and with whom they do so. The following section will first look into the observational findings and their significance in relation to respectively group one or two. The two groups stem from eight overall significant points and tendencies derived from a comparison of all observations collected during the complete observation. The eight points are as follows:

- 1. Usually, one of the first available products presented on a table or on a rack is touched upon entry to the store, no matter if said product appears to be of serious interest to the customer or not. Following this initial contact between store and

customer, it is only when significant interest is shown hereafter, that a product is touched.

- 2. Clothes are typically touched by rubbing it against the thumb and index finger, or in other ways cradled in the hand, for a couple of seconds.
- 3. Clothes are being held in an extended arm, turned around, and inspected. The customer often holds up an article of clothing against his/her body.
- 4. The clothes are being held up in front of oneself, and in this way, it is judged whether or not the clothing article is a go or a no go.
- 5. Shopping is primarily done in groups or pairs.
- 6. In groups, the persons involved often navigate through the store in a row, wherefrom each person in the group might take their own detours.
- 7. Customers who shop alone spend less time in the store than groups/pairs of customers.
- 8. Customers generally navigate through the store at a slow pace.

The first significant observation, number one of the above list, is related to the first contact between customer and store. In most cases, the customer, upon entering the store, will reach out and touch the first, or one of the first products, which catches his/her eye without necessarily showing a genuine interest in the product itself. When this, perhaps unconscious, inspection has taken place, it is from here on after only when significant interest is shown in a product, that the customer physically inspects it. Based on the observation, it is obvious that the first physical encounter with the clothes in the store functions more as a sort of routine and 'need' for a physical touchpoint with the clothes, rather than an actual interest in the specific piece of clothing touched. Oftentimes, the customer does not even look at what he/she is touching at this point of the shopping situation.

The second, third, and fourth significant observation all relates to the physical interaction between the customer and the products in the store. One of the most obvious differences when comparing physical to web clothing stores is the ability to experience the products physically in the store. Nonetheless, it was quite striking to see just how much this physical attribute was being utilized, when keeping in mind how online shopping has gained traction in previous years and are still doing so.

There was a general way in which the majority of the customers touched the clothes.

Typically, a customer would extend an arm, grabbing the piece of clothing with his/her

thumb and index finger, and rub the clothes between these two fingers. This inspection would typically have a duration of no more than a couple of seconds. This observation emphasizes the importance of the physical interaction between customer and product, and how it almost seems a necessity for the customer to touch something when inside a store.

When it comes to judging the fit and look of clothes, the significance of the ability to physically handle the clothes before buying is clearly seen when observing customers in-store. Among the customers observed there appeared to be a recurrent routine for judging a piece of clothing. The customer would raise the piece of clothing up with an extended arm and hold it out in front of him/her. The piece of clothing would be twisted and turned as a way to judge it both from a distance, in the front, and from the back. Sometimes the customer would quickly hold the item out in front of him/her as a means of judging whether the piece of clothing had potential or not.

Observation five, six, seven, and eight deals with how customers navigate the store and shop together.

During the observation, it was clear that the majority of people were shopping in couples or as groups. A group would typically consist of no more than two to four people. Although this observation might be influenced by the time of day or other factors, it is still important to note this characteristic of the observation, as the social aspect of shopping is often pointed out as being one of the most significant reasons why many consumers still shop in physical stores. As Morgan states, “Shopping is a social experience, and nothing can re-create wandering through a store with friends. No amount of technology can ever replace human touch and interaction” (2018). Even though the shoppers arrive together and leave together, they might not constantly be browsing the store together. Oftentimes, primarily the women observed, would stroll through the store in a form of column formation. This formation would give the sense, that as a starting point the shoppers would browse the store together, but at times one of the shoppers would make a detour as his/her attention was caught by something interesting. When this detour was completed, the group would regroup, and the procedure would repeat itself. This behavior indicates that even though you are shopping together, you might be there with different purposes and goals in mind. One of the members might be in the store just to browse and seek inspiration, while another member of the group might be there to find some specific article of clothing. This behavior indicates, that even though there is a significant tendency to shop in groups, the reason for doing so is not socially related to such a high degree as what may have been formerly presumed. This is based on the fact that of the groups observed, very little verbal communication was registered

among group members. On the contrary, customers might shop in groups as a way to seek comfort and/or specific advice and opinions on shopping related aspects. Thus, a customer's need for shopping in groups is based more on practical needs e.g. advice, opinions, comfort enhancing, rather than being based on emotional needs such as conversation, nursing relationships, etc.

It was observed, that a person shopping alone, when compared to a group of shoppers, would spend less time in store. The solo shopper would oftentimes be less physical when assessing the clothes and be more determined in his/her search for a product. The final significant observation was shared among solo shoppers as well as groups. A tendency observed was, that shoppers would move through the store at quite a slow pace. One of the main characteristics and reasons why consumers shop online often mentioned in research papers and articles is the efficiency and time-savings possible through this shopping mode. The shoppers' behavior, in this case, proves that this is not a concern when shopping physically. Shoppers are taking their time in physical stores thereby indicating that perhaps time spent is not a concern when one has already made the choice to shop in a physical store.

5.2 Observant Participation – Physical Clothing Stores

No fieldnotes, recordings, or the like, were taken while conducting the observant participation. As the goal was for the informants to feel as comfortable and natural in the situation as possible, and for me as an observer to affect the data as little as possible, it was assessed, that the best way to do so was to take notes immediately after the observation had taken place.

In total, seven people agreed to let me join on a shopping trip. The group of informants consisted of three females and four males ranging in ages from 22 – 63 years old. The informants were all familiar with both physical shopping and online shopping. All observations took place in the same city center, but on various dates and times of the day. The informants had no restrictions as to what stores they were allowed to enter and were purely told, that the observation itself was limited to clothing stores.

The following section will highlight the most significant observations, and observational points, that were similar to ones observed during complete observation.

One of the most significant findings during the complete observation was the customers' relation to and use of the tactile attribute of physical stores. The same actions repeated itself during the observant participation observations. During all observations, the informants were at some point of their user journey in physical contact with at least one

article of clothing, no matter if he/she ended up buying something at all. The interactions with the clothing were typical of the same nature as that of the complete observation. The informant would most of the times repeat a process of locating a piece of clothing, detaching the piece of clothing from its rack, check the price, hold the piece of clothing out in front of him/her with one arm extended, rotating it 180 degrees, and sometimes hold the piece of clothing up to one's body as to judge the fit and look. This physical interaction was reflected in several different ways. One of the cases, which particularly emphasized the customers' need for touching something with the sole purpose of touching something at all, was the case of touching something, without actually being able to feel the product. As one of the observations took place in the colder months, this particular informant was wearing gloves outside. As we were walking down the main street browsing the stores, a sweater hanging outside the store caught her eye. She approached the sweater, detached it from the rack and held it out in front of her. She touched the fabric between two fingers as to judge its quality, not realizing at any point that she could not feel this due to her gloves (Appx. B1). Another action related to the tactile attribute of physical stores was touching and/or examining a piece of clothing, knowing perfectly well that the item is of no significant interest. This was even sometimes verbally expressed. On several occasions, an informant would select a piece of clothing with remarks such as, "Look at this size" while being in awe over a very small size or, "I cannot believe how ugly this t-shirt is" (Appx. B1 and B4). The need for touching and inspecting pieces of clothing is therefore not solely based on positive attitudes towards the product, but also on negative attitudes.

In regard to navigating a store and forming a general view of the store upon entry, the informants were generally quite alike. The majority of informants entered the store straight on and upon entry, they gravitated towards the sidewalls of the store. The informants would hereafter go through the store while 'hugging' the walls, only seeking in towards the center of the store whenever something caught their attention (Appx. B3). This was at least the case for stores, that had a layout consisting of clothing hanging on the walls of the store and racks of clothing situated on the center floor of the store. For larger stores or stores where clothing was not mainly hanging along the walls, the informants would typically make a stop in the middle of the store upon entry and look around in an attempt to get an overview of the store (Appx. B2). The informants would then move through the store – at times with no particular visual pattern. When something grabbed their attention, they would then very purposefully move towards that piece of clothing.

Another repeated action was checking the price. Not so surprisingly, one of the first actions taken during all observations, when checking a specific piece of clothing out, was checking the price. This action occurred either as the first step in the customer-product interaction or at least as one of the first steps. One of the informants consequently checked the price as the first thing, whenever he interacted with a piece of clothing (Appx. B2). The price determined whether or not he would examine the clothing article further. If the price was better than, or as expected, he would proceed to further examination. Was the price worse than expected or in his words, "Not worth it" (Appx. B2), he would continue his search. This particular informant was in his early twenties and a student, which could play a part in his price-consciousness. Another informant, a male in his early-sixties, typically checked the price immediately after interacting with the piece of clothing, indicating that he only bothered checking the price if he was certain the clothing article was suitable for him. At times he would seem to be looking for the price but abruptly move on. He stated, that if it was a hassle to locate the price, he would not bother and would rather just move on (Appx. B3). This situation illustrates a serious user experience flaw resulting in a potential loss of sales. If the customer cannot find vital information about the product, such as the price, he/she is likely to go somewhere else.

Two of the observations were done in groups of respectively two people. One male group and one female group. The male group consisted of two males in their early to mid-twenties (Appx. B4). Upon entering the store, the group stopped for a second to get an overview of the store before quickly splitting up, making their separate ways through the male section of the store. When one of the informants showed interest in a piece of clothing, the two would consult each other. They would state their initial opinion on the article of clothing. If the reaction was positive, it would often lead to trying it on. They would then complement each other or express dislike depending on their opinions. When one article of clothing had been tried on, and opinions had been expressed, the two males would carry on as before, each browsing the store in a primarily individual fashion, and yet again consult with each other whenever something of interest showed itself. The occasional small talk would interrupt the shopping session, but the shopping itself was not as social as one might have expected. Here, it is, of course, important to mention, that the observation of the amount of social interaction during group-shopping may differ greatly based on the individuals shopping. The store and its items may also influence this phenomenon, as it was observed that funny or 'weird' articles of clothing would often spark some kind of mutual reaction (Appx. B4).

The female group consisted of two females – one in her late twenties and one in her late fifties (Appx. B5). The actions of this group were generally very much like the aforementioned male group with the most significant difference being the amount of talking and evaluation of products. The female group would inspect and handle many more clothing articles than the male group, and the female group discussed the clothing in a lot more detail. They would also discuss current trends, which was not a subject discussed among the male group. Lastly, the communication between the females involved a significant amount of non-shopping related topics whereas the male group mostly stayed focused and primarily discussed the products in the store while they were shopping.

An observation, which was not a common theme among the observations, but still deserves a mention, is a small conversation that took place as the female group left the store. Informant 1 had tried on a pair of pants only to realize that the store did not have the correct size. As the informants were leaving the store, informant 1 said to informant 2 that she would try and see, if she could find them in her size online. Hereafter followed a conversation dealing with how it is oftentimes easier to find what one wants online (Appx. B5). This indicated, that even though a specific choice has been made to shop in a physical store, the customer still had the idea of online shopping in the back of her mind.

One of the most significant attributes of physical stores, when it comes to drawing the customers in, is the window displays. The stores have the advantage of being able to expose the customers to their products without even having to draw them into the store first. However, just as well as the window displays can draw customers in, it can also be an impediment, as if this first-hand impression of the store is not positive, the customer might not even enter the store. Oftentimes the choice of what store to enter, particularly when the store is unfamiliar, is based on the window display. Interestingly enough, very few of the informants had a look at the window displays of a store before entering. One of the informants mentioned, that if he usually experienced the store having a window display, which he found interesting, he would repeatedly check it out whenever he went to that particular store. However, if he had grown familiar with a store having a non-inspiring window display, or it generally not catering to his taste, he stated, that he would never check it out (Appx. B3). This significant disadvantage of utilizing store space for window displays with little to no impact on the customer is not necessarily blame that can be put on customers and their general interest in window displays. Almost every single physical store makes the same mistake when setting up window displays i.e. not taking into account the angle from which the shopper approaches the store (Underhill, 2009, p. 81). As Underhill states: “On the

street, how do you approach a display window? In almost every instance, from an angle – as you’re walking toward the store from left or right. But most display windows are designed as though every viewer is just standing there staring into them head-on” (p. 81). With that statement in mind, it might explain why so little attention was directed towards the display windows during the observant participation, even though they are one of the first potential elements of a physical store to grab the customers’ attention. That is not to say, that with minor modifications to the window displays, among them an optimized viewing angle, they would have had a stronger impact on the observation. However, this might be one of the areas where physical stores could improve the user experience and regain traction in the retail market.

5.3 Web Observation – Online Clothing Stores

In order to fully understand how the use of respectively physical stores and online stores differ from a consumers’ point of view, it was important to observe both of these shopping spaces in use. The physical stores are of course a way more tangible object to observe, as it is significantly easier to see exactly what the informant is focusing on, what grabs their attention, and their interaction while in the store. Online stores have the disadvantage of being very restricted in what can be physically observed, as the only physical interaction when shopping online is that between the customer's keyboard, mouse, and screen. This entails some obvious restrictions in how to observe shopping behavior, especially since online shopping is often done as a very spontaneous act, which might happen at home, at school, in the office, during transportation, or anywhere else for that matter. This made it nearly impossible to conduct the data collection in the same manner as in physical observation. The method found to be the most viable, which would take into consideration the spontaneous nature of online shopping at the same time as best as possible, was for the informants to record their computer screens when shopping. These videos could then later be screened and observed in regard to navigation, time spent, the examination of clothes, etc. In this regard, the informants themselves in a sense became the data collectors.

As expected, several behavioral patterns presented themselves when comparing the video material collected. These patterns will be analyzed in the following section in order to finally compare the user characteristics and perceived experience of physical stores to online stores.

During all of the observations, the informants made use of the ability to view the clothes from various angles, either by the use of pictures or short video clips available on the product page. As online stores are obviously completely lacking a tactile dimension in terms

of the ability to inspect clothes physically, the customer must make use of other methods for inspecting and evaluating products. The most typical substitutional feature in this area is the use of pictures and videos. While reviewing the collected video material, it was obvious that the use of pictures and videos for gaining knowledge about a product was a significant step in the online customers' user journey. Going through product pictures and/or videos was the step in the customer journey of online shopping, where the informants spent the most time during their shopping session. On some websites, it is possible to view the product from various angles in a preview, before actually clicking on the product and entering that product's specific page. On other websites, it was necessary to click and enter a products' specific page before being able to click through the pictures. Most websites incorporate the ability to zoom on the pictures too, making it possible to get an even closer look at a product. The feature was primarily used by an informant when it was clear that he/she was seriously considering a product (Appx. C2, 00:30 min.). During one of the observations, a dress with a specific pattern was being evaluated by the informant. This informant made use of the zoom feature in what was clearly an attempt at figuring out what exactly the pattern of the dress looked like (Appx. C1, 26:28 min.). This is a clear example of one of the major pitfalls of online clothing stores today. The ability to scrutinize every single detail of a piece of clothing is simply not there, making it a bigger judgment call for the customer whether or not to take the plunge and order the piece of clothing, well knowing that he/she does not know a hundred percent what the product might look or feel like.

Related to the above aspect of shopping online and the lack of ability to physically interact with a product, it is clear to see, that this urge to interact is still present when shopping online. Not only are traces hereof present in the form of the informants going through pictures and/or videos of clothing articles, but it is also clearly seen in how the informants move around the cursor on the websites. When the informants are scrolling, the cursor is typically static on the screen. When a product catches the informants' attention, the cursor is moved onto the picture of the specific article of clothing (Appx. C3, 8:45 min., & C2, 00:15 min.). This leads the thoughts to what was seen during the physical observation where touching and feeling the products was one of the most pronounced behavioral patterns. The cursor is almost used as a substitute for the touching of the clothes. Considering the fact that when using a computer, the cursor acts as an extension of one's arm, it makes sense for a person shopping online to use the cursor this way, when the natural instinct to handle the clothing kicks in. This observation is a significant example of one of the main advantages of

physical stores i.e. the tactile attributes being in the back of the customer 's mind, even while shopping online.

One of the major advantages of online stores is their ability to provide consumers with an at times unbelievable variety of products. However, even though this may be a strong incentive for consumers to shop online in some situations, it might also at times appear as an impediment. A larger selection is, of course, subject to being more confusing to navigate. The vast majority of online stores have tried to take this into account by adding various filters on their website, which can be combined when searching for a specific piece of clothing. All of the informants used filters on the websites to some degree, whether it was a filter used for isolating a specific product category, or whether it was a more specific filter, such as a specific brand. Filters were used for various things, such as finding specific colors, materials, brands, prices, etc. One of the informants filtered the page immediately so that it showcased the products from lowest to highest price (Appx. C1, 00:19 min.). The ability to do so is very specific to online stores. Although it may be possible in physical stores to quickly spot a product fitting ones' particular needs, it is often necessary to check the price on a specific product by actually getting hands-on with the product. On online stores, it is much easier to quickly filter the products, so that they are within a certain price limit. This saves the customer valuable time and makes the shopping experience much more streamlined.

Based on the video observations, browsing within a specific category appears to be the main activity on a digital shopping trip. The way in which a person browses a physical store versus an online store differs quite a lot. The video observation presented a common pattern in how the informants browsed through the product pages. The product pages are typically laid out in a grid pattern with three to five clothing articles per row. The informant would scroll down the page in a slow to medium pace, stop for one to three seconds whenever a new row appeared as to get an overview, and then repeat this action for part of, or the entire length of, the page (Appx. C1, 16:05 min.). The interesting thing to observe here is that, in most cases, every product appears to get the same amount of attention. It can be said that to a certain degree there appears to be a common 'scrolling-rhythm' in how the informants scroll on the product pages. This scrolling-rhythm is only broken whenever a product attracts the customer's total attention and he/she chooses to inspect a product further.

The ability to add products to a 'wish list' appeared to be a widely used feature among the informants. The 'Add to wish list/favorites' function makes it possible to comprise a list of saved products, that can be accessed whenever needed during the shopping session. If the shopper is logged in to his/her account, the list of favorites is typically saved for the next time

the shopper accesses the site from any device. The informants typically added a product to their list of favorites directly from the overall product list or had already several items added to their favorites upon entering a site. The feature of adding to a list of favorites appears to be significant in an online shopper's customer journey. What this feature does well is to create a more personalized shopping experience in the form of a personalized list, from which the customers can organize whatever he/she finds interesting and return to these products for review at their own pace. Whereas in a physical store you can browse, try, and buy the clothing while you are there, in an online store you can save this list for later and access it when there is time, or a purchase decision has been made. There is no need for making a new physical trip if you are undecided. The clothes will wait for you to return and can be purchased at any time and at your own pace.

Doing things at your own pace could easily be the headline of online shopping. The customer decides at what time, place, and pace he/she wants to shop at, and the website is there when the need arises. This expresses itself in how it in some of the observations can be seen how the informant shifts a lot between various online stores. There is not the same focus on one single shop at a time as there typically is when visiting a physical store. In a physical store, you are focusing on that specific brand or selection of brands at the moment. On the contrary, when shopping online, the customer has the ability to switch between stores in a matter of seconds, which results in a significant difference in user patterns. This means, that an online store has significantly less time than a physical store to grab hold of the customer and make him/her stay on their site as long as possible. It potentially only takes the customer a maximum of a couple of seconds to leave the store and visit a competitive site. Therefore, the online store needs to provide the customer with an incentive to stay a little longer on their site.

Adding to the above, it was also visible in one of the observations how shopping online can be a much more laid back and unfocused event than a physical shopping trip. This is seen when one of the informants abruptly is about to enter a news website and stop the shopping session (Appx. C2, 6:47 min.). The informant decides to stop looking at clothes in favor of pursuing a sudden urge of checking the news. This is most likely something that occurs rather often in online shopping situations. The differences in intensity and focus between online and physical shopping have clearly been illustrated through the video observations, and this example shows that online clothing stores are not only competing for the consumers' time against other online clothing stores. They are competing against every other website of interest for the specific consumer, such as a news website.

5.4 User Scenarios

Creating user scenarios is a commonly used tool among interaction designers as help for gaining an understanding for the end user and thus being able to define needs and requirements for a product/solution. As Preece, Rogers, and Sharp state, "...understanding what people do now is a good starting point for exploring the constraints, contexts, irritations, facilitators and so on under which the humans operate" (2002, p. 223). In order to communicate the pains and gains observed during the three different shopping experiences in a clear and engaging way, three different user scenarios will be presented in the following based on the data collected during respectively complete observation, observant participation, and web observation.

The following scenarios should not be viewed as a direct comparison between the observational methods used and their results, but rather as a manageable way to gain an overview of what different kinds of data the observational methods provided.

5.4.1 Complete Observation Scenario

A couple, a man and woman, approaches a store in a shopping mall, which sells a mixed selection of clothing brands for both men and women. As the couple approaches the store, their eyes register tables and racks with clothes on top outside the store. Mannequins are also standing outside styled with clothes available in the store. The couple is faced with two choices. They either stop and look at the clothes outside the store, because what if they were to find something they were looking for or something they like but were not looking for? Or they enter the store without giving the outside display any attention, as they are very determined in what they are looking for. The couple decides to stop outside the store and inspect the displays. On the left side of the store-entrance is displays with men's clothing and on the right side is displays with women's clothing. The men's displays were the first point they made contact with, given that the couple approached the store from the left side. Therefore, they first check out the men's displays followed by the women's displays. After checking out the outside displays, the couple enters the store.

The couple enters the men's department first. They move in line with the man first in line. Their eyes are flickering from side to side, taking in the surroundings. The man spots a pair of jeans on a rack. He holds them up in front of him looking towards the woman. She does not look particularly approving of what she sees. A few words expressing dislike for the jeans are exchanged before the man returns the pair of jeans to the rack and the couple moves on. As they navigate towards the back of the store, the man continuously looks from left to

right. He is trying to see if something clicks on his 'radar'. On their way to the back, the man briefly touches a couple of articles of clothing. They are not inspected further. Perhaps this is an unconscious action done only to be 'active' during the shopping session, or the quality was not up to his standards. It might also be, that nothing catered to his taste or met his demands but touching a couple of pieces of clothing makes him feel like visiting this store was not entirely unsuccessful even if he leaves empty-handed. The woman is not quite as active in this part of the store and is clearly waiting, albeit a bit impatiently, for it to be her turn to look in the women's department.

The couple has now reached the back of the men's department and enters the women's department of the store. The woman now comes to life and takes the lead. The couple splits up as the woman is navigating through the racks of clothing on the floor and walls. The man is more reserved in this part of the store and on 'standby' whenever the woman asks for his opinion on an article of clothing. The woman inspects various pieces of clothing. She mostly does so by holding the piece of clothing out in front of her, inspecting it front and back, and feeling the quality by rubbing the material between her fingers. Sometimes this inspection results in her putting the clothes back immediately. Other times the clothing qualifies for a second round of inspection. If that is the case, she might hold the piece of clothing up to her own body, trying to imagine how it would fit her. She is still undecided and hangs it back on the rack. She checks back in with her companion. She gives the signal, that she is done browsing and ready to leave the store. As they leave the store, the woman takes a final glance around the store, making sure that she did not miss anything of interest.

5.4.2 Observant Participation Scenario

As a man approaches a store, he reminds himself, that he is looking for something specific. In this case, it is a new jacket. As he is shopping on the main street in town, he is faced with three choices as he stands before the shop: One, he can check out the window display facing the street and/or two, he can check out the clothes on display on the street outside the store. Three, he can go straight into the store. As he approaches the first store, he goes straight in. He skips the outside displays, windows, and racks, as he usually does not find anything of interest there in this particular store. He is quick to navigate through the store and very specific in his search. As the shop assistant greets him, the male shopper greets back and declines any assistance. After a quick overview, where everything else but jackets are skipped over, he concludes, that nothing in this particular store meets his demands.

The man approaches a new store. He is pretty familiar with this store and their products, and he usually finds something of interest. Therefore, he regularly checks the display windows before entering the store. The store he enters is arranged with one main aisle down the center of the store with clothes on tables and racks on each side of the main aisle. The man navigates down the aisle looking left and right. He tries to spot the jackets among the vast and mixed number of products. He stumbles by a table displaying sweaters, which catches his attention. He briefly touches one of the sweaters, stops for a second, and examines the sweater further. The quality feels nice, so it qualifies for a thorough feel. He does not lift the sweater from the table. He reminds himself, that he is not out buying a new sweater, but he should be looking for a jacket. He spots a rack with jackets. It takes him no more than five to ten seconds to browse through those and conclude, that they are not his style. He turns around to see if there is anything he has missed looking at before leaving the store.

The last clothing store the man visits is a single brand large commercial store. He enters the store straight on and immediately aims for the escalator taking him to the 1st floor, where the men's department is located. He has been to this store many times before. Still, as he reaches the men's section, he stops for a second. The men's department feels very disorganized and he needs a brief moment to adjust to this and gain an overview. So far, his shopping trip has been very focused on the goal of finding a new jacket. However, he now gets distracted by a shirt hanging on the first rack he sees. He checks the price first and concludes that it is within his budget. He holds the shirt out in front of him, twisting it around, checking it from all angles. He checks the price and is pleasantly surprised. He asks himself if he really needs this shirt. After some consideration, he hangs it back. He takes a rather quick trip through the men's department while scouting for jackets with no success. As he is about to conclude the shopping trip, he returns back to the shirt he inspected earlier when he entered the store. He decides to try it on. His usual size does not fit right, but luckily there is a size smaller available, which fits perfectly. He decides to buy the shirt, but before he turns to the cashier, he checks the shirt for any defects or production errors, as he always does.

5.4.3 Web Observation Scenario

A woman in her mid-twenties has returned home from work. As a means to unwind, she decides to do a bit of online shopping. She has long been wanting a new dress and decides to search for one online. This saves her the stress of having to physically visit a store,

and furthermore, it saves her time in her stressful everyday life. She sits back in her couch with her computer on her lap and opens up the browser. She enters the URL of a shopping site she is fairly familiar with.

She is presented with the website's landing page. As it is a website she has visited before, it is already set on the category 'women'. She begins scrolling down the landing page, where the latest arrivals of clothing are presented in a mix of categories and colors. She stops and navigates towards the category tab, where she is able to categorize every product on the site. She almost always makes use of the feature, as it is much more efficient than browsing through every product on the website. She chooses the category 'dresses'. She lands on a visual overview of all the dresses in the form of pictures. She scrolls down the page, stopping for a couple of seconds for each row. She turns towards the filter tab. She is looking for a dress in a specific color. She chooses this color among the filters, thus eliminating every dress, which does not fit her requirements.

A dress catches her attention. There is a product preview in the product overview, allowing her to see a couple of pictures before actually clicking on the product. She checks out these pictures, which provides a view from different angles, and clicks on the product. The product page presents even more pictures, a short video clip of a model wearing the dress, product description, product information, and sizes available. Although the site provides a decent number of pictures and a video of the dress being worn by a model, which gives a good indication of how it looks, she is still undecided mainly because she cannot quite judge the quality by the pictures. She reads the product description, which states what material the dress is made of. She likes the look, so she decides to add it to the basket. The site provides free shipping and returns, so she thinks to herself that she has got nothing to lose.

Now she turns to the search function on the site to search for a specific brand. She likes this brand a lot and likes the fact, that she can simply search for it on the website, to keep up to date with their latest products. She knows it can be difficult to find this specific brand in physical stores, so she likes knowing that she can always find it on the website. She scrolls through the page with their newest arrivals, checking out a couple of sweaters, a pair of shoes, and some accessories. She is no longer on the lookout for a dress, as she has already gotten this need fulfilled. She is just browsing now – partly for entertainment and partly in case, she stumbles across something she might think she needs. She finds a sweater she likes, but she cannot quite justify spending the money at the moment. She decides to add it to her 'wish list' – a personalized list of products saved for later, which is available on her profile.

This means she will avoid having to search for the same product later but can access it through the wish list. She keeps scrolling.

Suddenly, she gets the urge to read the local news. She opens up a new tab and type in the URL. The shopping session has now ended.

6. Physical Clothing Stores vs. Online Clothing Stores Analysis

6.1 How Physical and Online Clothing Stores Differentiates Themselves – Based on Data Collection

In order to understand what physical clothing stores might do to combat their decline in popularity, it is necessary to investigate and compare on what critical points of the customer journey these two shopping possibilities differentiate themselves. Online clothing stores are obviously providing a service that makes shopping easier and simpler in many aspects of the user journey. The question is then, on what parts of the user journey the physical stores should focus on improving, rethinking, and/or innovating. Due to the fact that a physical store is set in an entirely different environment than an online store, and the use cases among consumers are so different, it is not a sustainable solution for physical stores to simply try and imitate online stores. In fact, this is more than likely not even physically possible.

Instead, the following section will look into at what five critical points of a shopping session the two types of shopping modes differ and what the significance is of these differences. The analysis will take outset in the following significant points of a shopping session:

- 1. The first point of contact between physical stores and online stores and the customer, e.g. display windows, outdoor clothing displays, the landing page of an online store, etc.
- 2. The first action that is taken when entering a store/visiting a website.
- 3. Navigational differences in physical stores vs. online stores.
- 4. How products are being evaluated and inspected.
- 5. How product-specific a physical shopping session is compared to an online shopping session.

These five critical points are constructed based on the data collected during the observations of both physical and online clothing stores. It is important to note, that these points have not

been listed in order of importance, but in an order that corresponds to the chronological timeline of a typical shopping experience. The points aim to put one shopping mode against the other in order to understand what exactly separates them and the significance hereof in relation to rethinking the physical shopping experience. The points are based on the areas of the observations where most common patterns were observed, thus resulting in the points on which the most valuable conclusions can be drawn.

6.2 The Five Significant Points in Depth

The first point and second point deals with the first contact between a customer and either a physical clothing store or an online clothing store, and what the first action taken by the customer is. These two points go hand in hand with each other as they play a major part in drawing the customer in through the doors and from there on into the store itself, thus being very important to the store and its potential sales. It is self-evident, that the first contact between the customer and the shopping mode differs significantly whether the customer is approaching a physical store and its tactile attributes in a shopping street or visiting an online store from home with no other interaction possible than what can be done with a mouse and a keyboard.

When approaching a physical store, there appear to be three overall approaches to choose from as the customer, based on the observations carried out for this thesis. Firstly, you can choose to have a look at the display windows. Secondly, you can choose to inspect the clothes presented on racks or tables outside in front of the store. Or thirdly, you can choose to enter the store head on, paying no special attention to anything before you are actually inside the store. Option one or two may sometimes be combined, but in general, the informants took one of the three approaches with the first and second type of approach being the most common. On the contrary, visiting an online store does not provide the customer with the same amount of choices. As soon as the customer enters the web address of a store and presses enter on his/her keyboard, he/she has already gone through the 'doors' to the store. The decision to enter the store does not come from what you see in display windows or what clothes are presented to you in front of the store. The decision to 'enter' the store is made before you have the store 'in sight', so to speak. The customer is only fully in contact with the online store when the website is entered. However, a significant mention here is the fact that online stores often utilize online advertising as a means to draw consumers in. Such advertisements do serve as a form of display window to the store, but they are not being considered in the same category as physical outdoor displays or display windows for this

analysis, simply because such advertisements are not connected to the online store in the same way – presentation and audience-wise. A kind of digital display window has, however, found its way to Google. If you Google “men’s shoes” for instance, Google will provide you with a preview of shoes from various online stores. The preview is however comprised of products from different websites and does therefore not function in the same way as a physical display window, which only displays products found within that specific store. However, this type of product preview cannot be compared to a regular physical display window. Therefore, this attribute of online shopping will not be discussed in further detail, but it deserved a mention in order to understand that the ability to see products online without entering an actual online store is slowly developing.

When the customer enters a physical store, he/she will typically either stop for a second or two to get an overview of the store, at times looking quite confused/disorientated, or go directly in one direction towards a specific product or area of the store. When entering an online store, the most common first action was to immediately access a specific product category and then scroll through that specific product category’s page either briefly or in a more focused manner. In fact, only one of the informants looked through the general landing page of an online store, albeit this was done very briefly (Appx. C4). What these two different approaches tell us is, that visiting a physical store is either a very casual experience with little preparation, or it is done with a set goal in mind. Visiting an online store, on the other hand, lands right in-between that of the physical stores, with the customer at first accessing a specific category, but not necessarily aiming straight for a specific article of clothing.

If one point should be taken away from this, it would be the fact that filtering clothing on online stores in categories of e.g. pants, jackets, shirts, etc. is such a crucial feature for online stores, as it is often the first action taken by the customer, and how the lack thereof in physical stores tends to overwhelm the customer. Dividing clothing into categories in physical stores is feature very rarely seen if ever seen, but given the usage of this feature online, perhaps it is time for physical stores to think more in these lines.

The third point deals with differences in how a customer navigates a physical store compared to an online store. Navigating a physical space with physical products obviously differs a lot from navigating what can easily be called an electronic database of clothing, i.e. an online store. Navigating a physical store is far more comprehensive, not only in a physical but also in a sensory sense and demands more from the customer than navigating an online

store does. A physical store does not only activate the sense of sight and hearing, as an online store does but also the sense of touch and smell.

As mentioned earlier in this thesis, in section 5, the informants primarily walked along the side walls when navigating the store, only seeking into the middle of the store when something grabbed their attention. Clearly, using this tactic to navigate the store is a sign that the customer takes a strategic approach given the selection and amount of clothing articles. In relation to the above mentioned of the customer being overwhelmed, staying at the side of the walls, and following the perimeter of clothing, is a way to guide yourself through the store and, in a sense, avoid being lost. When the layout of the store, or anything else, prevented the informants from using this tactic, the informants would typically stop for a second or two to look around, doing so in the attempt to gain an overview of the store.

Navigating online stores were primarily done using either the search function on the web page, the categories and filters available, or a combination of both. Online stores are far easier to navigate than physical stores, given that the customer can easily segment the selection online to fit exactly what he/she is searching for. Not only does this save time for the customer, but it also gives the customer the choice not to be presented with products irrelevant for that shopping session, thus making it a far superior way to shop in terms of navigational efficiency. At no point during the web observation was the informants seen struggling to navigate one of the online stores visited. Bear in mind, that as mentioned above, all of the informants were familiar with operating a computer and shopping online. Some online stores are of course easier to navigate than others. Nevertheless, from what can be seen on the observation videos, there was no point where an informant was observed struggling to find some specific category or article of clothing or getting lost in the site's search functionality.

But what is the significance of navigation in physical stores for the continued existence of physical stores? Well, in order for a physical store to make money, which is necessary in order for the store to even exist, the customer must be able to find what he/she is looking for. The likelihood of a customer leaving the store is very high if the store is either badly arranged or it is in any way hard to locate a certain type of clothing, color, or the like. What will be a takeaway from this in rethinking the physical store experience will be seeking inspiration in the simple, manageable, and structured navigational layout of online stores.

The fourth point deals with how products are being evaluated and inspected. Display windows, navigational differences, and convenience aside, it is fair to conclude that the

attribute of tactility is the most important attribute for physical stores. One of the few aspects of shopping, which cannot be replicated digitally, at least at the time that this thesis is written, is that of being able to physically feel and handle a product and try it on before purchasing. As amazing as technology is today, the tactility and ability to touch and feel clothes are still where online clothing stores fall short and therefore provides the consumers with the biggest incentive to shop physically.

A shopping trip in a physical clothing store involves a lot of touching, evaluation, and interaction with the products. According to the observations, this is actually where most time is spent during shopping. There seem to be two forms of tactile interaction among customers; a focused interaction and an unfocused interaction.

The focused interaction is to be understood as the act of inspecting the clothing from every angle, touching the fabric, evaluating the quality, and trying the clothes on to see if it fits. This appeared to be a very intense moment of the shopping situation. Typically, it is during these actions that the customer decides whether to buy the product or not. As this is taken place, the customer is fully focused on that specific piece of clothing. The observations made it clear, that when navigating through the store and looking around, the informants would often do so with a shifty glance. As soon as the informants began his/her one-on-one interaction between the shopper and the article of clothing, their look became much more focused and stayed focused until a decision had been made.

By unfocused interaction is meant to be understood the situations in which the informants very briefly or unfocused touched an article of clothing. Oftentimes, when approaching the outdoor displays or when entering the store, it was observed how the informants would touch a random piece of clothing – sometimes without even looking at what he/she was touching. This action appeared as more of a reflex, or shopping routine, functioning as a sort of shopping 'starting signal' given to oneself as the shopping session begins.

These two types of interaction can be, and most often is, combined. The unfocused interaction primarily appears during the approach, and the first seconds of a physical clothing store visit, whereas the focused interaction mainly appears as the customers are inside the store and browsing. As the customer is leaving the store one, or a few, instances of unfocused interactions may occur on his/her way out. In certain instances, the unfocused and focused interaction may become mixed and the customer can be observed shifting between these two forms of interaction. However, this was not one of the most common occurrences during my observation.

Looking towards online clothing stores, the actions are entirely different. In contrast to physical clothing stores, shopping online is a very static action, which does not make the same amount of variations available in regard to inspecting and evaluating the clothing. The online shopping behavior, as observed in this specific data collection, does not compare to the unfocused/focused evaluation of physical stores. Online shopping demands the customers' focus at all times, as without looking at the screen, there is no sensory input registered by the customer. It is not possible to inspect, feel, and evaluate a product online while looking the other way and paying no attention whatsoever to the screen because the only sense we use for making purchase decisions when shopping online is our vision. To compensate for the lack of tactility, online stores provide the customer with pictures of their clothes from various angles and sometimes even short video clips. Although this does not compensate for the lack of tactility, it does give the customer some confidence in their buying decision, and a notion that they know fairly well what the article of clothing looks like in real life. Watching the observations closely, it is obvious that whenever a product is being seriously considered, it is not enough for the informant to see a couple of pictures just once, before making a decision. At times, the informant would go through all pictures at least twice. This behavior might signal, that even though pictures serve as the best substitute to seeing and feeling the clothes in real life, it is still more difficult for the customer to correctly make a judgment than it would be in a physical store. On the other hand, the fact that online shopping has become so popular among consumers indicates that even though the physical interaction with products before we buy still plays a major part in our buying habits, perhaps we are starting to value other factors more, such as convenience and efficiency.

The fifth and final point deals with how product specific a physical shopping session is as compared to an online shopping session. During the observations, both physically and web-based, it was clear that there was a significant difference in the variation of clothing the informants would look at, depending on whether they were shopping in a physical store or online.

In a physical store, the informants were mostly targeted at either specific categories of clothing or articles of clothing, which they already had a clear vision of how should look. Although the informants were never asked to, in most cases they would mention what they were looking for, before entering the store. This could be something in the lines of, "I'm looking for a blazer", or a more specific criteria such as, "It is getting cold outside so I want a sweater, preferably in the color red" (Appx B1 & B3). At times, the informant would find

what he/she was looking for, and at other times he/she would leave empty-handed. It was clear though, that the informants would not spend a lot of time browsing items in other categories, then what they initially came for. This behavior also entailed that the informants would steer very directly at products, which were consistent with what they were looking for. Were the informants e.g. looking for a sweater, the informants would skip past jeans, jackets, and more. A lot of the store space was therefore not being touched at all by the informant. If this fact and the fact that the informants would often appear to be or even express being overwhelmed are being considered together, referring to point 3, it is clear that many stores, in fact, put obstacles in their own way, when not taking into consideration the desire of customers to find specific articles of clothing. Many clothing stores are organized with random browsing in mind e.g. mixing different categories of clothing and colors together. This makes it a real hassle for customers trying to find something specific, as it demands a certain ability to form a general view of the store in order to find something specific.

When online shopping for clothes, on the other hand, the informants showed a pattern of being much more likely to inspect various categories and types of clothing. As the recording was done remotely by the informants themselves, it cannot be said whether or not the informants would utter any words regarding the upcoming shopping session. However, the behavior observed painted a picture of it being common practice to jump from one category of clothing to another and then back again. As touched upon in the discussion of point number 1 in this section of the thesis, the first point of contact with an online store would often entail the informant choosing a category of clothing and scrolling either briefly, or more focused, through the products of this category. Already, this move indicates a less product specific experience, as it is hard to imagine a general customer browsing through the entirety of the products presented to him/her when first entering a physical store, before starting the search for something more specific. Although the initial search was not so product-specific and focused, the informants would often thereafter make use of the ability to categorize the products, find specific types of clothing, start using filters, or make use of the search function. The attribute of categorization, filters, and search function online makes it a lot easier to find something specific, than having to visually navigate through the entire number of products, as is the case for physical stores.

Overall it can be concluded, that the informants were significantly more product-specific and focused on their search for clothing in physical stores and significantly less product-specific and focused on their initial search on online stores. However, as the

shopping session started to develop online, the informants would become more and more product-specific and focused in their search.

6.3 Takeaways from the Analysis

The five critical points analyzed in the above section shed light on some of the significant areas of the user experience where physical clothing stores differentiate themselves from online clothing stores.

As for point number one, the analysis indicates that in most cases, the first contact between the physical store and customer takes place before the customer has actually entered the store. Clothing on display outside of the store and display windows both play a significant role in luring customers in and grabbing their attention outside of the store, giving them a taste of what can be expected inside. Online stores do not have the ability to lure customers in, in the same way, given their virtual presence. This poses some great opportunities for physical stores to profit from this extra attribute of theirs.

As for the first action taken when entering a physical store, point number two, the most important takeaway is the tendency for the customer to express confusion/disorientation when entering a physical store, which points at a general tendency for stores to be badly arranged or just not optimally organized. This relates closely to point number 3.

Point number three, navigational differences, is an area where online clothing stores really excels. Categorization, filters, and search functions were all utilized by the informants during the observations in order to be more specific in their shopping session, thus heightening their chances of being successful in finding a product, that fits their needs. In contrast, navigation in physical stores was a lot more restrictive and controlled, meaning not nearly as many different products were inspected, as was the case for the online shopping sessions. The navigation is an aspect of the shopping experience, where physical stores have an opportunity to really innovate themselves and try better at meeting the demands of the modern consumer.

How products are being evaluated and expected was discussed in point number four. The observations showed a lot of interaction between product and customer in physical stores, with the customers utilizing the tactile attributes as much as possible, which is a very strong point for physical stores. There even was a common pattern of how the informants, independent from each other, would touch the clothes between a couple of fingers to inspect its quality – either as a conscious or unconscious action. The importance of touch and feel in physical stores has been discussed several times before, but it is still something to pay

attention to. As Underhill states, "...why might somebody wish to touch something before buying it? There are plenty of very practical reasons, the most obvious being that if a product's tactile qualities are what's most important, we must know how it will feel" (2009, p. 172).

On the other hand, the customers were stuck with only pictures, videos, and product descriptions to base their decisions on when shopping online. Although these attributes combined may sound like a valid attempt at substituting tactility, it was clear that the informants spent a decent amount of time of their online shopping session clicking through pictures of products they were seriously considering buying or interested in, indicating the need for more thorough visual examination when there is no ability to feel the product before buying.

The ability for the customer to feel, touch, try on, and thoroughly inspect a piece of clothing before buying is definitely one of, if not the, most significant and important attribute of physical stores, as observed during the complete and observant participation. As KPMG states, the number one reason to shop in stores was, "I want to see/touch item first" followed by, "I want to try the item on" (2017, p. 29, Figure 3.3).

Point number five dealt with how product-specific a physical shopping session is as compared to an online shopping session. It was found, that a physical shopping session would typically be more product-specific than an online shopping session, meaning that the informants shopping in a physical store were more likely to look for something in a specific category of clothing, e.g. sweaters, or look at specific articles of clothing. Even though the informants shopping online would filter the clothing in categories there still was a higher tendency to jump between categories and products. The informants shopping online would most often either start by looking rather aimlessly at several different categories of clothing to then afterward narrowing down their search or jump between categories in a mix of focused and unfocused product searches in the duration of the shopping session.

Needless to say, the customers shopping online, and therefore in a less product-specific way, are being exposed to a lot more products than the customers shopping in physical stores.

Although it is not necessarily a bad thing for physical stores, that the customers visiting are more product-specific in their search, perhaps there are better ways in which physical clothing stores can take advantage of and cater to this behavior.

7. Looking Towards the Future of Physical Clothing Stores

The following section of this thesis will provide an assessment of the possibilities available for physical clothing stores to improve and innovate on their user experience in the future in order to improve their position in the current retail market, where online shopping is starting to dominate. The suggestions and points made in the following are based on the literature and points discussed in prior sections, and also the data collected and the analysis thereof. The following sections will include suggestions for short-term solutions and, taking outset in design fiction and critical design, also futuristic solutions, which may not be technologically feasible as of this moment. Note that the term ‘futuristic’ in this context should be understood in the sense that the solutions more than likely will be technologically feasible in the foreseeable future, but some of the suggestions would demand some progress be made technologically before the initiatives could be optimally implemented.

7.1 What are Current Initiatives Taken by Physical Stores to Improve the User Experience

Many areas of today's society have seen changes in recent years, which better aims to meet the demands of the consumers. Delivery services are getting products to our doorsteps in a matter of hours, cars are getting eco-friendlier, and we are able to stay connected to society 24/7 via our smartphones. Yet, physically shopping for clothes, which is an everyday activity for most of us, has not developed much till this day even though we are well aware that the popularity and usage among consumers of online shopping are ever growing. Although the development of physical clothing stores until this day has not been particularly revolutionary, some companies have made an attempt at incorporating new technologies and other initiatives in order to remain a viable shopping option. In the following, some of the current initiatives and technological additions to physical clothing shopping will be discussed and evaluated.

American company Cisco has developed the ‘StyleMe Virtual Mirror’. The purpose of this technology is to make it easier for the customers to ‘try’ products on by giving a digital visualization of how it looks when put on. As Fretwell states, “Cisco StyleMe consists of a life-sized mirror that overlays the customer’s image with pictures of clothing they select using gesture- and touch-based interfaces. It enables shoppers to quickly create outfits by mixing and matching a wide range of garments from the retailer’s in-store and online inventory” (2011, p. 1). The virtual mirror attempts to take the place of the traditional fitting

room, while at the same time being able to blend together the offline and online channel by showing both products available in-store and online. As nearly a third of consumers who shop online do so because of the greater selection according to KPMG (2017, p. 27), blending the offline and online selection in-store might seem like a good initiative on paper. However, the idea behind this might be flawed. Why would a customer who has made the trip to the physical store be interested in looking at clothes, that cannot be bought in the particular store, while also being able to only try it on virtually, which is almost certain to not provide a one hundred percent truthful representation of how the clothes would look on him/her in real life? Granted, a virtual mirror at the current technological state of such a shopping aid might prove beneficial as a gimmick or as a means of drawing customers into the store to experience the technology. The ability to receive feedback on their virtual try-on via social media and messaging (Fretwell, 2011, p. 1) might also appeal to, particularly, generation Z. But the question is, if there is, in fact, demand for such technology among the customers at this moment in time and if this technology actually gives enough value to the customer to justify its presence than simply shopping online? The technology does, after all, remove the important tactile attributes of touch and feel in physical stores. Such technology may improve the user experience in some areas, but it will have to live in solidarity with fitting rooms as we know it. Such a technology poses the question, that if the physical interaction of shopping for clothes is removed, what incentive is left to shop at physical stores?

British department store Debenhams has experimented with the boundaries of physical space by combining online and physical shopping in a new way. In 2011, Debenhams launched a virtual pop-up store available for three days, enabling shoppers to virtually try on a select amount of party dresses using augmented reality on either their iPhone or iPad. The app made it possible for the customer to virtually try on the clothes without even being inside a physical store. This is an example of trying partly to blend the attribute of online stores of 'anywhere' and 'anytime' with the physical attributes of trying the clothes on and seeing how it fits. Debenhams basically tried to blend together online and physical shopping in one digital solution. Whitelocks states that, "...a spokesperson for Debenhams said that the initial trial of the virtual store has been a success and it 'could well be something that becomes mainstream in the future' adding that hundreds of customers provided 'very positive feedback'" (2011). Even though this experiment was a success for Debenhams, and might be a viable option in terms of catering to the social aspect of shopping, it still does not fulfill the needs of touch and tactility when put in the context of

physical stores and might still be seen as a ‘fun’ addition to traditional shopping, rather than a potential substitute, or solution, to a problem.

During the 2019 London Fashion Week, LEGO and Snapchat teamed up to challenge the perception of physical clothing stores and shopping behavior. Together they opened the doors to a physical clothing store, which was entirely empty, except for a simple ‘Snapcode’, a special visual code needed to be scanned by the app Snapchat, which after being scanned would show the store and its contents in the room using augmented reality (London, 2019). This virtual store was constructed of LEGO, had virtual LEGO staff, and the ability to shop a special LEGO collection. The virtual store was also accessible outside of the physical room, but LEGO choosing to launch it inside a physical space is very interesting, as it combines the online augmented reality shopping experience with the traditional shopping experience of being inside of a physical room. LEGO and Snapchat showcased how the future of shopping might be entirely augmented and how it is possible to recreate a complete store digitally. Whether is it beneficial to have the virtual store be accessible in a physical space is up for discussion but doing so may not be particularly efficient. It neither emphasizes the positives of physical shopping e.g. tactility and social interaction nor does it emphasize the positives of online shopping, e.g. convenience and availability.

The fashion store Zara has been trialing a less drastic technological initiative in the UK, when compared to the aforementioned – but still a significant one. That is self-service checkout counters (Diner, 2017). The ability to check out yourself, and skip the interaction with a cashier, has been common in particularly grocery stores for quite some time now, but clothing stores have not yet adopted this technology. This is most likely due to the fact that shopping for clothes is often a more emotional and invested experience versus the more practical experience of shopping for groceries. Therefore, most physical stores are still manned by shop assistants in order to keep a personal touch. Self-service checkout counters are a small advancement in physical clothing shopping, but a significant measure taken in complying with the demands of the modern consumer of effectiveness and being able to handle the shopping all by himself/herself.

The above section should be viewed as a quick extraction of some of the attempts in recent years to breathe new life into shopping and engaging the customers. It is clear to see, that technology plays a very important and major role in what new initiatives find their way to the store, or even spares the consumer from actually entering a store at all. A lot of the

focus is on completely digitalizing the shopping experience, but perhaps technology is not the solution, but simply part of the solution, as discussed in the following section.

7.2 Short-term Initiatives for Improved User Experience in Physical Clothing Stores

The following proposals for future initiatives to improve the user experience are based on what is already technologically feasible and could be implemented without the need for significant new technological developments.

Looking at today's physical clothing stores, and comparing to clothing stores 10, 20, 30 years ago, or even longer, only minuscule changes and advancements in regard to the user experience have occurred to the vast majority of clothing stores. The concept is still very much the same as it always has been. You walk into a store with clothes presented most often mixed together in categories, colors, and patterns, on mannequins, racks, and tables. You browse around, perhaps finding something you like, and then you try it on. If it fits and is within your price range, you walk up to the counter and after a transaction and short interaction with the store assistant, you leave the store with your new purchase in hand. The experience is by and large the same no matter what ordinary store you enter, with the only nuances often being the interior design and selection of brands. Despite technology having impacted the majority of everyday actions, physical shopping is an area where little technological advancements have been seen – at least in the front end of physical shopping, where interaction between customer and store occurs. However, in recent years, technological initiatives have begun to find their way in to select physical stores – a few of these mentioned in section 7.1. Common to the vast majority of new initiatives is technology – either as an add-on to the shopping experience e.g. the Cisco StyleMe virtual mirror or as a technology-only solution, e.g. the LEGO/Snapchat collaboration. This is understandable, given the technology-centered society of today. But is technology really the savior for physical stores and the best way to keep customers surging through the sliding doors?

The proposals for new initiatives for physical stores will take outset in the results from the observations and data collection. It will look at improving the parts of the user experience that were found to be the most significant. It is thus estimated, that improving the most important points of the user experience will improve the user experience significantly. The data collection clearly emphasized the importance of touch and feel in a physical shopping scenario. Furthermore, it underlined some significant shortcomings in relation to in-

store navigation and how a store is presented from the outside. Looking at these significant points for physical shopping, technology has not yet been able or tried to improve on these points, which are essential for ensuring the majority of customers satisfactory shopping experiences. At the same time, a valid question is, if the consumers feel a demand for complex technological initiatives? It is important to differentiate between a physical store and an online store. Although the consumer of both shopping modes in some cases might be the same person, the circumstances under which each shopping mode is being used may call for different experiences. Physical stores have physical limitations. They are comprised of walls, ceilings, and doors. They have limited space and limited personnel. Everything has to fit inside the realm of physical space. Physical stores do not have the same freedom in how the store is constructed and operated as online stores do. However, physical stores do have significant advantages over online stores – advantages which cannot be replicated online.

The following proposals for physical stores are rooted in the takeaways of the five critical points and the conclusions of section 6.

Overall, the areas which can significantly improve the user experience of physical stores, if further innovated and developed upon are, the first interaction between customer and store before entering the store, the lack of a proper overview and/or arrangement of the store, how to navigate inside the store, a more product-specific approach from the store, which better consider the customer, and a bigger emphasis on the tactile elements, such as touch and feel. The proposed solutions for improving the user experience of physical stores today are to be understood in relation to medium to large clothing retail stores. Stores in that scale were chosen based on the fact that all observations were done in stores fitting in this category.

It was found, that the first interaction between customer and store typically happens before actually entering the store. Physical stores have the unique opportunity to attract customers and draw them inside the store from a distance on main streets, in shopping malls, and what else. Many stores utilize this opportunity by having a selection of clothes presented outside the store coupled with window displays typically showcasing some outfits on mannequins. The clothes on display appear to do a decent job of attracting customers. Some customers immediately check out the clothes, some skim it visually on the way in, and some skips it entirely. Display windows, on the other hand, did not appear to have quite the same effect on drawing customers in. In fact, only one of seven informants of the observant participation showed significant interest in the display windows of some of the stores visited. There is no question that these outdoor displays of either clothes or outfits serve as a

significant force of attraction for physical stores. At the same time, however, to direct the customers' attention, what is displayed must cater to a lot of different consumers.

It is time for physical stores to try some new and engaging ways to stop the consumers in their path and make them enter the store. This is a part of the shopping experience, where technology could be used very effectively.

How often does it happen, that a customer walks into a store, and within seconds he/she is on their way out? Either the content of the store was not what he/she thought it would be, or maybe it was too overwhelming and therefore the customer gave up immediately. Maybe the reason was something entirely else. Nonetheless, when a customer acts like this, it is because the store does not fulfill the customers' needs. But what if the customer could already become acquainted with the selection in store, without even having to enter the store? Imagine a scenario where you are on the lookout for a new sweater and you have a pretty good idea of what it should look like. Today, you would typically browse through several stores and either find what you are looking for or leave empty handed – perhaps turning to online shopping to find what you need. Physical stores should look into making it possible to browse their selection on digital screens from outside the store. Touch screens could easily be implemented in the display windows providing shoppers with an opportunity to skim through clothes available in-store, filtered by category and/or color. The customer would be able to choose a product and see where it is located inside the store, thus sparing the customer for the trouble of having to locate something specific. This would also improve on a large number of physical shopping trips being very product-specific. These outside 'inventory touch displays' would not completely substitute physical clothing displayed outside the store, in those cases where such displays are possible. However, plenty of stores does not have the opportunity to display clothes outside the store, and therefore lack the ability for customers to interact with the store before entering. The displays as proposed would fulfill this need. The displays could also be utilized in-store, providing the customer with a better overview of the products in the store and make navigating the products a manageable task.

During the observations it was noted, that it was common for the customers upon entering a store to express confusion and/or disorientation – meaning that they felt a need to form a general view of the store before commencing the actual shopping. Several reasons might lie at the root of this behavior, but one of the major reasons would be, that the customer simply does not know where to begin. Generally, when entering a store, you are presented with so many options to look at, and everything is mixed in between each other.

There is little to no structure in the arrangement of the clothes – at least not to the eyes of the customer. Looking towards online shopping, the structure is one of the main reasons as to why the popularity has skyrocketed. The ability to quickly search for items, categorize, and filter products make it easy to find something that fits your specific needs. The web observation confirmed the importance of this attribute for online stores. Not taking into account possible corporate demands as to the arrangement and structure of a store, physical stores should try to cater to the customers' appreciation of categorization and filters.

Imagine how much easier it would be to find a specific piece of clothing if the store was divided into sections based on clothing categories. Sweaters, t-shirts, jeans, etc. would all have their own section, and perhaps these sections would even be divided into colors too. It would create a much more fluent shopping experience, as the customer would be able to focus on one category of clothing at a time, while also being able to target their shopping trip on a specific category of clothes much easier. One of the only measures taken related to this idea as of today is the fact that most stores have a specific jeans section and/or shoe section. That is the only main category, which most stores today find necessary to group together. There is a need for more structure. Physical stores must learn from online stores, even despite the fact that physical stores hold the major attribute of tactility. Physical stores must acknowledge the appreciation consumers have for categorization, and a good layout, and adopt this approach from online stores.

What has just been discussed of the customers having a problem in getting an overview of the store upon entering, fades into how customers navigate inside the store. How to locate products and find what one is looking for is, of course, relates to how customers react when entering the store. If the customer immediately gets a sufficient overview, the navigation will be easier and vice versa. During the complete and observant participation, there was no particularly striking pattern in how customers navigated. It was a popular move to navigate along the side walls of the store, but some also went straight into the middle of the store. But of course, these patterns will differ, as it is rare to know exactly where the products you are looking for are located inside the store. This is where physical stores need to reevaluate these first moments of the user experience. The store being able to lead the customer towards a product is at the end of the day what generates sales. More than one initiative could be made in this regard. A 'high fidelity' solution would be a digital screen available upon entry to the store, able to guide the customer in the right direction. On this display, the customer would be able to choose a category of clothes, or a specific article of

clothes in stock, and be presented with a visual guide on the floor-plan of the store, showcasing where the article can be found. Such a solution would eliminate the need for aimlessly looking around and perhaps leaving the store in frustration over not locating a specific product.

Building on the concept of clothing being divided into categories, a 'low fidelity' solution would simply be for the store to have signs hanging from the ceiling stating what category of clothes can be found in that section of the store. A simple initiative like that would more than likely result in a huge improvement of the user experience. As has been discussed earlier, one of the reasons why customers have been favoring online stores in recent years, and are increasingly doing so, is the convenience factor. Of course, physical stores will never be a match for online stores in terms of convenience. It does not get much more convenient than shopping from your couch wearing a pajama. The essence of this proposal to physical stores is, that even though they will never fully match online stores on convenience, trying to adapt categorization to a physical mode of shopping will more than likely improve the user experience and provide the consumers with an attribute they have come to like from online stores, thus giving them a stronger incentive to shop in physical stores.

The ability to touch and feel products, here among also being able to try the clothes on before buying, is for many synonymous with physical clothing stores. It is also an attribute, which in itself plays a very significant part in the physical user experience. Being able to touch and evaluate a product on all parameters entirely is one of the strongest incentives a consumer can have to shop physically. It was observed, that often a customer would touch some articles of clothing either before actually entering the store, or right as the store was entered. The initial touching of a product seemed more like an unconscious instinct than a conscious choice, as the customer typically would not pay much attention or show significant interest to what he/she was touching at first. It would have been interesting to get a statement from a couple of clothing stores about whether or not they are aware of this behavior and if they arrange the clothes according to this, or if the displayed clothes are simply arranged at the front of the store based on what is new, what is on sale, etc. Unfortunately, it was not possible to get a statement from a clothing store on this specific topic. It would have been interesting to know, whether or not they have the customers' initial touch-point in mind when deciding how to arrange the front of the store. Nonetheless, simply judging by how outdoor displays, or the clothing just inside the entrance of most of the stores was displayed, there seemed to be no particular thought put into this. It was more or less

random. Some stores had things on sales laying outside the store and others had new styles or popular items. Based off of the observation it appeared that what clothes were displayed did not make a big difference in terms of convincing the consumer to enter the store as long as the consumer has already either decided to enter the store before approaching it or the consumers' interest happen to be caught by some of the displayed clothing. But physical stores should focus more on engaging the consumer and their tactile behavior at this first point of contact, as to create a stronger first-hand impression between store and consumer.

The tactile behavior continues when the consumer has entered the store with the difference being, that when the consumer has entered the store and becomes more specific in his/her shopping session, he/she appears to put more thought into what is being touched. One of the most important things to keep in mind is not what and when the customer touches and feel products, but rather that the customer touches and feels at all. It cannot be stressed enough how valuable the ability to touch and feel the clothing is for physical stores. As every physical clothing store of course already fulfills this need, it is an area, which is quite difficult to provide with new initiatives. There was no apparent pattern in what kind of clothing, fabric, etc. that a customer would touch, and therefore no specific clothing category or material can be highlighted. However, it was observed during the web observation that when a product was given extra attention, the product details would often be checked out i.e. care labels, fabric information, etc. During the complete and observant participation, however, it was very rarely seen that an informant would check anything else on the product label than size and price. As a result of this, a suggestion would be for physical stores to put more emphasis on product characteristics, such as materials, etc. A conclusion on the importance of highlighting product features, such as material details, cannot be based on the observation done for this thesis alone and would, therefore, be a topic for further research. There is a significant chance though, that creating a more collected experience, in regard to combining the tactile features with more product-specific details, would provide the customer with a more complete tactile and informational interaction with the products. This could, for instance, be done as simple as providing more clear product details throughout the store. T-shirts presented on a rack could have a clear sign providing product details above. Not only would such a sign be able to attract attention to specific products or areas of the store, but it would also connect the tactility aspect with the emotional aspects of product preferences. Whether or not such an initiative would have a positive impact or not on the user experience

would, of course, have to be researched and user tested, just as with every other suggestion made in this section of the paper.

Physical retail stores should take note, that sometimes what seems like a tiny, perhaps not necessary, initiative such as navigational signs, etc., might prove to be a significant improvement of the user experience. Sometimes, less is more.

7.3 Futuristic Initiatives for Improved User Experience in Physical Clothing Stores

The following section will introduce design thinking in the form of the practices Design Fiction and Critical Design. These two practices will then be used to outline a suggestion of what a user experience in a physical clothing store might look like in the future. This suggestion will be presented as a fictitious user scenario. The reason for creating a user scenario is, that it is easier to imagine how a futuristic physical shopping scenario could potentially feel like as a whole, instead of simply listing and explaining the suggested initiatives and uses of technology one by one.

7.3.1 Speculative Design – Design Fiction & Critical Design

The following fictive futuristic shopping scenario is based upon Design Fiction, which makes it possible to incorporate both possible and, at the moment, impossible solutions. Design Fiction is a design approach, which roots stems from the genre of science fiction. According to Bleecker, Design Fiction is, "...a way of materializing ideas and speculations without the pragmatic curtailing that often happens when dead weights are fastened to the imagination" (2009, p. 6). Consequently, Design Fiction gives way for the imagination to run free and makes it possible for designers to construct solutions, which does not necessarily take reality as its starting point and are not bound to physical space. Design Fiction gives way to futuristic solutions, that can form the basis for debate about any given product or subject. As Bleecker states: "As much as science fact tells you what is and is not possible, design fiction understands constraints differently. Design fiction is about creative provocation, raising questions, innovation, and exploration" (2009, p. 7). Design Fiction is a speculative approach to design and therefore it can be said to be related with Anthony Dunne and Fiona Raby's Critical Design in that aspect. Critical Design also stems from speculative design. Originally, Dunne and Raby defined Critical Design as follows: "Critical Design uses speculative design proposals to challenge narrow assumptions, preconceptions and gives about the role products play in everyday life" (2007). The purpose of Critical Design was for Dunne and Raby to design solutions, both dystopian and utopian, which questioned and

challenged the usual usages of products. In 2013, Dunne and Raby defined Critical Design in a milder fashion, stating that, “Critical designs are testimonials to what could be, but at the same time, they offer alternatives that highlight weaknesses within existing normality” (p. 35). Dunne and Raby now have less focus on the dystopian and utopian aspects of critical design and rather focuses on the purely speculative aspect. Dunne and Raby furthermore advocate that all good design, in essence, is critical as it constructs alternatives and better versions based on the shortcoming of the thing the designers are redesigning (2013, p. 35). The purpose of Critical Design and Design Fiction is therefore to construct design solutions that expose products' weaknesses and problematics, and because of this causes debate. The purpose of the following solutions mixed into a fictitious future user scenario is therefore not to predict what a future physical shopping experience should look like, or is going to look like, but rather shed a light on and spark a debate on the need for innovation in this area of retail. As stated by Dunne and Raby, it is "...a reminder of the possibility of alternatives, as somewhere to aim for rather than build" (2013, p. 73).

7.3.2 Futuristic Shopping Scenario

On the main street, a group of female friends approaches a fashion shop from the left side of the store entrance. In former times, this would mean little chance of the group being exposed to the window display because of the approach angle. However, new technology has made it possible for the display windows to reflect its contents digitally so that it is viewable from every direction. This piques the groups' interest, as they move closer towards the store. Outside the store, touch displays are available where they are able to skim through the contents of the store before entering. One the females find a product of interest, a shirt, and are able to see its location in-store on a map on the screen. By entering a 3-digit code in the store's complimentary app, she is able to bring up the map on her phone, making it very easy for her to locate the product. Such technology would help significantly in situations where customers enter the store and have difficulties getting an overview and navigating the store, which was a recurrent theme during the observations.

As the group enters the store, it is clearly marked where different categories of clothing can be found. The store is divided into jackets, sweaters, shirts, t-shirts, jeans, dresses, etc. As one of the group members head for the product she located from outside the store, the other two stops at the ‘virtual fitting rooms’. Here it is possible to ‘try on’ articles of clothing available at the store using augmented reality, which is refined so much that it looks as close to real life as possible when for example ‘putting on’ a dress. The technology

has been so refined, that it is possible for multiple people at a time to try something virtually on. This virtual fitting room makes it possible to simulate different environments in terms of lighting and surroundings, for instance being at a party, making it possible to evaluate what a piece of clothing will look like in various situations. The third friend joins them in the fitting room. When the virtual mirror is turned off it functions as a regular mirror. The friend tries the shirt on. Unfortunately, it is not the correct size. The mirror registers what product is being tried on and the customer is then able to check the store's inventory in the fitting room to see if the correct size is in stock. If it is not in stock, it is possible to order the correct size for delivery either to the store or to her home. She decides to order it to her home.

The group returns to browsing the store. Some of the clothing racks have screens attached to them. These screens play a video of models of various shapes and sizes wearing the clothing article on the rack. This engages the customer and creates a more lively and visual shopping experience, while also providing a live preview of the clothes. After browsing around the store, the group sits down in one of the shopping-lounges. This is an area, where the customers can sit down and digitally look through a catalog of the products in the store. If they wish, they can select multiple articles of clothing, which will then be sourced out by an employee and made available to try on. This provides the customers with an opportunity to not only be more social in shopping together but also more directly choose outfits to try on as a social activity. Such a feature would encourage the customers to spend more time in the store together, which more than likely will increase the chance of sales. Underhill states that, "If you can create an atmosphere that fosters discussion of an outfit...the merchandise begins to sell itself (2009, p. 168).

The group has now found a couple of items and decides to check out. The store provides a self-service checkout to make it a quick process to checkout. They could have decided to check out as they go using their smartphone by scanning a code on the article of clothing and pay by via the stores' dedicated app. The store provides several options in order to eliminate any waiting time and make the final process of the shopping trip as quick and painless as possible. Eliminating waiting time is very important for physical stores. As Underhill states, "...the single most important factor in determining a shopper's opinion of the service he or she receives is waiting time...a short wait enhances the entire shopping experience and a long one poisons it" (p. 201).

As they only had a couple of products to buy, they decided to use the self-service checkout.

8. Critique, Limitations, and Suggestions for Further Research

The following section deals with methodological critique and limitations in regard to the methodological application for this master's thesis. Furthermore, the following section will look into how the research question, and the way it has been dealt with, could be developed on in further research projects.

8.1 Critique and Limitations

This thesis has approached the question of in what areas, and how, physical clothing stores might improve their user experience to keep up with the ever-growing popularity of online clothing stores. One of the most important takeaways for this thesis is the method by which the research question has been examined – the method of observation. The literature review sheds light on some of the former methods used for examining the relationship and choices of consumers in regard to physical and online stores. Common to the majority is that they take a quantitative approach to the subject. As has been touched on in previous sections of this thesis, taking a quantitative approach to the subject of how consumers utilize both physical and online stores will rarely provide valid unbiased results. Asking people to reflect on their own behavior, particularly in regard to shopping, where a lot of the things we do are deep-rooted habits, is unlikely to result in one-hundred percent truthful answers. The method of observation, by which the topic has been dealt with in this thesis, should be seen as taking one of the first steps in a more qualitative and observational approach to dealing with user experience in retail. Clothing stores were chosen for this particular subject, as it is an area of retail where the consumer is both very emotionally and physically involved – the physical aspect, of course, expresses itself the most in physical shopping scenarios.

8.1.1 Methodological and Data Collection Critique

Variations of the anthropological method of observation were chosen for the data collection of this thesis, as the overall purpose was to study actions and behavior. However, some limitations resulted in the data collection not being quite as extensive as one could have hoped for.

First off, it is self-evident that several more informants would have created more precise and nuanced results to base the proposed initiatives and solutions on. Complete observation accounted for 17 informants in total, observant participation for three individuals and two groups of two people each, and web observation accounted for seven individuals in total.

Thinking big picture, it is, of course, a bit of a stretch to try and conclude on the future of physical clothing stores based on that total amount of informants. A larger number of informants and a more extensive data collection on all three observational methods would be needed in order to do so. Also, a larger amount of different physical stores would need to be analyzed and observed. For this thesis, only one store agreed to let their customers be observed, which of course hindered the scope of the data collection.

Several choices had to be made when deciding on observation as the method for collecting data. The ideal scenario for the complete observation and observant participation would have been to be able to carry out video recordings of the observations. This would require permission from the store and the informants due to both ethical and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) reasons. An extensive effort was made in the hopes of gaining permission to film in selected clothing stores. However, due to the comprehensive tightening of the GDPR law in 2018 (European Commission), it proved extremely difficult to get physical stores involved in the project. Although the reach out to stores was far stretched, no stores granted permission to film inside, no matter if the informants were recruited outside or inside the store. I was however granted permission of one store to carry out my complete observation. This is, of course, a narrow scope to draw conclusions on. However, it is also important to emphasize the formalities, and thus the time frame for writing this particular thesis, which demanded that at one point a decision had to be made of whether to continue seeking permission to record video inside stores or go an alternative route with the observation, which in the end ended up being that of creating field notes instead of video recordings.

As discussed earlier in this thesis, the aspect of web observation was also considered carefully. The ideal scenario would have been to be able to record the shopping session whenever it spontaneously occurred. This would demand a significant investment in the project from the informant's side, as some kind of tracking software would have to be installed on their electronic devices. Although this would provide the most advanced and thorough data, it would also demand significantly more of the scope of the project. Furthermore, the web observational data collected in this case came entirely from shopping scenarios taking place on computers. No video material of online shopping scenarios on smartphones was carried out. Online shopping does not only occur on computers today, but also on smartphones, and therefore it would have been very beneficial for the results to have had this area of online shopping included.

For observant participation and web observation, a convenience sample was used. This methodological approach has already been discussed in earlier sections of this thesis. However, it is important to note, that making use of a convenience sample, although the most time-efficient and most suitable for this particular thesis, can influence the results compared to a completely random sample. It is very difficult to say to what degree this might be the case, and it is impossible to ever be certain when conducting the observation.

All in all, it is important to yet again note, that the methodological approach to the research question of this master's thesis and the results hereof should not be seen as a definitive solution to the research question, but rather a new methodological approach, showcasing how such a research question, like the one presented for this thesis, can be dealt with. This opens up for further research by the use of this method and provides examples of what data might be derived from making use of the method in this specific context.

8.2 Suggestions for Further Research

Further research on what initiatives can be taken, in regard to the user experience of physical stores to ensure their future survival in an online shopping dominating culture, could derive advantage from the lessons learned by this master's thesis. These include establishing stronger connections to physical stores and preferably being granted permission to video record. Having the ability to record video would be extremely beneficial for the analysis, as it would make it possible to go back and re-watch the shopping situation, thus being able to spot nuances and far more details than is possible by doing purely visual observation in the moment combined with field notes. A future research paper could very likely profit from conducting such an investigation in collaboration with a specific retail chain or several stores. There should also be aimed at recruiting a larger number of informants as doing so would yield the most precise results.

Generally, future researchers should look more into collecting data in a more qualitative rather than quantitative manner when investigating the relationship between physical and online retail stores – particularly when focusing on user experience. It is important for future researchers in this field to not look at numbers to conclude why people today are shopping primarily online, but rather look at the behavior of the consumers and understand how they use the different shopping modes. Furthermore, future researchers deciding to do this kind of study within this field should consider the time-frame for conducting the data collection. Doing observation is time-

consuming and especially when combining the need of establishing contacts when doing three different types of observation.

One area of shopping that could be very interesting for future researchers to go in-depth with, especially by utilizing the method of observation, is that of the social aspect of shopping. When beginning the research for this thesis, it was presumed that the social aspect would express itself a lot more than it actually did and bear a more significant role in the analysis. However, the data collected did not point in the direction of the social aspect of shopping being one of the most significant points in this case. Therefore, this thesis did not look further into this. Related to section 8.1.1, the fact that the social aspect of shopping did not shine that much through in the data collected for this thesis could very well be a result of the lack of an extensive data collection, i.e. significant more informants than was the case for this thesis, since shopping, and in particular physical shopping, and being social is often mentioned together. Therefore, dedicating an entire research period to the social aspect of shopping by making use of observation as the method would more than likely provide some interesting insight into the field of physical versus online shopping.

9. Conclusion

This Master's Thesis set out to answer the question of how physical clothing stores can rethink their user experience, and what initiatives they can take to remain a viable shopping alternative, in a retail market where online clothing stores are gaining ground fast. The topic has been approached and researched by the method of observation.

The topic of physical stores versus online stores has for some years been a hot topic. Online stores are steadily rising in popularity, and even though physical stores have not yet lost their relevance, it is evident that their development cannot stay static much longer. The vast majority of past researchers in this field have drawn their conclusions on a quantitative data collection comprised of questionnaires, surveys, or the like. However, it was found, that there was a gap to be filled with aiming to understand shopping behavior in a qualitative and as objective way as possible, thus the reasoning for making use of observation as a method for this thesis.

Three different types of observation were utilized for this thesis. Complete observation and observant participation were used for studying physical shopping behavior, and web observation was used for studying online shopping behavior. These three observational

studies combined provided an overview of patterns and general shopping behavior among consumers.

After analyzing and discussing the different ways in which consumers shop for clothes in physical stores versus online stores, it was possible to list the five most significant points of a shopping session – according to this specific data collection. These five points were the first contact between the store and customer, the first action that is taken when entering/visiting a store, navigational differences in physical versus online stores, how products are evaluated and inspected, and how product-specific a physical clothing shopping session versus an online shopping session is.

Based on these five points, it was possible to dive into and suggest what current initiatives taken by physical clothing stores are, and what could be done in the near future to secure their position in the retail market.

Some physical clothing stores and brands have already taken initiatives in order to breathe new life into the user experience. Cisco has developed digital mirrors, which challenge the way in which we usually try clothing on. Debenhams has experimented with the limits of physical shopping by creating virtual pop-up stores, and LEGO and Snapchat have experimented with an entire clothing store constructed in augmented reality. Common to most of these initiatives are, that they are all based on technology. However, the data collection proved, that even though technology should definitely be incorporated more in clothing stores than it is today, physical stores also need to rethink the most basic aspects of the physical stores, e.g. how we interact with clothes and navigate the store. A couple of the suggestions was therefore for physical stores to provide the consumer with the opportunity to digitally look through the store's selection from outside the store and for stores to keep a tighter structure inside the store, thus making navigating the store and locating products easier for the consumer.

The thesis also looked into what a shopping scenario might look like in the future. These suggestions were presented in the form of a fictive user scenario based on the design practices of design fiction and critical design.

Lastly, the thesis provided some methodological critique in relation to the data collection of this thesis, and how the number of respondents and stores in which the observation took place, among other things, might have affected the results. Some suggestions for further research were also presented, here among establishing connections, that would make it possible to conduct video observation, and to look more into the social aspects of shopping.

Overall, the thesis has succeeded in answering the problem formulation, in that it has provided suggestions based on an observational data collection for what initiatives physical clothing stores could, and should, take in the future. The suggestions include looking at incorporating technological initiatives, such as touch screen displays, which provide an overview of the selection inside the store, from the very moment the customer approaches the store. Such displays would also be effective inside the store in terms of improving the navigational experience. However, a much simpler suggestion for improving the navigation and user experience would be to arrange the clothing in categories so, for instance, all white shirts were grouped together. Simple signs hanging above each section of clothing, stating where each category is located, would also help significantly in the customer's product search and ability to navigate the store. The thesis also suggests for physical stores to put more emphasis on product characteristics, such as materials, in order to create a more collected tactile experience by combining the tactile features of the products with a higher emphasis on product-specific details.

The thesis has approached the topic by a method rarely used in the context of researching the relationship between physical and online stores. Even though the data collection in this particular case has had its limitations, it has still provided a strong foundation on which future researchers can build on.

Whether physical stores want to admit it or not, consumers are growing more and more fond of shopping for clothes online. Physical clothing stores have stayed static in their development long enough, and the time has come for new initiatives and innovation in this field. Even minor changes in a store's layout and organization might prove to be a significant improvement in terms of the user experience for the customer. This does not mean, however, that physical stores should completely put technology aside. Technology definitely has its place, also in physical clothing stores, but physical clothing stores should not wait for technological initiatives in their field to be fully developed, before making any new initiatives at all. In the end, it is the user experience, which greatly dictates if the consumer decides to make the journey to a physical store to spend his/her hard-earned money, or whether the consumer decides to do the shopping from the comfort of his/her home. All in all, the findings of this master's thesis shed light on the fact that even though physical stores came before online stores, and online stores has since won the heart of many consumers, now is the time for physical stores to learn from online stores and adapt to the shift in consumer culture. Whether this is done in the form of incorporating technological initiatives inspired by online shopping or simple initiatives, such as looking towards online

stores in how customers navigate for clothing, which to a high degree consists of utilizing filters such as size, color, and price, and is an area where online stores excel, any improvement in the user experience, however seemingly insignificant will help physical stores maintain their position in the retail market in the future to come. Looking into and improving the five significant points of a shopping session, as presented in this thesis, would be a place to start.

10. Literature

Bernard, R. H. (2006). *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (4th ed.). Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press.

Blázquez, M. (2014). Fashion Shopping in Multichannel Retail: The Role of Technology in Enhancing the Customer Experience. *International Journal of Electronic Commerce*, 18(4), 97-116. doi: 10.2753/JEC1086-4415180404

Bleecker, J. (2009). *Design Fiction: A short essay on design, science, fact and fiction*. Retrieved from http://drbfw5wflxon.cloudfront.net/writing/DesignFiction_WebEdition.pdf

DeWalt, K. M. & DeWalt, B. R. (2011). *Participant Observation: A Guide for Fieldworkers* (2nd ed.). Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press.

Diner, J. (2017, September 8). Help Yourself: How Zara Is Elevating the Self-Service Experience. *VOGUE*. Retrieved from <https://www.vogue.co.uk/>

Dunne, A. & Raby, F. (2007). *Critical Design FAQ*. Retrieved from <http://dunneandraby.co.uk/content/bydandr/13/0>

Dunne, A. & Raby, F. (2013). *Speculative Everything: Design, Fiction, and Social Dreaming*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

European Commission. *Data Protection in the EU*. Available from https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/law-topic/data-protection/data-protection-eu_en

Fretwell, L. (2011). *Cisco StyleMe Virtual Fashion Mirror: How New Consumer Behaviors Are Enabling Retailers to Revitalize Their Stores by Combining the Virtual and Physical Worlds*. Retrieved from https://www.cisco.com/c/dam/en_us/about/ac79/docs/retail/StyleMeEngagementOverview_120611FINAL.pdf

- Hsiao, M-H. (2009). Shopping Mode Choice: Physical Store Shopping versus E-shopping. *Transportation Research Part E: Logistics and Transportation Review*, 45(1), 86-95. doi: 10.1016/j.tre.2008.06.002
- Jiang, L., Yang, Z., & Jun, M. (2013). Measuring Consumer Perceptions of Online Shopping Convenience. *Journal of Service Management*, 24(2), 191-214. doi: 10.1108/09564231311323962
- KPMG. (2017). *The Truth About Online Consumers – 2017 Global Online Consumer Report*. Retrieved from <https://assets.kpmg/content/dam/kpmg/xx/pdf/2017/01/the-truth-about-online-consumers.pdf>
- Laroche, M., Yang, Z., McDougall., G.H.G., & Bergeron, J. (2005). Internet versus Bricks-and-mortar Retailers: An Investigation Into Intangibility and its Consequences. *Journal of Retailing*, 81(4), 251-267. doi: 10.1016/j.jretai.2004.11.002
- London, L. (2019, February 13). LEGO and Snapchat Just Opened a Clothing Store With No Clothes In It. *Forbes*. Retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com>
- Maat, K., & Konings, R. (2018). Accessibility or Innovation? Store Shopping Trips versus Online Shopping. *Transportation Research Record: Journal of the Transportation Research Board*, 2672(50), 1-10. doi: 10.1177/0361198118794044
- Morgan, Blake. (2018, October 15). Will There Be a Physical Retail Store in 10-20 Years? *Forbes*. Retrived from <https://www.forbes.com>
- Pantano, E., & Gandini, A. (2017). Exploring the Forms of Sociality Mediated by Innovative Technologies in Retail Settings. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 77, 367-373. doi: 10.1016/j.chb.2017.02.036
- Papagiannidis, S., Pantano, E., See-To, E.W.K., Dennis, C., & Bourlais, M. (2017). To Immerse or Not? Experimenting with Two Virtual Retail Environments. *Information Technology & People*, 30(1), 163-188. doi: 10.1108/ITP-03-2015-0069

- Preece, J., Rogers, Y., & Sharp, H. (2002). *Interaction Design: Beyond Human-Computer Interaction*. New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons.
- Rajamma, R. K., Paswan, A. K., & Ganesh, G. (2007). Services Purchased at Brick and Mortar versus Online Stores, and Shopping Motivation. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 21(3), 200-212. doi: 10.1108/08876040710746552
- Richter, W. (2017, November 20). Nothing Can Stop the Shift to Online Shopping. *Business Insider*. Retrieved from <https://www.businessinsider.com>
- Schramm-Klein, H., Swoboda, B., & Morschett, D. (2007). Internet vs. Brick-and-mortar Stores – Analysing the Influence of Shopping Motives on Retail Channel Choice Among Internet Users. *Journal of Customer Behaviour*, 6(1), 19-36. doi: 10.1362/147539207X198356
- Statista. E-commerce share of total retail revenue in the United States in 2011, 2016 and 2021, by product category. *Statista*. Retrieved from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/203043/online-share-of-total-us-retail-revenue-projection/>
- Underhill, P. (2009). *Why We Buy: The Science of Shopping*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.
- Whitelocks, S. (2011, November 1). Virtual Changing Rooms Hit the High Street: Debenhams First to Trial New Technology. *Mail Online*. Retrieved from <https://www.dailymail.co.uk>

11. Appendixes

Appendix A - Complete Observation Fieldnotes

- **A1)** To kvinder, mor og datter?, ca. 25-30 og 50-55 år.
Træder ind i herreafdeling. Kigger først rundt allerforrest i butik. Går derefter ud. Tjekker displays ude foran. Går hen til dametøj. Tjekker displays ude foran. Spotter bluse. Tjekker efter rigtig størrelse. Står længe og snakker. Emnet skifter til noget ikke shoppe-relevant. Går efter et par minutter ind i butikken. Stopper op. Snakker videre endnu et par minutter. Bevæger sig langsomt gennem butikken. Stopper op og undersøger mannequin. Går videre ind i butik. Går rundt i kanten af butik. Stopper et par gange og undersøger produkt. Forlader butik.
- **A2)** Kvinde og Mand, ca. 30 år, barnevogn.
Befinder sig i herreafdeling. Går gennem butikken. Stopper op ved “øer” og rører ved tøjet. Leder efter rigtig størrelse. Hvis ikke rigtig størrelse fortsættes jagten. Går imod udgang. Stopper op. Går ind i butik igen og ned bagved igen. Skifter over i dameafdeling. Samme procedure som ovenstående. Der bevæges langsomt gennem butikken. Der stoppes op og tøjet inspiceres. Der udvises ikke oprigtig interesse i tøjet, men det fornemmes at det skal røres og undersøges, før der kan gås videre i butikken. Slutteligt går kvinden igen ind i herreafdelingen. Vognen er nu parkeret og der gås endnu en runde, “Har jeg fået set alt?”. Manden er nu ankommet og spotter et par bukser ved indgangen. De skal prøves. Der spottes en t-shirt på vejen. Kvaliteten tjekkes hurtigt mellem to fingre. Det bliver ved det. Skohylden inspiceres. Der diskuteres model. Besøget har nu taget over 15 min. Der prøves nu sko til manden. Kvinden vandrer rundt med barnevogn i ventetiden. Samlet besøg nu over 20 min. Produkt er valgt og der gås til kassen.
- **A3)** Par, mand og kvinde, 45-50 år, herreafdeling.
Går målrettet ind og finder stativ med kasketter. Kasketterne prøves. Ved hver kasket fremviser kvinden den til manden. Manden afviser eller godkender. Til sidst opnås enighed. Et meget hurtigt og fokuseret besøg. Der er udvalgt en kasket. Der sigtes mod kassen.

- **A4)** Par, mand og kvinde, 18-21 år.
Går ind i butikkens herreafdeling. Følges ad. Går først lidt ind, derefter tilbage og rundt på anden side af reol. Kvinden målretter (den her er fin), mand undersøger. Kun første 1/3 af butikken undersøges, før der skiftes til kvindeafdelingen. Her går hurtigt gennem halvdelen af afdelingen. Derefter tilbage i herreafdelingen. Display med buks ved indgang tjekkes. Kvalitet tjekkes med to fingre. Bukser holdes op. Farver sammenlignes. Kvinden tager teten. Mand følger med. Der diskuteres buks. Bukser er blevet udvalgt. Der sigtes målrettet efter prøverummet. Efter en tid i prøverummet er buksen valgt og købes ved kassen.
- **A5)** Par, mand og kvinde, 25-30 år, barnevogn.
Der går kolonne. Der går lige ind i butikken. Inden for 5 meter undersøges kvalitet på et par bukser. Kort kommentar udveksles. Derefter fortsættes ned i enden af butikken. Der kigges til højre og venstre. Herefter fortsættes ind i dameafdeling. Turen bliver mere fokuseret. Kvinden undersøger flere produkter. Der berøres meget. Efter dette er gentaget forlades butikken.
- **A6)** Mand og dreng (Sandsynligvis far og søn), 45-50/12-15 år.
Der målrettes efter skohylden. Tydeligt de kender butikken. To par sko tages op og undersøges af begge parter. Efter kort undersøgelse forlades butikken. Samlet besøgstid cirka 1min.
- **A7)** To kvinder, 23-26 år. Dameafdeling.
Følges langsomt ad. Øerne/borde inspiceres. Tøjet berøres på typisk vis. Pigerne følges ad i kolonne stil. Når der spottes noget interessant/spændende, vendes dette indbyrdes og undersøges ved hurtig berøring. Den ene finder bluse, holder den op til sig (forestiller sig hvordan den ser ud på). Hænges tilbage. Sjove/underlige produkter vendes og der grines. De er meget taktile. Tydeligt de søger efter forskellige ting.
- **A8)** To piger, 16-18 år.
Dameafdeling. Går ind og kigger lidt omkring. Den ene spotter nogle sko "Er det ikke dem her du gerne vil have?". "Nej ikke dem svarer den anden". De bevæger sig hurtigt igennem butik. Udviser stort overblik. Vender målrettet tilbage til skohylden.

Rører og undersøger sko. Opdager knagerække bagved sig. Undersøger i fællesskab bluse. Fokus vendes tilbage mod sko. Flere sko tages ned og undersøges.

Meningsudveksling. Butikken forlades herefter.

(Note: Tydeligt at butikken er blevet besøgt med formålet at se på sko, men at de bliver distraheret af andre produktkategorier).

- **A9)** To drenge, 17-19 år. Herreafdeling.

Finder målrettet noget der ligner det de søger. De vurderer sammen farver. Den ene leder efter sin størrelse. Den findes ikke. Klør sig i hovedbunden. Der udveksles dialog omkring hvad de har overvejet at købe af tøj. Der tjekkes endnu engang efter korrekt størrelse. Den anden finder sin størrelse i anden farve. De går sammen til prøverummet. Imens den ene prøver tøj, kigger den anden rundt *(Note: Er der mon andet som fanger mig?)*. Der prøves i lang tid. Efter bukserne er prøvet går begge tilbage og lægger bukserne på plads. De holdes op foran sig en sidste gang. Butikken forlades.

- **A10)** Mand, 60-65 år. Herreafdeling.

Går ned gennem butikken. Hilser på ekspedient. Kigger rundt med hænder i lommerne. *(Note: Prøver at danne overblik over om der er noget af interesse. Søger ikke umiddelbart noget målrettet)*. Han henvender sig til mandlig ekspedient vedr. hjælp til bukser. Der diskuteres modeller. Efter en model er fundet prøves de på. Bukserne var ikke af interesse og efterlades i prøverummet, hvorefter butikken forlades.

- **A11)** Kvinde, 35-40 år. Dameafdeling.

Efter entré henvender ekspedient sig. Kvinden søger noget specifikt. Ekspedient foreslår en model. Det var ikke hvad kunden søgte. Der rystes på hovedet og det forsøges at forklares nærmere, hvordan det ønskede ser ud. Ekspedient foreslår anden model. Heller ikke rigtig. Ekspedienten siger, at det er det tætteste hun kan komme på. Kunden er ærgerlig og forlader butikken.

- **A12)** Kvinde, 60-65 år. Dameafdeling.
Går ind i butik. Tjekker første stativ. En bluse berøres. Et skridt tilbage. Betragter. Kigger højre og venstre. Går ud igen. Stopper op ved display foran butikken, tjekker en bluse. Forlader butikken.
- **A13)** To piger, 16-18 år. Dameafdeling.
Der gås kolonne. Imens der snakkes, berører den bagerste person en bluse idet de passerer, men kigger ikke på den. Hånden stryges blot henover den. De går hurtigt gennem butikken med flakkende blikke, før der vendes om og butikken forlades hastigt. Der udveksles ikke megen snak. (*Note: Det fornemmes af butikken anses som uoverskuelig, og det er af denne grund, at butikken forlades*)
- **A14)** Pige, ca. 24 år. Dameafdeling.
Går ned mod enden af butikken. På vejen stryges hænderne over tøj der hænges på rækker, men det undersøges ikke nærmere (*Note: ubevidst berøring*). Dette gentages flere gange. Personen går målrettet efter kjoler. Stopper tit op og kigger rundt i lokalet. (*Note: Forsøger at skabe sig et overblik*). Visse produkter tages af knagen og undersøges. Butik forlades.
- **A15)** Par – mand og kvinde, 25-28 år.
Kvinden stopper op foran butik og tjekker jakke. Berøres og derefter entré i butik. Parret splittes uden kommunikation – kvinde bliver i dameafdeling og mand går ind til herreafdelingen. Kvinden undersøger ø med t-shirts. Tilfældig (*Note: Synes det*) udvælges. Den drejes, så logo bedre kan ses. Overvejes i to sekunder, men fravælges. Manden kommer ind til kvinden. Der snakkes lidt (*Note: Mand ryster på hovedet. Lader til turen var uden succes*). De forlader butikken.
- **A16)** Par, mand og kvinde, 55-65 år. Dameafdeling.
Kvinden udvælger kjoler som holdes op foran sig foran spejlet (*Note: mulighed for at undersøge muligt look uden at prøve det på?*). Dette gentages flere gange. Hun kigger på manden, når dette gøres (*Note: Ønsker måske bekræftelse fra manden på tøjvalg?*) Manden deltager ikke ret aktivt, men forholder sig passiv.

- **A17)** Pige, 16-17 år, Dameafdeling.

Med hastige skridt entreres butikken. Noget fanger interesse – stopper brat. Produktet (bukser) føles med nogle fingre, hvorefter de holdes i strakt arm. Efter 2-3 sekunder sænkes buksen og hænges tilbage. Der undersøges videre. En bluse spottes. Samme procedure som før. Denne tages målrettet med i prøverum. Efter et par minutter forlades prøverummet, og bluse hænges på plads. På vej ud stoppes ved førnævnte buks. Undersøges igen med samme procedure. Nu tages de med i prøverum. De hænges på plads igen. Butik forlades. *(Note: Muligheden for at prøve tøjet på, gør hende sikker i sit valg).*

Appendix B - Observant Participation Fieldnotes

B1) Kvinde – 23 år

Pieces

- Stopper op på gågaden, spotter trøje, vurderer kvalitet (rører ved tøjet selv med handsker på. Menneskeligt behov for blot at røre og undersøges illustreres her?).
- Går ind i butik. Finder bukser. “Wow se størrelsen på dem her”. (Inspicerer tøj som overhovedet ikke er relevant for sig selv). Kigger ofte forvirret rundt.

Vero Moda

- Tjekker tøj ud på stativ foran butik. Nævner, ”Kunne godt bruge en sweater, når det er så koldt for tiden”.
- Finder trøje “Jeg har denne i forvejen. Kunne godt tænke mig en størrelse mindre”. Tager trøje ud. Holder i strakt arm. Holder op foran sig. Den er valgt og tages med ind i butik.
- Går ind i butikken. Står midt i rummet og kigger forvirret rundt. Vilkaarlige ting røres ved. Holder sig i kanten af butikken og går mod uret rundt.
- Stopper op. Kigger på tøjet som hænger over skulderhøjde. “Mangler også sokker. Kan få dem i H&M, hvis vi kan nå det” (Der tænkes allerede over næste butik selvom turen i denne butik ikke er fuldendt). Trøjen købes.

H&M

- Går ned af midtergangen. “Det her kan jeg ikke overskue”. Vender om efter midtergangen og går tilbage. Spotter sokker ved kassen. Kigger kort på disse.
- Stopper op. Rører ved rød trøje. “Tror jeg skal have ny rød hoodie”. Holder den i strakt arm ad flere omgange. Holder op til kroppen. Den tages med.
- Glider hånd over bukser. Kommenterer modellen. Ej det bliver jeg nødt til at gøre en anden dag. “Jeg bliver nødt til at prøve bukser på” (Hun gider ikke prøve bukser på, på denne dag).
- Rød trøje fra før prøves udover skjorte midt i butik. Nu ombestemmer hun sig. Pasformen var ikke som forventet. Den røde trøje hænges tilbage. Butik forlades.

B2) Mand – 22 år

Magasin

- Går direkte i herreafdelingen.
- Starter ud med at få overblik over butikken. Først stoppes der op og kigges lidt rundt I starten af afdelingen. Herefter gås rundt ad midtergangen og der spejdes til højre og venstre.
- Søger derefter hen til produkter som fanger hans blik (Meget vilkårligt hvor disse hænger)
- (Tjekker altid pris først, derefter kvalitet med fingre og er det godkendt herefter tages tøjet af knagen).
- Hvis prisen er for høj, hænges tøjet direkte tilbage på knagen, og han går videre
- Hvis pris er tilpas inspiceres tøjet yderligere.
- Der bliver primært kigget på tøj indenfor samme kategori (Jakker). Der nævnes også på et tidspunkt, "Kunne godt bruge en ny jakke".

B3) Mand – 63 år

Bertoni

- Nævnes før der gås ind i butikken, "Jeg er på udkig efter en blazer".
- Går meget hurtigt igennem butik. Han holder sig langs kanterne i butikken. Blikket ryger hurtigt fra produkt til produkt.
- Butikken forlades inden for 1 minut. Tydeligt han er meget målrettet i sin søgning.

Tøj Eksperten

- Igen, meget hurtigt gennem butikken og langs kanterne.
- Et par produkter fanger kort hans interesse et par gange, men vurderes hurtigt.
- På et tidspunkt spottes en blazer som vises stor interesse. Han prøver at finde prisen men giver hurtigt op og går videre. Han ytrer, at hvis det er svært at finde en pris, går han bare videre.

Frederik

- Kigger på udstillingsvinduerne. Han siger højt, "Hvis jeg ved, det kan være spændende, tjekker jeg også vinduerne. Ikke hvis jeg ved de er kedelige".
- Går ned gennem midten af butikken. Ser en bluse på bord. Tager ikke tøjet op men røre ved det imens det ligger på bordet.

- Han ser nogle blazere på et stativ. Bladrer gennem blazere på stativ. Danner hurtigt overblik over dem og intet fanger interessen. Han forlader butikken.

Magasin

- Går langs kanten af butikken. Spotter ting på afstand og går direkte hen til dem.
- Stopper nogle gange op og kigger rundt i butikken for at danne overblik.
- Går forbi alle andre afdelinger end herretøj.
- I denne butik undersøges ikke meget tøj. Ganske få gange holdes blikket fast på noget tøj, men intet undersøges nærmere.

H&M

- Spotter en skjorte på første stativ. Tager den ud. Rører ved den. Kigger på den (drejer den 180 grader). Tjekker pris. Siger højt, "Har jeg brug for den?". Hænger den tilbage.
- Han går videre. Kigger hurtigt rundt blandt produkterne. Intet af interesse.
- Vender tilbage til første skjorte, da han er på vej ud. Vælger at prøve den. Vil have skjorten. Tjekker den for fejl. "Det gør jeg altid". Køber skjorten.

B4) To mænd – 22 og 24 år

H&M

- Der splittes hurtigt op og kigges individuelt på forskellige tøjstativer.
- Haris/Informant 4 Kigger rundt. Rører ved tøj på stativ, tænker, hænger det så tilbage. Finder en jakke. Tjekker prisen. Prøver den på midt i butik. Går hen til spejl. Vender og drejer. Spørger ven (Informant 5) til råds. Vælger at tage den med til kassen.
- Informant 4 finder jakke til Informant 5. Info 5 prøver den på. Spørger Info 4 til råds: "Ser det godt ud?". Info 4 bekræfter og siger ja. Info 5 prøver den midt i butikken. (Denne procedure med at få tilkendegivet meninger fra hinanden gentager sig igennem besøget).
- De roser hinanden, når de finder noget, der klæder hinanden. Er der noget tøj som er sjovt/underligt grines der sammen af dette. Dette vises da informant B4 vifter informant B5 hen for at vise en t-shirt med ordene, "Overvej lige, hvor grim den her er?".

B5) To kvinder – 28 og 57 år

Noa Noa

- De finder en “spændende butik”.
- Så snart Informant 1 går ind i butikken, spotter hun et par bukser. Går målrettet ned og undersøger et par bukser som er udstillet på manequin.
- (Informant 2 går lidt rundt og kigger (sædvanlig berøring))
- Informant 1 spørger Informant 2 om hendes mening om bukser. Informant 2 godkender.
- Informant 1 leder efter størrelse. Finder ikke sin rigtige størrelse. Hun prøver den, som kommer tættest på. Hun spørger Informant 2 til råds. De bliver enige om, at den størrelse ikke sidder godt.
- Informant 1 spørger ekspedient om de har hendes størrelse. Ekspedient tjekker. De har ikke hendes størrelse.
- Informant 1 ærgrer sig til informant 2. Informant 1 siger til informant 2, at hun måske kan finde bukserne i hendes rigtige størrelse på nettet. Butikken forlades.

Appendix C – Web Observation Screen Recordings

NB: Appendix C1 through C7 has been uploaded to myMedia on BlackBoard and handed in via “Store Bilag” as prescribed, from where they can be accessed.

C1 – Duration: 53.12 minutes.

C2 – Duration: 6.54 minutes.

C3 – Duration: 13.33 minutes.

C4 – Duration: 9.01 minutes.

C5 – Duration: 2.40 minutes.

C6 – Duration: 8.37 minutes.

C7 – Duration: 20.28 minutes.