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TITLE: Hvordan kan vi forstå kunders preferanser og online shopping mønstre angående multiple og single nettsider?

ENGLISH TITLE: How to understand customer preferences and online shopping patterns related to multiple versus single websites

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Abstract

Online shopping bears the mark of high economic growth and numerous online consumers. Thus, the complexity of the website design is crucial to understand how to attract and maintain customers. More specifically, emphasis is put on the use of the website for online segmentation, in other words with the use of single or multiple websites. Concurrently, customer preferences differ among individual aspects of perception. Hence, the centrality of the study is at the intersection of the aforementioned topics, with a customer-oriented approach.

This study, therefore, aims to provide insight into consumers' online shopping patterns, their preferences regarding website design, and implications for strategic marketing. In addition, emphasis is put on online gender differences regarding online shopping. With a qualitative research approach, twelve informants described and justified their perceptions. The findings indicate that consumers prefer multiple websites when shopping for themselves. The finding was justified with the perception that multiple websites were easiest to use, saved the most time, and appealed the most. However, the single website was perceived as providing the most relevant information. The findings indicate advantages and disadvantages with single and multiple websites, and that emphasis is put on content relevance. In other words, as long as a website offers gender segmentation alternatives, they are satisfied. Notably, operating multiple websites is more expensive than operating a single website. Hence, maintaining multiple websites could be a waste of money, time, and resources, if the users are satisfied with a single website with gender segmentation alternatives. Overall, these findings contribute to companies' and marketers' understanding of the impact choice of website design has on consumers.

Foreword

This master thesis is written by two students in their final part of the master thesis program Business Administration, Strategic Marketing and Analytics at the University of Stavanger, spring 2021. The thesis is written within the thematic direction Digital Marketing.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank our supervisor, assistant professor Elham Ghazimatin from the University of Stavanger for good advice, support, and guidance.

We also want to thank the informants who took time out of their day to meet with us on zoom calls to answer our questions and help us provide insight on consumers' online shopping habits. Finally, we want to give a huge thank you to Aunt Ruth for support and inspiration.

Thank you!

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Tables and figures

1. Introduction to the Research Topic

The phenomenon in focus in this master's thesis is online shopping, where the emphasis is put on patterns and preferences regarding website design. The purpose of the introductory chapter is to account for the relevance of the topic, present the research space, and briefly present the methodology, purpose, and research questions. Finally, a description of the thesis's structure will be presented.

1.1 Topic Relevance

Online shopping is becoming increasingly popular among both consumers and companies worldwide. For instance, global e-commerce accounted for 4.28 trillion U.S. dollars in 2020 (Sabanoglu, 2021). This clearly demonstrates a market characterized by economic growth and numerous online consumers. In eshopworld's Global e-commerce market ranking report, Norway was ranked fourth with the highest number of online shoppers in 2018(ESW, 2018). Subsequently, Norwegian consumption increased by 9.4% from 2018 to 2019 (Elisenberg & Sletholden, 2021), indicating that Norwegian online shopping habits are constantly evolving. Due to Covid-19, online purchases grew by 33% in the third quarter of 2020 (Frøberg & Toraman, 2020). Concurrently, the accounted amount for the third quarter in 2020 increased by 9% (Frøberg & Toraman, 2020). In total, Norwegians e-commerce was measured at the net sum of NOK 156.7 billion in 2020 (Nets, 2020).

With high circulation and high online shopping activity, Nets (2021) confirmed that, among other things, availability is the main reason consumers choose to trade online. Despite the complexity of the term, it is conceivable that customers perceive online shopping as more available due to the different aspects of the website design. Considering every element presented on the website, the user will evaluate and establish an impression of the website, both consciously and subconsciously. For instance, color combinations, placing, images, image sizes, amount of information, and type of information will determine the user's impression and satisfaction, which in total will amount to the perceived usability. The website's usability has an impact on how satisfied users are with the website (Dianat, Adeli, Jafarabadi & Karimi, 2019). As consumers today access countless websites, it is important to create well-designed,

efficient websites that contribute to usability. Consumers spend their time carefully and want to gather information quickly and follow through on easy transactions (Chaffey & Smith, 2017, pp. 165–166).

Emphasis is on how an efficient website consequently creates a customer experience that turns visitors into purchasers (Harmeling, Bleier, & Palmatier, 2019). Thus, the content presented on a website should be adjusted based on the targeted users. Matters like the amount of information or relevance of the chosen stimuli need to be considered, as the perception can vary from male to female, young to old. Hence, online firms should not treat their consumers as a single group, but they should consider individual needs, for instance by emphasizing online gender differences (Sohaib, Kang & Nurunnabi, 2019).

Today, one can find considerable studies on customers' online buying preferences, among other things, where the amount of information and the type of information has been evaluated regarding website design. Thus, gender differences regarding perceptions of website design have been established as a central area of research (Hsieh & Lin, 2016; Hasan, 2010; Slyke, comunale & Belanger, 2002; Kim, Lehto & Morrison, 2007). As website developers design for specifically targeted groups, it is relevant to investigate how customers perceive the website design regarding gender segmentation. Specifically, the focus of this study is to investigate consumers' preferences regarding single versus multiple website design.

1.2 The Purpose and Research Questions

The overall purpose of our study is to provide insight into customers' online shopping patterns, their preferences regarding website design, and the implications for strategic marketing. This study will contribute to companies and marketers understanding of the impact choice of website design has on the customers and the further consequences this may have on the overall experience of the website. For instance, a lack of segmentation can induce loss of relevant customers which can be harmful to the company's brand. Additionally, it can induce

less sales if relevant products do not appear to the relevant customers, or customers have to spend considerable time orienting around the website.

The Overall Problem Statement*: How can we understand customer preferences and online shopping patterns regarding multiple versus single websites?*

Question 1: *What characterizes customers' online shopping patterns?*

Question 2: *How do customers describe and justify multiple versus single websites?*

Question 3: *To what degree do gender differences become visible in customers' descriptions?*

Previous studies (Appendix 7 and 8) on this topic are mainly built on quantitative research; therefore, this study aims to answer the research questions following a qualitative approach. We chose twelve informants to present their descriptions of patterns and experience within online shopping through semi-structured interviews. This will provide a greater understanding of consumers preferences. With an even gender distribution within the informant group, we can draw conclusions based on similarities and differences between genders.

1.3 Structure

A further structure for this study is consistent with the three research questions. Chapter Two will present literature regarding shopping patterns, website design, and online gender differences. The research context is assessed in Chapter Four, where a brief presentation of the two specific website designs relevant to this study will be presented. To assess the data considered relevant to the topic in question, a qualitative method will be presented and justified in Chapter Five. Findings will be presented and linked to relevant theory and literature in Chapter six and Seven. Finally, central conclusions will be presented, before explaining implications with this study.

2. Literature Review and Analytic Approach

In the following chapter we will start off by explaining the strategy of search regarding extract relevant literature for this study. Subsequently, literature regarding the three research questions will be presented: consumer patterns, website design, and online gender differences. Website design is further divided into consumer information processing information, website aesthetics, content relevance and navigation of a website. Subsequently we will present differences in online gender shopping patterns.

2.1 Search Strategy

The literature review describes findings from various published materials that provide an examination of previous or current literature (Grant & Booth, 2009 p. 94). The strategy of search is based on the SALSA framework: search, appraisal, synthesis, and analysis (Grant & Booth, 2009 p. 94). The search performed for this study is not-comprehensive, meaning that specific keywords and themes were chosen for the topic in question. A disadvantage of a literature review is that the authors can choose literature that supports their viewpoint (Grant & Booth, 2009 p. 97). As the topic in question was of extensive character, we had to narrow down the search, and keywords such as website domain, Search Engine Marketing, conversion rate, purchase pattern, etc., were eliminated. Concomitantly, the consumer perspective was elaborated with an emphasis on online gender differences.

The literature review does not assess quality assessment, but a brief presentation of the findings. This is justified primarily by the limited time of research. The literature presentation is thematic, divided into three sub-themes: customer shopping patterns, website preferences, and gender differences. The synthesis of the review, Sections 1 and 2 is presented as narrative, meaning that the literature is presented as a descriptive text of the central findings and statements (Grant & Booth, 2009 p. 94). Section 3 will present a more comprehensive approach by considering whether technological development may impact the findings presented. Thus, the section will be structured according to the year of publication.

2.2 Customers' Online Shopping Patterns

Online shopping is of increasing interest for both consumers and companies. In 2020, global e-commerce sales amounted to $4.28 trillion (Sabanoglu, 2021). With 84.65% online users, Sweden was ranked as the country with the highest number of online shoppers worldwide (ESW, 2018). Following Korea and the U.K., Norway ranked fourth place with 79.25 % (ESW, 2018). Norway was also ranked 17th among the top ecommerce markets regarding market revenue and online shopping (ESW, 2018). With a steady increase in online shopping, Norwegian consumption had an annual growth of 9.4% from 2018 to 2019 (Nets, 2020). Moreover, due to Covid19, the third quarter of 2020 resulted in an increase of 33% more payments compared to the year before, where the amount was 9% higher (Frøberg & Toraman, 2020). Overall, the trading year of 2020 was measured at a net sum of NOK 156.7 billion, with physical goods as the top category (Nets, 2021). The reference is primarily made to clothing, beauty products, and takeaway, where clothing contributes 34%, corresponding to 14.5 billion (Nets, 2021). As over 93% of Norwegians in the age group 16–64 use the Internet several times a day (Pay, 2021), the Norwegian market bears the mark of a high degree of online shopping and online activities in general.

2.3 Website Design

Customers access more products through more channels than ever before (Meyer & Schwager, 2007), for instance websites. Traditionally, websites are considered key to attracting new customers (LaSorsa, 2012). Therefore, it is crucial to invest time in designing websites that customers can easily find and feel comfortable with (LaSorsa, 2012). A well-designed website can build relationships, nurture loyalty, and satisfy impatient customers (Chaffey & Smith, 2017, pp, 165–166). Hence, it is crucial to understand how the customers process the information presented on the website (Hofacker, 2001, cited in Chaffey & Smith, 2017, pp. 186–189). Therefore, one must consider the website as in total, considering that the website is only as good as its content (LaSorsa, 2012). For instance, Charles Hofacker presented in 2001 the information processing model, assessing the website's template layout (cited in Chaffey & Smith, 2017, p. 128). The processing model involves customers' first impressions regarding their overall perception of the website aesthetics before evaluating information relevance and whether they accept this. In addition to web layout, a website's performance, for instance

navigation, is considered an essential point for assessing usability (Dianat, Adeli, Jafarabadi & Karimi, 2019). Visitors entering a website often have a specific goal, such as gathering information or buying a product or a service (Chaffey & Smith, 2017, pp. 305–307). Hence, navigation is considered crucial for customers to find the desired destination. Navigation has been identified as a recurring theme for assessing important website design elements in previous research (Tandon, Kiran & Sah, 2016; Cebi, 2013; Gehrke & Turban, 1999; LaSorsa, 2012). Therefore, Section 2.3.1 will involve theory and literature about the customer processing model as a whole before assessing website aesthetics, information relevance, and website navigation as separate sections.

2.3.1 Information Processing

In designing a superior website, one must consider how customers perceive and process the presented information (Hofacker, 2001, cited in Chaffey & Smith, 2017, p. 186). Hofacker has presented the assessment of website elements as a linear process, with the approach that each stage must be fulfilled before the consumer enters the next stage (Hofacker, 2001, cited in Chaffey & Smith, 2017, p. 186). The five stages of information processing involve exposure, attention, comprehension, and perception, yielding and acceptance, and retention (Hofacker, 2001, cited in Chaffey & Smith, 2017, p. 128). For this study, an illustration of the stages in the processing model is presented in Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1 Information processing model (Hofacker, 2001, cited in Chaffey & Smith 2017 186– 190)

Stage 1: Exposure

The content presented on a website must be available for a long enough time so that consumers can process it. If the content, such as shockwave animations, splash pages, or banner adverts changes too quickly, the consumers will not receive the message. Through the use of "remarketing," marketers can ensure that consumers see their ads. Remarketing makes the

same ad appear in different places online and follows the consumers as they move around, enhancing the likelihood that the consumers will see the ad (Hofacker, 2001, cited in Chaffey & Smith, 2017, pp. 186–190).

Stage 2: Attention

Consumers have a limited capacity to find the main message from a website comprising single-column text formats with no graphics or headings. Colors, movement, and text size can catch consumers' attention and lead them to the key message. Using too much garnish animation and colors can look amateurish or be perceived as loud advertisements, making the consumer screen out (Hofacker, 2001, cited in Chaffey & Smith, 2017, pp 186–190).

Stage 3: Comprehension and Perception

Comprehension and perception refer to customers' interpretations of the website's combination of multimedia, graphics, and text. An effective website design uses metaphors or standards that consumers are familiar with, because consumers interpret website content with previous memories and experiences. After finding the information the consumer was looking for, they might dig even deeper to find more relevant information. However, consumers have a selective perception, meaning they often screen out information that they do not consider relevant (Hofacker, 2001, cited in Chaffey & Smith, 2017, pp. 186–190).

Stage 4: Yielding and Acceptance

Yielding and acceptance refer to consumer acceptance of the content presented on a website. All consumers are different, and to convince different consumers, different tactics are needed. Consumers will respond differently to the website's content. Some will have a clinical evaluation of the text, while others might have a more emotive appeal reinforced by images. This explains the difficulties a company can face when combining graphics and text to convince different customer segments (Hofacker, 2001, cited in Chaffey & Smith, 2017, pp 186–190).

Stage 5: Retention

Retention refers to customers' ability to recall previous experiences. Consumers will remember clear and distinctive website designs, which could result in repeat visits. The consumer might ponder over some information they have read and wonder where they found it. A clear, clean, and distinctive layout will help customers remember the website, making it easy for them to revisit (Hofacker, 2001, cited in Chaffey & Smith, 2017, pp 186–190).

2.3.2 The Linear-Model Paradox

In developing processing models, a simplification of the complexity will naturally occur for the model to be considered usable across various situations and to generalize the process to a certain extent. However, questions must be asked about whether the human brain's way of processing information can be placed in a linear system. As a critique of processing as a linear process, Ekuni, Vaz, & Bueno (2011) argued that variations exist due to varying degrees of cognitive effort. By referring to Kapur, Craik, Tulving, Wilson, Houle, & Brown (1994), cognitive effort is justified as the degree to which attention is given to the particular stimuli, or how intuitions and emotions related to the subject are crucial to the processing (Ekuni, et al., 2011). As an alternative to processing as a linear model, Chang & Chen (2009) argued that one way of assessing the website's template layout was to evaluate different components of the website: convenience, character, interactivity, and customization. Recent research suggested adding content as a fifth dimension (Fan, Lee & Kim (2013)

First, convenience is the extent to which a website is user-friendly (Chang & Chen, 2009). For instance, the convenience can be the organization of the website's information, where good categorization of content and use of appropriate graphics can be considered the most effective way to achieve increased user satisfaction (Dianat et al. 2019). Second, the website's character reflects the overall aesthetic impression one gets as a user of the website, such as the use of colors, fonts, and patterns (Fan et al., 2013). The third, interactivity, is the extent to which a website encourages two-way communication between the company and the consumer (Fan et al., 2013). Fourth, is the ability to customize services, products, and additional designs for the individual customer (Fan et al., 2013). The fifth, contents reflect the

extent to which the website offers valuable, useful, and varied information regarding the various services and products offered (Fan et al., 2013). Another perspective for assessing the aesthetics presented on the website is to divide between "verbal elements," "visual elements," and "verbal-visual elements" (Bleier et al., 2018). The breakdown addresses how the three types of information components can create relevance for the user and will be addressed in Section 2.3.3 Information Relevance.

2.3.3 Website Aesthetics

The website's interface and overall aesthetics will give the user an impression of a character. It is relevant to evaluate, among other things, the use of colors, fonts, and patterns (Fan et al., 2013). Thus, companies should have a marketing strategy that emphasizes customer-oriented design to achieve increased interactivity, customer comfort, and individual customization (Chang & Chen, 2009). Concomitantly, strategically using different design elements such as high-quality photos and videos to create an experience for their customers can result in visitors becoming buyers (Bleier et al., 2018 p. 111). Specifically, the use of bullet points, short paragraphs, contrasts, and strategic symbolic color choices can contribute to good design (Wenzel, 2014). In other words, the placement, amount, and size of the information or stimulus presented will influence the user's perception. A high level of symmetry and uniformity, represented by the number of objects and the number of different sizes, impact the perceived visual aesthetics of the website's design (Altaboli & Lin, 2012). Overall, reducing the number of objects and different sizes increases the perceived aesthetics of the website design (Altaboli & Lin, 2012).

2.3.4 Information Relevance

Information usefulness is essential when assessing a website (Tandon et al., 2016). Evaluating the website's content as a collective term will establish the extent to which the website offers valuable, useful, and varied information about the various services and products offered (Fan et al., 2013). Simultaneously, the more marketers know about their customers and how they decide the products they want to buy, the easier it is to identify obsolete products and customer needs (Radu, 2021). Studying customer behavior can also give a better perspective on presenting products and services that are appealing to the customers. In other words, the key

to reaching and engaging customers is to understand their buying behavior (Radu, 2021). Based on this, one can divide the market into different groups based on how one identifies consumers' purchasing characteristics and shopping behavior, which is also referred to as market segmentation (Weinstein, 2004, p.5). The main purpose of segmentation is to divide the market into homogeneous groups with similar characteristics (Tynan & Drayton, 1987). One way to divide the market is to distinguish between personal factors, psychological factors, and social factors as the three main factors influencing customer behavior (Radu, 2021). The personal factors involve customers' individual opinions and interests. Personal factors can often be influenced by demographics, such as gender, culture, age, etc. Psychological factors are based on the individual customer's perceptions and attitudes. Social factors influence customers' behavior, such as income, family, education level, friends, and social media (Radu, 2021). Market segmentation can be beneficial as the companies must focus on how to use their strengths, which can create competitive advantages (Dolnicar, Grün & Leisch, 2018, p. 7).

When using digital aids to target the desired segment, the marketing must be adjusted accordingly, as customers may have different attitudes to how they experience and interpret the information offered online and offline (Chaffey & Smith, 2017, p.161). One should think globally and behave locally (Chaffey & Smith (2017, p. 163). In other words, one should think about the preferences of the individual groups simultaneously, as one must remember that the digital audience can be located across borders (Chaffey & Smith, 2017, p. 163). Hence, the content must be clearly formulated and understandable and aimed at the targeted user (Tandon et al., 2016). For instance, in assessing the product page presentation, one can with the help of pronouns like "you" or "yours," the formulation of the website's "verbal elements" addresses directly to the user and contributes to perceived relevance (Bleier et al., 2018). The "visual elements" involve all content presented photographically or illustrated, such as image size, feature crops, lifestyle images, and product films (Bleier et al., 2018). Image size highlights the image in its entirety and the size it was presented, while feature crop refers to presenting individual details of a product in the form of detailed images (Bleier et al., 2018). Customers want personally tailored information and communication (Chaffey & Smith; 2017, p. 165). Thus, lifestyle images can be used to illustrate how a product can be imagined in a consumer's life, and product films can demonstrate the product itself and its main characteristics (Bleier et al., 2018). Looking at the "verbal-visual elements," one finds the crossing point of images and

text, often presented in the format of comparison matrices, content filters, or customers' ratings (Bleier et al., 2018). The elements involve how customers perceive the information given and how they interpret the structured path for them.

2.3.5 Navigation

Navigation can be seen in the form of categories that are clear and use obvious wording (Rabhan, 2013). To keep customers interested in the product, the least possible distractions should be presented, which include links to other products (Rabhan, 2013). Avoid much creativity, and post placements of objects where customers expect to find it (Rabhan, 2013). The number of choices will determine how the paths to the desired target point are designed (Graham & Henman, 2017). Websites that are easy to navigate are a prerequisite for online shopping (Tandon et al., 2016). As early as 1999, Gehrke & Turban (1999) found navigation to be a crucial factor for website design, justified because lack of effective navigation can induce confusion, frustration, and potential abandonment of the website. The finding is based on determinants of successful website design associated with effectiveness as a decisive factor (Gehrke & Turban, 1999). Substantiated by Hernández, Jiménez & Martín (2009), navigation primarily refers to the website's usefulness and how quickly one finds useful information. Hence, it is important to provide simple and integrated solutions to time-pressed customer problems (Meyer & Schwager; 2007). It can be beneficial that the navigation design is fairly constant throughout the website, so consumers become familiar with the navigation (Gehrke & Turban, 1999). Additionally, marking and placement of buttons are crucial for an effective path. For instance, one should use clear wording and marked categories to avoid confusion about where the internal link leads (Gehrke & Turban, 1999). Hence, home buttons will contribute to the user not losing track of the navigation (Hernández et al., 2009). Another example is to have a sticky bar that follows the consumer when they scroll up or down the website (Wenzel, 2014).

To orient around the website, a menu for each page will allow the user to quickly access the various parts of the website (Hernández et al., 2009). Alternatively, an internal search function to find relevant information (Gehrke & Turban, 1999), which subsequently contributes to a higher degree of the individual user's experience of self-service (Hernández et

al., 2009). Overall, Hernández et al. (2009) argued that companies need to improve the user experience of self-service and control of user interaction on the website. One-size-fits-all designs do not work anymore, and one should not automatically apply a cookie-cutter approach (Harmeling, Bleier & Palmatier, 2019). Hamzi & Hajmoosaei (2014) found that companies that use multiple websites can customize their websites to match different cultures. In comparison, they found that single websites provide only a general interface and do not consider the variety of users, different cultures, or gender preferences, stating that everything falls under the same category (Hamzi & Hajmoosaei, 2014).

2.3.6 Gender Differences

To understand consumer buying behavior, one must consider personal factors, psychological factors, and social factors, for instance, worldviews, marital status, family relationships, age, etc. (Radu, 2021; Odden, 2012). These factors can be decisive for the customer's digital behavior and purchase intention (Odden, 2012). Thus, marketers can benefit from creating gender-sensitive website content and presentations (Kim et al., 2007). Primarily, Hsieh & Lin (2016) argued that online gender differences are primarily dependent on preferences for website interface design.

Considering online gender differences from a historical perspective, males have considerably used the web for research more than females (Jackson, Ervin, Gardner & Schmitt, 2001). Concomitantly, females have often been considered passive users when it comes to technology (Slyke et al., 2002). For instance, the literature has shown that males historically have preferred online shopping more considerably than females (Slyke et al., 2002). With a quantitative approach, males from the U.S. rated related advantage, compatibility, and trustworthiness higher than females did (Slyke et al., 2002). Concomitantly, females expressed a preference for offline shopping over online shopping and justify this because a product is more difficult to evaluate online compared to offline (Slyke et al., 2002). Hence, females tend to be more rational shoppers (Slyke et al., 2002).

Conversely, the perspective of emotional attachment provided a contribution to the literature, in which it was expressed that females had a reduced commitment regarding online shopping (Dittmar, Long & Meek, 2004). With a quantitative approach, the findings indicated greater similarities between the genders (Dittmar et al., 2004). Out of 113 university students in the U.K., 74% expressed that they considered convenience and efficiency as benefits for Internet shopping, which was justified with time saving and the opportunity to shop at any time and having it delivered to their home. Overall, the findings suggested that males emphasized functional motivations for shopping (Dittmar et al., 2004). Hence, males were attracted to the interactive and 'flashy' aspect of the websites (Cyr & Bonanni, 2005). Simultaneously, females were attracted to the colors on the website (Cyr & Bonanni, 2005) and emphasized psychological motivations for shopping (Dittmar et al., 2004) Seen in a different perspective, females were found to be generally more skeptical of the information presented or tended to seek more information before making a purchase decision (Cyr & Bonanni, 2005). Supplementary, females acquired higher value for various online and offline sources of information (Kim et al., 2007). Despite the study's nature, namely, a quantitative study of gender differences in attitudes toward online and offline travel information, findings from 1337 respondents indicated gender differences regarding information seeking. Overall, females were found to use gender-neutral websites, in terms of functionality and content, to a greater extent than males (Kim et al., 2007). In other words, a reference is made to how information is displayed, of which males express higher demands on the content and characteristics of the information than females.

Regarding online shopping attitudes, males considered online shopping convenient and beneficial to economic efficiency (Hasan, 2010). In a study of 80 students from the US, the literature found that females preferred conventional shopping more than males and justified this finding based on social and personal interactions (Hasan, 2010). Concurrently, females expressed a lower degree of affective and cognitive attitudes toward online shopping (Hasan, 2010). By examining the design of the website interface, compatibility was crucial for both genders and was explained as the website being designed with natural navigation paths that resulted in the expected response (Hsieh & Lin, 2016). Yet, gender differences occurred in which males preferred minimal action, flexibility, and compatibility were the most important criteria for design (Hsieh & Lin, 2016). Minimal action was justified by perceived efficiency,

such as the website having a text box with automatic filling (Hsieh & Lin, 2016). In comparison, females found teachability, compatibility, and user guidance to be the most crucial design criteria (Hsieh & Lin, 2016).

2.4 Sum of Literature and Theory

In the literature review and analytic approach, we have elaborated on consumers' online shopping patterns, website design, and online gender differences. Customer's shopping pattern was briefly described. High degree of activity regarding online shopping was a central theme. Norway was noted of those countries in the top tier regarding number of online shoppers (cf. ESW, 2018). The presented figures refer to a topicality among Norwegian consumers, confirming the crucialness for companies to have insight into what customers are affected by, and how they process what they are presented (cf. Chaffey & Smith, 2017, pp. 204-208).

Hence, Hofacker's information processing model was presented, to evaluate the customer's experience of content and website design in a five-stage processing model (cf. 2001, cited in Chaffey & Smith, pp. 186-190). In contrast, it has been discussed whether processing can be considered a linear process, by establishing that external factors can affect the impression or experience, such as intuition or emotion (cf. Kapur et al., 1994, cited in Ekuni et al., 2011). Therefore, an alternative to processing as a linear model, two theories about assessing the individual components of the website was presented (cf. Chang & Chen, 2009; Fan et al., 2013; Bleier et al., 2018).

Further, three central topics regarding website design were introduced, namely aesthetics, information relevance and navigation. The literature offers a wide range of factors to consider when assessing website design. Here one must consider everything from the colors to the amount of information. Second, relevance addresses the perception of the content presented. Hence, different ways of categorizing customers were presented, to explain how segmentation differs when using digital tools to target the customer. Finally, navigation explained how different tools can be used for the customer to orient themselves around the website.

With the help of aesthetics, relevant content, and navigation, the websites can adapt to the targeted group, for instance, by considering gender differences. Here, it was explained that gender differences in online shopping had been identified over the years, focusing on different aspects. Some recurring topics that emerged were that males expressed a higher degree of online exploring, preferred online shopping, and considered minimal action as an essential website design element. However, there was a more substantial skepticism about online shopping among the females, of which conventional shopping was highlighted as the preferred alternative. Furthermore, the literature shows that females do extensive search both online and offline before purchasing, both online and offline.

3. Research Context

This chapter defines the context of the research objectives. Our study is based on two website designs: multiple and single. In this chapter, we present the advantages and disadvantages of both website designs from a company's perspective. Also, we introduce two companies: one that offers a multiple website design, and one that offers a single website design. To provide a better understanding of the websites chosen for this study, we see it as relevant to give a brief introduction / description of the companies as well

3.1 Multiple versus Single Websites

To better create an understanding of multiple and single websites as a concept, three websites have been selected for this study. As already mentioned, companies can segment in several ways. In this study we have chosen to look at similar Nelly.com (Appendix 3), Nlyman.com (Appendix 4), and Zalando.com (appendix 5 and 6). Founded in Sweden in 2004, Nelly.com is currently among the most well-known e-tailors in Scandinavia (Nelly.com, 2021, a). Nelly.com used to offer both female and male clothes, but in 2014, they decided to separate the brands, which resulted in a new website, NLYman.com (Nelly.com, 2021, b). The reason for this was to have a higher focus on male interests to better target them (Nelly.com, 2021). NLYman.com and Nelly.com represent multiple websites. They represent the same company, but they have chosen to separate into two websites, one for males and one for females. This allows Nelly.com and NLYman.com to specialize in their offers for their different segments. Zalando.com was founded in Berlin in 2008 and states that it is an online fashion leader in Europe (Zalando, 2021). A single website like Zalando.com offers one channel for several segments, in this case: women, men and children. Hence, customers can buy across age groups and genders This allows them to reach out to a huge market. The following chapters will provide a short presentation of the differences, advantages, and disadvantages of multiple and single websites.

3.2 Multiple Websites

Using multiple websites like Nelly.com and NLYman.com reduces customer confusion, ranks higher with geo-specific sites, provides more flexibility with services and products, and improves affiliate linking (Hisham, 2020). Geo-targeting is used to detect a visitor's location to provide location-based advertising and content (MarketingTerms.com, 2021). Affiliates is another word for recruits who sell someone's (a company's) products and services online. Affiliates are provided with a link to the company's website, so when visitors click on this link and purchase, the recruits earn a commission (Techopedia.com, 2021). Additionally, one can dedicate a single website to one service or product line, and if one website is down due to security or technical reasons, the other website still generates business (Hisham, 2020). There are also some disadvantages with multiple websites. It is more difficult to cross-sell; one spends more time on website issues, building, and maintaining, which subsequently induces higher costs. Furthermore, duplicated content can lower search engine result page ranking (SERP) (Hisham, 2020). To achieve good placement in the SERP, one must provide quality content. Relevant content in relevant places strengthens the possibility that prospective buyers will locate you at the right time. To be discoverable, one should think of multiple websites, multiple touchpoints, and multiple times (Chaffey & Smith, 2017, p. 286).

Choosing to use multiple websites is a business decision often made by companies wanting to separate brands or focus on a product offering for a specific customer base. This can help customers find relevant content faster (Dod, 2017). When practicing multiple websites, it is important to merge websites only if it adds value. When you sell the same product on multiple websites and the SERP rankings are poor, it could be beneficial to merge the websites because it could increase the link profile. Having one good link profile is more valuable than having five average link profiles. Hence, it is important to examine the potential growth from keyword ranking compared to the loss of revenue with multiple websites to decide what you should do. Merging websites could result in less marketing and maintenance, but there is also the risk that merging could induce loss of revenue (Dod, 2017). One always has to remember to link the sites to share link authority and deny users the ability to navigate to other domains in your portfolio. It is also important to avoid replicating the websites, and to make sure that the websites have relevant and useful information (Dod, 2017).

3.3 Single Websites

Some benefits of using single websites, such as Zalando.com, are as follows: it is cheap to build and maintain, it is easier to create authority sites, one can easily cross-sell services and products, fewer website issues, and there is less chance of content duplication (Hisham, 2020). An authority website is a website that is highly trusted by users and other companies. Simultaneously, disadvantages of using a single website model are potential search engine optimization (SEO) penalties for linking to affiliates, inability to geo-target customers, and when the website shuts down, they lose all their business until the website is running again (Hisham, 2020). According to Park & Fader (2004), another downside of using a single website is that datasets from single websites are incomplete because they cannot capture shopping behavior across multiple websites. The visiting patterns from several websites can provide information regarding timing and frequency of customers' future visit patterns (Park & Fader, 2004).

4. Methodology of Study

This chapter aims to account for and justify the choices made regarding this study's design, methods, and assessments. First, we give a brief introduction to the design of the study in Section 4.1. Second, qualitative research design is presented and justified for in Section 4.2. Third, we justify our methodological choices on choice of informants in Section 4.3, before explaining how the data is conducted in Section 4.4. Finally, the analysis and strategies to secure the quality of the data is introduced in Section 4.5 and 4.6.

4.1 Design of the Study

There are many ways of conceptualizing research design. Kvale & Brinkmann (2017, p. 144) explained research design as the study's "how." Hammersley (1992) provided another way of conceptualizing research design: "research design should be a reflective process operating through every stage of the project." Below, we present Maxwell's (2013) model.

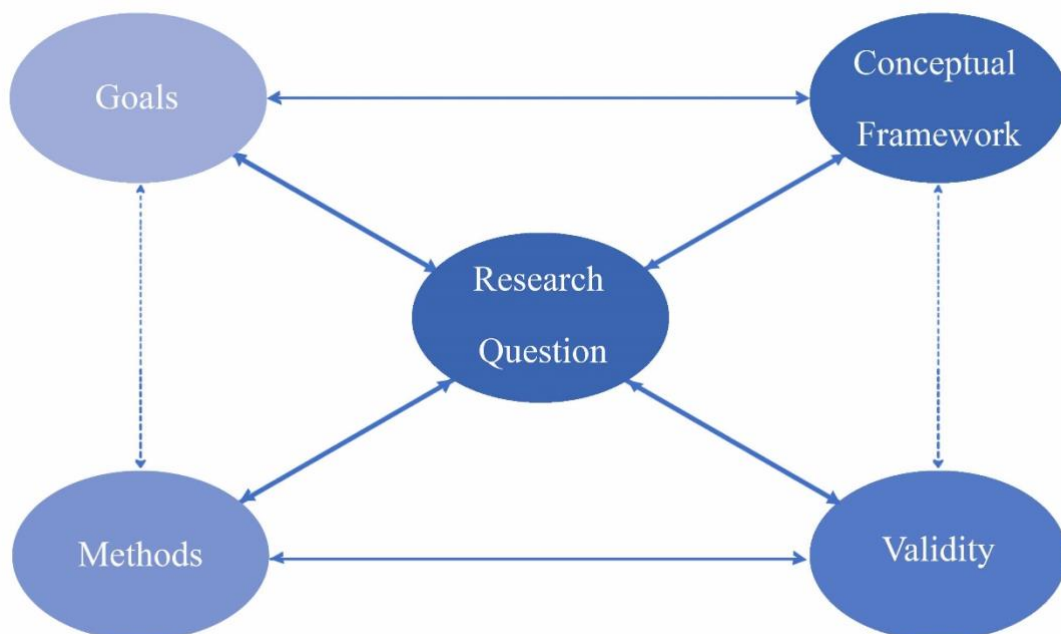*Figure 4.1 An interactive model of research design (Maxwell, 2013)*

Figure 4.1. illustrates how the structure of a research design comprises different study components, and how the different components will enlighten how they can influence or be influenced by each other (Maxwell, 2013). The model treats the research design as a unit, not just as a plan or abstraction (Maxwell, 2013). The five components of the model address various challenges that are considered essential in understanding the study's context. Cohen, Manion, & Morrison (2018 p. 173) argue: "There is no single blueprint for planning research. Research design is governed by the notion of 'fitness for purpose.' The purposes of the research determine the methodology and design of the research". Hence, the aim of what you want to investigate affects the choice of method.

As explained in the introduction, the study aims to provide insight into customers' shopping patterns and experiences of website design and to identify the implications for companies and website developers to get unfolded arguments for website design experiences. The theoretical and literary chapters form the basis for the study's research context, where it is established that online shopping is of increasing interest to both customers and companies, various website elements have an impact on experience, and there are online gender differences (appendix 7 and 8). Overall, the study's research question is, "How do we understand customer preferences and online shopping patterns regarding multiple versus single websites?" Hence, in this study, we have used a qualitative research design to provide insight into customer's online shopping patterns and preferences regarding website design. Cohen et al. (2018) argued as follows:

> Social science is seen as a subjective rather than an objective undertaking, as a means of dealing with the direct experiences of people in specific contexts, and where social scientists understand, explain, and demystify social reality through the eyes of different participants. (Cohen et al., 2018, p. 17)

To put it another way, qualitative research design is used to explore, describe, or explain social phenomena in behavioral and social science (Geertz, 1974). The purpose of this study is to describe and interpret customers' online shopping patterns and how they experience website

design, given the character of the research context. We preferred to ground our study on interview data, which, according to Kvale & Brinkmann (2015), can be used in cases where human experience is the topic.

4.2 Qualitative Research Interviews

To document how the informants interpreted and justified the topic in question, we built our study on interview data. The justification for using a qualitative interview method is to encourage thick descriptions (Hammersley, 1992). In qualitative research, Bryaman(2012) distinguished between unstructured and semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured or unstructured qualitative interviews are primarily used to form an understanding of experiences, interpretations, and spatial conditions in social life (Dowling, Lloyd, & Suchet-Pearson, 2015). Yet, all methods have strengths and weaknesses. For instance, the semi-structured interview guide considers the situation, and increases the conduction to happen systematically (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison 2015). Concomitantly, a semi-structured interview can result in the omission of important topics. Additionally, the flexible order can induce challenges with comparisons if there are substantial differences between the interviews (Cohen et al., 2015, p.413). Hence, we conducted semi-structured interviews. To provide thick descriptions of customers' online shopping, we should have the opportunity to ask follow-up questions to better understand the intermediate structures and aspects of customer experience. This way, a semi-structured guide was considered an appropriate fit, as the interviewers could adjust the approach to who was being questioned and what they answer. To strengthen the examination of this study, the informants were provided with screenshots of websites representing single and multiple websites. The use of artifacts when interviewing strategically contributed to increased reliability, which we will discuss in more detail in point 4.6.1 "reliability." The sources of data were generated from recordings of interviews conducted via Zoom.

4.3 Selection of Informants

Based on analytical and theoretical reasons, the informants were chosen by a systematic assessment because they were considered to provide relevant and exciting information to the study (Grønmo, 2004, p. 102). Overall, twelve informants were interviewed for this study. Kvale & Brinkmann (2015) proposed to have 15 +/- 10 informants for the study to be considered representative and simultaneously provide answers to the investigated topic. As presented in Table 4.1, the data collected for study comprises six males and six females from Norway.

Table 4.1: Informant summary

Informants	Age	Gender	Marital Status
1	20	Female	Single
2	24	Male	Single
3	26	Female	In a Relationship
4	25	Male	In a Relationship
5	31	Female	Married
6	24	Male	In a Relationship
7	26	Female	In a Relationship
8	26	Male	In a Relationship
9	26	Female	In a Relationship
10	26	Male	In a Relationship
11	26	Female	Single
12	31	Male	In a Relationship

The informants is in the age group 20–35 years old, which is supported by the literature presented by Pay (2021) stating that males and females in the age groups 16–24 and 25–35 scored highest on "Used Internet several times a day" and "Used Internet every day or almost every day" (Pay, 2021). The choice of age group is somewhat recurring in several previous studies that have done researched on online shopping, of which the informants have been selected on the basis that they are students (Appendix 8): Cyr & Bonanni, 2005; Jackson, Ervin, Gardner & Schmitt, 2001; Dittmar, Long & Meek, 2004; Slyke, Comunale & Belanger, 2002; Hasan, 2010; Hsieh & Lin, 2016). It is relative whether students are in a given age range, especially if one considers that the researchers are from different countries and not the Norwegian context. Nevertheless, it can still be assumed that students on a general basis are aged between 18-35 years old. Consequently, the informants met specific, pre-selected

requirements and were not chosen fortuitously (Acharya, Prakash, Saxena & Nigam, 2013; Grønmo, 2021). Hence, the chosen sample met given prerequisites and selection criteria (assumptions), i.e., familiarity with this type of website, both genders and age. It was considered beneficial that the informants were familiar with multiple and single websites because of their orientation with a view to acquaintance with locations and functions. Thus, the selected informants were all familiar with online shopping. A strategic choice for this research was to maintain the gender distribution relatively even so that the final data represents how both females and males perceive the website design.

4.4 Data Collection

An important part of a study is planning the data collection (Kvale & Brinkman, 2015). To strengthen this study, the interview guide was first tested on five pilots to map how the response was regarding the interview guide. A pilot will establish the effectiveness of the interview, and what type of information will be obtained (Berg, 2001, p. 80). The pilot interviews made it clear that some questions were formulated in a way that seemed challenging for the interviewees to provide proper answers. The explanation for this could be that the interviewers and the interviewees have different knowledge bases associated with the topic in which the questions do not make sense to the informants. For the phenomenological approach, interviewers' knowledge and appearance are decisive in how a phenomenon can be understood. Hence to obtain personal opinions, perceptions, and viewpoints, one should adjust the linguistic character of the interview based on the interaction with the interviewee and the interview purpose (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). The experiences from the pilot interviews became consequential for the final version of the interview guide (Appendix 2).

As already stated, the data were collected using Zoom due to the Covid19 situation. The informants were contacted via email, where we asked whether they would be interested in participating in an interview via Zoom. The informants were provided with information (Appendix 1) about the topic and purpose of the interviews. We explained that they would be exposed to screenshots of different websites (Appendix 3, 4, 5 and 6), and that we would ask

questions regarding them. We provided them with information about the length of the interview and asked them politely if we could record the meeting.

The interviews were structured into two parts (appendix 2). In part one, the interview started with some general questions about the informants' general shopping pattern. Kvale & Brinkmann (2015) highlighted the critical first minutes of the interview, where you create good contact by attentive listening and apparent interest in what is being said. Personal questions of this type place limited demands on cognitive reflection. It is primarily fact-based questions that also establish a common understanding of who the person answering the following questions is. Part one was constructed to build trust and provide a relaxed atmosphere by mapping the person's characteristics and warming up with some general questions about shopping habits. Hoping that these questions will help the informants mentally prepare their mindset, which can result in reflected thoughts on single versus multiple websites. The first two questions addressed were posed to enable informants to understand the theme of the interview immediately.

Part two of the study was devoted to multiple versus single websites (Appendix 3,4,5 and 6). The purpose was to identify how customers describe and justify multiple and single websites. Part two was designed to encourage a general reflection by asking what the informants see when watching the selected websites, and how they interpret it. In this situation, the informants were expected to reflect on website design in general by describing what they see. The question was formulated so that the informant holds a role that is not influenced by or is expected to influence what is being investigated. By asking the informant how he or she describes what he or she sees, a formal relationship between the informant and the object being studied is maintained, which does not influence any parties. As a follow-up, the informant was asked in the following question to take a position on the object being studied with a more active role as an approach. In other words, the informant was asked to take a position from the perspective of a sender or designer of the studied object. Furthermore, the informant's viewpoint is moved in a receiving position, where they were asked to answer from a personal viewpoint.

4.5 The Analysis

The purpose of the analysis is to get an overview by first reducing the amount of data. There are many ways to analyze qualitative interview data. Hsieh & Shannon (2005) argued that there are three approaches to qualitative content analysis: direct, conventional and summative. The main difference between the three mentioned approaches lies in how the introductory codes are developed (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The former, directed content analysis, is used to examine an already existing theory of framework that has a missing factor or needs additional description (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). In other words, the research is based on an already existing discovery. Conventional content analysis is used primarily when one wants to describe a phenomenon, and where categories are created based on data that emerges (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Moreover, one of the advantages of conventional content analysis is that research without preconceived categories is explained. The latter, summative content analysis (SCA), is used when one wishes to examine, for example, word frequency, to discover underlying structures (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). For this study, the preferable choice was an SCA, which is used when one wishes to examine, for example, word frequency to discover underlying structures (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

> Typically, a study using a summative approach to qualitative content analysis starts with identifying and quantifying certain words or content in a text with the purpose of understanding the contextual use of the words or content (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005)

We conducted and transcribed the interviews ourselves because we found it crucial to ensure that the informant's answers were portrayed correctly. Further, we read through all the interviews to get an impression of the informant's answer. The interviews will subsequently be structured by densification of meaning (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). This was done by summing up the main points of what was said (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). The main findings were sorted into a matrix of questions and answers, separated by gender. The purpose of the matrix was to obtain an overview of the collected material and to identify underlying structures across the data. Additionally, it became a central tool for distinguishing between the research questions and for comparing genders.

4.6 Strategies to Secure the Quality of the Study

There are multiple ways to secure the quality of the study. Primarily, one finds two main frames: credibility (Silverman, 2010) and trustworthiness (Lincoln & Cuba, 1985). We accounted for credibility related to reliability, validity, and generalizability. The different strategies that were chosen to strengthen the credibility of the study are described below, as well as the factors that may threaten its credibility.

4.6.1 Reliability

Trustworthiness and consistency are highlighted as explanatory factors for reliability (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). Cohen et al. (2018, p. 149) explained reliability as "the fit between what the researcher records as data and what occurs in the natural setting that is being researched, i.e., a degree of accuracy and comprehensiveness of coverage." We conducted a data-assisted interview, with the help of artifacts, which contributed to a semi-authentic interview situation. We assumed that the informants had not thought about the topic in advance of this current research. Therefore, it was essential to use artifacts to create a shared understanding of what was being investigated. It was not the purpose of the interview to test the informants' memory but rather to gain insight into their perceptions, descriptions, and justifications.

Hence, artifacts are used to create an interview situation approximately similar to the informants' situation in the relevant topic in question. In other words, the informants were shown screenshots (Appendix 3,4,5 and 6) of the website design in question during the interview. Since the interviews took place on zoom, the reliability increased. The situation took place in front of a computer, similar to what it potentially would do when shopping online. Still, artifacts in studies pose challenges to the transformation of the data, making it into electronic versions (Sharp, Robinson & Petre, 2009). Thus, the presented findings will be characterized by the informants referring to the artifacts. This can reduce the details explained, as they assume that what they are referring to in the artifacts is implicit. This can also affect the interpretation of data if misunderstandings or a lack of reference occur. We considered it

crucial that we, as interviewers, transcribe to ensure that the informant arguments come out in the proper sense.

We anonymized the websites by for example taking away the website's logos. By giving the websites numbers [one, two, three] it made it more convenient for the informants to distinguish in their descriptions. The first two websites we showed were the multiple websites (Appendix 3 and 4). Website one was the female website, and website two was the male website. Website three was both the male and female section of the single website (Appendix 5 and 6). They were both referred to as website three so that the informants would also understand that the reference was to the same company

4.6.2 Validity

Validity is defined as the extent to which the findings accurately reflect the data (Noble & Smith, 2015). Validity increases when one can refer to quality at the seven stages of validation: thematization, planning, interviewing, transcription, analysis, validation, and reporting (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). First, the thematic approach of validation is to evaluate the logic of the theory set up against the research question (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). In this study, the overall question represents three sub-themes. Second, the validity regarding the planning of the study is considered and justified in section 4.4 "Data Collection." For instance, we completed five pilot interviews to ensure that the interview guide provided us with elaborated answers. Third, validation linked to the interview is, in this case, done using different wording variants and follow-up questions such as "why." To ensure the quality of the transcription, we both conducted and transcribed the interviews to ensure that the correct opinion emerged. For the analysis, the questions were specific but open-ended to ensure relevant answers, but still encourage reflection. In this study, the seven stages of validity were used to ensure a review of the overall validity of the research. In reporting, validation is ensured by accounting for a comprehensive comparison of the main findings with previous research.

A potential weakness with our method was that two different people collected the interview data. This can potentially lead to different follow-up responses. Therefore, we considered it

essential to discuss the completed interviews after the implementation to discuss the interviews' good and negative experiences. This also opened up for internal discussion about the interview data.

4.6.3 Analytical Generalization

The selected group of informants reflects and provides a holistic understanding of the entire group they represent, allowing for analytical generalization (Grønmo, 2004 p. 102). In other words, based on the sample in this study, one should draw conclusions based on a generalization of what and who they represent.

This power depends, among other things, on the balance between results and investments, the question of whether in other situations the same or at least recognizable constraints apply, and the way in which the results are made known to others." (Wardekker, 2000, p. 271)

This study has outlined specific strategic choices to account for establishing a basis for analytical generalization. For instance, specific prerequisites and selection criteria (assumptions) for the informant group were chosen for the findings to reflect a variety in age and gender. It was essential to distinguish between context related observations and those related to the topic in more general practice for the analysis. In other words, it became crucial to distinguish between descriptions about specific details related to the exemplified websites and what could be interpreted on a more general level. For example, color choices and images may vary from website to website and thus be situation-specific. Still, it is expected that there is a connection between the two, i.e., situation-specific characteristics and whether they can be linked to website design in general. Therefore, it is still crucial to distinguish between in the analysis and assess the extent to which the descriptions are generalizable to other similar cases.

The advantage of this type of interview is that the already established relationship increases the opportunities to achieve a greater degree of openness and expression. Concurrently, the choice of words and expressions may not be weighted to the same extent, and a source of error here may be sociolect and an expectation arises in an established common understanding of words and expressions. Kvale & Brinkmann (2015) also emphasized that body language and its interaction with what is said is of great importance in qualitative research. Given the nature of the Covid19 situation, this is to be regarded as erroneous or reduced collected data information, as the interviews were conducted via zoom. Simultaneously, it can still be said that it is strengthened concurrently to the extent that the informant is in a more natural habitat by sitting in a similar environment as he or she would in such an investigated situation. When it comes to the interview location, the interviewer must take other considerations into account when creating a safe space, compared to if it were to be done physically.

The choice of which website is presented first has been under evaluation several times. It was included in the assessment that the first website presented encountered some uncertainty and testing, before one on website two possessed more information and thus had an easier time comparing advantages and disadvantages with the second website. If multiple websites (Appendix 3 and 4) are presented first, it is conceivable that it is incomprehensible to the informant in what is expected of him or her. It may be unnatural for a person to visit a completely different website to shop for the opposite gender. Furthermore, this can also induce the presentation of the single website (Appendix 5 and 6), as the second website is considered a more straightforward case since one is presented with a composition of the two segments, which may induce a simpler orientation for the informant. In other words, the answers may differ in part three from part one of the interview since they then have something to compare with. Also, if we ask all questions simultaneously, there is a danger that they will mix the impressions or forget what impressions they made in the first and second part of the interview.

The sample is restricted to two specific pre-selected website examples, which could be a source of error. An alternative would be to base the study on individual websites separately,

independently of each other. When comparing, one will look for advantages and disadvantages by comparing them. However, if one had evaluated the designs separately, it would not have been an alternative, and one would possibly receive different answers. Another source of error may be confusion related to the purpose of the research. As the starting point is online shopping, this can induce the informants' misunderstanding of how this factor is relevant and thus provide feedback related to the shopping rather than the website design. Therefore, the interviewers needed to be constantly observant in guiding the informant back to the topic in question.

4.7 Research Ethics

Given the covid-19 situation, all interviews were conducted online using the web-based tool, Zoom. By offering a digital platform in video meetings, share screen, chat, calling, etc., Zoom (2021) emphasized security with its Advanced Encryption Standard (AES) 265, which uses a one-time key for each meeting. The safety requirements align with the University of Stavanger (2021) and NSD's encryption guidelines. The informants' personal information was anonymized when transcribed into digital data. All informants were informed of their rights in advance of the interview (Appendix 1). They were also informed that the collected data in this study would be deleted when the project is finished, in order to protect their anonymity. Additionally, the informants were informed that they would be kept anonymous in the final text.

4.8 Summary of Chapter

In this chapter we have elaborated on advantages and disadvantages of a qualitative research design, arguing for why we chose this design. We have chosen to use semi-structured interviews where the informants were provided with screenshots of a multiple website and a single website. This was to make sure that the twelve informants had fresh impressions of a multiple and single website design. In addition, we have amplified the quality of our research through reliability, validity, analytical generalizations, and source of error.

5. Results and Analysis

This chapter analyzes and presents the data collected from the interviews and relates it to theory. The structure of this chapter revolves around our research questions, where questions one and two are presented together. We start by analyzing customers' shopping patterns and their descriptions of multiple versus single websites. Then, we analyze gender differences in online shopping. Each paragraph starts with our main findings, followed by a more detailed analysis.

5.1 Multiple Versus Single Websites: Descriptions and Justifications

In assessing multiple and single websites (Appendix 3, 4, 5, and 6), some key points stood out among the informants' answers. Among other things, a common perception of multiple websites was that they appeared very different, of which the informants were stunned that they could be the same sender. There were fluctuating comments on whether and how the two websites affected the individual informant. Furthermore, it was commented that multiple websites were perceived to have a higher degree of gender-specific products. An advantage with multiple websites was that the customer never had to doubt the relevance of the products, simultaneously; a gender segmented website induced some reactions, where the use of color associated with stereotypes was discussed. In comparison, the single website was described as neutral. An advantage that was highlighted as a result of this was that it presented a more neutral impression and that, in this way, a broader customer group could be reached. Additionally, the informants saw the advantage of buying for several people at once. Simultaneously it was agreed that the single website offered a greater number of products, where it was discussed whether this could have positive or negative consequences.

5.1.1 Less Degree of Perceived Interaction Between Multiple Websites

When the informants were asked to describe multiple websites, fluctuating descriptions of the two websites emerged. The informants had different perceptions of whether they considered the significant differences between the multiple websites as positive or negative. The website aimed at females was described as pink and girly. The descriptions of colors refer

to Hofacker stage two (attention) (c.f. Chaffey & Smith, 2017). For instance, informant three mentioned that the use of colors refers to a stereotype associated with gender: "The colors they [the company] choose are very stereotypical girl and boy colors." The association with gender confirms the informant's interpretation of what she sees. The statement refers to Hofacker stage three (comprehension and perception) regarding how the informants interpret the presented stimulus (c.f. Chaffey & Smith, 2017).

Simultaneously, the website aimed at males was described as neutral and basic and was perceived as deviant from the female's website. The associated product pages created reactions among the informants where, among other things, informant ten explained [when comparing the female and male multiple websites the female and male multiple websites]: "They look completely different from each other; it does not look like it is the same company." Substantiated by informant nine, who said: "Looking at the product-page aimed for females, I would have thought that this is a website I can shop from, but then looking at the male's product page, I would have thought 'hell no.'" We interpret this as the informant considering the website design aimed at females to be more appealing than the one aimed at males, mainly referring to the product page of the websites. The statement is identified as Hofacker step four, yielding and acceptance (c.f. Chaffey & Smith, 2017), whereas the informant expresses that he does not accept the presentation of the product page for males. One of the reasons for this can be linked to how the informants provide a description of neutral color choices, which in comparison deviates from the female website. It can be interpreted that the informant expresses a greater degree of acceptance of clear gender-oriented communication. Also, the product pages of the two websites are set up in two different ways, which can induce the customer to have two different shopping experiences. Hence, where informant nine expressed a higher degree of perceived relevance of the product page aimed at females. Still, a reason for his spontaneous reaction may be caused by a higher degree of recognition of the female product page; hence, the male webpage design was perceived as foreign and unknown.

When asked why the informants thought the company had set up the website designs differently, several informants answered that they thought it was to adapt the website based on differences within gender preferences. Hence, informant nine specified: "The websites

[multiple websites] are more tailored to the individual genders. So, what I like [website preferences] is not necessarily what girls like, and vice versa. The design is tailored to the specific consumer, so the male side is better suited for males because we may want a website design that is simple and efficient. While on the female's website, there is much more going on [elements, information]." The informant gives a reflection based on a comparison of website design but also concludes: "I would prefer to use the website aimed for females [female and male, multiple websites]." Hence, six out of twelve confirmed informant nine's claims of preferring the female's website, which informant seven justifies as follows:

I think that the female website was much more inspiring than the one aimed for males. Primarily, I think this is due to the combination of neutral colors and few eye-catching objects on the website aimed at males. So, if you had taken the female website and turned it into menswear, then I might have been more inspired to shop.

This can be interpreted as meaning that the website designed for females achieved a higher degree of gender-related content that is considered positive. Hence, in comparison, informant seven concluded that the website aimed at females is trying to construct and sell an identity. The overall interpretation of color use related to gender can contribute to the experience of a higher degree of relevant content on the website. However, none of the informants commented on the interface of the website design, or how the two designs encouraged different ways of usage.

5.1.2 Multiple Websites Mean a High Degree of Relevant Content

The informants were asked to evaluate why they believed the websites had separate websites for each gender. Several informants agreed that it was to reach the individual genders with content and marketing. Hence, informant seven stated, "By having a separate website design, one can have a much more differentiated approach." He mainly refers to the sender perspective and claims that with multiple websites, one can considerably offer content that is aimed at a specific recipient. By putting oneself in a recipient perspective, informant ten justified this assessment as beneficial by saying, "It is just more inviting with multiple websites,

where you get straight into what you are looking for, without irrelevant content." An interpretation is that the informant ten considered gender-relevant content relevant to her as a customer. It can be perceived as a negative matter if she encounters too much of what she does not consider relevant. Substantiated with informant ten, saying that it is advantageous to get several things that she is interested in without being interrupted by things she is not interested in. Although a reference to irrelevant information can be subjective, both informants six and seven see it as advantageous knowing that all the presented products are directed to them.

5.1.3 The Single Website is Perceived to Have a Gender-Neutral Design

When asking the informants about how they would describe the single website compared to the multiple websites, the informants described it as plain, simple, minimalistic, and neutral regarding the color choices. These descriptions mainly referred to the website's character (cf. Fan, Lee & Kim, 2013). The description was linked to gender differences as dissemination, benefiting those shopping for both male and females and those preferring gender-neutral products. Informant eight explained when watching the images of the single website: "The people and clothing are presented in a more neutrally, objective way." Without saying it explicitly, we considered the statement to reflect a more gender-neutral interpretation without any particular degree of feminist or masculine features. It may be interpreted that customers perceive minor distinctions between the genders due to, among others, neutral color choices. In contrast to the website design in question, informant seven draws links to what he generally considers the typical website for males, which aims to appeal to typical masculinity without elaborating these types of characteristics further. Hence, informant eleven substantiates this utterance by describing his perception of a typical male-website, a dark and tough design with large fonts. Informant seven elaborates by saying: "I consider those websites offering a separate website for males often try to appeal to a masculinity, which I do not identify with. In a way, it becomes a parody of gender roles." With a generalizing example of a typical design for males, informant seven briefly describes what does not strike him of today's website design. The comment is somewhat contradictory to the general findings associated with single websites. So, one interpretation is that the informant does not identify with the presentation of other websites, which can be considered both relative and individual, of which small details can provoke this perception.

5.1.4 The Single Website Encourages Cross-Sales

The opportunity to shop for both females and males at once is highlighted as an advantage of the single website. It is conceivable that this advantage is linked to a more practical and convenient perspective, as the informants justify the saved cost of shipping and that they receive the total order at once. In the interview guide, when the informants are initially asked about whom they are shopping for when shopping online, twelve out twelve informants answer that they primarily shop for themselves, with individual cases of gifts, etc. As a follow-up, a linkage to the mapping of shopping patterns was made, where the informants were asked to evaluate the degree to which this good benefits them.

When questioning the perceived benefits of presenting the single website regarding the informant's previous descriptions, there was a general agreement among the informants that single websites aim at a broad target group. Informant eight explained: "One of the benefits of a single website is that it appeals to all genders: him, her, and the non-binary gender." It is conceivable that informant eight sees this as an advantage by arguing that she often takes advantage of shopping products intended for males if they are sold out for the products intended for females. "I would buy a male sweater if the store were out of stock for the same type of sweater for females. The single website is designed in a way that encourages gender neutrality, making it easier for me, as a female, to buy menswear." Substantiated by informant two, explaining that he does not necessarily care if the products are aimed at females or males, but does care about the importance of the appearance of the products. Hence, informant seven argued that: "Gender does not always necessarily have to be an indicator of what one is looking for." It appears that several of the informants argued for the advantage of being able to order what is referred to as gender-neutral products. Additionally, this benefit is associated with how the website design is presented.

5.1.5 The Single Website is Perceived to Have too Many Irrelevant Items

Another prominent point in the description and perception of the single website was an increase in the number of products compared to the multiple websites. Hence, informant one specified that when the company offers products to males, females, and children, he instinctively thinks that the website has too many products, referring to Hofacker stage three

(comprehension and perception) (c.f. Chaffey & Smith, 2017). Thus, an interpretation is that his claim is based on the three mentioned categories (female, males, and children), which are also visible in the interviews specifically, as the interviews do not account for any other type of product quantity, such as the total number of products. The allegation is not explained in more detail but is drawn from the informant's instinctive interpretation of the presented screenshots. Informant eight argued [when looking at the single website] that too many products can result in much scrolling. Concomitantly, the argument was not discussed against a counter argument, for example, related to shopping in general, which cannot be interpreted in a positive or negative sense. The perceived amount of information was also linked to quality, as informant eleven claimed:

It is like a restaurant; if they have 100 dishes on the menu, they most likely do not have any good quality of the different dishes. So, if they have too many products, their range is too broad. I am not saying that their products are bad, but that it can very quickly become confusing. It is so much easier for me to go into an eyewear store, for instance, rather than buying sunglasses here. (informant eleven)

Although quality is not assessed at the level of detail [products], the informant's immediate perception is that combining many segments can affect the quality of the website. Another linkage is made to time, where informant five argued [when looking at the single website] that too many irrelevant products could potentially result in her leaving the website. The statement is justified by a perception of increased time use, where she stated that a lack of relevant products may induce increased time use. It can be interpreted as the informant experiencing that she does not find it interesting to spend time on what she considers irrelevant. Regarding Hofacker (c.f. Chaffey & Smith, 2017), her perception model is reflected in stage four (yielding and acceptance), where the amount of information is not accepted. Thus, it is substantial to remark that perceived relevance is also a question of definition, in which individual preferences are essential for interpreting the statement. Thus, a link can be drawn to informant thirteen's comment, referring to "today's short-attention culture," substituted by informant nine who mentions, "as a consumer, you have so many choices [regarding websites], so it will take me three seconds to get out of a website that I don't like." In other words, it can

be interpreted as several of the informants concluding that several elements on the website with reduced relevance can result in a negative interpretation of the website or, in the worst case, that they leave the website. Substantiated by informant eight, explaining that such a website [single website design] can be beneficial when one knows what he or she is looking for, but that one would not browse this type of website because of the amount of selection. When the informants evaluated the front page of a single website, three out of six females expressed that it had too much irrelevant information. Hence, referring to the type of information as sustainability or gift cards without any further linkage to the combined gender aspect. Still, the examples may also result from having gender-combined websites, as the information may need to be more neutral and therefore display information of a more general character.

Figure 5.1 Female and male preferences regarding single versus multiple websites
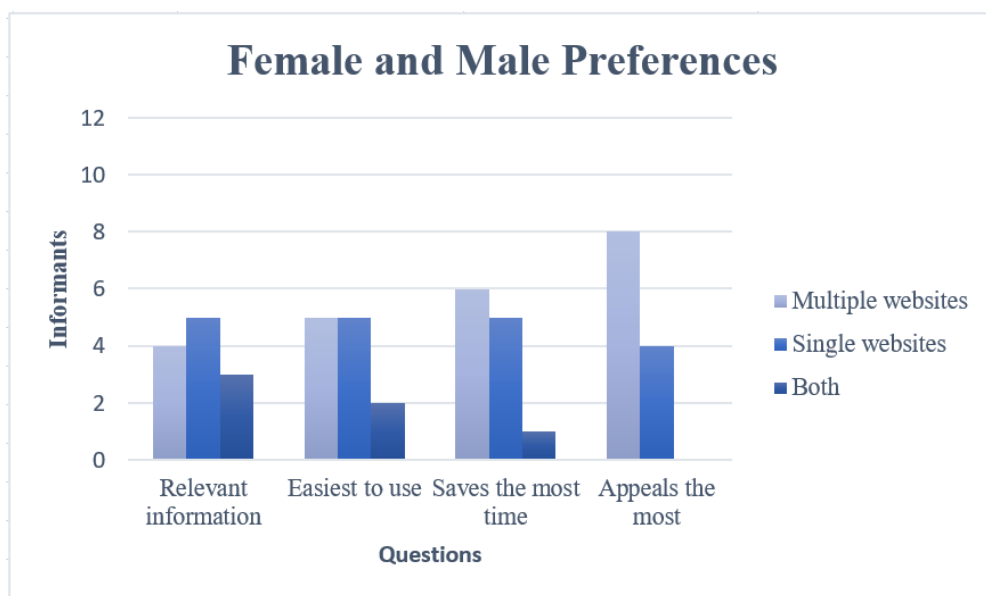
Figure 5.1 sums up the informant's opinions on which website design provided the most relevant information, is easiest to use, saves the most time and appeals the most. Figure 6.1 clearly shows that multiple websites is the overall favorite. Chapter 5.2 will provide a deeper presentation of how the individual genders perceived multiple and single website design.

5.2 Gender Differences—Shopping Patterns

To analyze gender differences, it was essential to map how the shopping patterns emerged differently among the male and female informants. This was to make it easier to link descriptions of preferences and habits to their experiences of the websites.

5.2.1 Males Consider Online Shopping Simple and Time-Saving

The informants' descriptions showed some key differences between the genders. The main findings were that males preferred online shopping considerably and shopped more often online than females. For instance, four out of six male informants stated that online shopping is easier. On average, the male informants expressed a higher degree of online shopping, estimated to be approximately 2.25 times a month, compared to the female informants, who shopped 1.5 times a month. Informant six elaborates on this by saying: "I prefer online shopping because I consider it easy and time-saving, especially in the busy everyday life." The informant's reference to online shopping as simple and time-saving can be considered relative terms. Simultaneously, it emerges later in the interview that he primarily complements the statement by saying that he has no interest in spending time shopping. Another perspective emerged from informant two, who justified online shopping as simple by linking the website's navigation to a compelling shopping experience: "The fact that the website has a search function means that I can be quite efficient, which makes it easier for me to shop." Thus, the informant expresses an acquaintance with the website's design for user interactivity (cf. Chang & Chen, 2009), linking to perceived efficiency. Concurrently, offline shopping is justified by the opportunity to try on clothes, where informant two explains: "I think it is much easier to visit the store and try it [clothes] right away." The informant's reasoning can be interpreted as another way of referencing time use where he considers offline shopping easier.

5.2.2 Males Favor Doing Extensive External Research and Comparisons

A common denominator for several informants was the extent to which they spent time on different types of investigations before they bought something. Informant eleven explained: "I do extensive research before buying anything. If I shop on a website that I have never used before, I always look at the reviews other customers have commented on. It could potentially

cause me to choose not to use that website." Thus, the informant confirmed that he relies on other consumers' experiences with the website if he doubts the website's trustworthiness, referring to the website's verbal-visual elements (cf. Bleier et al., 2018). The statement refers to the importance of what effect customers have on the company's reputation by clearly stating that it can potentially induce lost sales. Other factors highlighted for research are related to price, where informant seven stated: "If I find a product I like, I try to find it cheaper elsewhere." Thus, it can be interpreted that the informant expresses knowledge of the use of the Internet as a tool to do external research to establish an overview of the company's competitors. Informant nine claimed: "I always research before buying anything. For instance, I Google it or check out the company on Facebook. Additionally, I looked at reviews, ratings, or videos of other customers evaluating the product. I do it thoroughly; thus, concurrently, it does not take that long." The informant refers to something that can be regarded as a relatively comprehensive survey to ascertain from what he considers various reliable sources. Still, he explained that he does not perceive it as time-consuming. One interpretation is that he has good knowledge of this type of investigation and, therefore, concludes from there.

5.2.3 Females Prefer Both Online and Offline Shopping

The female informants expressed mixed preferences associated with shopping, of which two preferred online, two preferred offline, and two preferred both. Online shopping is justified by not having to go shopping physically, and offline shopping on the opposite side is justified by not having to return items that do not fit. The overall impression of the female's preferences regarding shopping was that they considered it essential to have knowledge about the product they were to buy. It could thus be interpreted to be somewhat independent of whether it was online or offline. Hence, those who preferred both types justify this by saying that they see the clothes online and then go to the store to buy them: "I will look up the products online before buying them in the store "(informant ten). It can be interpreted as the informant preferring to examine the product online before going to the store to confirm or decline the already established impression from online research. This can be referred to as Bleier et al.'s (2018) point on how visual elements can contribute an experience of how the product can fit into their life, wherein this case can be considered unsatisfactory with the presentation experienced from the website.

5.2.4 Females Prefer Gathering Information Through Internal Research

Overall, the female informants are expressive about how the information provided on the website is crucial for them to shop there. Two recurring topics came up in the females' answers about what information they were looking for in advance: reviews and material on the product. In other words, the answers referred to internal information that could be found on the relevant website without reference to other comparisons with external sources. Informant ten confirmed this claim by saying, "I do not compare with other stores." Furthermore, all the females emphasized the importance of customer reviews. The reference was identified as the website's way of setting up interactivity. The communication, in this case, is based on customer-to-customer communication via the website (cf. Fan et al., 2013). Informant eight explained from a previous experience: "In the reviews, someone wrote that the product was small in size, which induced me becoming so insecure that I did not buy it." It seems that the informant attaches great value to this function and that it can be decisive whether she chooses to buy a product or not. One reason for this may be that she associated it with trust to see other customers' descriptions, and the assessment referred to "verbal-visual elements" (cf. Bleier et al., 2018). Some of the informants also emphasized the importance of product information, of which the quality of the fabric was associated with laundry handling. Informant twelve said: "I like to find out what material the product is made of and how it should be washed since I do not like to wash by hand." It can be interpreted as the informant here evaluating the product under potential practical advantages or disadvantages that may arise as a result of purchasing the product. Substantiated by informant three, stating, "If I visit a website that does not provide any information about what [fabric] the product is made of, I do not buy it. For example, if I buy a sweater online and the fabric gets ugly after one week, I consider it a waste of money." Hence, the informants referred to the relevance of the website's content (c.f. Fan et al., 2013). An interpretation is that the informant values the provided information about the product to visualize it in her own life and draw conclusions, thereby determining whether she wants to buy it. Another perspective is stated by informant five, mainly referring to payment and shipping: "Information about returns and shipping, or whether they [the company] use reputable payment schemes is crucial. If this information is difficult to find, I will not shop there." Hence, referring to the accessibility of specific information, one can interpret this statement as to how the informant assesses the website's content concerning the implementation of the shopping activity and overall perceived trust in the company.

5.3 Gender Differences—Single vs Multiple Website

By asking the informants which website design that provided them with the most relevant information, the website design that is easiest to use, the website design that saves the most time, and the website design that appealed the most, we found that the male informants overall preferred the single website, and the female informants preferred the multiple websites.
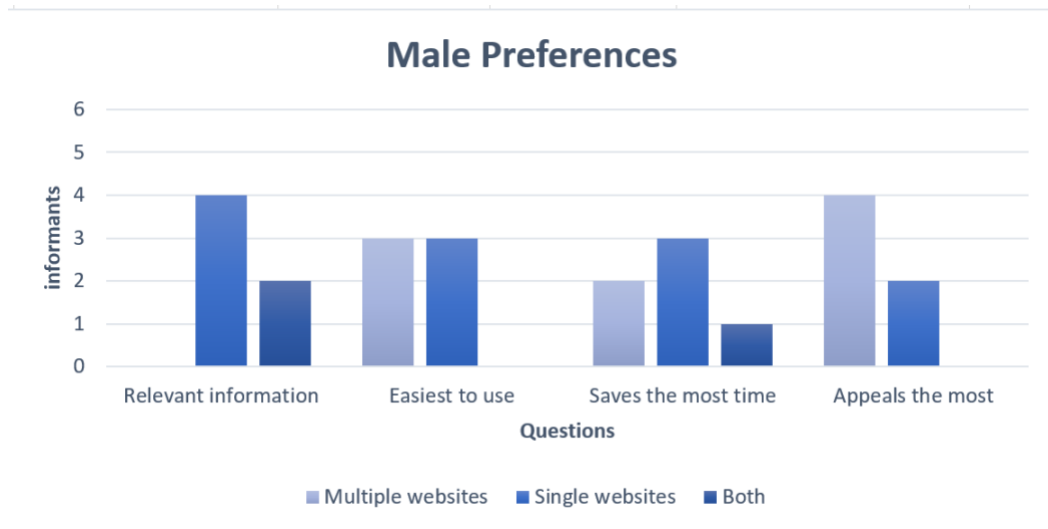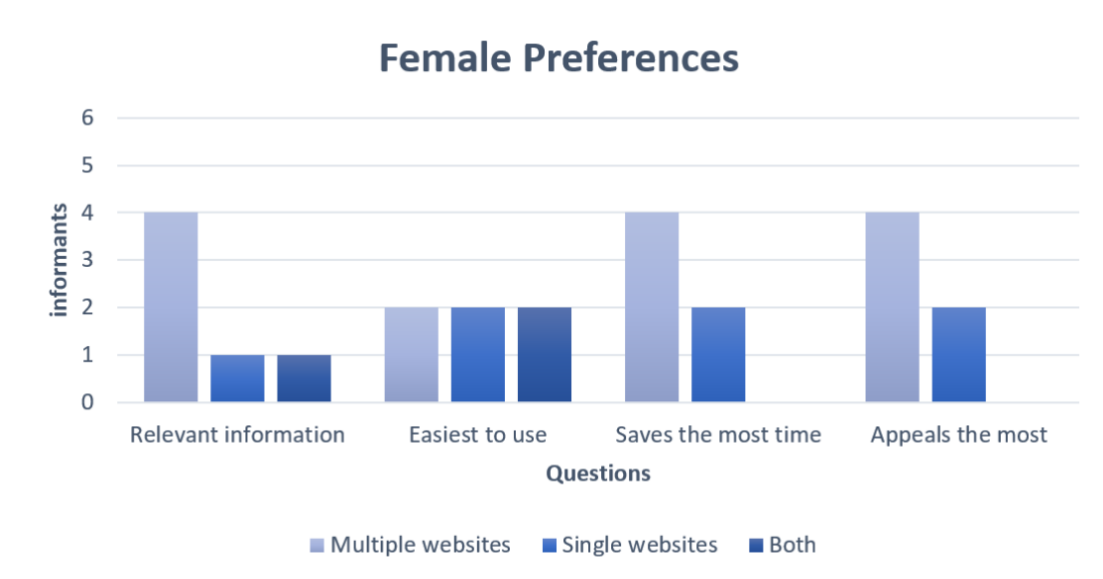
Figure 5.2 Male preferences regarding single versus multiple websites

Figure 5.3 Female preferences regarding single versus multiple websites

Figures 5.2 and 5.3 present the difference in how male and female informants perceive multiple and single websites regarding appeal, information, time use and navigation. As one can see from Figure 5.2, the male informants are leaning toward single websites. As a comparison, Figure 5.3 presents female preferences, which indicates that the female respondents experience that multiple websites, appeals the most, provide the most relevant information, are time efficient and easy to navigate through. There is a greater variety in the females' answers, where some explicitly prefer single, multiple, or they like both. The male informants provide more consistent answers, where many prefer single websites. Another observation is that the female informants changed their minds less compared to the male informants.

To conclude whether the informants preferred multiple or single websites, we asked them directly what they preferred when shopping for themselves and others. As can be seen in Figure 5.4, we found that the male informants preferred to use multiple websites when shopping for themselves and the single website when shopping for others. The female informants presented in Figure 5.5 preferred single websites when shopping for others, but when shopping for themselves, they answered 50/50, meaning that there is no clear answer for which design they prefer.

Figure 5.4 Male preferences regarding multiple and single websites when shopping for themselves and others
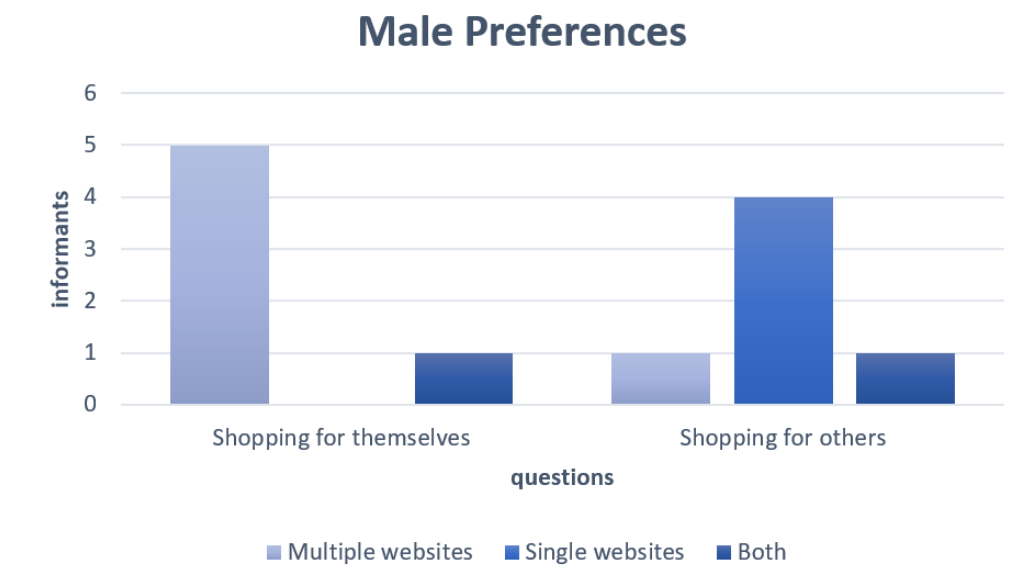
Figure 5.5 Female preferences regarding multiple and single websites when shopping for themselves and others
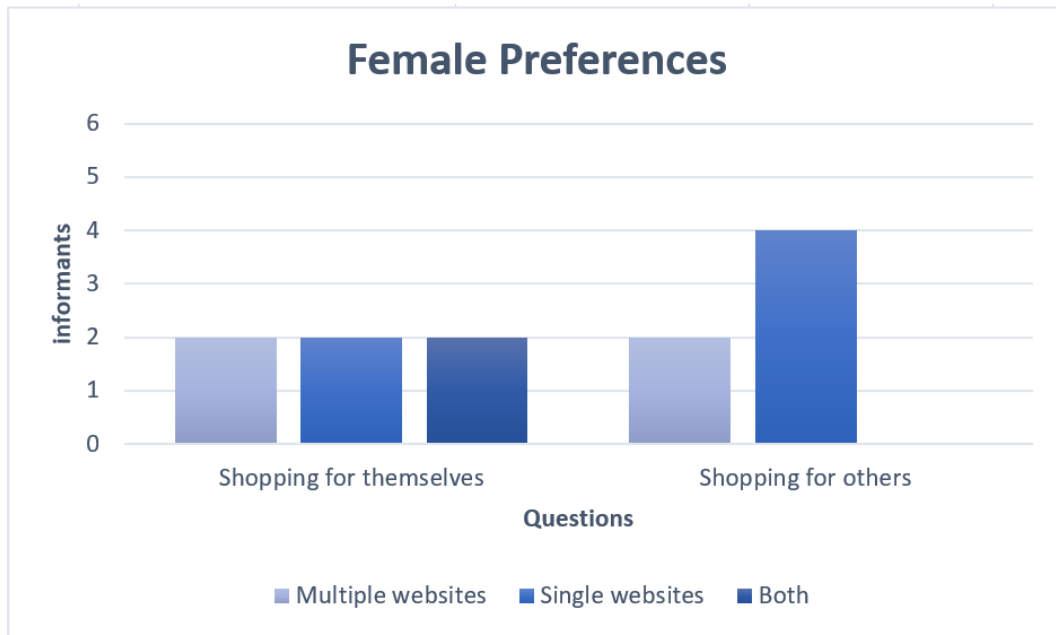
5.2.6 Males Prefer Gender-Specific Content

When assessing the multiple websites, all the male informants expressed that they consider it advantageous that the products are aimed at them specifically. Informant six elaborated: "It appeals more to me to have gender-specific websites because then I know that they [the website] only have the things that I am looking for. Normally, when I visit a website, I am looking for something specific." In other words, he explains that the segmented [multiple] website design suits him as a consumer because it makes him confident that he will find what he is looking for. It can be interpreted that he links gender-specific website design to a perceived reduction in relevant products without saying it implicitly. One possible explanation may be that he assumes that single websites devote space to several segments, leading to compromising gender-specific products relevant to him. Another perspective that justifies why the informants prefer gender-specific websites is advertising and how a single website can affect the marketing they are exposed to on external media. Informant seven explained:

A single website design can potentially lead to confusion in terms of the ads [external]. In general, if there are ads that are considered irrelevant, one can right-click and say,

'This ad is not relevant to me.' Meanwhile, on a single website, advertising can potentially involve products for both genders. At worst, this can lead to buying a product meant for the other gender, if not alerted. If the gender-segmented website provides the information I am interested in, I would have preferred this type of design to avoid the conflict of what advertising I am exposed to because I find that extremely annoying.

His claim refers to how he is affected by external information, in this case with advertisements, and how it can result in his choice of website design. Put bluntly, informant seven explains that he considers the advertisement he is exposed to so vital that it may affect his website design choice.

5.2.7 Males Highlight the Importance of Content Relevance

Another interesting point about comparing multiple and single websites was that several of the male informants highlighted the relevance of the content. Specifically, the informants emphasized the extent to which they considered it essential to use images to target consumers. Hence, referring to the component "visual elements" (cf. Bleier et al., 2018). Informant nine emphasized the importance of how the use of images can affect him as a consumer: "What is a common feature for all good websites is the way of presenting the products with the use of images. It should be clear to the user what they are selling." He also refers to how a neutral use of images and a lack of conspicuous images can affect his impression: "I would prefer images that make me want to shop there. A boring and basic website design can look like any other website. As one today has so many choices, it only takes me about three seconds to leave the website if I do not like what I see." To link the statement to the websites in question to our study, several informants explained the single website as neutral and basic. An interpretation of the descriptions is that the informants perceived the single website as a design aiming to create content to target both females and males, described as boring and basic in this study. Informant nine illustrates the extent to which these choices may have consequences for him as a website user. The statement is confirmed by informant seven, who exemplifies:

Let us say that one visits a website for the first time. The presented colors are neutral, and the content bears the mark of few eye-catching elements. It is conceivable that this

can induce one to move on to the next website in today's short-attention culture, since nothing stopped your gaze. The combination of neutral and few eye-catching elements does not make me particularly inspired.

The informant explained that a more gender-neutral website's potential result may be that he loses the inspiration to act. The informant refers to a short-attention span culture, which is remarkably consistent with the male informants' descriptions of online shopping preferences, summarized as practical and straightforward.

Although it is argued for the benefits of gender-relevant content, several of the male informant's express indifference to whether the website must involve both female and male clothes. Informant nine says, "Even though it is obvious, it is in a way ultimately the products that decide whether I like the website or not. So, if the store does not manage to attract you with these, then it has nothing to say about how good the website's layout is." Confirming the statement that a website is only as good as its content (c.f. LaSorsa, 2012). It may seem that the male informants emphasized the selection and presentation in the evaluation of the website. Bleier et al. (2018) gave a brief presentation of the assessment of website components, which in many ways emphasized the overall impression you get when you visit a website. This can, in many ways, be consistent with males' descriptions of how they experience the website by highlighting facts that are associated with the first impression. This subsequently can be linked to their prioritization of time, where it appears crucial that online shopping provides the desired information they are looking for in a relatively short time.

5.2.8 Females are More Skeptical of Gender as a Strategy for Communication

Overall, it appears that the female informants consider it practical that the website is gender-segmented, but generally express more skepticism about the dissemination. For example, the female informants reacted strongly to the gender-segregated presentation, focusing on a website aimed at females. Informant five explained: "The images of males are relatively conservative compared to females. The females [in the photos] are lightly dressed, and there is far more focus on the body and showing lots of skin on the female side than on the male's side. It seems that they are trying to manipulate their customers. They use primitive

choices to try to manipulate the female and the males to buy more." The informant refers primarily to the website's image use (c.f. Bleier et al., 2018) and recognizes the website's way of using images as a strategy to reach the desired gender. Further, one can interpret that referring to "primitive choices" is primarily justified with the interpretation of the example of a website's photos. The justification is relevant in the case of gender-specific websites because one has to assume that companies have to make some strategic choices to promote the gender they are trying to reach. Concurrently, the informant refers to the way of presenting genders in the photos [lightly dressed, showing much skin], which is not a given prerequisite based on the design. Informant eight completes the statement by describing the multiple websites, focusing on the website intended for females:

> All the details are pink [on the website]. Maybe girls are more attracted to pink. Hence, that is how one normally separates a child by gender: blue for boys and pink for girls. It is a bit silly when I think about it like that because I like blue as well. Such a way of dividing the genders is almost a bit sexist, where everything should be so nice and delicate. They convey a message saying, 'If you wear this t-shirt, you will look hot and become a hot girl.' I think it is stupid that they do that.

It seems like the informant associates a website design that conveys gender differences as trying to create a character that she perceives negatively. The quote is yet another example of a confirmation of what strategic choices a company can make to try to reach a specific user group. Using too much garnish animation and colors can look amateurish or be perceived as loud advertisements, making the consumer screen out (cf. Hofacker, 2001, referred to in Chaffey & Smith, 2017, pp 186–190). The informant expressed strong disagreement as to whether it affected her as a consumer.

5.2.9 Multiple or Single Websites are Not Decisive For Females' Shopping Experience

Our findings suggest that there is an even distribution on whether females prefer multiple or single websites in our study (Figure 6.5). Similar to the male informants, the females saw it as advantageous that all of the content aimed at them as users. Concurrently,

there was a more general openness for both types, of which informant five explained: "Multiple website designs use simple manipulation to reach out to their customer group, with lots of colors, images, and suggestions for things you should [according to the company] have. It seems like they try to manipulate their customer base" The informant's way of describing and discussing the strategic choices, can be elucidated in a negative manner, hence closely linked to cunning perception. Concomitantly, when asking what website design appeals to her the most, she answers: "I prefer multiple websites because of the colors. I easily let myself be manipulated." Hence, informant five acknowledge the website's way of targeting the user based on specific choices as regards content, but still claims to accept it.

A similar situation that emerged in one of the interviews was with informant ten, where she discussed the advantages and disadvantages of both websites, of which she initially gave the impression of leaning towards multiple website designs. When asked which one she thinks might be easiest for her to use, she replied: "I would prefer two separate websites [multiple websites]. It was not really what I had thought at the beginning of the interview, though ». The statement shows how the informant has, throughout the interview, reflected on the advantages and disadvantages of the two designs, and how the questions have led her to discuss whether she had preferred one over the other, compared to easy to use. Finally, she was asked to decide whether she preferred multiple or single websites when shopping for herself. Informant ten then replied: "At the beginning of the interview, I thought I would rather have both female and male at the same website because you then know what they have [the company, products]. But again, if they [the company] market well enough, it's just as good to have two different websites, one aimed for females and one aimed for males. "

5.3 Summary of Findings

In this chapter, we have presented and analyzed various findings represented in Table 5.1, related to the three research questions: Customer shopping pattern, website preferences, and gender differences.

Table 5.1 Summary of findings

Website design	
	Less degree of perceived interaction between multiple websites
	Multiple websites mean a higher degree of relevant content
	The single website is perceived to have a gender-neutral design
	The single website encourages cross-sales
	The single website is perceived to have too many irrelevant items
Online gender differences	
	Males consider online shopping simple and time-saving
	Males favor doing extensive external research and comparisons
	Females prefer both online and offline shopping
	Females prefer gathering information through internal research
	Males prefer gender-specific content
	Males highlight the importance of content relevance
	Females are more skeptical of gender as a strategy for communication

We have presented key findings related to the two types of website design in focus before going in-depth and look at similarities and differences between the two informant groups: females and males. This was then linked to their previous shopping pattern.

Overall, the informants consider the single website as advantageous, as they can shop for others or shop for themselves across the gender-specific products, also justifies the neutral color choices as a high degree of relevance linked to the single website. While those believing that an amount of information [products, for instance] are perceived as irrelevant also describe the neutral color choices as boring. Hence, there may be a link between how the informants express the amount of perceived information regarding information and relevance. An interpretation here may be that those who see it as relevant to act across genders also consider the amount of information appropriate, and vice versa.

As males have expressed that they consider online shopping easier and more time-saving, this can be linked to the importance of relevant content. This study has described that

a result of a gender-neutral website may be a lack of eye-catching images and objects. Furthermore, conclusions are drawn that this can make customers, emphasizing male consumers, leave the website, claiming to prefer the time-efficient and simple online shopping experience. When it comes to research, it appears that the female informants have clear preferences for what they primarily seek when they shop, namely, the product's quality and reviews from other customers. In other words, it refers to the information available internally on the website. However, males express a more complex search in which they go beyond the information offered on the website using a search engine to compare price or product reviews in the form of reviews or movies.

When it came to gender differences between the informants' descriptions, some key findings were prominent. For example, males highlight the importance of relevant content and argue that they prefer gender-specific content. However, females had a more complex reference area, of which advantages and disadvantages of both types were commented on. When it came to gender differences between the informants' descriptions, some key findings were prominent. Overall, males showed greater clarity to website preference than females, of which the emphasis was on multiple websites. This was justified by the fact that males primarily preferred gender-relevant content. Conversely, the females gave a more even expression, of which a general skepticism of gender-specific choices was prominent in their descriptions.

6. Interpretation and Discussion

This chapter aims to discuss our findings presented in chapter six, with relevant earlier research presented in chapter three. In this chapter, the discussion revolves around our research questions, similar to chapter six, where questions one and three are presented together. In other words, we will start by discussing multiple and single websites, then we will discuss gender differences regarding shopping patterns. Finally, we will discuss how gender differences become visible in the informants' descriptions.

6.1 Multiple Versus Single Websites

6.2.1. Segmentation Can Be Found in the Intersection Between Personal Factors and Psychological Factors.

Findings from our study show that the informants were skeptical about how deviant multiple websites are. Although the website, in this case, is segmented based on personal factors, namely gender, and age (c.f. Radu, 2021), an interpretation of the informants' perceptions is linked to the customers psychological factors (c.f. Radu, 2021). For example, an individual customer's attitudes and perceptions can affect how the website design is perceived. It is crucial to consider who the customer is, their preferences, and other goals for visiting the website. Furthermore, it may also be crucial to mention that the findings are based on a comparison [multiple websites], of which it is conceivable that a general assessment of the website designs individually could have given a different outcome. The informants highlighted the relevance of content as being crucial in assessing the website designs, of which males want relevance of images.

Overall, it can be interpreted that perceptions refer to the psychological factors upon which the informants' perceptions and attitudes emerge (c.f. Radu, 2021). In other words, the finding suggests that gender is not necessarily the best indicator of segmentation, and that it should be based on homogeneous groups with similar characteristics (cf. Tynan & Drayton, 1987). For companies, the challenge is to map how they are going to segment based on who the target group is, and which products are sold. It is conceivable that some given prerequisites cannot be avoided in the case of clothing to reach the right user. Nevertheless, it is relevant to

consider what strategic measures should be taken to convey this. It can be beneficial for companies to concretize their segment to gain a competitive advantage (cf. Dolnicar et al., 2018, p. 7).

6.2.2 Single Website can Affect the Perceived Navigation of the Website

Findings from our research indicate that a single website is perceived to have considerable amounts of elements and products, which potentially could result in the informants abandoning the website. The assortation is justified by the perception of having to scroll a lot to find relevant content. Hence, an interpretation is that the number of elements may influence the perception of navigation. On a general term, theory states that the number of options can affect navigation (cf. Graham & Henman, 2017). Moreover, previous literature states that a lack of effective navigation can induce confusion, frustration, and potential abandonment of the website (cf. Gehrke & Turban, 1999). The finding is based on a literature review (c.f. Gehrke & Turban, 1999), and reflects a presentation of important elements for website design, which is related to effectiveness. Even so, no special emphasis has been placed on whether efficiency is a driving element for the study in question. In other words, one can relate our findings to information on the website but without a basis for linking it to efficiency as a measurement parameter. Hence, in this study, navigation was assessed on a general level, namely, on the basis of the provided screenshots (Appendix 3, 4, 5, and 6). Thus, overall, it can be considered an inadequate assessment element for the study.

Further, it can be drawn to whether the informants are associated with the argument for the expected use of time, of which navigation emerges as a central aid in how quickly the user finds valuable information (cf. Hernández et al., 2009). Generally, the findings highlight the central notion that more segments mean the perception of more products; thus, more time is used. It can be essential that a website designed for several segments should focus on designing so that users do not negatively perceive navigation.

6.3 Shopping Pattern and Online Gender Differences

6.3.1 Males' Shopping Preferences Has Been Consistent Over Time

Our findings suggest that the male informants preferred online shopping considerably more than the female informants. Furthermore, the male informants claimed to shop online more often than females. The finding follows previous research, confirming that males have expressed preference for online shopping more considerably than females for a long period (cf. Slyke et al., 2002). Still, the statement is based on a comparison, which can be relative, from which it does not appear whether males like online shopping or whether it is due only to the comparison. One prediction is that such a claim would be challenging to measure. This study does not aim to map whether males prefer online shopping on a general basis. Nevertheless, the perspective may be relevant as auxiliary information when evaluating further justifications.

Our study's findings claim that the male informants justified online shopping as being considered easy and time-saving. Also, the findings are justified by the degree of accessibility. It is explained that, for example, with the use of mobile phones, one can shop more sporadically throughout the day. Although not being justified with the same term, previous research has found that males consider online shopping convenient (cf. Hasan, 2010). Hasan (2010) is based on a quantitative approach, which in general indicates a limited definition of the variable "convenience". In comparison, our approach allowed the informants to express themselves without given predetermined terms. Additionally, one must consider how language can vary across borders, which this study as referred to was conducted in the U.S. (Appendix 7). It is conceivable that using descriptive terms may have a different meaning than what it has for our research in the Norwegian context. In other words, one must consider that the informants attach different meanings to the expressions when comparing two studies. Still, an interpretation is that the terms can be somewhat in the same category. By gaining insights into males shopping habits, companies can adapt websites and offers accordingly. For example, a qualitative approach contributes to insights into the specific elements' males consider time-saving and easy. Regarding website design, this type of insight can provide website developers on how they should design for specific genders regarding preferences. In this study, a reference is made to internal searches and a shopping website's compatibility with phones.

6.3.2 Females Shopping Preferences Has Changed, But the Justifications are Consistent

Our findings show that females prefer a combination of online and offline shopping. The findings contradict previous literature stating that females prefer offline shopping over online shopping (cf. Slyke et al., 2002). Still, one must consider the age of literature [more than ten y/o], as one can assume that online and offline shopping preferences have evolved since then. With a quantitative approach, the research accounts for correlation between variables, and loses possible data that reflects the intermediary. Furthermore, it is not given that our study differs directly from previous research, but that it is simply due to the choice of method. Our findings indicate that females, such as males, explain online shopping as efficient. Simultaneously, the preference for offline shopping is primarily justified by evaluating the product in real life. The justification corresponds with previous literature, where females justify physical shopping by assessing the product physically (cf. Slyke et al., 2002). Our study addresses the benefits of online and offline shopping as a comparison, but it is unknown whether previous research does the same. Females argued for the same thing in both studies. Although our informants were asked to justify on a comparative basis, the study did not explain whether one can influence the other.

In addition to physically evaluating a product, the female informants claimed to seek product fabric or washing instructions when shopping online. The literature claims that females tend to be rational shoppers (cf. Slyke et al., 2002). Rationality tends to be yet a term of relative meaning. Still, an interpretation of the term may be related to whether a product has utility value compared to spontaneous purchases. The aforementioned factors are not assessed in this study. Despite this, a link between the findings of our research and rationality can be linked to how female informants aim to evaluate how a product can be imagined in their everyday lives. It may be relevant for website developers to have knowledge of the information females seek in specific. This can prevent them from primarily losing female customers due to a lack of information. For instance, website developers can focus on how they can gain increased experience of evaluating a product physically for websites that specifically aim to target females. An alternative is to emphasize the combination of shopping online and picking up at the physical store. Thus, the website encourages trading via its chain. However, this is a challenge for websites without a physical store. Thus, other online strategies must be used for female customers to experience satisfactory effects.

6.3.3 Females and Males Highlight the Importance of Thorough Research

In this study, the findings indicated remarkable similarities between male and female informants regarding the amount of research they conducted. Generally, the finding follows previous research, which explains that females' online shopping attitudes are more similar to male than they are in the real world. However, the finding contradicts previous research, which mainly emphasizes that females seek more comprehensive information online than males (c.f. Hsieh & Lin, 2016; Kim et al., 2007; Jackson et al., 2001). An example here was the degree of research before a purchase, where it was prominent that both female and males emphasize research considerably. For instance, both females and males highlighted the importance of customer ratings. Compared to previous research, a generalized indication is that females place great emphasis on research, of which it has been specified that they often seek more information before a purchase (c.f. Cyr & Bonanni, 2005), and that they obtain information from different sources (c.f. Kim, Lehto & Morrison, 2007). These differences may be due to different methods of data collection or the age of the data. The former can be explained because the two studies are based on quantitative research (Appendix 8), which does not reflect the total spectrum of the extent to which consumers research. Also, it may be due to a basis of comparison of the two genders, which induces one gender to obtain a score higher on some parameters than the other and vice versa. The latter, the data's age, can be explained because the studies are over ten years. It is conceivable that much has changed both technologically and with the associated generation. Concomitantly, it is worth mentioning that the aim of the studies may impact the data.

In other words, our findings suggest that males and females express extensive research related to shopping but from two slightly different angles. Males express their research externally by searching for other customers' experiences or by comparing the information with other companies, for example, by price comparison. Previous research has suggested that males prefer price comparisons when shopping online without further elaboration (cf. Nets, 2021).

6.3.4 Males Radiates Curiosity Regarding Online Exploring

Our findings indicate that the male informants see the opportunity to evaluate products using external information and comparisons. An interpretation of this is that the male informants do not experience receiving adequate information on the website and thus search for information on other forums and websites. Nevertheless, it is relevant to specify that males, from a historical perspective, have considerably used the Internet for exploring than females (cf. Jackson et al., 2001). A prediction of a possible linkage between our findings and previous literature is that males generally see it as beneficial to search beyond the primary source. The literature referred to is older, and it must be considered that potential changes may occur in consumers and preferences (c.f. Jackson et al., 2001). Still, findings from our study (or other literature) have not provided grounds for claiming that there have been significant changes in males' preferences in using the Internet for search. Hence, web developers could benefit from designing for external linkages to customer experience videos or forums on the website. A linkage could result in a greater degree of interaction between customer and company, as the company encourages customers to influence the information they receive from the website. Previous literature confirms that companies should focus on a higher degree of user experience of self-service and control of user interaction in the use of websites (cf. Hernández, Jiménez & Martín, 2009). An example of this is a user-generated design, which can be found at LEGO.com. LEGO encourages and refers to external groups and communities on the website that share experiences with their products (Lego, 2021). Since it has been established that males seek external information, website developers could benefit from having a more active approach by referring to chosen external actors directly from the website. This way, they could encourage user-generated websites, from which the users could seek out and share their experiences. This type of customization can contribute to an increased experience of service quality (cf. Fan et al., 2013).

6.3.5 Females Do Comprehensive Research Due to a General Skepticism

Our findings indicate that females seek information internally on the website, mainly referring to customer reviews and specifically related to the product. Regarding previous literature, females are generally skeptical of the information presented on websites (cf. Cyr & Bonanni, 2005). Therefore, an interpretation is that females attach great value to internal information, since they must assure themselves in various areas before purchasing. An alternative explanation is that females have different criteria for retaining information when shopping than males. Additionally, literature states that females in general has psychological motivations for shopping (cf. Dittmar et al., 2004). It can be interpreted that the female's quest of doing comprehensive research (cf. Kim et al., 2007) is due to a general skepticism.

6.4 Multiple and Single Websites: Gender Differences

In general, when assessing the website design, the informants explained that an advantage of multiple websites is that the company can adapt the content to specific genders. The findings indicate an agreement with previous literature, which specified that marketers can benefit from creating gender-sensitive website content and presentations (c.f. Kim et al., 2007). However, it is conceivable that the literature generally refers to websites without any references to single or multiple websites. Our findings suggested that the use of specific colors and images impact the impression, both regarding single and multiple websites. Still, it is relevant to assess the degree to which the spectrum in customers' perceptions impacts how and which elements of the content are considered relevant. For instance, our findings show some disagreement about the extent to which the informants considered gender-sensitive content relevant. This was justified by referring to stereotypical color choices or the perception of a parody of gender roles. Previous literature substantiated the importance of designing a website with which customers can feel comfortable (cf. LaSorsa, 2012). Nonetheless, it can be challenging for marketers and website developers to identify the fine line between relevant content and whether it is considered too much.

6.4.1 Males Prefer Gender-Specific Content, Females Prefer Gender-Neutral Content

Our findings suggest that males prefer gender-specific content, while females don't necessarily see whether single or multiple websites are as decisive for their shopping experience. This can be supported by previous literature, from which it has been explained that females, on a general basis, used gender-neutral websites to a greater extent than males (c.f.Kim et al., 2007). The mentioned study researched gender differences in collecting information related to online and offline travel information and cannot be directly compared with our study of shopping preferences. Still, reference was made to a greater openness to a gender-neutral presentation of the content, of which it was explained for comparison that males had stronger preferences in the mentioned area (c.f. Kim et al., 2007). Our study shows similar trends, especially in the last point, where the male informants express a preference for gender-relevant content. In other words, females show greater acceptance of what is presented, while males have more evident demands for what they prefer. Seen in a broader perspective, it is conceivable that website developers must generally be more observant of the content, primarily if they target both genders with a single website. Here, an alternative may be to examine whether females accept male preferences related to information and content for the website's design.

6.5 Summary of Chapter

This chapter discusses several central findings with previously presented literature. First, we discuss how our findings can be linked to different types of segmentation. Hence, the findings indicate that the perception of segmentation can be found in the intersection between personal factors and psychological factors. It can be perceived that a single website affects the navigation of the website as a result of having too many elements and options on the website.

Then we discussed online gender differences with shopping patterns, which had great similarities with previous research. For instance, male shopping preferences are confirmed to be consistent over time. However, females' shopping preferences indicate that there are abnormal findings from previous research. Our study implies that females prefer a variation of online and offline shopping. However, previous literature emphasizes the extent to which females prefer conventional shopping. In comparison, we discuss whether there is a basis for comparison, mainly due to the age of previous research and different approaches of methods.

At the same time, the female informants' justifications for preferences are consistent with previous literature.

Finally, we discuss that both females and males highlight the importance of thorough research when shopping online. Our findings contradict previous research, regarding choice of method and age of previous research. We consider this to be a linkage between males who radiate curiosity regarding online exploring. Regarding website design, we discussed the differences between the genders' descriptions. Hence, the males prefer gender-specific content, and females prefer gender-neutral content. Regarding previous research, similar findings have been presented, though with another approach. In comparison, previous literature mainly refers to interpreting the website's way of presenting information, and it has been discussed whether marketers can benefit from this knowledge.

7. Conclusion and Implications

7.1 Conclusions

In recent years, online shopping has attracted considerable attention, because more consumers and companies have moved toward online shopping rather than physical stores. In this study, we investigated customers' online shopping patterns, their preferences regarding website design, and the implications for strategic marketing. Multiple versus single websites differ due to the website's offerings and features. Hence it is crucial for marketers and companies to understand how the choice of website design impacts the consumers. With a qualitative approach, we collected data from semi-structured interviews. The interviews was data-assisted, meaning that the informants evaluated two specific websites [screenshots, Appendix 3,4,5 and 6].

This study reveals that consumers perceived multiple websites as having a high degree of relevant content. Having two separate websites reassured the informants that they would only find relevant information regarding their gender. In comparison, a single website is perceived to have a broader range of products, of which the ability to shop across genders at the same website is justified. Our findings indicate that males prefer online shopping. They considered online shopping as simple and time-saving and favored doing extensive external research and comparisons. Females however, preferred both online and offline shopping. When shopping online, they gather information through internal research. We found that males and females exhibit similar behavior when shopping online. Still, there were some apparent differences. Additionally, males highlighted the importance of relevant content and argued that they prefer gender-specific content, hence multiple websites. The male informants preferred multiple websites when shopping for themselves but preferred a single website when shopping for others. Regarding which design provided the most relevant information, which was the easiest to use, which saved the most time, and which design appealed the most, the male informants preferred the single website. Females were more skeptical of gender as a strategy for communication. The females did not have any specific preferences regarding using either multiple or single websites. Subsequently, they expressed preferring to use single websites when shopping for others. Overall, females considered multiple websites as offering the most relevant information, easiest to use, saves the most time, and appeals the most.

The aim of this study was to answer the overall research question: How can we understand customer preferences and online shopping patterns regarding multiple versus single websites?

The overall conclusion is that consumers prefer multiple websites when shopping for themselves, and single websites when shopping for others. The informants justified that multiple websites were easiest to use, saved the most time, and appealed the most. However, the single website was perceived as providing the most relevant information. It is important to acknowledge that some of the informants answered that they did not have a clear preference for multiple or single websites. Emphasized that as long as a website offers gender segmentation alternatives, they are satisfied. Notably, operating multiple websites is more expensive than operating a single website. Hence, it could be a waste of time, money, and resources to maintain multiple websites if the users are satisfied with a single website offering gender segmentation alternatives.

7.2 Limitations

Our study has shown various findings related to customers' perceptions of two different website designs. Some of the main limitations of this study are the size and nature of the sample. The study is based on twelve consumers, which can potentially have an impact on the variation of answers. The informants were within the age group 20-35 years old, which could induce similarities in the answers. Due to covid-19, the study was conducted over zoom. Hence, the interview situation was characterized as semi-authentic, meaning that the informants evaluated screenshots of multiple and single websites.

7.3 Implications

For future research, it could be beneficial to increase the interview sample to obtain a broader representative number of the Norwegian population. This could also result in a larger variety of informants with families, which could result in interesting findings regarding consumers with and without children. Another measure that could increase the credibility of the research is making "new" websites. We experienced that the informants quickly recognized the websites, even though we had tried to anonymize the websites. Therefore, many answered

that they preferred the website design with which they were familiar with. A more anonymous website could result in a deeper reflection on multiple and single websites.

Females express strong opinions about the use of color in multiple websites, of which stereotypical colors are highlighted as the main point. Regarding psychological factors, individual attitudes and perceptions appear in customers' descriptions of website design (cf. Radu, 2021). However, no consideration has been given regarding the extent to which such factors may be decisive, such as educational level or other environmental reasons. For further research, a focus on psychological factors may be relevant, as it may be interesting to consider how the environmental factors around the individual customer can be influential drivers for their statements. Conceivably, this can be a study of a more comprehensive scope than what has been investigated in this thesis, with a higher degree of focus on the meaning of words and explanations.

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9. Appendix

Appendix 1: Participation information - NSD

Do you want to participate in the research project:" *Single vs. Multiple websites design"*?

This is a question for you to participate in a research project where the purpose is to investigate what type of website design Norwegian consumers prefer, the advantages and disadvantages of two specific designs, and how it will affect the overall user experience. In *this letter, we give you information about the goal of the project and what participation will mean for you.*

Purpose

The purpose is to form a better understanding of why companies should choose a specific design, based on what consumers express to prefer. We want to map attitudes and experiences of different types of website design, among consumers in Norway. The data collected will be produced in our **master's degree in Business Administration, Strategic Marketing and Analytics.**

Who is responsible for the research project?

The University of Stavanger is responsible for the project.

Why are you asked to participate?

The sample for this project is females and males aged 20-35 who use or have used the internet as a source for shopping. The criteria are that the person in question has used the internet for shopping for themselves or others.

What does it mean for you to participate?

This method is based on an interview with the help of the online video-call program called "Zoom." We will record your answers to transcribe what is being said after the interview. If you choose to participate in the project, it means that you:

1. Will be presented with screenshots of a website representing multiple websites and another one who represents a single website.
2. Participate in an interview afterward, where we want to map your shopping behaviour and your preferences regarding multiple and single websites.

It is voluntary to participate.

It is voluntary to participate in the project. If you choose to participate, you can withdraw your consent at any time without giving any reason. All your personal information will then be deleted. It will not have any negative consequences for you if you do not want to participate or later choose to withdraw.

Your privacy – how we store and use your information

We will only use the information about you for the purposes we have described in this article. We treat the information confidentially and in accordance with the privacy regulations. The students and the supervisor will have access to the data collected. The informant's name will be coded with a separate list of names stored separately from other data. The recordings will be in line with the University of Stavanger and NSD guidelines on encryption. In publishing data, only age, gender and marital status will be included, and the informants will not be recognized in any other sense.

What happens to your information when we end the research project?

According to the plan, the information is anonymized when the project is completed / the assignment is approved, which is 15 June 2021. When the project is finished, all data will be deleted.

Your rights

As long as you can be identified in the data material, you have the right to:

- access to which personal information is registered about you, and to receive a copy of the information,

- to have personal information about you corrected,to have personal information about you deleted, and

- to send a complaint to the Data Inspectorate about the processing of your personal data.

What entitles us to process personal information about you?

We process information about you based on your consent.

On behalf of the University of Stavanger, NSD - Norwegian Center for Research Data AS has assessed that the processing of personal data in this project is in accordance with the privacy regulations.

Where can I find out more?

If you have questions about the study or want to exercise your rights, please contact:

• University of Stavanger by Emmy Kariann Fatnes (901 49 884) and Ida Kristin Jensen (992 66 283). The supervisor of the project is Elham Ghazimatin, assistant professor of marketing (51831038).

• Our privacy representative: Åse Lea, tel. 51 83 37 47 at the Norwegian School of Management at UiS.

If you have questions related to NSD's assessment of the project, you can contact:

• NSD - Norwegian Center for Research Data AS by email (personverntjenester@nsd.no) or by phone: 55 58 21 17.

With best regards

Elham Ghazimatin   *Emmy Kariann Fatnes*   *Ida Kristin Jensen*

(Supervisor)

-

Declaration of consent

I have received and understood information about the project Holistic versus segmented website and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I agree to:

[ ] to attend an interview via zoom

[ ] I agree that my information will be processed until the project is completed.

(Signed by project participant, date)

Appendix 2: interview guide

Interview guide

Part one

1. Do you usually buy clothes online or offline? Why?

> 1.1 How have your online/offline trading habits changed after Covid-19?

2. Which online stores do you often shop at?

> 2.1 What do you like about these websites? Why?

3. How often do you shop online?

4. Whom do you shop for online?

> 4.1 When shopping for others, do you use one or more retailers? Which ones?

5. How important is your time to you when shopping? Why?

> 5.1 To what extent do you research the products you need? (price, quality, information)

6. Which information must a website offer you, if you were to shop from them?why?

Part two

[SHOW SCREENSHOTS]

> Script:
>
> *Websites one and two represent multiple websites that have chosen to divide its brand into male and female, both with their own website. Website three represents a single website where you can shop for children, females, and males on the same website. Now we want to ask you some questions based on these screenshots about the design of the various websites.*

7. How would you describe the website design (layout) of websites one and two?

8. How would you describe the website design (layout) of website three?

9. Why do you think website one and two have chosen to divide the brand into two websites?

10. Why do you think website three has chosen to include both sexes on one website?

11. What advantages/disadvantages does it give you that a website contains clothes for both genders?

12. What advantages/disadvantages does it give you that a website has segmented gender into two different websites?

13. What is the most significant difference between multiple and single websites?

14. Which of the designs gave you the most relevant information? Why?

15. Which design was easiest to use? Why?

16. Which design saves you the most time? Why?

17. Which design appealed to you the most? Why?

18. Do you prefer multiple or single websites when shopping for yourself?

19. Do you prefer multiple or single websites when shopping for others?

20. What changes related to the various website designs would you suggest?

21. Do you have anything else you want to add?

Appendix 3: Multiple websites 1: Females

(Nelly.com, 2021b)

(Nelly.com, 2021c)

Appendix 4: Multiple website 2: Male
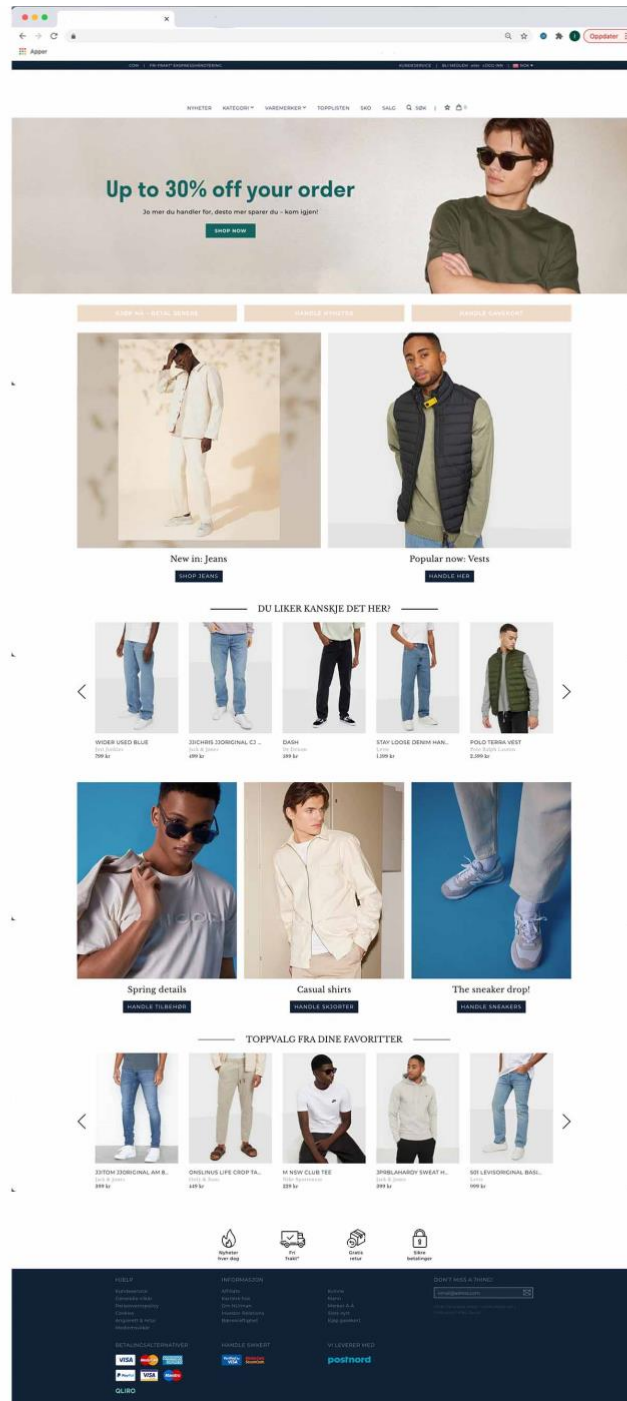
(NLYman.com, 2021a)
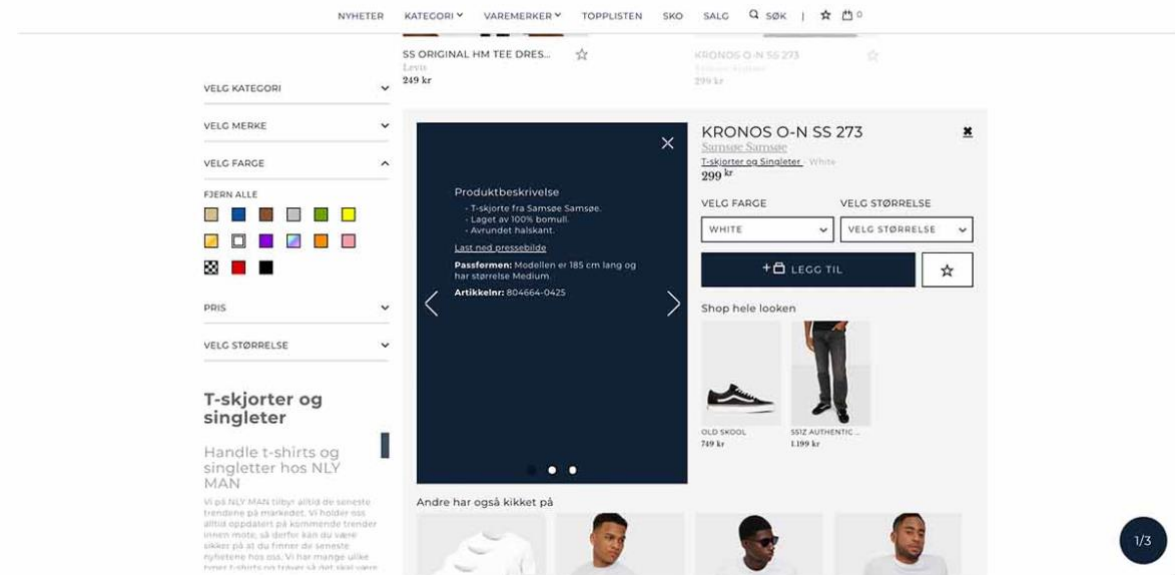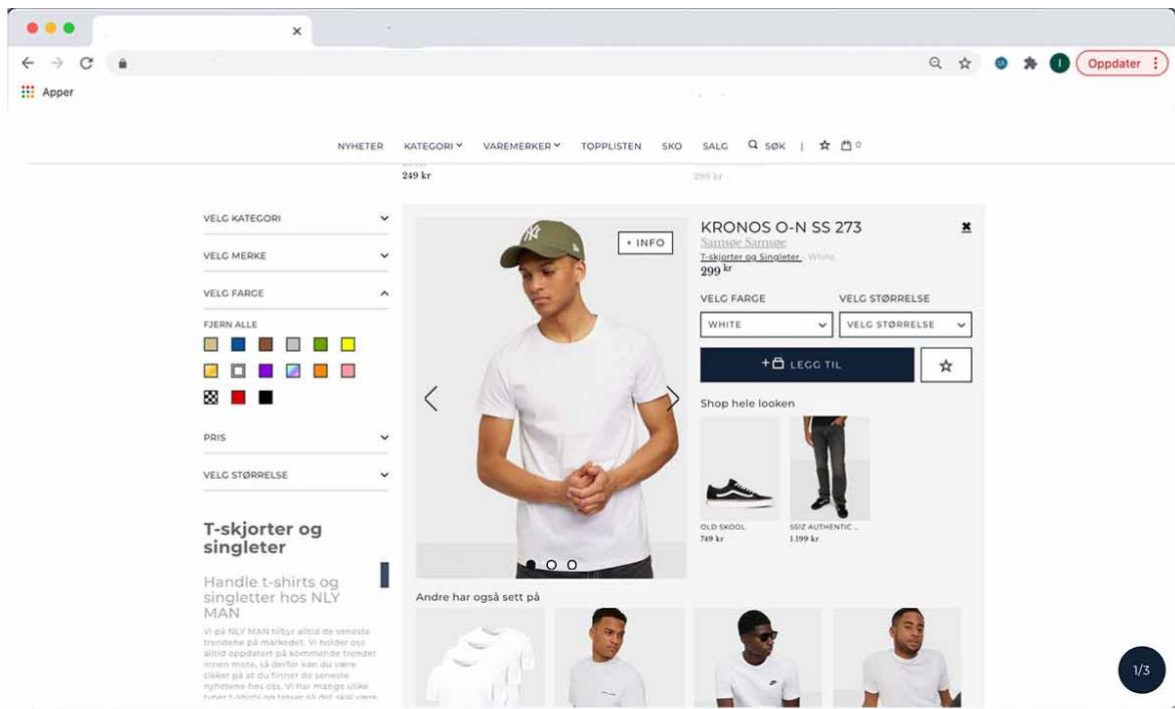
(NLYman.com, 2021b)

Appendix 5: Single website 3: Female

(Zalando, 2021b)

Zalando, 2021c)

Appendix 6: Single website 3: Females

(Zalando, 2021 d)

(Zalando, 2021e)

Name of Journal	Study (ref)	Study context	Research Methodology	Sample (n) and distribution (females: f, and males: m)	Main characteristics: Questions(I) and Findings (II)
Service Science	Tandon, Kiran & Sah, (2016).	India	Quantitative, five-point likert scale	North Indian Internet Savvy consumers (n=410)	I: Examine the impact of web service quality on repurchase intention and customer satisfaction. II: Information usefulness, website design, usability, navigation, security, customization and ease of ordering has an effect on perceived service quality. II: Navigation, ease of understanding and information usefulness was considered the most important dimensions for website quality.
Managing Service Quality	Fan, Lee & Kim, (2013).	China and Korea	Quantitative, seven-point likert scale	Chinese (n=212) and Korean (n= 219) consumers	I: Explore the relationship between website quality, flow, customer satisfaction, and relationship intention II: Convenience, character, interactivity, customization and contents are relevant for assessing website quality.
	Altaboli & Lin, (2012)	U.S	Quantitative	Online users of a service (n=38)	I: The number of objects and sizes has an impact on the perceived aesthetics of website design. II: Reduction in the number of objects and different sizes has a positive impact on perceived website design.
Electronic Commerce Research and Applications	Cebi, (2013)	Turkey	Quantitative	Expert team, members of the evaluated pages, (n=5)	I: The concern for perceived design quality of online shopping websites with the use of multiple, with the use of interactions among design characteristics II: Technical adequacy was to be considered as the most important design element for website design, and it involves system accessibility, access, navigation and speed.
Applied Ergonomics	(Dianat, Adeli, Jafarabadi & Karimi, 2019)		Quantitative	Graduate students, age 18-25 (n=18)	I: Investigate and understand the usability and user satisfaction to ensure user-centered design II: User satisfaction was influenced by web design attributes Navigation and performance were main predictors of perceived usability
Information & Management	(Chang & Chen, 2009).	Taiwan	Quantitative: Multiple-item scales	Online banking users of four main banks (n=798)	I: Understand the relationship among consumers interface quality, customer satisfaction, switching cost, perceived security and consumer loyalty. II: Customer interface quality can increase how the customer perceives the security. To build loyalty in e-commerce companies need to differentiate themselves
American Marketing Association	(Bleier et al., 2018).		Quantitative	Adults with at least one year shopping exp. (n=314); Workers at Amazon Mechanical Turk (n=10,470)	I: How to create well designed, effective product pages II: The most effective outcome-oriented for search products are informative experiences Entertaining experiences are important for less trust-worthy brands
International Journal of Information Management	Hernández, Jiménez & Martin (2009),		Content analysis	The researchers	I: Identify key aspects of designing a commercial website and which contribute to successful e-strategy II: The firm must invest in SEO instead of SEM. Navigation refers to the website's usefulness.

Appendix 8: Summary of literature - online gender attitudes

Name of Journal	Study (ref)	Study context	Research Methodology	Sample (n) and distribution (females: f, and males: m)	Main characteristics: Questions(I) and Findings (II)
Sex roles	Jackson, Ervin, Gardner & Schmitt (2001).	Prague	Quantitative: five-point rating scale	Undergraduate students (n=630 [403 f, 227 m], average age: 20 y/o)	I. Gender differences in internet use and factors responsible for these differences. II. Females use e-mail for communication, more than males Males use the web more than females did, consistent with a stronger motive for information
Communication of the AMC	Slyke, Comunale & Belanger (2002).	U.S.	Quantitative: evaluating relative advantage, complexity, compatibility, result demonstrability, visibility and image	Males and females (n=511, 17-48 y/o)	I. Is gender a significant predictor of intention to shop on the web, and how do perceptions of web shopping differ according to gender II. Males more likely to purchase products/services via the Web than women Males perceives web shopping more positively than females Males rate compatibility, relative advantage, result demonstrability, and trustworthiness of web shopping higher than f females Females rate complexity higher than males
Sex roles	Dittmar, Long & Meek (2004).	U.K.	a. Qualitative, open ended question schedule b. Quantitative, statement 1. Buying motivations can be understood in terms of three main dimensions: functional issues, emotional-social factors and identity-related concerns. 2. relative important of these dimensions is strongly gendered	Students (n=113 [56 f ,57 m])	Ia. Motivations and concerns in online and offline shopping. IIa. Males and females described more advantages and disadvantages with internet buying than conventional buying. Females reported emotional and psychological involvement in the whole shopping and buying process. Males focused on efficiency and convenience Ib. Gender differences in conventional buying, impact of shopping environment on buying motivations, comparing e-buyers and non-e-buyers online motivations, predicting internet buying from conventional buying IIb. Emotional and social-experiential concerns are more important to females than males. Females differentiate more strongly between identity-related concerns with emotional and experiential concerns than males. Males are more concerned with functional motivations. Females place more emphasis on psychological motivations, particularly emotional involvement, but also identity -related concerns. Hence, males are more functional in their buying attitudes in conventional stores tha n women

Journal	Author (Year)	Location	Methodology	Sample	Research Questions / Findings
International Journal of Electronic Business	Cyr & Bonanni (2005).	Canada	Quantitative. 5-point likert scale Survey: transaction security, information design, navigation design, visual design, website trust, website satisfaction, and e-loyalty.	Undergraduate students (n=76 [26 f, 49m], age: 66 u. 20 y/o)	I. How perceptions between the genders differ concerning transaction security, website design elements, and how the experience of online shopping results in perceptions of website trust, website satisfaction, and e-loyalty. II. No difference between the gender in regards of trust, attitude toward transaction security and e-loyalty Females prefer information about product, and overall greater privacy. Females were attracted to the colors of the website, while men were more attracted to the interactive and 'flashy' aspect.
Tourism Management	Kim, Lehto & Morrison (2007).	North America	Quantitative: Computer Aided Telephone Interface.	Randomly selected from telephone directories, interviewed by telephone (n=1334)	I. Examine gender differences within the context of online travel website functionality and content preferences as well as search behavior. II. Females and Males process information in different ways. Females attached higher value to a wider variety of offline and online sources of information. Males prefer information highlighting the range of attributes. Females use gender-neutrally designed websites, in regards of functionality and content, more than men.
Computers in Human Behavior	Hasan (2010).	U.S.	Quantitative: specific website, perform the first steps of placing an online ordering, before completing a questionnaire.	Students (n=80 [36 f, 44 m], average age: 22.54 y/o)	I. Gender differences across the three attitudinal components: cognitive, affective, and behavioral II. Males value the utility of online shopping to a greater extent than females. Females prefer conventional shopping to a greater extent than males. Males think online shopping is beneficial to the economy, efficiency and convenience.
International Journal of Industrial Ergonomics	Lin & Hsieh (2016).	China	Quantitative: 6-point likert-type scale. Survey: Compatibility, consistency, flexibility, learnability, minimal action, minimal memory load, perceptual limitations, user guidance.	Undergraduate and graduate students (n=236, [123 f, 113 m], average age: u. 20 y/o)	I. Website interface design criteria for users of different genders based on usability principles. II. Females prefer teachability, compatibility and user guidance for website design criteria. Males ranked compatibility, minimal action, and flexibility as important website design criteria