

MASTER'S THESIS

# UK CONSUMERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS GROCERY SHOPPING DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Rebecca Marie Mortensen og  
Maria Rosenbak Jensen

Supervisor: Jeanne Strunck  
Characters: 168.426

Aalborg University – International  
Business Communication



## Summary

This master's thesis examines attitudes and consumer behaviour in the United Kingdom regarding grocery shopping during the COVID-19 pandemic. The interest for this stems from the change that has been detected in grocery shopping habits since the pandemic first emerged and because of the interest in investigating consumers' attitudes in relation to this. The interest, furthermore, sparks from the rare opportunity to contribute to adding new knowledge to this topic which has yet to be thoroughly examined.

To achieve more knowledge on this subject, a literature review has been conducted that includes existing scientific literature and studies that deal with COVID-19. This is done to position this master's thesis and place it in the field of existing research in a meaningful and relevant way of manner. Furthermore, to answer the research question "*How does the COVID-19 pandemic affect UK consumers' attitudes towards grocery shopping?*" different theories have been used. Hereof, The Theory of Reasoned Action together with The Theory of Planned behaviour which contributes to understanding how attitudes influence behaviour and The Elaboration Likelihood Model which is used to determine and interpret the cognitive processes that happen within consumers' heads when they, for instance, are exposed to messages regarding social distancing or the requirement to wear a mask.

Moreover, the thematic analysis method to identify, analyse, and report patterns within the data, which takes its stance in a survey that holds 55 responses from respondents from the United Kingdom. The thematic analysis is, hence, chosen with the purpose of gaining a broader understanding of how the COVID-19 pandemic is affecting UK consumers' attitudes towards grocery shopping as it provides the opportunity to depict any prominent themes, agreements, disagreements etc., within the data. The thesis employs a mixed-method approach analysing on both the statistical findings detracted from the survey and several elaborating answers provided by the respondents.

The thesis portrays several issues which the section of reflection touches upon. Here, findings within the data collection, the reliability and applications of results and the topic of online grocery shopping are further discussed and explained.

The result of this thesis shows that the COVID-19 pandemic has greatly affected UK consumers' attitudes towards grocery shopping, as the analysis provided clear evidence that the coronavirus

Study No:  
20167436  
20164100

outbreak has developed an attitude of anxiety and uncertainty among the majority of the UK consumers who answered the survey. Furthermore, the conclusion was that this, therefore, resulted in having a large impact on the respective consumers' overall grocery shopping behaviour as the attitude caused significant behavioural changes.

Study No:  
20167436  
20164100

<b>SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>1.0 INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>5</b>
1.1. RESEARCH QUESTION AND IMPORTANCE OF STUDY .....	6
1.2 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS.....	7
<b>2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW .....</b>	<b>9</b>
2.1 UNDERSTANDING CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR IN LIGHT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC .....	9
2.1.1 <i>How COVID-19 is Changing Consumer Behaviour in the United Kingdom</i> .....	13
2.2. CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR DURING ONLINE GROCERY SHOPPING .....	16
2.3 UNDERSTANDING CONSUMER ATTITUDES THROUGH THEORY .....	18
2.3.1 <i>The Reasoned Action Model</i> .....	19
Attitude toward the behaviour .....	20
Perceived norm .....	20
Behavioural intention .....	20
Theory of Planned Behaviour .....	21
Theory of Reasoned Action and Planned Behaviour in Relation to the COVID-19 Pandemic .....	22
2.3.2 <i>Elaboration Likelihood Model</i> .....	23
The Elaboration Likelihood Model in Relation to the COVID-19 Pandemic .....	26
2.4 CONCLUSION OF LITERATURE REVIEW .....	27
<b>3.0 METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>28</b>
3.1 CHOICE OF THEORY.....	28
3.1.1 Criticism of TRA and TPB .....	29
3.1.2 Criticism of ELM.....	30
3.2 PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE.....	30
3.3 RESEARCH STRATEGY.....	33
3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD .....	35
3.4.1 <i>Data Collection</i> .....	35
Survey.....	35
The self-completion Questionnaire.....	37
The Respondents.....	39
Timespan.....	40
Reliability/validity .....	40
Source of Error .....	41
3.4.2 <i>Data Analysis</i> .....	41
Method of Thematic Analysis.....	41
3.5 STRUCTURE OF ANALYSIS .....	44
<b>4.0 ANALYSIS .....</b>	<b>45</b>
4.1 RESULTS .....	45
4.1.2 <i>Sub Conclusion</i> .....	54
4.2 THEMATIC ANALYSIS .....	55
4.2.1 <i>Analytical Model</i> .....	55
4.2.2 <i>Anxiety and Uncertainty</i> .....	57
4.2.3 <i>Calm and Indifferent</i> .....	64
4.3 THE ELABORATION LIKELIHOOD MODEL .....	67
4.4 SUB CONCLUSION.....	69
<b>5.0 REFLECTION ON OUR MASTER'S THESIS.....</b>	<b>71</b>
DATA COLLECTION .....	72
RELIABILITY AND APPLICATION OF OUR RESULTS .....	72
ONLINE GROCERY SHOPPING.....	73
<b>6.0 CONCLUSION.....</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>7.0 BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>78</b>

# 1.0 Introduction

Currently, the entire world is affected by the novel coronavirus that, in the year 2020, changed the lives of millions of people in numerous ways. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by a virus of severe respiratory syndrome and is in medical terms referred to as SARS-Cov-2 (World Health Organization 2021). The virus first saw the light of day in the Chinese city Wuhan in late 2019 but travelled with high speed across borders showing its first significant outbreaks in larger European countries, respectively Italy and Spain. Shortly after that, on March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared the virus a global pandemic after pointing to over 118,00 cases in more than 110 countries (Ducharme 2020).

Followed by the declaration, many countries tightened their restrictions on travelling between borders. Slowly, as time went by, people were forced to work from home, physical stores were shut down, and social gatherings were no longer allowed (Safi 2020). Therefore, the new daily life appears exceedingly different from before the coronavirus outbreak, as citizens are now living under the various restrictions that the COVID-19 pandemic has brought with it. Therefore, the global pandemic has already had a significant impact on people's livelihoods worldwide. In the 21st century, we have experienced crises such as 9/11, the Ebola outbreak and faced enormous challenges of poverty and war. However, each of these crises had regional epicentres, whereas the current pandemic terrorises people, businesses, the economy, and health services worldwide (Bakhtiari 2020). Nothing like the COVID-19 pandemic has ever been seen in modern history, making it an extremely rare and uncertain situation (Bakhtiari 2020).

Countries worldwide have all responded differently to the pandemic, with the United Kingdom announcing their first nationwide lockdown on March 23, 2020. The lockdown meant that citizens were solely allowed to leave their homes for essential needs, and only gatherings of two people were allowed. With the lockdown, schools, stores, gyms, hairdressers, pubs, etc., shut down, and people were forced to work and study from home (Duddu 2020). As of March 2021, the United Kingdom has registered more than 146.000 deaths due to COVID-19 making them one of the hardest-hit countries in Europe (Gov.uk. 2021a). Therefore, the severity of the pandemic appears very clear to the citizens of the United Kingdom, and especially the UK supermarkets have introduced several new rules and restrictions because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Meaning, a trip to the local grocery store is a

Study No:  
20167436  
20164100

different experience now than before the pandemic (Janes 2021). The major supermarkets Tesco, Asda, Aldi, and Sainsbury's have all adopted new rules to which you can be denied entry if you do not adhere. These rules count both purchase limits, limited opening hours and a limit of the number of customers in-store (Janes 2021). Sainsbury's has even provided elderly and vulnerable customers with priority access, so they can skip queues and enter stores quicker than other customers (Janes 2021). Especially during the second and third phase of the pandemic, these increased restrictions and raised awareness of the severity of the coronavirus have caused consumers to limit their visits to the physical stores, which has resulted in a rise in online grocery shopping and delivery (Charm et al. 2020). Statistics by the UK supermarket chains Waitrose and Tesco display that there has been a significant change in their consumers' shopping habits since the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak. They show that approximately 60% of individuals who usually go to Waitrose have been doing online shopping for groceries more frequently since the coronavirus outbreak, with 41% pointing to convenience as one reason they have made the change in their behaviour (Clements 2020). Furthermore, before the pandemic, Tesco states that their online sales were around nine per cent, whereas the sale is now approximately 16% (Clements 2020). Concurrently with the change in consumer behaviour in grocery shopping, researchers have engaged in further exploration of these behavioural changes stating that consumers tend to change their behaviour and preferences of what is important during a crisis. Therefore, they expect that the coronavirus will most likely cause a permanent shift in consumer shopping behaviour (Zwanka & Buff 2020; Wang et al. 2020).

### 1.1. Research Question and Importance of Study

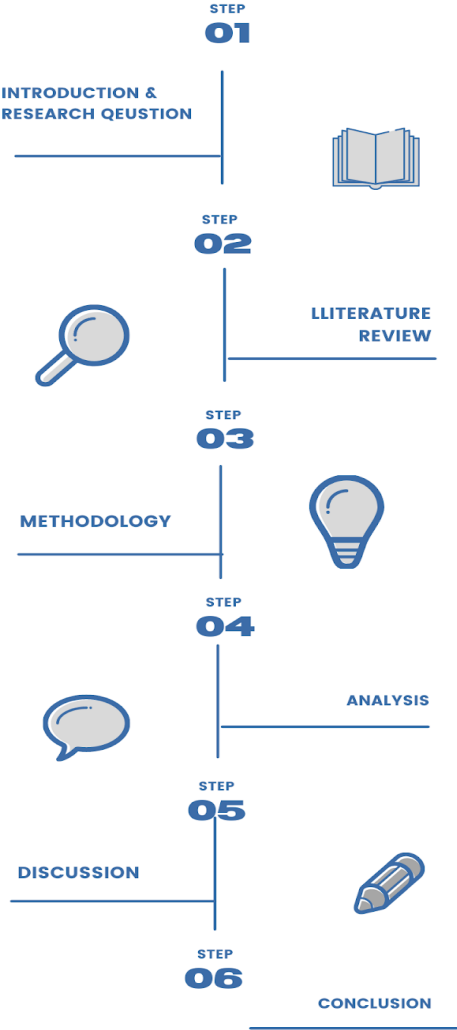
Considering the changes that COVID-19 has brought to society and considering the rise of online shopping behaviour, we find it remarkable how much of an effect a global pandemic has on everyday behaviour, such as shopping for mundane items and going to a physical grocery store. Because we see that, especially the grocery sector, has been much influenced by the pandemic, we find it interesting to investigate consumers' attitudes in relation to this. It is evident that most adults must purchase groceries from time to time, and one can argue that we manage it without giving it much thought. However, what happens when a dangerous, uncertain and contagious virus suddenly enters the picture and interferes? Based on our knowledge regarding how the novel coronavirus outbreak is impacting consumer behaviour in terms of shopping for groceries, we find it interesting to look further into the attitudes that have caused consumers to make these changes to behaviour. This has led us to produce the following research question, which this master's thesis will seek to answer:

### ***How does the COVID-19 pandemic affect UK consumers' attitudes towards grocery shopping?***

We find our topic of this thesis to be of great importance in terms of understanding consumer behaviour during a crisis. As mentioned, it is evident that the grocery sector is currently facing several challenges as the many restrictions made by the government are forcing physical grocery stores to take extra precautions (Aull et al. 2020). This, therefore, arguably affects consumers' overall experience of being at a supermarket as these conditions imply that it is unsafe to be there. Thus, the COVID-19 pandemic also entails that consumers are somewhat forced to investigate and consider alternative grocery shopping methods, which presents the possibility of them not returning to physical grocery stores again after the pandemic has subsided. Because COVID-19 is still relatively new to our worldview, there is not much research on each event the pandemic has already affected. Thus, we find this subject and our examination of significant importance to develop knowledge on this specific topic further. Undoubtedly, identifying peoples' attitudes and behaviours is an essential element of research as it can help control and manage a crisis situation like the one, we are currently facing. To sum up, we, therefore, believe that this study will provide researchers and retail stores with a more thorough knowledge of how the COVID-19 pandemic is affecting consumers in the United Kingdom in terms of grocery shopping.

## **1.2 Structure of the thesis**

The figure presented below shows the structure of how we have chosen to conduct our master's thesis. First and foremost, we will introduce our topic of interest, which has led us to produce our research question. Following this, we will review all existing and relevant literature on the topic of this thesis. The literature is examined to understand the frame in which our subject exists and review relevant theory to conduct our analysis later in this thesis. After the literature review, we will present our methodology section. Hereunder, choice of theory, philosophy of science, research strategy, research design, and analysis method. The fourth section of our master's thesis concerns our results and, thereby, the analysis. The analysis is divided into two parts: our statistics and findings from our survey and a thematic analysis. Following this, we will reflect on relevant elements which we have found necessary to discuss to provide the reader with a greater understanding of our research process and our findings. Finally, we will conclude our master's thesis by providing a collective answer to our research question.





## 2.0 Literature Review

The following chapter presents and discusses existing scientific literature and studies that deal with COVID-19. This presentation takes the form of a traditional literature review that provides an opportunity to gain broader background knowledge on specific topics and a deeper insight into research with similar interests to ours (Cronin, Ryan & Coughlan 2008). This allows us to position our thesis and place it in the field of existing knowledge in a meaningful and relevant way of manner. In line with the chosen type of literature review, the choice of studies and articles for this chapter has been selective and closely linked to the main focus of this thesis, namely how consumers in the United Kingdom are dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, regarding our research question, this literature review will include a review of relevant theory for us to investigate how the novel coronavirus has affected UK consumers' attitudes in terms of their grocery shopping behaviour in the following analysis of this thesis.

To provide clarity, the literature review will be divided into three subchapters. First and foremost, we seek to understand how consumer behaviour and the COVID-19 pandemic correlate and how COVID-19 has already impacted consumer behaviour in the United Kingdom. Second, we will present literature on consumer behaviour concerning e-grocery shopping as we, during the pandemic, have seen a rise in online grocery shopping. Finally, we will provide theories relating to understanding consumer attitudes to provide a theoretical background for our further analysis.

### 2.1 Understanding Consumer Behaviour in Light of the COVID-19 Pandemic

As we touched upon in our introduction of this thesis, the COVID-19 pandemic is affecting industries and economies globally, forcing small businesses to shut down, closing corporate offices, and cancelling social events (Ozili & Arun 2020). Following historical crises and shock events such as the Spanish flu, Plague, Ebola and the 2002-04 SARS outbreak, it is evident that COVID-19 has made a significant impact on a global scale, causing unemployment, industry failures and economic downturns (Loxton et al. 2020).

The studies presented in this literature review have found that these drastic changes in society also impact consumer behaviour and have examined how and why consumers are affected by such a thing

Study No:  
20167436  
20164100

as a global pandemic. Before we look further into these studies and the COVID-19 pandemic, a small section on consumer behaviour and its definition will be presented.

Consumer behaviour is a topic for which there are countless studies. To have successful marketing, marketers need to understand their customers, which involves many different factors (Kotler et al. 2019). Various studies on consumer behaviour exist, such as understanding consumer behaviour within a different industry, a segment, or a specific product. Solomon et al. (2016) state that consumer products exist to satisfy needs, and this brings us to the definition of what consumer behaviour is said to be. Because of the many studies on the subject, there also exist different definitions of consumer behaviour and various models for measuring consumer behaviour. However, most studies agree that consumer behaviour is influenced by many different factors (Solomon et al. 2016; Sethna and Blythe 2016; Kotler et al. 2019; McCracken 1986; Andersen 2011). According to Solomon et al. (2016), consumer behaviour is: "the study of the processes involved when individuals or groups select, purchase, use or dispose of products, services, ideas or experiences to satisfy needs and desires". They stress that a consumer can be anyone, and the item being consumed can be anything. Another paper states that the non-self-sufficient human has different physiological, psychological, social, and cultural needs. Every attempt to meet any of these needs could be defined as consumer behaviour (Torlak 2000, 17). It seems that the definitions of consumer behaviour can agree on one thing: it is a process to satisfy needs and desires.

Following this, to understand consumer behaviour in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, we can look into the studies mentioned first in this chapter. One of the early studies focusing on the coronavirus outbreak and consumer behaviour was published in June 2020 by Jagdish Sheth (2020). He examined if consumers will change their consumption habits due to lockdown and social distancing or if they will return to their old habits as soon as the pandemic is over (Sheth 2020). Through his research, Sheth (2020) found different immediate impacts of COVID-19 on consumer behaviour. In correlation to this thesis and its focus on COVID-19's influence on grocery shopping behaviour, Sheth's proposed impacts of hoarding and the embracement of digital technology is of most relevance to us and will be elaborated throughout this literature review.

Further research suggests that the COVID-19 pandemic has come as a shock to many and how they have been dealing with the crisis has been very versatile. However, research indicates that, in general, the pandemic has left consumers feeling "caught off guard". As a result, they have developed a stock-up mentality of preparedness, making consumers purchase everyday items that will keep them safe

Study No:  
20167436  
20164100

going forward. These, amongst others, include medical supplies, long-lasting canned food, and other necessities (Zwanka & Buff 2020; Sheth 2020). Hoarding or what Kameda and Hastie (2015) call herd mentality can be defined as "(...) an alignment of thoughts and/or behaviours of individuals in a group, that emerges without purposeful coordination by a central authority or leading figure, and instead through local interactions among agents" (Kameda & Hastie 2015, 2). Because when consumers experience periods of shock, like with the COVID-19 pandemic, the fear of insecurity makes them make irrational decisions (Cheung et al. 2015). The overall meaning of both hoarding and herd mentality can, therefore, be used to describe how COVID-19 is causing consumers to feel anxious, and as a result thereof, they develop a sense of panic in terms of wanting to prepare themselves for what is to come (Sheth 2020; Zwanka & Buff 2020; Kameda & Hastie 2015).

Furthermore, this sense of panic is said to be closely related to the term "panic buying", which is described as:

*"(...) behaviour exhibited by consumers where they purchase unusually large amounts or an unusually varied range of products in anticipation of, during, or after a disaster or perceived disaster, or in anticipation of a large price increase or upstream shortage" (Yoon et al. 2017; Yuen et al. 2020, 3-4).*

In response to COVID-19, Yuen et al. (2020) developed research that identified four primary factors causing panic buying: 1. Perception. 2. Fear of the unknown. 3. Coping behaviour. 4. Social psychology. The research results stated that when consumers perceive the likelihood of contracting a disease to be high, they are more prone to undertake self-protective activities, hereby including panic buying, to minimise the perceived risk (Yuen et al. 2020).

Furthermore, Elmore (2017) argues that the fear of the unknown is what's causing panic buying behaviours because consumers channel their absence of knowledge regarding crises into behaviours that are known for being more solacing, giving the consumer the feeling of security and stress relief. Yuen et al. (2020) also state that panic buying helps consumers gain a sense of control during times of unpredictability. In contrast, Slovic et al. (2004) say that panic buying is best described as consumers' way of getting rid of stress and anxiety in a decision-making process.

Sheth (2020) provided us with research that predicted what changes and new habits consumers would develop due to COVID-19, and since then, reports on these consumer behavioural changes have been

Study No:  
20167436  
20164100

published. One of these reports was published in late December 2020 by the company Swiss Re Institute who investigated how COVID-19 is transforming consumer behaviour. They stress how the global pandemic has affected almost every aspect of our lives. Some consumers have been most affected by the involuntary and sudden developments such as social distancing and the requirement to wear a mask. Others have experienced that their behaviour towards digitalisation has accelerated (Puttaiah, Raverkar and Avramakis 2020). The report questions if the new behaviour and habits will last once the pandemic is over. For example, we saw a rise in telehealth during the initial phase of most lockdowns worldwide. However, that need quickly diminished once people learned more about the virus and its effects. However, online shopping is new behaviour that the report believes will last after the pandemic since consumers have experienced how convenient it is (Puttaiah, Raverkar and Avramakis 2020).

The report highlights five key behavioural changes emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic. Two of these are significantly important and interesting for our thesis, these being increased digital adoption and change in purchasing behaviour.

Due to COVID-19, countries have more or less shut down, and consumers have been somewhat forced to adapt to new digital technologies for both work, education, fitness, shopping and entertainment. We see this adaptation all over the world. In fact, in June 2020, it was measured that online purchases across geographies have gone from six to ten per cent in most product categories since the COVID-19 outbreak (Puttaiah, Raverkar and Avramfakis 2020). Another study on consumer trends was published in February 2021, expanding on the top ten global consumer trends in 2021. Here some of the key takeaways are that consumers are seeking convenience. Going into 2021, consumers seek to get back into the ease of the 'normal' daily life they had before the COVID-19 pandemic, which they previously took for granted. However, digital channels gave us this convenience during the pandemic, and consumers are therefore also most likely to continue relying on these post-COVID-19. Therefore, a positive experience across all channels plays a pivotal role in consumers' purchase decision and loyalty (Silberstein 2021).

Furthermore, with the rise of online channels, the report from Swiss Re Institute also reports that they have seen noticeable changes to consumers' purchase behaviour. Surveys conducted worldwide found that consumers are opting more for what is called value-based purchasing, meaning that consumers are looking for optimal value for their money. Therefore, consumers have become more aware since the COVID-19 outbreak and are now buying more essentials and are cutting back on spontaneous and

Study No:  
20167436  
20164100

unnecessary purchases (Puttaiah, Raverkar and Avramakis 2020). The report from February 2021 stresses how value does not have to be defined by price. However, the benefits for the consumers are equally as important. Due to the global pandemic today, consumers are more likely to question if buying a product solves a problem or what health benefits the product has (Silberstein 2021).

These significant behavioural changes that COVID-19 has caused shows us how consumers today are thinking more of implications for risk and protection. We have already seen that consumer behaviour has changed throughout the pandemic and what started as a sense of panic has become a more cautious approach that focuses on value, health and convenience (Puttaiah, Raverkar and Avramfakis 2020).

### 2.1.1 How COVID-19 is Changing Consumer Behaviour in the United Kingdom

As the COVID-19 pandemic has only been around a year and is still causing lockdowns all around the United Kingdom, studies on how the pandemic has affected UK citizens are limited. However, we still found that as the year 2020 passed, various statistics on how COVID-19 has had an early effect on businesses, economics, households etc., were developed. Amongst the statistics, the company EY conducted a survey in early May 2020 that researched how COVID-19 was reshaping consumer behaviour in the United Kingdom (Carlyle & Rindone 2020). They emphasise how consumer companies are most affected by COVID-19 and propose an index on future consumer segments that can help companies prepare and position themselves for what happens next regarding consumer behaviour. The survey was conducted based on the remarkable shifts seen in consumer behaviour due to COVID-19, emphasising social distancing in supermarkets and the rise of new online channels (Carlyle & Rindone 2020).

EY proposed four new consumer segments that they have seen appear in the UK during the COVID-19 crisis and five consumer segments that will emerge after the crisis.

Consumer segments during COVID-19:

1. Save and stockpile (38%)
2. Stay calm, carry on (26%)
3. Cut deep (25%)
4. Hibernate and spend (10%)

Study No:  
20167436  
20164100

Consumer segments after COVID-19:

1. Get to normal (33%)
2. Cautiously extravagant (25%)
3. Stay frugal (20%)
4. Keep cutting (13%)
5. Back with a bang (8%)

(Carlyle & Rindone 2020).

The consumer segment 'save and stockpile' represents 38% of UK consumers who are not that concerned about the crisis, however worried about their families. However, the segment 'cut deep' shows 25% of UK consumers as the most affected by the crisis, which has led them to spend less across all categories. Following this, EY asked the respondents what they believe will happen following the pandemic, which led to the five new consumer segments. Hereof, 33% of UK consumers respond that they think that the pandemic will not impact their daily lives and spendings going forward. This segment primarily has an older age profile and includes people who would not pay for premium products (Carlyle & Rindone 2020). On the other side of the spectrum, 25% of consumers land in the 'cautiously extravagant' segment, which is a segment of people in the middle-income bracket. They understand the impact of the crisis on their finances. However, they still expect to spend more when the world returns to normal. Furthermore, this segment scores highest for caring, meaning that they would instead purchase goods from a company that cares for its staff, fights the pandemic and supports the community (Carlyle & Rindone 2020). Furthermore, since the lockdown, the survey found that UK consumers spend more on food, household products, and personal care (Carlyle & Rindone 2020).

As the pandemic evolved, new statistics were presented. McKinsey and Company surveyed UK consumer sentiment in mid-December 2020. Their survey was published almost a year after the first outbreak of the coronavirus, and the survey could, therefore, potentially deny or confirm some of the predictions made by EY.

The survey shows that UK consumers are less pessimistic concerning the economic aspects following the pandemic. The majority of consumers predict that the financial impact of the coronavirus will continue for approximately four months, hence why they are holding back on purchases except for

Study No:  
20167436  
20164100

grocery shopping (Günday et al. 2020). Mckinsey and Company state that consumers adopt new habits to save money and put more thought into how and what they spend their money on. As with the survey conducted by EY, Mckinsey and Company also saw four fundamental shifts in consumer behaviour:

1. Shift to value and essentials (Up to 65%)
2. Flight to digital and omnichannel (Up to 40%)
3. Shock to loyalty (61%)
4. Homebody economy (90%)

(Günday et al. 2020).

Here, up to 65% of UK consumers say they spend less on non-essential products such as entertainment costs and restaurant visits, and 61% of consumers have made a change in their preferred stores, brands or how they shop. The survey shows that more than 55% of UK consumers respond that value and convenience play a role in deciding where to shop. Furthermore, 8% noted that hygiene also mattered to their decision (Günday et al. 2020). The survey also asked the consumers to consider how concerned they felt with doing various activities where avoiding a crowd is difficult. Here, 51% of UK consumers answered that they were not worried about going to the grocery store, 33% were somewhat concerned, and 16% were concerned. Moreover, the survey found UK consumers' top priorities when deciding where to shop. These were: 28% for masks and barriers, 24% for cleaning and sanitisation, 22% for physical distancing, 10% for no-contact purchasing, 9% for store regulations, and 7% for health checks (Günday et al. 2020).

The above statistics are included to create a solid foundation for our further research and introduce how COVID-19 is changing consumer behaviour, specifically in the United Kingdom. Even though many of the statistics included in this chapter covers the same subject that this thesis revolves around, we find a gap where the investigation and examination we are to conduct in our following analysis could add new knowledge and elaborating research to the already existing statistics on the subject. We seek to investigate how COVID-19 affects UK consumers' attitudes towards grocery shopping behaviour, as we can conclude that there has been a change in how consumers who live in the United Kingdom are managing their grocery shopping. Following this, we would like to investigate further what thoughts and considerations drove them to make these changes. More specifically, explore *how*

Study No:  
20167436  
20164100

and if the COVID-19 pandemic that today is a normality in the UK impacts consumers' attitudes and how these lead them to engage in new behaviours – both during the pandemic and after.

Because we are currently experiencing an ongoing pandemic, it is evident that our behaviour will constantly evolve and change as we go along and daily life with the various restrictions becomes more ordinary. Therefore, the statistics carried out at the beginning of the pandemic might show entirely different results than those carried out after a year of living with the pandemic. Therefore, we hope to contribute with research that shows how much consumer behaviour has changed throughout the cause of the COVID-19 outbreak.

## 2.2. Consumer Behaviour During Online Grocery Shopping

Given the current pandemic, it has become significantly more necessary to operate different systems as several physical stores have been shut down, and many people are forced to work from home due to the restrictions COVID-19 has brought with it (LaBerge et al. 2020). For many people, the use of technology can be complex and comes with risk in regard to the safety of one's data. However, considering the current pandemic, people also face risks by running errands such as grocery shopping, as it could potentially lead to getting infected with the coronavirus (Sheth 2020). Thus, a new scenario has emerged that equates a previously accommodating problem with a completely new and unfamiliar situation.

According to Bellamy et al. (2000), Grocery shopping is an omnipresent activity that most people do regularly. Kurnia and Chien (2003) argue that purchasing groceries online is an easier way for consumers to use supermarkets' websites to gather their daily goods more efficiently. The wall between physical and online stores is steadily fading, and as stated by The Nielsen Company (2015), it is evident that consumers are starting to see the benefits of purchasing groceries online instead of driving to supermarkets. This is especially evident during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As more food is being consumed and prepared at home due to lockdowns and social distancing, especially the United Kingdom sees an increase in the use of digital delivery services for takeaway foods and grocery deliveries (McKevitt 2020). However, before the pandemic, the UK had already experienced a steady increase in online food sales, and COVID-19 has just accelerated that (Cummins et al. 2020). Online grocery sales have seen a rise of 14%, meaning that 600,000 more households



bought their groceries online for the first time last year (Nielsen 2020). As mentioned earlier in this literature review, Sheth (2020) proposed that an immediate impact of COVID-19 on consumer behaviour was that we would embrace digital technology. The most important is new video services, such as Zoom and Teams, as we work and go to school at home. However, he also implied how new technology such as online and mobile delivery services would break consumers' old habits of solely going to a physical store to buy groceries (Sheth 2020).

Furthermore, as already touched upon, McKinsey & Company (2020) stated four fundamental shifts to consumer behaviour due to the pandemic. Here, in relation to Nielsen (2020), they emphasised an increase in online spending with up to 40% even post-COVID-19. Their survey also showed that there is particular growth in terms of UK consumers using restaurant and grocery delivery. McKinsey & Company state that 21% of UK consumers are using grocery delivery more since COVID-19 started and that 11% of UK consumers specifically started to purchase groceries online because of the coronavirus (Günday et al. 2020).

When comparing physical stores to online grocery shopping, it is conspicuous that both alternatives have pros and cons. Visiting a physical grocery store gives you the benefit of immediate purchase and the opportunity to see, smell, and feel the product you are buying (Mastercard 2008). Furthermore, there is no shipping fee, and you get the experience of customer service and the ability to ask employees for help (Mastercard 2008). However, shopping online is a different experience, as the online store's website has to provide visuals and a decent amount of information on each product to obtain interest from potential customers (Mastercard 2008). When buying online some of the benefits you do not get from a physical store are comparing prices of products between stores fast. Online shoppers do not need to look through several magazines to find the cheapest options (Mastercard 2008).

To understand user acceptance of e-grocery better, Fred Davis (1989) developed a model called the *Technology Acceptance Model* (TAM). This is a theory within information systems that can be used to describe how consumers or users come to terms with using technology (Davis 1989). The model helps to acknowledge behavioural intention and attitude towards people's use of technology, and Davis suggests that several factors contribute to the decision making about how and when people will use technology (Davis 1989). Davis claims that there are several steps to follow within a decision-making process, including perceived usefulness, perceived risk, and perceived ease of use (Davis 1989). Among these, the perceived ease of use is of most relevance for our research as it revolves

around how a consumer is more willing to continue using and learn about new technology systems if the system is easy to use (Chiu and Wang 2008). Therefore, it can be used in correlation with our knowledge regarding UK consumers' increase in online shopping. The theory, however, also states that there can occur risks when using technology and purchasing online, which spikes our interest in investigating if the dangers of online shopping are somewhat eliminated by the threat of going to a physical store and getting exposed to the coronavirus (Davis 1989).

## 2.3 Understanding Consumer Attitudes Through Theory

To investigate how the global pandemic has impacted UK consumers' grocery shopping behaviour, we must understand consumer attitudes. Therefore, based on the literature mentioned above, we have chosen to look further into theories with a framework suitable for us to investigate UK consumers' attitudes and behaviours in regard to answering our problem statement. Therefore, the following chapter will be a presentation of our theories of choice, The Reasoned Action Model, The Theory of Planned Behaviour, and the Elaboration Likelihood Model.

To commence this chapter on attitudes, we find it relevant to, first and foremost, introduce and explain what an attitude is and how it can be defined. Richard M. Perloff (2017) stresses that there does not exist a clear definition of attitude. He, however, proposes one himself: "(...) a learned, global evaluation of an object (person, place or issue) that influences thought and action" (Perloff 2017, 87). He further explains that an attitude is not a behaviour, however, it might consist of different patterns related to reacting to social stimuli. Therefore, an attitude is "(...) a predisposition, a tendency, a state of readiness that guides and steers behaviour in certain predictable, though not always rational ways" (Perloff 2017, 87). Other researchers have stated that an attitude simply is "a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favor or disfavor" or "a learned predisposition to respond in a consistently favourable or unfavorable manner with respect to a given object" (Perloff 2017, 87). Here, it is evident that all of the above definitions each emphasise distinctive aspects of the concept of attitude. However, what is significant is that all definitions seem to agree on the fact that an attitude is made based on some kind of evaluation, thus, why many researchers use attitudes as a guide to behaviour. Perloff also emphasises that attitudes often guide our behaviour, however, what attitudes affect us and how much they affect us is individual. Therefore, to understand a certain attitude and behaviour, it is necessary to study which attitudes are more or less

likely to influence action. To do this, researchers have developed models that can explain and even predict behaviour (Perloff 2017).

### 2.3.1 The Reasoned Action Model

One of the major theories developed to study how attitudes influence behaviour is The Reasoned Action Model (TRA). The model was proposed by Fishbein and Ajzen in 1975 but was extended by Ajzen in 1991 with The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB). Furthermore, in 2010 the two social scientists published a collective work where they integrated their work and the Theory of Planned Behaviour into The Reasoned Action Model, thus re-evaluating and extending it with newer processes (Perloff 2017).

The term reasoned action gives us an indicator of the fact that Fishbein and Ajzen might believe that people are rational when debating whether to perform a behaviour or not. This is, however, not the case. The two theorists state that we, as people, are not always rational and that we do not always think all the decisions that we make through (Perloff 2017). Alternatively, they believe that we form a set of beliefs on which we act – meaning that through these beliefs, one can predict behaviour. Furthermore, Fishbein and Ajzen stress that these beliefs are the cognitive basis for all attitudes, intentions and behaviour that follows (Perloff 2017).

Fishbein and Ajzen generally believe that human behaviour unfolds reasonably and sometimes spontaneously depending on the information or beliefs that the person thinks about the behaviour in question. These beliefs have different origins and could, for example, be a personal experience, education, TV, the Internet, family, friends etc. (Fishbein & Ajzen 2010). They stress that a person's characteristics, such as demographic and personality, significantly impact how we experience, interpret, and remember things. People use these beliefs as a guide to whether or not they should perform the questioned behaviour. Here, Fishbein and Ajzen (2010) distinguish between different kinds of beliefs.

First and foremost, people have beliefs about what outcome they might experience by performing the behaviour – is it positive or negative? These are what they call *behavioural beliefs* and are said to determine one's *attitude toward the behaviour* (Fishbein & Ajzen 2010). Secondly, we will most likely think of what people in our lives would think if we carried out the behaviour – would they approve or disagree? These are *normative beliefs* that produce what Fishbein and Ajzen (2010) call a

Study No:  
20167436  
20164100

*perceived norm*. Third, people usually construct beliefs about the environmental and personal factors surrounding the behaviour that might hinder the attempt to carry out the behaviour. This results in either high or low *perceived behavioural control* (Fishbein & Ajzen 2010). Following this, researchers should be able to predict behaviour from the attitude toward the behaviour, perceived norm and perceived behavioural control. This ends in what has been labelled *behavioural intention* and is the intention to perform the particular behaviour. Naturally, if the intention is relatively identical to the behaviour in question, one can most certainly count on that the behaviour will be carried out (Perloff 2017).

As shortly presented above, the Theory of Reasoned Action consists of five components. We will elaborate on each element below in order to gain further knowledge for us to use these in our analysis later in this thesis.

### **Attitude toward the behaviour**

This is an attitude that is said to be very specific. It is made up of two subcomponents, namely behavioural beliefs and outcome evaluations. The behavioural beliefs stem from determined consequences of the behaviour in question, and the outcome evaluations are the act of evaluation of whether one is willing to risk or ignore these consequences or not (Perloff 2017).

### **Perceived norm**

Perloff identifies norms as: "Norms refer to acceptable, recommended behaviour in a society" (Perloff 2017, 168). Therefore, a perceived norm is said to be the pressure one would feel from society to perform the behaviour in question.

### **Behavioural intention**

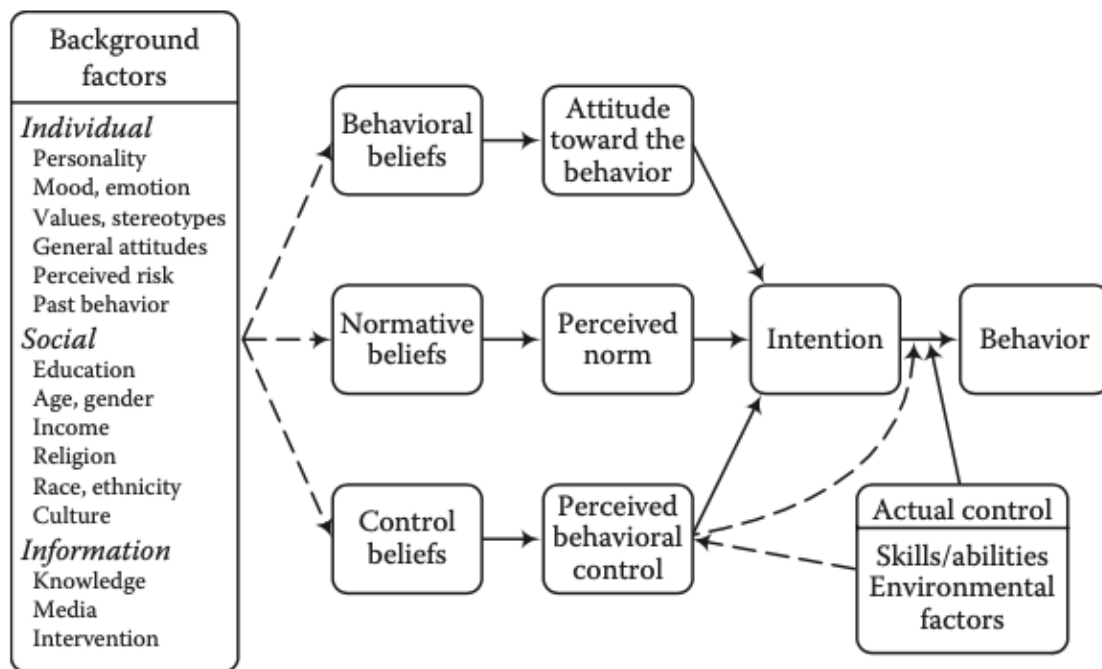
This is an individual's intention to carry out a particular behaviour. Fishbein and Ajzen (2010) stress that this is one of the components that can be predicted quite accurately through the use of the model, as all the other components make up the behavioural intention. Perloff states that to obtain knowledge on this, one should just simply ask if an individual has an intention to perform a particular behaviour. From that answer, you would then analyse the underlying reasons and beliefs (Perloff 2017).

### **Theory of Planned Behaviour**

As mentioned earlier, Ajzen introduced the Theory of Planned Behaviour in 1991, which extended The Theory of Reasoned Action. This involved the introduction of the concept of perceived behavioural control. Perloff identifies the concept as: "(...) the degree to which individuals perceive they are capable of performing a particular behaviour or can control their performance of the action" (Perloff 2017, 172). The Reasoned Action Model stressed that if the intention is strong, one will most likely perform the behaviour, however, the lack of the necessary skills or actual control over the performance might prevent someone from acting on the strong intention. Therefore, Fishbein and Ajzen (2010) stress that intention is only a good predictor of behaviour if the person questioning the behaviour has complete control over the behavioural performance. Therefore, it is necessary to not only analyse one's intention but also analyse if the person holds the required skills and abilities to perform the behaviour. And this is what perceived behavioural control is said to be able to measure (Fishbein & Ajzen 2010).

Perloff (2017) provides us with the example of a woman feeling positive toward losing weight and feels a social pressure to do so. However, she cannot seem to find the self-control to stay on a diet. In this example, the attitudes and norms will, therefore, not predict intention or behaviour. However, suppose one adds perceived behavioural control to the question. In that case, we can measure if this woman thinks she can say no to food and, therefore, the attitude and norm she has to lose weight and stay away from food will indicate whether the behaviour will be performed (Perloff 2017). Thus, perceived behavioural control can give us more accurate predictions of how attitudes can be used to predict intentions and, therefore, behaviour.

In their collected work in 2010, Fishbein and Ajzen proposed an overall framework including perceived behavioural control into the Reasoned Action Model, which looks like this:



(Fishbein & Ajzen 2010).

To sum up their framework, Fishbein and Ajzen stress:

*"(...) people are said to perform a behaviour because they intend to do so, they have the requisite skills and abilities, and there are no environmental constraints to prevent them from carrying out their intentions (i.e., they have favourable intentions and actual behavioural control"* (Fishbein & Ajzen 2010, 22).

Following this step, the model can be used to dig deeper and consider the determinants of intentions. Meaning, that we obtain knowledge of whether people will intend to perform a behaviour if they perceive it will provide them with a positive outcome and if they feel a normative pressure to do so (Fishbein & Ajzen 2010).

#### Theory of Reasoned Action and Planned Behaviour in Relation to the COVID-19 Pandemic

The Theory of Reasoned Action has been widely used to predict health-related behaviour throughout the years. This, we also saw in the example that Perloff (2017) provided us with. Here, The Reasoned Action Model was used as an example to predict behaviour in terms of diet control. Thus, why The

Study No:  
20167436  
20164100

Reasoned Action Model is also of high relevance when analysing consumer behaviour relating to the COVID-19 pandemic. Different researchers have already adopted The Theory of Reasoned Action and Theory of Planned Behaviour and focused it on the COVID-19 outbreak (Zeren 2021). As an example, we can highlight a study conducted by Munir Ahmad, Khadeeja Iram and Gul Jabeen in July 2020. Their research focused on perception-based factors that influence the intention to prevent getting infected with the coronavirus. They analysed this through a modified framework of TRA and TPB, which included these perception-based factors. Some of the factors were, for example, risk perception, epidemic knowledge and perceived feasibility (Ahmad, Iram & Jabeen 2020). The study results found that government's guidelines on epidemic prevention and risk perception had the most significant influence on people's intentions (Ahmad, Iram & Jabeen 2020). Therefore, they proved that these intentions based on the government's guidelines turned into behaviour such as social distancing, avoiding shaking hands, sneezing into one's sleeve and an increase in hand wash and the use of hand sanitiser (Ahmad, Iram & Jabeen 2020). Furthermore, the aspect of the perceived norm could also be said to influence our intentions in this example. Social norms, for example, our friends and family have a significant impact on our behaviour, therefore, with this example, the different restrictions increased people's perceived norm, which led them to quickly adopt these preventive behaviours (Zeren 2021).

How TRA relates to the COVID-19 pandemic is, therefore, relatively simple. One's attitude towards, for example, social distancing is combined with the subjective norms of social distancing. Fishbein and Ajzen (2010) stated that we outweigh both positive and negative consequences of the said behaviour to determine a behavioural intention. Concerning the COVID-19 pandemic, these considerations might spike questions such as "what will happen if I do practice social distancing?" or "will social distancing keep me from getting infected with the coronavirus?". If a person determines that social distancing is a good measure against getting infected, he or she will most likely have a positive attitude towards social distancing. In terms of subjective norms, if a person experiences that the people around them, for example, friends and family, value the act of social distancing, the person is more likely to adopt the behaviour themselves.

### 2.3.2 Elaboration Likelihood Model

In terms of understanding how consumers' attitudes towards grocery shopping are affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, it is also relevant to understand the cognitive processes that happen within

Study No:  
20167436  
20164100

consumers' heads when they, for example, are exposed to messages concerning social distancing or the requirement to wear a mask. One of the models dominating this field is the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), whose approach stresses that it is impossible to understand how a message affects someone without analysing the underlying processes of how the message influences our attitudes. Therefore, ELM is what we call a dual-process model that argues that there exist two routes by which communications affect attitudes (Perloff 2017).

The Theory, as mentioned above of Reasoned Action and Planned Behaviour, predict and explain behaviour through a very organised framework, and the TRA is said to provide a map of the journey that our thoughts go through before they get the possibility to affect our actions (Perloff 2017). Thus, TRA gave us a link between attitude and behaviour. However, ELM provides us with a more procedural model of how a change in attitude and, as a result of this, behaviour occurs. The keyword here is that ELM focuses on processes, as scholars believe that if they can understand how people cognitively process messages, they can better understand how it affects our attitudes (Perloff 2017).

ELM is said to be one of the most influential contemporary frameworks for work on persuasive communication and was developed by Richard Petty and John Cacioppo in 1980. According to a conceptual paper by Daniel J O'keefe: "The ELM suggests that important variations in the nature of persuasion are a function of the likelihood that receivers will engage in elaboration of (that is, thinking about) information relevant to the persuasive issue" (O'keefe 2008, 1475).

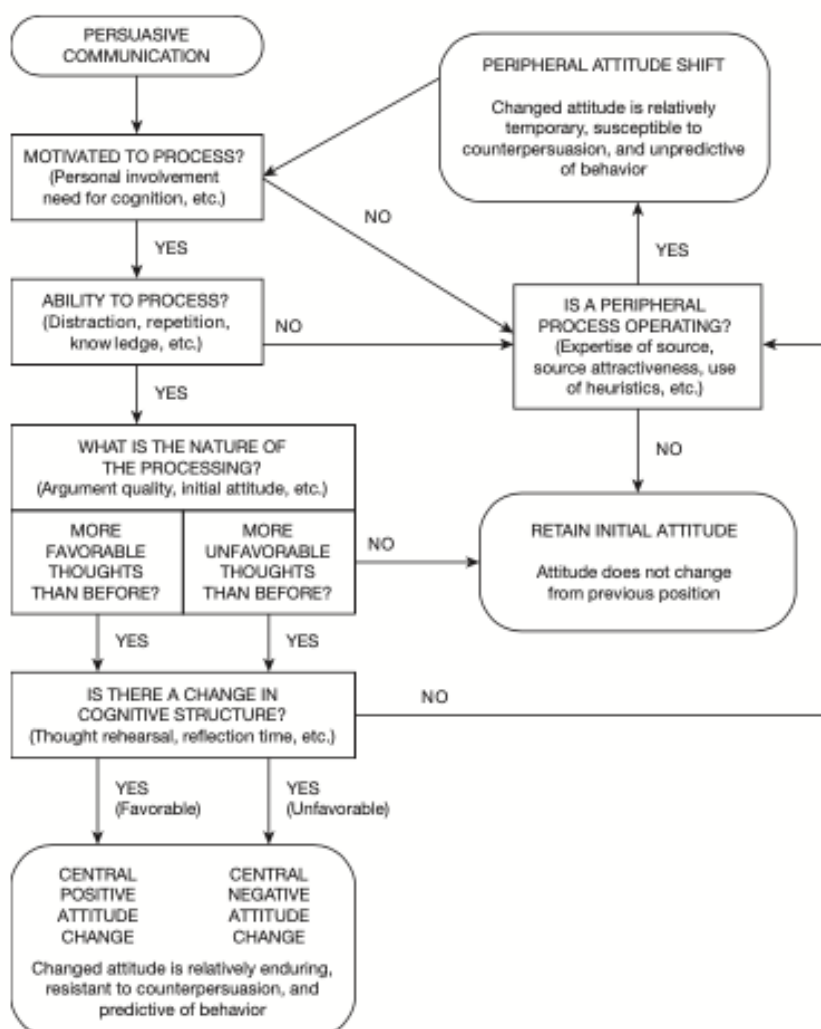
Petty and Cacioppo state that the model initially focused on accounting for differential persistence of communication-induced attitude change but rapidly developed into two distinct paths to persuasion based on their empirical findings and theories within the field (Petty & Cacioppo 1986). The ELM claims that these two separate ways in which people process a persuasive message or communication are called *routes*. Furthermore, the model stresses that every time we think about a message, these routes cross each other, forcing us to make decisions based on our reactions to the message (Perloff 2017). Depending on the level of elaboration, the two routes to persuasion propose either a systematic way of thinking or a simple way of thinking. Petty and Cacioppo categorise the first type of persuasion as the *central route*, and here the level of elaboration is said to be relatively high. Within this type of persuasion, thorough investigation through extensive information on a given topic is considered before making any definitive decision (Petty & Cacioppo 1986). The other type of persuasion is



Study No:  
20167436  
20164100

categorised as the *peripheral route*, and here the level of elaboration is said to be relatively low. Within this type of persuasion, the receiver will make decisions based on simple rules, such as believing in individuals or groups with high credibility (Petty & Cacioppo 1986). Furthermore, O'keefe states that when receivers choose the peripheral route, "(...) receivers may rely upon various peripheral cues (such as communicator credibility) as guides to attitude and belief, rather than engaging in extensive issue-relevant thinking" (O'keefe 2008, 1475).

To further explain The Model of Elaboration Likelihood, the following figure presents an overview of the central and peripheral routes to persuasion together with some of the actions that underlie the overall decision-making process:



(Petty & Cacioppo 1986).

Study No:  
20167436  
20164100

The figure mentions attitude changes and Petty and Cacioppo (1986) explains their definition of the term 'attitude' as being:

*"(...) general evaluations people hold in regard to themselves, other people, objects, and issues. These general evaluations can be based on a variety of behavioural, affective, and cognitive experiences, and are capable of influencing or guiding behavioural, affective, and cognitive processes"* (Petty & Cacioppo 1986, 127).

Within The Model of Elaboration Likelihood, the two primary factors deciding how a person processes a message are motivation and ability. A person processes through the central route if he or she is genuinely motivated to consider the message or if they are cognitively able to reflect over arguments for and against. Different situations might affect one's ability to reflect on a message and if one cannot find the motivation to process a message, they tend to process it superficially, meaning they opt for the peripheral route (Perloff 2017). Petty and Cacioppo underlines that it is impossible to process every message we receive carefully and thoughtfully, thus why the different factors included in their Elaboration Likelihood Model make central or peripheral processing most likely (Petty and Cacioppo 1989).

Another important aspect of ELM is involvement. Perloff writes:

*"Individuals are high in involvement when they perceive that an issue is personally relevant or bears directly on their own lives. They are low in involvement when they believe that an issue has little or no impact on their own lives"* (Perloff 2017, 235).

The ELM claims that when people are highly involved, they are more likely to engage in issue-relevant thinking. Furthermore, Perloff (2017) stresses that this is also where individuals might change their opinion on something. If they hear a message that they find interesting to consider, they might start digging for more information and assess the different arguments in the message – this might change their attitude towards the message if the arguments can persuade them. On the flip side, if a person is under low involvement, they find no interest in even considering arguments for the message. Here, they will look for what theorists call 'mental shortcuts', which guides them to determine if they should agree with the given message or not (Perloff 2017).

The Elaboration Likelihood Model in Relation to the COVID-19 Pandemic

Study No:  
20167436  
20164100

When considering the Elaboration Likelihood Model in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic, the model can determine whether the consumers of our survey are moving within the peripheral or central route of persuasion in managing their grocery shopping. Furthermore, the ELM can provide us with further insight into how the pandemic influences the consumers' attitudes and, with this, also their behaviour. Let's take the example of social distancing provided in the section relating the COVID-19 pandemic to The Theory of Reasoned Action and The Theory of Planned Behaviour. We see that individuals could be influenced by factors such as the government's restrictions to protect people from getting infected with the virus. Here, one type of individual could decide to rely on governmental decisions truly and, thereby, not engage in whether or not social distancing is a good measure against getting infected with the coronavirus. Therefore, this type of individual would be taking the peripheral route as he/she probably has made no or minimal effort in terms of obtaining knowledge on the given topic. Thus, the individual might consider the government to have high credibility. However, another type of individual could decide to question the concept of social distancing and, on that note, choose to gather information themselves. This would then mean that this individual will be taking the central route as the desire to find their own in-depth details on the subject indicates that they would then have a somewhat systematic way of thinking.

## 2.4 Conclusion of Literature Review

After conducting our literature review, it is evident that there exists an extensive amount of research on consumer behaviour and the different factors that affect it. Our literature review proves that the theoretical background on consumer behaviour correlates with the findings of the various studies examining consumer behaviour concerning the grocery sector in the United Kingdom. Therefore, through our literature review, we were able to find relevant theories that could provide us with a framework for our further analysis. We discovered that The Reasoned Action Model, The Theory of Planned Behaviour and the Elaboration Likelihood Model all analysed how attitudes influence actions, thus why they can supply us with the tools needed to find an answer to our research question. Therefore, the key takeaways from our literature review and the theoretical considerations will be the basis of our analysis in this thesis. And even though some of the literature examined the impact of COVID-19 on UK consumer's buying behaviour, we still find a gap in the literature that needs more attention and research. The literature touched upon the fact that the overall environment and experience of grocery shopping in the UK have changed due to the restrictions and new initiatives that the global pandemic brought. Concerning this, our research in this thesis will focus on how this new

environment impacts UK consumers' attitudes towards grocery shopping and how it has affected their consumer behaviour during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## 3.0 Methodology

The following chapter will provide an account of the methodological stances applied throughout this thesis. First and foremost, we will justify our choice of theory and second, the philosophy of science of this thesis will be elaborated. Hereafter, the research strategy and data collection will be presented as well as our structure of analysis. Thus, this chapter includes the overall framework for how we have chosen to structure and execute our thesis.

### 3.1 Choice of Theory

In this chapter, we will justify our choice of theory. The section will seek to explain how the chosen theories cooperate with our collected empirical data to answer our research question. Furthermore, we will account for relevant critique of the theories to emphasise why we decided to work with these theories in our thesis despite this.

In relation to our research question, the intention for behaviour and what influences this intention is interesting because we want to find out how the COVID-19 pandemic influences UK consumers' attitudes. We use the theoretical understanding of an individual's actions and behaviour which was presented in both TRA and TPB, to analyse and examine what intentions and, hereby, attitudes UK consumers have concerning grocery shopping during the COVID-19 pandemic and what behaviours these intentions resulted in. TRA and TPB enable us to access consumer's thought process analytically and, thereby, examine whether the consumer's attitudes towards grocery shopping during the global pandemic are in line with the consumers' actual actions or whether other factors beyond the consumers' control affect their grocery shopping behaviour. With the addition of TPB to TRA, we can investigate how actions happen based on the intention, attitude and the ability to perform the questioned behaviour. However, to get a more nuanced picture of how the consumers' attitudes and actions are influenced, we added the ELM to our theoretical framework. Because in this thesis, we believe we are looking at two types of decisions in terms of grocery shopping behaviour; the cognitive, conscious and well-considered decisions versus the emotional and impulse-driven decisions, thus if consumers, based on how the COVID-19 pandemic influences them, take the peripheral or central route.

### 3.1.1 Criticism of TRA and TPB

Despite its popularity, The Theory of Reasoned Action has been met with criticism through time as some researchers believe that the theory cannot predict an adequate clarification of human social behaviour (Ajzen 2011). Despite the fact that Fishbein and Ajzen later enlarged TRA with the introduction of TPB, critics have still found issues regarding the usefulness and trustworthiness of the theory.

One of the major critiques of The Reasoned Action Model is that it suggests that human behaviour is reasonable and that it is also performed reasonably as it follows beliefs. However, critics have stated that no behaviour can be described as reasoned, and both The Reasoned Action Model and The Theory of Planned Behaviour are, therefore, argued to be too rational. They support this because none of the models takes things such as emotions or compulsions into account (Fishbein 2008). However, in an article from 2018, Martin Fishbein, one of the co-creators of both The Reasoned Action Model and The Theory of Planned Behaviour, states that both TRA and TPB does not, in fact, deny any emotions or irrationality. Even though not one of the models mentions emotions, they are a part of the 'background' for establishing a belief about a particular behaviour. He further underlines that these beliefs might not be rational, however, they are 'reasoned'. Thus, why attitudes, intentions, and behaviour vary from person to person and sometimes people's behaviour might come off as irrational, but it was a very carefully considered behaviour based on their own beliefs (Fishbein 2008).

When considering the usefulness of TRA and TPB, we also questioned how rational people's behaviour seemed in both models. However, after reading Martin Fishbein's article, we believe that both TRA and TRB can give us a reliable tool to analyse and interpret UK consumers' attitudes in regard to grocery shopping in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. This is because we believe that the theory is accurate enough to illuminate some of the most essential aspects of which we wish to elaborate in this thesis, which is what attitudes influence actions and what causes these attitudes to unfold.

Furthermore, because we have yet to experience a similar crisis to COVID-19 in the 21st century, we anticipate that the relationship between the consumers' intentions and their actions will become significantly noticeable for us to analyse as we do not have any other similar actions to compare them with. Furthermore, because we analyse and interpret from the standpoint of a social constructivist, we simply seek to understand the underlying thoughts in relation to the UK consumers' view of the

COVID-19 pandemic and how they understand it in relation to the social world and, therefore, not striving to obtain an unambiguous answer to our problem statement.

### 3.1.2 Criticism of ELM

The Elaboration Likelihood Model has more than 30 years of history behind it. As we already established in our literature review, the ELM is one of the most influential theories of all time in studying persuasive communication. However, as it is with all grand theories, the ELM has also received notable criticism. One of the most prominent issues that relate to our thesis concerns what critics call the 'mediating variables of the ELM'. Studies show that the variables that mediate elaboration likelihood in the ELM amongst others include 'affect' 'involvement' and 'cognitive responses' (Kitchen et al. 2014). Critics have questioned whether peripheral processing actually influences affect and, therefore, argues that the ELM is somewhat underspecified. Moreover, even though the model suggests that in a situation where an individual's elaboration likelihood is high, their feelings may be central and if one is unmotivated, the effect is a peripheral cue, critics still propose that effect solely occurs through the peripheral route (Kitchen et al. 2014). Overall, the ELM has been faced with criticism in terms of determining when an individual's processing shifts from central route processing to peripheral route processing, and critics argue that an evaluation of these shifts will allow for a better understanding of the elaboration likelihood continuum (Kitchen et al. 2014).

In terms of incorporating ELM in this thesis's theoretical framework, we believe that The Elaboration Likelihood Model can function as a supporting tool for our findings in our analysis using TRA and TPB. Through the theory provided by Fishbein and Ajzen, we can examine our respondents' attitudes and how these have influenced their behaviour in terms of their grocery shopping patterns during the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, when working with the ELM, our primary interest is not to determine whether the peripheral or central cues influence affect, but instead to understand the underlying aspects of the respondents' thought-process in terms of their grocery shopping behaviour. Based on these processes, we will then be able to depict whether our respondents have taken the peripheral or central route.

## 3.2 Philosophy of Science

In the following section, the philosophy of science will be elaborated. Our philosophy of science will contribute to determining how we select and unfold information. This, amongst others, includes how

Study No:  
20167436  
20164100

we shape our questions, develop our data, and carry out our analysis. Therefore, the philosophy of science will have a significant impact on the overall outcome of the study.

In our thesis, the subject of the matter concerns UK consumers' attitudes towards grocery shopping. According to Perloff (2017), attitudes are in no way observable in the same way as other human organisms, which implies that the exploration of attitudes becomes more a matter of understanding human behaviour and their attitudes rather than clarifying them (Perloff 2017). When studying meaning, qualitative research is said to be the best fit, as it is said that "(...) it is only through qualitative research that the world can be studied through the eyes of the people who are studied" (Bryman 2016, 624). However, Bryman stresses that he found several quantitative researchers and studies that surveyed regarding uncovering issues of meaning. Therefore, he underlines that the big gap there is said to be between quantitative and qualitative research might not be that wide after all (Bryman 2016), thus, why we employ what is called a mixed method. Our research strategy is predominantly quantitative as we are conducting a survey, however, as we are interested in understanding consumer attitudes, our analysis will account for a more qualitative method as we are not interested in numbers, rather the respondents' thoughts on the questions asked. The mixed methods will be accounted for in chapter 3.2.

Because of the mix of methods and our interest in uncovering attitudes, we argue that this thesis will adhere to the epistemology of interpretivism rather than positivism. This is supported by the fact that attitudes solely are created subjectively, which means that they cannot depict the whole truth. Thus, it is not possible to achieve the overall knowledge of the structure behind them (Bryman 2016). In accordance with this, the philosophy of phenomenology is related. Phenomenology is defined by Bryman (2016) as something that concerns "the question of how individuals make sense of the world around them and how in particular the philosopher should bracket out preconceptions in his or her grasp of the world" (Bryman 2016, 694). Edmund Husserl initially founded the phenomenological approach at the beginning of the 1900s to develop a scientific standpoint where the world could be observed through the subjects' experiences of the actual phenomenon (Brinkmann & Tanggaard 2015). Brinkmann and Tanggaard (2015) claim that one of the most essential factors within the phenomenological approach is that the human consciousness will always be intentional and, therefore, always will be pointed towards something. Furthermore, the general concept of intentionality is concentrated towards the idea of an individual being accentuated from a subjective perspective which, therefore, implies that every individual will most likely encounter a phenomenon as something

Study No:  
20167436  
20164100

specific. However, the interpretation of a phenomenon can fluctuate from individual to individual (Brinkmann & Tanggaard 2015). Because individuals do not always perceive phenomena as the same, it is argued that they will develop different subjective interpretations of the given situation (Brinkmann & Tanggaard 2015).

Furthermore, the phenomenological approach claims that intentionality contributes to the understanding between the subject and object, which as a result of this, combines them into one entity. This, therefore, implies that the correlation between an individual and the world becomes one instead of two objects (Brinkmann & Tangaard 2015). This, in regard to our investigation, is useful as the phenomenological approach can help provide a comprehensive understanding of the attitudes and impact which the COVID-19 pandemic might have imposed on consumers in the United Kingdom. Moreover, it is important to state that our primary interest for this thesis is to look upon the individual's perception of the phenomenon and, therefore, not the actual phenomenon itself. When working from a phenomenological approach, it is crucial to examine and control data carefully. One of the weaknesses of phenomenology is that all data and research must be handled thoughtfully as we, as researchers, have complete responsibility for potentially influencing the individual's perceptions (Koch 1995).

Moreover, we argue that the philosophical standpoint for this thesis also concerns a constructivist ontology as we are interpreting the social constructions that our respondents created through their experiences and attitudes towards the COVID-19 pandemic. Social constructivism is a sociological theory of knowledge and proposes that human thoughts are developed through a frame of understanding, constructed through interaction with others (Esmark et al. 2005). Moreover, social constructivism argues that no reality is more accurate or false than any other, as it solely comes down to the individual observer (Esmark et al. 2005). To illustrate a social construct, Charles Cooley's concept of self/self-identity can be mentioned. In his book 'Human Nature and The Social Order' Cooley presents his theory of the 'looking glass self' that states that "I am not who you think I am; I am not who I think I am; I am who I think you think I am" (Cooley 1902, 168). This example supports that an individual in society constructs perceptions that could perhaps not exist without the existence of other individuals to witness them (Cooley 1902).

Our thesis utilises that consumers' attitudes during times of crisis are a socially constructed phenomenon and therefore, also is socially changeable (Bryman 2016). Hence, when conducting our analysis, we will analyse our empirical data using theories consistent with the social constructivist approach to



address how the COVID-19 pandemic is changing UK consumers' attitudes towards grocery shopping (Bryman 2012). Furthermore, based on our knowledge and the example provided by Cooley (1902), we argue that an individual's thoughts towards the novel coronavirus can be shaped differently depending on their level of interest in the subject. Whilst some individuals might follow the information provided by the government, others might trust the words of family and friends more in regard to how to cope with the consequences of the pandemic (Bryman 2012). Thus, the social constructivist approach will help us understand how UK consumers create their reality around the phenomenon. More specifically, the approach will help us interpret the respondents' different mentalities regarding the COVID-19 pandemic.

Both phenomenology and social constructivism act jointly in our thesis to determine how we are going to pick and unfold information, as both of the scientific approaches have similarities to one another. According to a conceptual paper published by Wendy Bastalich (2020), the correlation between phenomenology and social constructivism is that:

*"Both phenomenology (...) and social constructivism aim to understand objects' out in the world', or some aspect of an 'essential' reality as it is read from a specific cultural placement (social constructionism) or from an intuitive act of human consciousness (phenomenology). All insist that social research reflects upon socially mediated or essentially human understandings of the world"* (Bastalich 2020).

Therefore, to sum up, interpretivism, social constructivism, and phenomenology can contribute to enlighten us in whatever meaning and knowledge there is to depict from the social world and how humans experience it (Bastalich 2020).

### 3.3 Research Strategy

As shortly mentioned, this thesis is going to be conducted through a mixed-method research strategy. This, amongst others, is due to our interest in collecting tangible data relatively fast to provide solid answers for our analysis and, further, to obtain more in-depth knowledge about consumer attitudes (Bryman 2016). This follows the definition of mixed-method research, as that is:

*"(...) As a methodology, it involves philosophical assumptions that guide the direction of the collection and analysis and the mixing of qualitative and quantitative approaches in many phases of*

Study No:  
20167436  
20164100

*the research projects. (...) Its central premise is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches, in combination, provides better understanding of research problems than either approach alone" (Cresswell & Clark 2007, 5).*

Many strategies have been used to distinguish between quantitative and qualitative approaches. Most often, the difference is found in how the approach is associated with the purpose of a study and, therefore, the research question. Here, the qualitative method is more often used to answer *how* and *what*, whereas the quantitative approach is more used to discover statistical and mathematical results (Creamer 2018).

These definitions correlate with our intentions with this thesis. Thus, we apply a mixed method to gain a deep but simultaneously broad understanding of UK consumers' attitudes. As the definition of a mixed method implies, we still find a difference between the qualitative and quantitative approach in our thesis, however, to answer our research question, they are linked and overlap in both the way we are obtaining our data and how we analyse and come to a conclusion to our research question. Consequently, the quantitative approach is employed in conducting a survey, which is created to receive responses from UK consumers to obtain greater knowledge about the individual's perception of the pandemic, quantifying the overall opinions of the consumers towards grocery shopping during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, as our research question seeks to understand consumers' attitudes and behaviour, we will employ the qualitative approach to gain more in-depth answers through our survey to understand whether our respondent's grocery shopping behaviour changed due to new attitudes obtained during the pandemic. Therefore, the qualitative approach will also be used to expand our quantitative analysis by adding elements that give us the ability to unveil the attitudes behind the answers provided to us by the respondents. How the quantitative and qualitative approaches correlate in our analysis will be elucidated in chapter 3.4.

Regarding our mix of methods and taking the correlation between our research and theoretical framework into deliberation, this thesis will use an inductive method approach. According to Bryman (2016), the purpose of an inductive approach is to map out and further develop a theory that can elucidate the phenomenon that is being interpreted. Moreover, when utilising an inductive method, "Theory is the outcome of the research. In other words, the process of induction involves drawing generalisable inferences out of observations" (Bryman 2012, 26). In our thesis, the inductive method approach, together with our survey, will help us identify and develop new knowledge on how the COVID-19 pandemic impacts UK consumers' attitudes towards grocery shopping. Through

Study No:  
20167436  
20164100

conceptual papers, news, and other research relating to our topic, our interest in investigating consumer attitudes was initiated. Therefore, before conducting our literature review, the area of interest was already known.

Since we had a desire to explore a newly emerged phenomenon, not much theory and literature was to be found specific to our topic. Therefore, our literature review sheds light on the existing literature and theories on the surrounding factors, which then, in correspondence with our survey, will help us answer our research question. To clarify, the inductive approach makes it possible to take our empirical data and the related theory and detect meaning from it.

### 3.4 Research Design and Method

In the following chapter, a clarification of how our thesis is designed as well as the method for both data collection and our data analysis, will be presented. According to Bryman (2016) “a research design is a structure that guides the execution of a research method and the analysis of subsequent data” (Bryman 2016, 10). As our aim for this study is to obtain knowledge regarding UK consumers' attitudes towards grocery shopping in the light of the pandemic, we trail an explorative research approach in this thesis. Meaning that we, with our data, would like to elaborate and further develop research on this matter. Therefore, our aim and intention with this master's thesis have never been to provide a definitive answer to how UK consumers' attitudes are affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. We are aware that the pandemic is constantly evolving, hence why we must expect that new and engaging aspects to our research topic have come to the surface amid our design of this thesis.

#### 3.4.1 Data Collection

When first scheming the framework for this thesis, several options were given to how we could answer our research question in the best possible way. As this thesis employs a mixed method approach, we found that the best suitable way to gather our empirical data was to conduct a survey, as it also goes nicely hand-in-hand with the explorative research approach of our thesis. The explorative approach, together with our mix of methods, namely gives us the possibility to achieve a broader understanding of consumer attitudes in our survey. Thus, the following section will elaborate on how a survey is conducted and how we approach it in our thesis. The survey is to be found in appendix 1.0 as a direct link to the questions or in appendix 2.0, where all our findings are presented.

#### Survey

Study No:  
20167436  
20164100

As mentioned, to answer our research question, we chose to conduct a survey to gather data on UK consumers' grocery shopping behaviours during the COVID-19 pandemic. One of the purposes of choosing this approach is the ability to collect a reasonable amount of data. Survey research is defined as the most acquainted quantitative research method in social sciences and uses questionnaire design and scientific sampling to provide data that is more manageable in terms of developing comparatives (Muijs 2004). Moreover, the approach of conducting surveys is exceedingly helpful for researchers to divide individuals into different segments and groups (Sukamolson 2007).

Jackson (2011) defines a questionnaire as "questioning individuals on a topic or topics and then describing their responses", and the overall motivation of conducting a questionnaire is, therefore, the ability to gather a broader understanding of a specific topic from contrasting or different respondents. Furthermore, surveys are an excellent method to map current behaviour and obtain indications about future behaviour from the respondents (Andersen et al. 2019). Surveys come in many different forms, however, the six most acknowledged are interviews, focus groups, panel sampling, telephone surveys, mail surveys and online surveys (Andersen et al. 2019). In this thesis, we are interested in collecting data from UK consumers. Therefore, we chose to conduct an online survey to have easy access to respondents from the UK. As technology has evolved over the decades, sending out questionnaires has become significantly easier. First and foremost, an online survey is fast and cheap to do, and the results are digital. Therefore, they can be processed immediately upon receipt (Andersen et al. 2019). Through Aalborg University, we have access to [www.surveymxact.dk](http://www.surveymxact.dk), which is a software system where you can develop online surveys and see results and statistics of the answers from your respondents. Thus, why we chose surveyxact to set up our online survey for this thesis. An online survey is an easy way to gather information from all around the world and, as a result of this, engage in cultures and behaviours different from one's own (Andersen et al. 2019).

However, according to Andersen et al. (2019), there are both pros and cons of conducting an online survey. Amongst others, some of the pros of choosing an online survey lie in the ability to achieve relatively reasonable response rates, and it is an effective way of managing data. However, the cons of conducting an online survey are the limitations of not being able to engage in a dialogue with respondents regarding the questions asked. Moreover, despite it being an advantage, there is also a proposed risk of not collecting enough responses from the survey (Andersen et al. 2019). We have chosen this survey method as it springs from the combination of interest in gathering a reasonable

Study No:  
20167436  
20164100

amount of data fast and because conducting in-depth interviews has not been an option due to the current pandemic.

Initially, we would have preferred to conduct a combination of both an online survey and in-depth interviews as we would then have had an equal amount of qualitative and quantitative data to analyse from. As we do not have many acquaintances in the United Kingdom, we determined that the best way to conduct in-depth interviews was to travel to the UK and ask strangers in various grocery stores. However, as we were not able to visit the country due to the global pandemic, we decided to stick with the online survey method, as we would then still be able to reach out to respondents in the UK, and with our mixed-method approach, we are still able to gather some qualitative data which can be used in our further analysis.

#### The self-completion Questionnaire

When conducting an online survey, there are several ways to construct the questionnaire. One way to do so is through a self-completion questionnaire. Bryman and Bell (2011) define this as a questionnaire that respondents complete by themselves. Along with the rise of technology, how to conduct a self-completion questionnaire has evolved. Earlier, the most commonly known forms were 'mail' or 'postal questionnaire', where the questionnaires were sent out to the respondents via mail. However, today an online survey is the most accessible form of a self-completion questionnaire as it allows respondents to answer fast (Bryman & Bell 2011).

As we are interested in respondents living in the United Kingdom, a self-completion questionnaire fits our overall data collection for this thesis. Both advantages and disadvantages are found in a self-completion questionnaire. One of the main advantages of a self-completion questionnaire is the fact that it is convenient for the respondents, as they can complete it anytime they find it fitting and spend as much time on it as they want to (Bryman & Bell 2011). However, some of the disadvantages of a self-completion questionnaire are that there is no way of helping the respondents if they experience any difficulties answering the questions. Moreover, the administrators of a survey can't probe respondents to elaborate on specific answers, nor is it possible to ask more than a 'few' questions due to the risk of respondents losing their interest in fulfilling the questionnaire if they have to write a lot (Bryman & Bell 2011).

Study No:  
20167436  
20164100

We concluded that the advantages of a self-completion questionnaire outweigh the disadvantages in our case. As we are interested in consumers in the United Kingdom, we needed to be able to collect our data efficiently, and as we are interested in exploring our respondents' attitudes, we also needed a method where they would be able to answer at their own pace and time. Therefore, we found that the self-completion questionnaire could help obtain data to find an answer to our research question.

Bryman & Bell (2011) stresses that, usually, a self-completion questionnaire does not involve many open-ended questions as respondents tend to skip these. Therefore, we naturally had this in mind when formulating our questions for our survey. However, Bryman and Bell (2011) later underline that the topic of the survey is of great importance. If, for example, the subject is of particular interest to the respondent, he or she is more likely to take their time to write down an answer for an open question.

When designing our survey, we decided to incorporate one open-ended question since we believed that consumers had taken a stand on their attitudes and behaviours during the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, they would be interested in making their opinion known after answering whether or not the pandemic had influenced their grocery shopping behaviour. Our open-ended question is as follows: "Please explain how your grocery shopping behaviour has changed due to COVID-19" (Appendix 2.7). Andersen (2019) states that open-ended questions provide researchers with more in-depth data. By that one question, we would then be able to retrieve how consumers, themselves, describe how the pandemic has changed their grocery shopping behaviour, thus providing us with qualitative data. However, our questionnaire is predominantly developed based on the method for a self-completion questionnaire. Thus, the questions asked are closed questions, distinguishing between two different types: scale questions and multiple choice. Andersen (2019) underlines that closed questions do not allow the respondent to give more in-depth answers contrary to open-ended questions. However, these types of questions make it easier to transfer data to computer-based data processing. As we are interested in uncovering our respondents' attitudes towards grocery shopping, we decided to incorporate a choice called 'other' in all of our questions. Here, the respondents would be able to provide a more thorough answer, and we might, despite the closed questions, be able to retrieve more in-depth answers.

Study No:  
20167436  
20164100

Closed questions are great to ask simple questions, but they do not allow for nuances in the answers (Andersen 2019). If a researcher would like to retain the ability to analyse data using a computer but also want to open up for more nuanced answers, one should incorporate scale questions (Andersen 2019). Thus, why our survey consists of both scale questions and multiple-choice questions. A scale question can be used to measure if a respondent agrees with a number of statements and how they rate an item on a scale in terms of, for example, importance (Bryman & Bell 2019). We constructed our survey so the scale questions would imply if the consumer had even thought about the questions, we would like them to elaborate on. For example, we are interested in finding out if consumers are shopping less at physical stores. A scale question could help us answer that, and if the respondent ticked that they do go to a physical store less, we designed that they are then sent to a follow-up question composed of multiple choices relating to why that is. In this way, we only collect answers from respondents who already have an opinion or have changed their behaviour or attitudes towards grocery shopping due to COVID-19. Therefore, we also believe that there is a greater chance that they will spend time giving us a credible and in-depth answer that we can use for the more qualitative part of our analysis and uncover and understand the respondents' attitudes.

#### The Respondents

When designing our survey for this thesis, several thoughts were given to how we, in the best possible way, could answer our research question regarding UK consumers' attitudes concerning their grocery habits during the COVID-19 pandemic. In general, our goal is not to investigate whether there is a difference amongst genders or a difference amongst age groups but more to obtain a broader understanding and insight into the overall attitudes of the individuals concerning our research question. Therefore, when conducting our survey, we hoped to see representatives within all age groups and genders. However, we still chose to ask our respondents to provide us with information on both gender and age because this information could potentially show patterns and contribute to obtaining a greater understanding of consumption across segments. Despite this, this is not our primary focus, and these patterns will only be analysed and touched upon if our findings show noticeable results from a specific segment. Because we do not have a wish to illuminate a particular segment of consumers but rather target as many as possible, we chose to distribute our survey in different ways. We found that the best possible way for us to achieve responses from a younger segment was to post our survey to survey-exchange groups on Facebook. We believed that the age group here would represent individuals between 18-25. Moreover, we shared our survey with friends of the United Kingdom between the age of 25-50 with the intention to have them share the survey amongst their friends and

Study No:  
20167436  
20164100

family. Thus, we would then receive responses from their friends within approximately the same age groups as themselves and their parents and perhaps even grandparents, which would then provide us with answers from all of the respective age groups we chose to include in our survey.

#### Timespan

We sent out our survey on March 17, 2021. As we needed to reach UK respondents, we contacted five acquaintances who live in the UK and had them share our survey on their Facebook page. We also posted it in several Facebook groups whose purpose is for students to share and collect empirical data for projects or theses like ours – naturally asking specifically for UK respondents.

As our survey is intended to collect data on consumer behaviour during the COVID-19 pandemic, the stage of the pandemic during the period the survey is active is rather important. On March 17, 2021, The United Kingdom was amid its third lockdown, with Prime Minister Boris Johnson stating that all restrictions will be lifted by June 21 at the earliest (Davis 2021). However, the first step of lifting the lockdown in the UK started on March 8, 2021, where schools reopened. This was followed by hair-dressers, pubs and restaurants, and outdoor activities on April 12 (Sim 2021). As we, with our survey, want to collect data on attitudes changed due to COVID-19, we wish to examine UK consumers and their mindset when being at the centre of the restrictions caused by the pandemic. Thus, we decided to close our survey on April 20, 2021, as the United Kingdom is slightly lifting its restrictions and because we have a limited time frame to conduct this thesis.

#### Reliability/validity

The following section concerns the reliability and validity of our master's thesis and is elucidated to evaluate the quality of our research. Based on our limited time to conduct this thesis and our desire to gather as many answers as possible in a short amount of time, we decided to make a concise yet concrete survey. Therefore, our survey involves 16 questions of which we intend to use for our investigation. In total, we received 55 responses that contain both multiple-choice but also in-depth answers. This appears to be a valid number of responses to provide an adequate analysis. We support this with the fact that we were able to collect 55 responses despite our survey only being distributed a month. Also, we find the number of responses to be a sufficient amount of data to handle during the limited time frame we have to conduct our analysis. Furthermore, since we were able to send out our survey through a highly professional statistical tool and extract our data from it, we find the survey to have high reliability. This is supported by the fact that we solely base our analysis on all the findings



Study No:  
20167436  
20164100

presented within surveyxact. Therefore, there is no possibility for any biases. Lastly, we believe our data to be reliable and valid based on the number of elaborating answers we have received. 35 out of the 55 respondents choose to elaborate on their answers, which truly gives us the ability to conduct a more thorough analysis.

#### Source of Error

Through our survey and the collection of our data, we became aware of a particular source of error. As earlier mentioned, our survey was distributed through survey-xact.dk. As we were going through our collected data, we found that the survey allowed respondents to leave the survey without finishing all of the given questions. This, therefore, means that we, through our survey, fluctuate between the number of respondents and, therefore, we see a variation in respondents and answers. Meaning, a respondent might have only answered five questions and then left the survey. However, the five answers still count as part of our data collection, even though we lack answers to 11 questions. Moreover, this can cause ambiguity among the readers of this thesis as there is expected to be a minor error in terms of measuring our data in percentages.

### 3.4.2 Data Analysis

For us to interpret and analyse UK consumers' attitudes towards grocery shopping in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is essential to employ a method for data reduction, and with this, point out if there are any common themes to be seen within the answers from the respondents of our survey. Thus, we have chosen our analysis method to be based on a thematic analysis that we will elaborate on in the following section.

#### Method of Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis (TA) is a well-known method within qualitative research and can be used to thematise data (Braun & Clarke 2006). Despite it being widely used, there is, in fact, no clear agreement as to what the method stands for and further how to make use of it. Thus, the method sometimes can be interpreted as somewhat poorly branded opposite to other methods, e.g., grounded theory or content analysis (Braun & Clarke 2006). However, because the thematic analysis does not have a general layout that must be followed, it can be beneficial in a thesis like ours that works from a constructivist standpoint together with a mixed-method approach. This is because thematic analysis, despite being a well-known method within qualitative research, also can be used to thematise quantitative features,

Study No:  
20167436  
20164100

which would be the 'more' measurable elements like, for instance, age, gender, location, etc. (Braun & Clarke 2006).

When we researched the field of thematic analysis, we came across a definition provided by the lectures Braun and Clarke (2006) that argue that thematic analysis is:

*"(...) a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organises and describes your data set in (rich) detail. However, it also often goes further than this and interprets various aspects of the research topic (...)"* (Braun & Clarke 2006, 6).

Furthermore, they propose an interesting framework to the thematic analysis, arguing that the method can be used and/or explained through a six-phase process which is as follows:

1. *Familiarising yourself with your data*

In this phase, it is important to immerse yourself in the data to the point where you are aware of the depth and breadth of the content. This, amongst others, includes reading and re-reading data and taking notes of initial ideas.

2. *Generating initial codes*

After the first phase, when being familiarised with the data, this phase then suggests coding relevant features within the data in a systematic way that allows us to collect data suitable to each code.

3. *Searching for themes*

Phase three within Braun and Clarke's six-phase process revolves around the search for themes and proposes that you collect and divide the codes as mentioned earlier into different themes and, hereafter, search for all relevant data relating to them.

4. *Reviewing themes*

In phase four, we reach the process of reviewing the different chosen themes, examining whether or not the themes correlate with the coded extracts and the overall dataset and hereby conduct a 'thematic map' of the analysis.

5. *Defining and naming themes*

In this phase, it is all about defining and naming the themes together with creating clear definitions for each of them.

6. *Producing the report*

The last and final phase concerns the actual writing of the analysis. Here, as mentioned above, the five phases contribute to the overall understanding of the findings collected along the way.

(Braun & Clarke 2006).

Despite appearing to be a linear process, Braun and Clarke (2006) argue that it is essential to understand that the six-phase process of thematic analysis is simply guidelines, not rules. Thus, they state that the process will need to be applied with the flexibility to fit whatever research question and data involved.

Regarding our thesis, the method of TA contributes to a broader understanding of how the COVID-19 pandemic is affecting consumer attitudes towards grocery shopping in the United Kingdom. The reason for this is because it provides the opportunity to depict if there are any prominent themes, agreements, disagreements etc., to be found within our empirical data. Furthermore, through various themes, we can perform a more manageable approach to our analysis, making the thesis more readable by adding a structure and contributing to a more thorough review of our findings concerning our topic.

Because we chose to conduct a survey to gather our empirical data, we had the opportunity to divide our questions for our respondents into different topics concerning the different aspects that we would like to shed light upon in this thesis. Thus, we find it suitable to use a thematic analysis method, which uses a similar approach, to preserve the common thread in terms of the overall framework of our thesis. Therefore, we argue that how we have chosen to structure our survey goes well with using the TA to structure our analysis. We believe it can illuminate qualitative features of our findings in the elaborating answers of our survey, for example, helping us detect different attitudes and behaviours in our respondents' answers.

Study No:  
20167436  
20164100

To summarise, the themes that we can create through the thematic analysis method can contribute to understanding the underlying factors of UK consumers' attitudes towards grocery shopping during COVID-19. Moreover, TA can help us achieve a broader understanding of the connection between the mindsets of our respondents and thus explain the basis for their actions/answers. Lastly, one more reason for choosing to utilise the thematic analysis method is because it correlates well with the scientific standpoint of constructivism. Through TA, we can depict the individual observers' thoughts of the social world and hereby put them into categories to create an image of how UK consumers are managing their grocery shopping during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### 3.5 Structure of Analysis

In the following section, we will present an overview of how we will structure our analysis. Furthermore, we will provide reasons as to why we chose this structure and how it enables us to answer our research question.

As previously mentioned, our thesis utilises a mixed-method research strategy, which enables us to conduct an analysis that conveys qualitative and quantitative results. Therefore, our analysis will be divided into two main parts that each has its own purpose. However, both contribute to illuminating how UK consumers' attitudes towards grocery shopping have changed due to COVID-19. Both parts of the analysis will be supplemented with external sources to acquire a greater insight into our research topic and to explain further why we find the attitudes and behaviours throughout our analysis. In the analysis, we will be using both authoritative and non-authoritative sources to emphasise examples, statements and conspicuous findings. These will be gathered through data search sites such as ResearchGate, Google Scholar and Google.

First and foremost, we will elaborate on the quantitative aspects seen in our survey, which can provide us with an overview of all the measurable factors such as age, gender, and residence segmentation. Moreover, it helps us uncover patterns in the quantitative data, for example, if we register a predominance of "yes" in a particular age group or if we, for instance, see an overload of "no" amongst men.

The second part of our analysis will then be focusing on the qualitative aspects. Our primary goal is to use our findings from our quantitative analysis and look further into the answers to the elaborating questions from our survey to depict and understand the underlying themes of the UK consumers' attitudes through our thematic analysis. The thematic analysis will be divided into the two most

Study No:  
20167436  
20164100

significant attitudes extracted from our data, and hereunder, each theme will be divided into sub-themes regarding different detected behaviours.

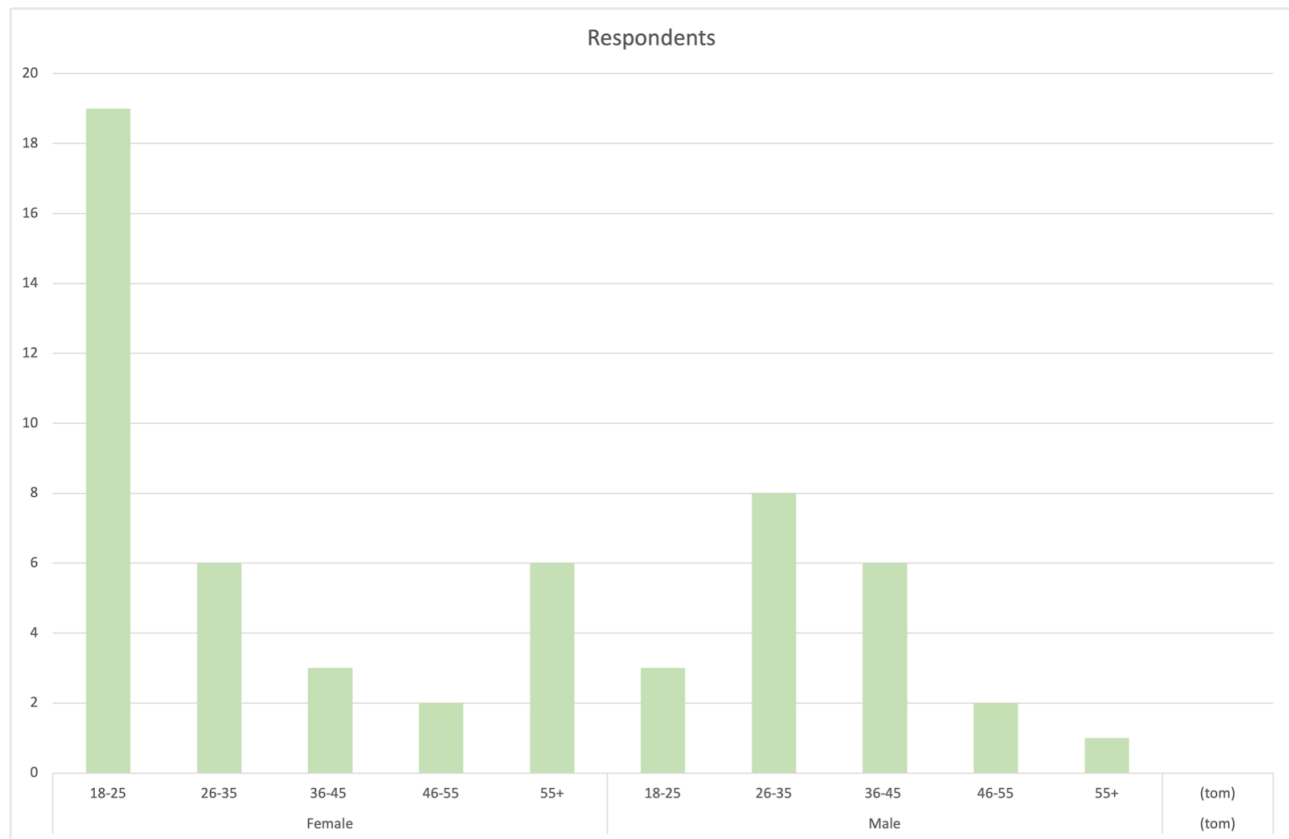
## 4.0 Analysis

In the following chapter, we are going to present our two-part analysis. First and foremost, we will go through the measurable results from our data set to provide an overview of the fundamental findings of our survey. On the basis of these findings, we will conduct a thematic analysis that includes the respondents' in-depth answers, which has been divided into two themes that we found to represent the most prominent attitudes of our respondents regarding grocery shopping during COVID-19.

### 4.1 Results

As shortly introduced, the first section of our analysis will present descriptive statistics of the most significant findings from our survey. This is done to provide a general introduction as well as an overview of our data for us to go more in-depth in the following thematic analysis. It is important to state that the thematic analysis will function as our main analysis in this thesis, and the following descriptive statistics will act as a supporting tool. We achieved 55 answers from UK consumers through our survey, which the following statistics are built on.

First and foremost, table 1 presents an overview of our respondents' different age groups and gender distribution. This is done to illuminate if all segments are equally represented or if we see any remarkable standouts.

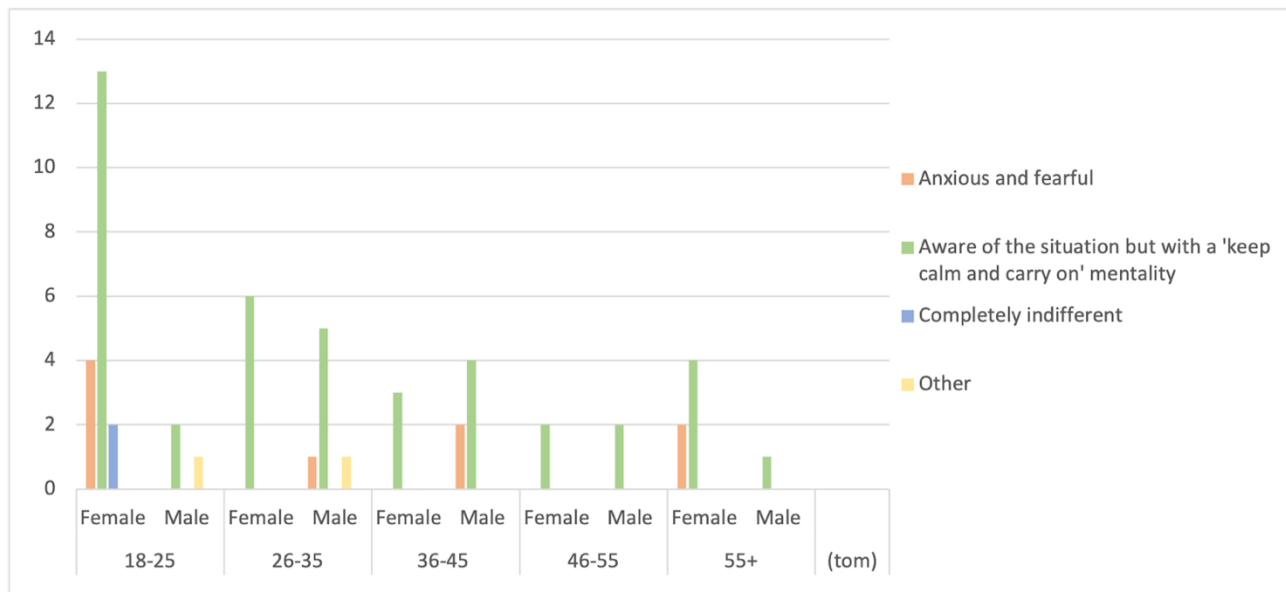


**Table 1:** Age and gender distribution of the respondents

**Source:** Own creation based on data set

As table 1 presents, we see that most of our respondents are females in the age group 18-25 years. As the survey has primarily been distributed to survey exchange groups on Facebook, it can be assumed that most of the receivers of our survey are students who belong to the respective age group. Moreover, most of the members of the survey exchange group were women, and we, therefore, anticipate that this is why we see the most representatives from this segment. However, the survey still represents respondents within all age groups and represents individuals of both genders. This we, as researchers, appreciate, as we can then understand attitudes from a broader perspective as we anticipate that the attitudes concerning COVID-19 in terms of grocery shopping might be different depending on age and gender.

The following table 2 presents statistics regarding our respondents' feelings toward the coronavirus. The question was created to gain insight into UK consumers' overall perception of the phenomenon and are as follows:

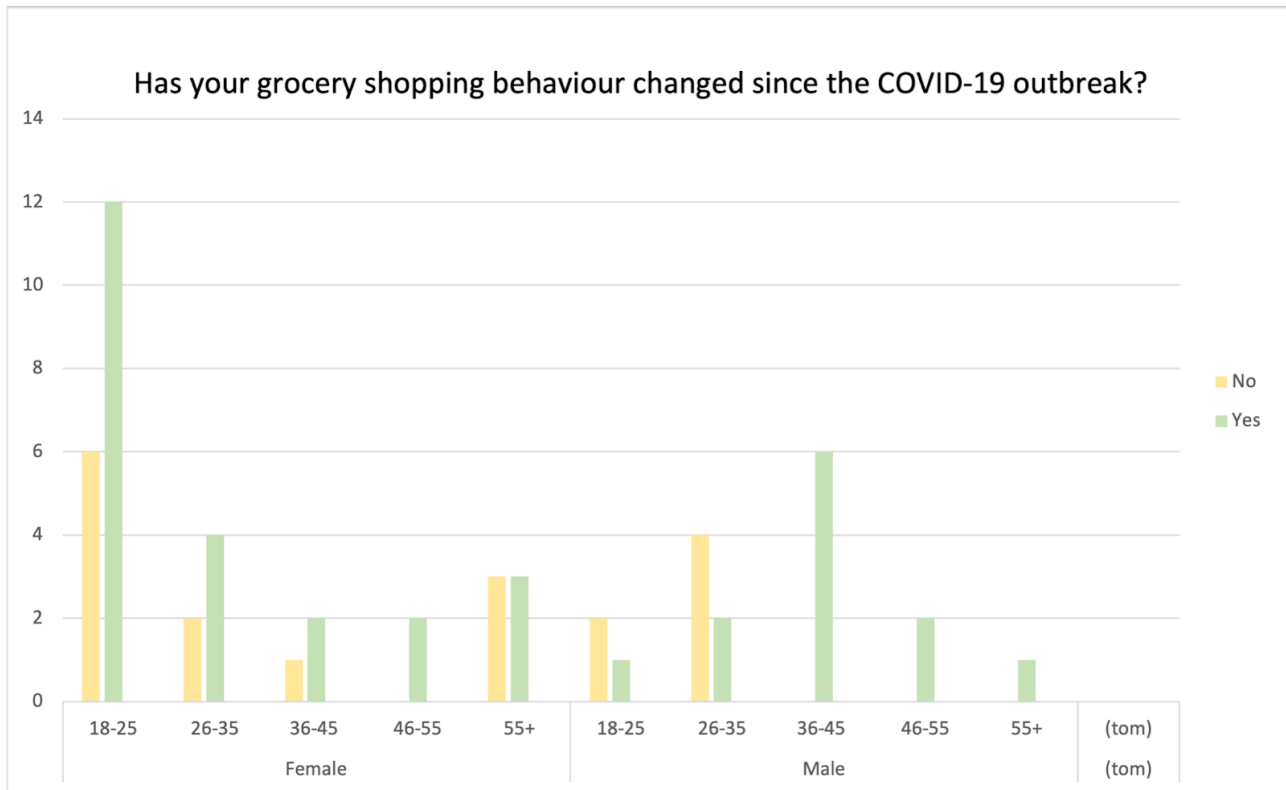


**Table 2:** Description of UK consumers' perception of COVID-19

**Source:** Own creation based on data set

Here, it is evident that a larger segment of our respondents answered that they are “aware of the situation but with a keep calm and carry on mentality”. This is distributed well between both genders in most of our respondents' age groups. However, the majority is young women aged 18-25. When looking into sources that have already touched upon how we cope with such a thing as a pandemic, this is a surprising finding. Namely, it is found that women are more anxious and have more negative thoughts towards COVID-19 than men (Liu et al. 2020). It can further be argued that these negative thoughts towards the pandemic should be highest among young adults because it is within this segment that individuals are engaging the most in social activities which, due to the coronavirus, have been forced to shut down or narrowed down to the absolute minimum (Taub 2021). Furthermore, as the pandemic has progressed, more and more studies state that young adults' mental health has been affected the most by the many lockdowns (Rideout 2021). Therefore, our findings are rather surprising as we expected more women and young adults to state that they felt anxious and fearful about the pandemic.

One of the primary interests for conducting this thesis was to gain an insight into whether or not consumers of the United Kingdom have made any significant changes to their grocery shopping behaviour due to COVID-19. To avoid biases and retrieve the most reliable answers, we put the simple question “Has your grocery shopping behaviour changed since the COVID-19 outbreak” at the beginning of our survey.



**Table 3:** Changes in UK consumers' grocery shopping behaviour

**Source:** Own creation based on data set

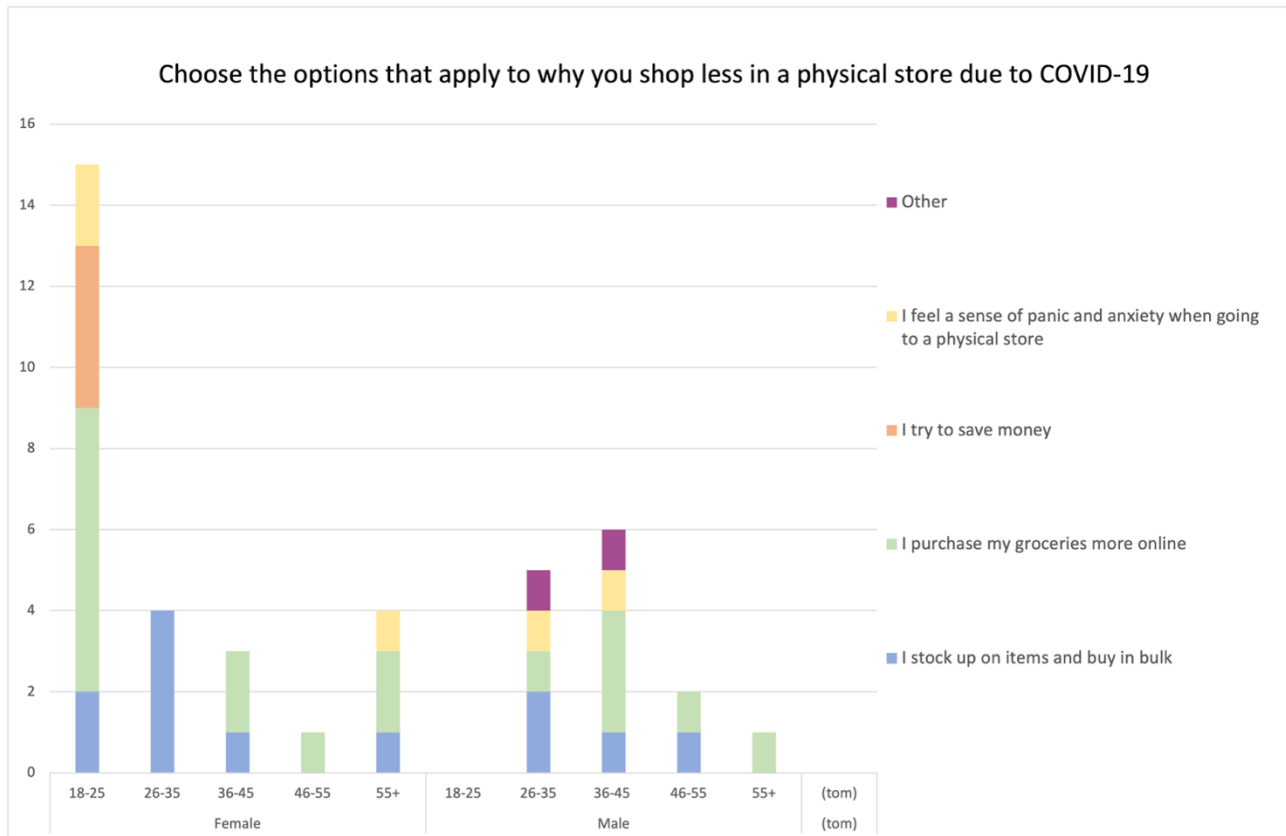
As table 3 presents, our respondents only had the possibility of answering 'yes' or 'no'. This was done based on our interest in asking all of those who answered yes to further elaborate on what changes had been made. Furthermore, by adding an open-ended question, our respondents had the possibility to elaborate on how their grocery shopping has changed since the COVID-19 outbreak with their own words instead of us providing them with possible reasons that could have pointed them in a particular direction. When analysing table 3, we find that more than half of our respondents did make a change to their grocery shopping behaviour. We believe this to be an interesting finding as we, in table 2, established that the majority of the respondents had a "keep calm and carry on" mentality. When considering this, one might argue that if you hold such a mentality, you are not likely to change your behaviour because of it. Despite this, 66% of our respondents answered "yes" to have made changes to their grocery shopping behaviour. We find this interesting as it indicates that our respondents hold different attitudes from the ones implied in table 2.

Based on the previous question regarding if the respondents had made any changes to their grocery shopping behaviour during COVID-19, we asked those who answered yes whether they buy their



Study No:  
20167436  
20164100

groceries in a physical store more or less. Here, more than 50% answered that they shop less at a physical store in the light of the pandemic, and we, therefore, asked them to choose between options that might apply to how and why that might be.



**Table 4:** Why UK consumers shop less at physical stores during the pandemic

**Source:** Own creation based on data set

Table 4 presents quite an interesting change in the respondents' grocery shopping habits during the COVID-19 pandemic, as 44% answered that they made the shift to purchase their groceries online. As seen in our literature review, a rise in online shopping has been detected during the pandemic, and the literature, therefore, correlates well with our findings in our survey. We do, however, find it interesting that the majority of our respondents earlier answered that they, in general, were calm about the situation, when we, within this table, see that most of them purchase their groceries online, which could indicate that there does, in fact, exist some feeling of fear and anxiousness related to grocery shopping in physical stores. However, as the responses regarding having a 'keep calm and carry on' mentality were retrieved through a question asking our respondents of their general perception of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is arguable that due to our desire of wanting to investigate their behaviour

Study No:  
20167436  
20164100

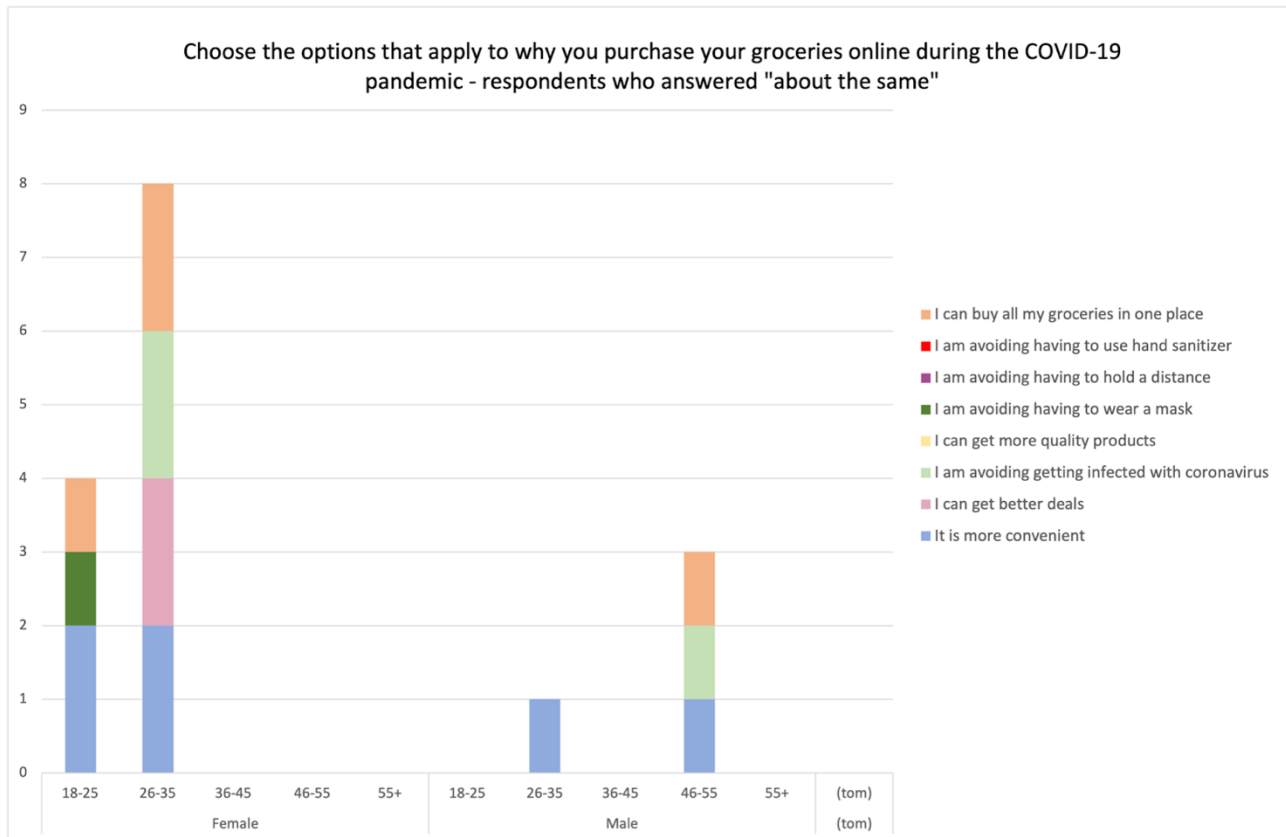
in terms of shopping for groceries, they are forced to reflect and elaborate on their attitudes and behaviour in that particular field. Thus, it is evident that our respondents might have a different view on their grocery shopping behaviour in terms of COVID-19 than the overall phenomenon itself.

The respondents who answered that they, in the light of the pandemic, were doing more online grocery shopping instead of going to a physical store and those who answered that they were doing about the same amount of online grocery shopping as before the pandemic were asked to choose between options that might be the reason hereof.



**Table 5:** Why UK consumers shop more online during the pandemic - more frequently.

**Source:** Own creation based on data set



**Table 6:** Why UK consumers shop more online during the pandemic - about the same

**Source:** Own creation based on data set

Table 5 and 6 presents a wide range of answers from our respondents. However, two of the answers, in particular, stand out. Namely, that it is more convenient to shop online during COVID-19 and that it reduces the risk of getting infected with the coronavirus. That the percentage of these two answers were the highest among all of the options does not come as a surprise to us, as it makes perfect sense that the respondents find it more convenient to purchase their groceries more online during a time where a trip to a physical store could mean getting infected with the coronavirus. This is also supported by what we found in our literature review. Here, we saw that some of the biggest consumer trends of 2021 were that consumers, namely, seek convenience. Following lockdowns, people realise that they have taken their 'normal' life for granted. Therefore, they want to return to the ease of it, which especially online shopping has provided them with during the pandemic. The literature, therefore, argued that consumers would continue to strive after this even post-COVID-19 (Silberstein 2021). Despite this, we still find it interesting that the percentage of convenience is higher than the percentage of avoiding getting infected with the coronavirus.

Study No:  
20167436  
20164100

Following this, we found that because the UK has been undergoing three lockdowns and people have been forced to work and study from home for almost the entirety of 2020, they have also been forced to manage many of their daily tasks from home and especially parents have experienced challenges with managing both remote working and taking care of their children (Franklin 2020). Therefore, based on this, one could argue that this also has made people realise the convenience of online grocery shopping.

Furthermore, we find it interesting that all female respondents in the age group 26-35 are solely represented in table 6, meaning that they have been familiar with online grocery shopping before the COVID-19 pandemic. Here, one can argue that this age group might represent mothers who, based on having a busy everyday life with children, already have gained insight into some of the benefits of buying groceries online. Also, this can be supported by the fact that the respective age group primarily answered that some of the most important reasons that apply to why they purchase their groceries only are due to the ability to buy all groceries at one place and get better deals. Thus, their reasons to purchase groceries online does not seem to be because of COVID-19.

For us to gain greater insight into our respondents' actual attitude towards online grocery shopping, we asked them if they will continue to buy groceries online once the COVID-19 pandemic has subsided or if they will go back to buying all of their groceries in physical stores.

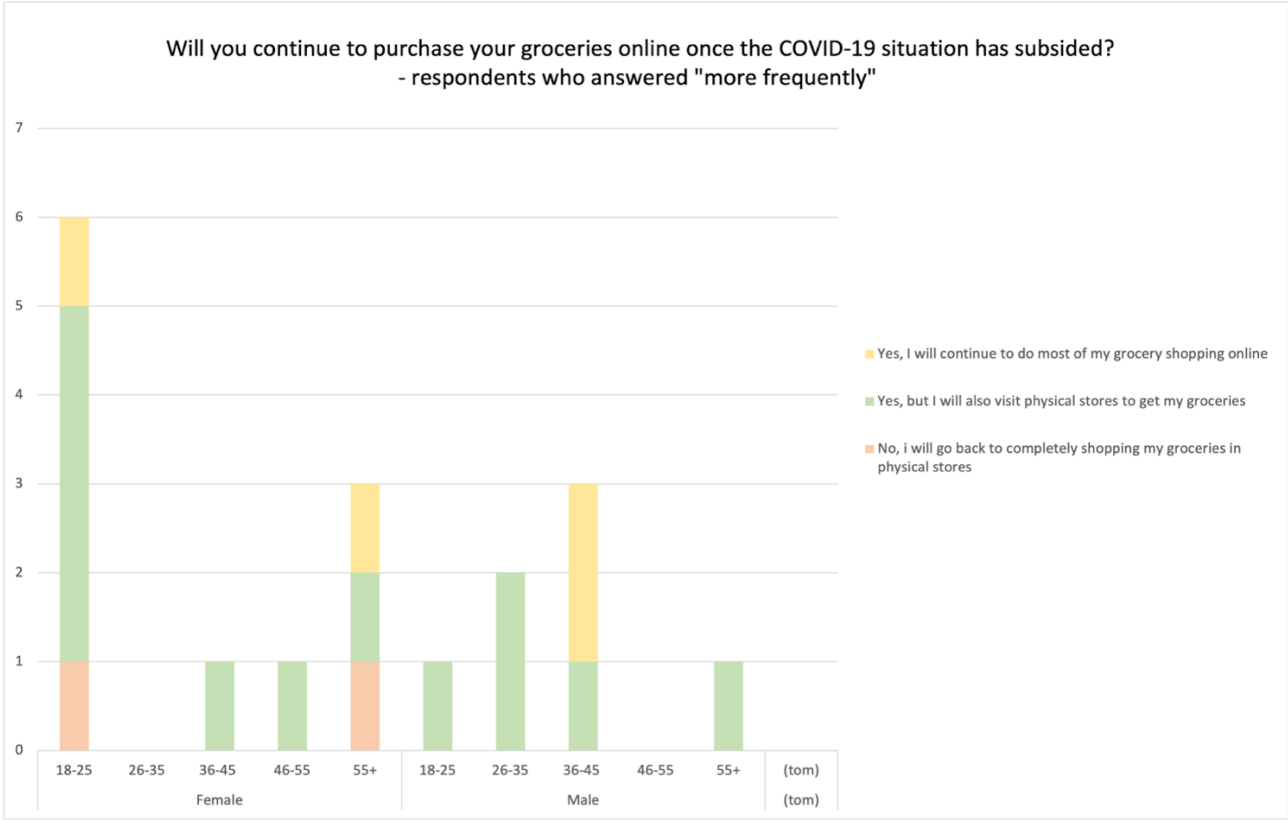
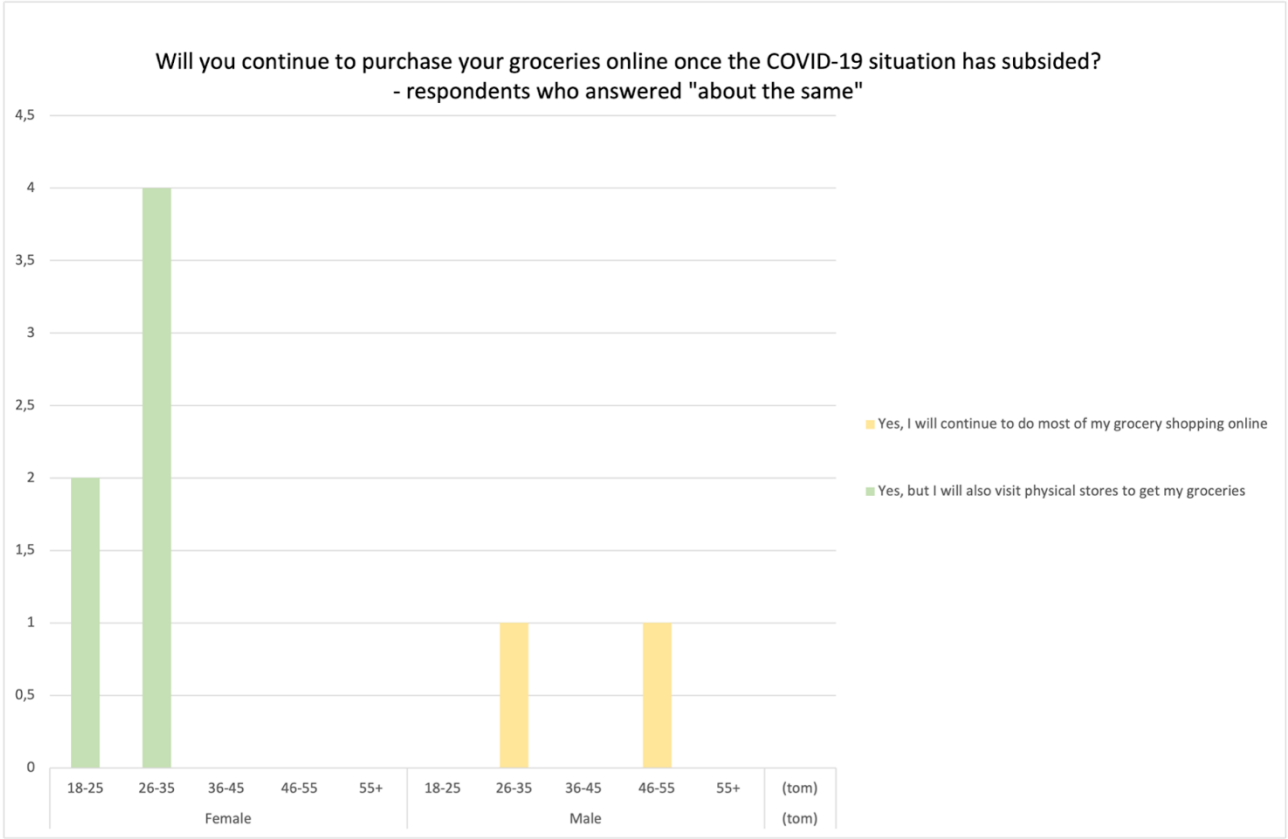


Table 7: Future grocery shopping - More frequently

Source: Own creation based on data set



**Table 8:** Future grocery shopping - about the same

**Source:** Own creation based on data set

Table 7 and 8 present that the majority of our respondents answered that they would return to physical stores and continue to purchase their groceries online. This shows us how the attitudes that our respondents had to the overall pandemic resulted in some changed behaviour. Also, as our respondents answered that they, in the future, will engage in both online and offline grocery shopping, it can be argued that they seem to believe that they will slowly return to their 'normal' behaviour once the COVID-19 has subsided.

#### 4.1.2 Sub Conclusion

Through our analysis of the descriptive statistics of our data, we obtained the knowledge that the largest represented group of the respondents of our survey were females in the age group 18-25. We argued that this could be due to how we chose to send out our survey, which primarily was distributed to survey groups on Facebook. Despite this, we saw representatives from all age groups and genders, which allowed us to discover UK consumers' grocery shopping behaviour from a broader perspective. Furthermore, the most significant finding in the descriptive statistics concerned how the majority of the respondents answered that they were carrying a "keep calm and carry on mentality" towards the COVID-19 pandemic. We argued that this was interesting, as we later found that more than half of the respondents answered that they had made a change in their grocery shopping behaviour because of the coronavirus outbreak. Namely, 50% of the respondents shop less at a physical store and 44% shop more online. Therefore, we concluded that our respondents had made significant changes to how they would typically manage their grocery shopping. Based on this knowledge, we argued that this could indicate that our respondents, in fact, do not have a calm mentality towards grocery shopping during the pandemic. Following this, some of the reasons for the different changes to our respondents' grocery shopping behaviour during the pandemic showed to be convenience and avoiding getting infected with the coronavirus. Furthermore, the results showed that convenience was weighted higher among the respondents than the risk of getting infected with the virus. We argued that the realisation of convenience in, for example, online grocery shopping could have something to do with the fact that the pandemic has made people open their eyes to how easy online shopping is as they have managed their everyday lives working from home. We, therefore, found that the majority of the respondents, after the COVID-19 pandemic has subsided, will continue to shop for groceries online.

However, the results also showed that the respondents would return to purchase groceries in physical stores and, with this, combine the two approaches to grocery shopping in the future.

## 4.2 Thematic Analysis

In the following chapter, we will carry out our thematic analysis. For us to provide an answer to our research question and uncover the attitudes that the respondents hold toward grocery shopping during the pandemic and how these have influenced their behaviour, it is relevant to investigate the different determinants of namely our respondents' attitudes toward the behaviour, their beliefs and whether these result in low or high perceived behavioural control. These elements will be analysed through two generated themes, which are chosen based on our most significant findings in the descriptive statistics and the more in-depth answers that were given in our survey. As we analyse our respondents' attitudes towards grocery shopping, the two themes are divided into the two most significant attitudes that our respondents hold. The two themes identified are:

1. Anxiety and uncertainty
2. Calm and indifferent

### 4.2.1 Analytical Model

Before we begin our thematic analysis, we will provide a presentation of our model of analysis in terms of presenting both the method for generating our selected themes and sub-themes and securing readability by going through why and how we use the concepts of TRA and TPB. We do this to give the reader of this thesis a better understanding and a fresh memory of how we have chosen to set up and execute the forthcoming chapter.

Through the thematic analysis method, we have been able to analyse and report patterns within our data, which we find the most interesting in regard to our research question. This was, amongst other factors, done via help from the six-phased process proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). This has helped us set up a framework that supplements our chosen TRA, TPB and ELM theories to best obtain a broader understanding of how the COVID-19 pandemic affects consumer attitudes towards grocery shopping in the United Kingdom. We find that the structure of our survey goes well with how we can use the method of thematic analysis to structure our analysis, and as already established, we found two major themes which portray two different attitudes. Thus, we find it relevant to examine this in

Study No:  
20167436  
20164100

more detail to gain further insight into why our survey respondents hold different perceptions of the same phenomenon and how these perceptions result in different behaviours.

Each theme will be analysed individually yet provide us with an all-together understanding of how our respondents' attitudes towards grocery shopping during the pandemic has led to a behavioural change. To ensure the readability of our analysis, each theme will be divided into sub-themes. These sub-themes are generated based on different groups or segments of our respondents, which means that the analysis of each theme will go through the most significantly detected attitudes and behaviours of our respondents and analyse each segment individually to better understand which attitudes led to the behaviour in question. The Theory of Reasoned Action and Theory of Planned Behaviour will be used as the driving theories for the following thematic analysis, with the focal point being attitudes in relation to behaviour. Both theories were developed to understand attitudes in order to predict behaviour. However, in our thematic analysis, the behaviour has already been detected. Therefore, we are not interested in predicting our respondents' behaviour but more interested in discovering the basis for their decisions in relation to their grocery shopping behaviour during the pandemic. The behaviour examined in our thematic analysis is our respondents' decision to visit a physical grocery store during the pandemic or not.

The thematic analysis will be made up of the different concepts that TRA and TPB are built on. These concepts will be applied to our collected data in the form of our respondents' elaborating answers from our survey. Each theme and sub-themes will bring forward the in-depth answers that are most interesting for the further analysis of the respective segment's attitudes. First and foremost, each theme will begin with observing the respondents of the respective theme's general behavioural beliefs. An individual's behavioural beliefs derive from their deliberation concerning if a behaviour provides them with a negative or positive outcome. Therefore, when we have determined our respondents' behavioural beliefs, we can detect their attitude toward the behaviour, which shows us whether or not our respondents have detected any risks with carrying out the behaviour of visiting a physical grocery store during the pandemic. If they feel and believe that visiting a physical grocery store during the pandemic is acceptable and does not propose any risk to themselves or the people around them, they will most likely hold a positive attitude. However, if they find that they are running a risk by visiting a physical grocery store, they will have a somewhat negative attitude toward the behaviour. Throughout our thematic analysis, we will continue to analyse each segment's behavioural



intention, which measures if a respondent is likely to visit a physical grocery store or not. As the different segments of respondents represent different behaviours, the sub-themes will also represent different levels of intention. We do this to investigate if the level of intention impacts our respondents' final COVID-19 grocery shopping decision. When adding TPB to the question, our thematic analysis will, moreover, look into if our respondents believe that they carry the necessary skills and abilities to visit a physical grocery store during the pandemic, as this is something that might eliminate the behaviour even though we detect a strong intention in our respondents. The question of control is of significant interest to us in this matter as we, in our statistical analysis, found that during this time of crisis, our respondents seem to believe that they have a calm attitude toward the pandemic in general. However, the behaviour detected showed something else. Therefore, throughout the thematic analysis, we will look into our respondents' ability to control their performance during a physical grocery trip to investigate if it is a concept that changes their attitude or behaviour.

In the following section, we will commence our thematic analysis. Thus, the first section will be elaborating and examining the first major theme found within our data.

#### 4.2.2 Anxiety and Uncertainty

The first major theme of the analysis concerns how UK consumers, in general, have been dealing with their feelings in terms of managing their grocery shopping during the COVID-19 pandemic. The theme is generated based on our interesting findings regarding the discrepancy between our respondents' attitudes and actions. This discrepancy is of significant interest to us, as it shows a major theme of our respondents, implying how they have a calm mentality towards the pandemic in general. However, their changed grocery shopping behaviour shows us something else. Namely, most of our respondents' behaviour revealed implications of a somewhat more anxious and uncertain attitude, thus why we choose to call this theme "Anxiety and uncertainty". We determine that this is the attitude that most of our respondents hold as they expressed that the pandemic had made them make significant changes to their grocery shopping patterns.

Within this theme of the respondents being anxious and uncertain, we detect that this attitude has led to different behaviours. Therefore, the theme will be divided into four sub-themes to illuminate the various behaviours best.

Study No:  
20167436  
20164100

First and foremost, we will look into our respondents' general behavioural beliefs, which guide their attitude toward the behaviour. 33 of our respondents provided us with an elaboration on how their grocery shopping behaviour has changed due to COVID-19. Here, we find that a significant amount states that they have changed their grocery shopping pattern from visiting a physical store several times a week to only once a week or are relying entirely on online grocery deliveries. From a wide range of answers, a small extract is:

1. *"I only go to Tesco one time a week, I have 3 children and would usually have to go a few times, but i buy more at once now"*<sup>1</sup>
2. *"Whilst still shopping in store at the beginning we would buy more to last us longer, to minimise the number of trips, aiming for between 10-14 days. We have now moved to click and collect again trying to increase the time between each order. If we run out of anything then we pop to the local corner shop."*
3. *"I get enough for a few days, so I don't have to keep going to the shops willy-nilly."*
4. *"well i limit the amount of time & visits for food shopping generally once a week maybe twice And use online for gifts and essential shopping eg clothing and household products that need replacing"*
5. *"I do some online or try to ensure I only have to do one weekly shop, rather than popping out more often"*

(Appendix 2.7)

---

<sup>1</sup> To preserve originality as well as truth, all quotes within this thesis are presented verbatim. Thus, spelling and typing errors may occur.

Study No:  
20167436  
20164100

Because of the fact that the above listed respondents have changed their grocery shopping behaviour, we can detect that the respondents have determined that the behaviour of going to a physical store often during the pandemic has consequences, meaning that they perceive physical grocery shopping as a risk. Therefore, we can also anticipate that their behavioural beliefs are negative, thus why it impacts their attitude toward the behaviour as well. Through all of these answers about the detected changed behaviour, we are, therefore, also able to predict our respondents' behavioural intention. With this theme, it is rather difficult to determine if their intention to visit a physical store is low or strong because we see that the majority of our respondents continue to engage in physical grocery shopping, however, they have limited it to a weekly trip. Therefore, we have actually found that, despite the fact that the respondents who are anxious and uncertain all hold a negative attitude toward grocery shopping at a physical store during the pandemic, we can detect different levels of their behavioural intention. For example, we see our first sub-theme in **the respondents that have a strong intention to still visit a physical grocery store once a week**. This specific segment has such a strong behavioural intention to continue visiting a physical store even though they have determined that it proposes a risk. Therefore, this segment is a good example of how a strong intention can cause and measure a huge behavioural change.

Furthermore, in section 2.3.1, we learned that the theory of planned behaviour states that to determine a person's perceived behavioural control it is necessary to analyse both if the person has the necessary skills to perform the behaviour as well as have full control over the behavioural performance. Within this sub-theme, we can bring forward the responses number *one*, *fourth* and *fifth* from above together with the following response:

*"My expenditure is restricted to essential things only because I can't see or scroll the things as i can in the store. So i have to prepare a list of items required and stick to that list. Sometimes i miss a few items or i am not aware of new prodcuts or offer so i postpone buying them. However, pre-covid ill visit the store and buy what i see now its buy what I need."* (Appendix 2.7).

In these examples, we can determine that the respondents within this sub-theme, in fact, have a strong intention to carry out the behaviour of physical grocery shopping as they are still doing it once a week. Therefore, we argue that because the respondents appear to have put a decent amount of thought into their weekly trip to a physical grocery store, they seem to have full control over their behavioural

performance. For example, the statement listed above shows us a respondent that puts time and effort into preparing a list of items that he/she needs to buy for his/her groceries to last a week. Moreover, we argue that because the respondent states that he/she sometimes misses items and offers, causing him/her to postpone buying them, it could indicate that the respondent is very goal-oriented during the grocery trip. Meaning, that the respondent is not wasting any time looking at unnecessary grocery items as this would mean losing the control that the person needs to hold to carry out the behaviour. We also see that almost 40% of our respondents answered that they, in light of the pandemic, are stocking up on items and buying in bulk (Appendix 2.9). This comes to show that our respondents have found this method of grocery shopping necessary to maintain control and, thereby, avoid the feeling of anxiety and uncertainty in regard to managing such daily tasks. After identifying a segment of respondents who are capable of maintaining control of their behavioural performance during the COVID-19 pandemic, we also have been able to detect a second sub-theme that represents a segment of **respondents who might not have the same ability to hold full control over their behavioural performance** even though they have the same strong intention to keep visiting a physical grocery store as the first segment. Here, we can bring forward the following examples:

1. *“Frustrated with members of the British public who can’t follow basic social distancing rules in places like supermarkets or retail stores. I also now feel uncomfortable getting to close to strangers in these places.”*

(Appendix 2.5)

2. *“Previously me and my girlfriend went together, now only one of us goes per week as this was a rule of most supermarkets. As per my previous response this seems to be a rule most people don’t follow, some now view doing the weekly shop as a family day out.”*
3. *“I am more cautious when shopping. Not walking too close and wear the masks. Not going to crowded places and shopping in the evening, when people are at home.”*

4. *“just more aware of keeping my space.”*

(Appendix 2.7)

5. *“I don’t want to keep coming into contact with people and physical items”*

(Appendix 1.10)

Despite the fact that it might seem like these respondents have control over their behavioural performance as they, like the other segment, have considered and mapped out their grocery shopping trips, we argue that these seem to be respondents that are more likely to be affected by external factors such as if too many people from the same household go grocery shopping together, if people do not follow the rules or if the shops are too busy. Namely, the theory suggests that environmental and personal factors might hinder the person’s attempt to carry out the behaviour. For example, this is what we see happening in the second response provided above. Here, one could argue that the respondent does not hold full control over his/her own grocery shopping experience, as he/she gets affected by other customers and their actions. Thus, it is arguable that the respondent gets annoyed with others' behaviour that is not similar to his/hers and, therefore, the respondent might experience a feeling of not being able to carry out the behaviour as he/she intended it. Furthermore, as the last response from above proposes, the respondent fears visiting physical grocery stores as it increases the risk of getting infected with the coronavirus. This is evident, as the respondent states that he/she does not want to keep coming into contact with other individuals as well as physical items. This might result in our respondent capturing a low perceived behavioural control, as it is arguable that the other individuals surrounding him/her in physical stores appears more as an obstacle rather than providing the respondent with a safe environment. This might make him/her reconsider carrying out the weekly grocery trip as he/she might have lost the ability to do it on his/her terms. Moreover, the anxiousness and uncertainty that we detected in our respondents from our first sub-theme appear to be somewhat different from the respondents within this sub-theme. As the first sub-theme suggests, the respondents express a general fear of the coronavirus and, therefore, they have created a tailor-made plan for them to stay in control and, therefore, minimise the feeling of being anxious and fearful. However, as we see in the second sub-theme, the respondents are highly affected by external factors such as other

Study No:  
20167436  
20164100

individuals' ability to follow the rules and restrictions given by the government, which, therefore, causes them to feel anxious and fearful based on other people's actions and not solely the virus itself.

When scrolling through the answers in our survey, we found our third sub-theme as we noticed that some respondents were **concerned about the health of family members or the general elderly population**. One said, "I live on a small Scottish island and have reduced my trips to the shop in order to reduce contact with the elderly population here (...)" (Appendix 2.7). Another one said, "I try to minimise the amount I go to a physical store where possible. Now I am living with my parents I only shop online as not to risk the health and safety" (Appendix 2.10). As with every other segment of our respondents so far, these respondents also have negative beliefs about carrying out the behaviour of going to a physical grocery store. However, these respondents do not believe that the behaviour has consequences for themselves but for people close to them. Thus, they still produce a vague behavioural intention as they see no point in taking the risk of visiting a physical store if it means getting exposed to the coronavirus and thereby, also the possibility of them infecting an elderly. Therefore, their intention to visit a physical store is very low, meaning that they will most likely not do it during the pandemic. To us, this is interesting as this might be the respondents' perception of social normative pressures; that you should look out for the elderly and vulnerable in a time of crisis. It is not surprising that these social pressures exist as there, in the UK, have been several discussions regarding the effect that the lockdowns might impose on the elderly population's mental health – making them feel lonely and cut off from the outside world (Gallagher 2020). Here, people have expressed their concerns, and it has then become a topic of conversation that during the COVID-19 pandemic, we must look out for our family and the elderly around us (Gallagher 2020). Therefore, it is arguable that the respondents that expressed this concern have been influenced by social norms, and the anxiety and uncertainty that these respondents feel is not focused on their own wellbeing but instead the fear of losing a loved one. This shows us that there exists a lot of reasons for an individual to change his/her behaviour, and it is not always the individual's own motivation and intentions that lay the foundation for the actual behavioural intention.

The fourth and, hereby, last sub-theme we have been able to detect within the first major theme for this analysis concerns those respondents who answered that they, during COVID-19, **are fully committed to purchasing their groceries online**. Once again, we argue that this segment of respondents has negative beliefs about carrying out the behaviour of going to a physical grocery store. Here, it

can be discussed that all of the aforementioned scenarios concerning external factors, the risk of getting infected with the virus and the fear of transmitting the virus to family members and the elderly population all contribute to our respondents having an utmost strong behavioural intention of not wanting to visit a physical grocery store. To provide examples, one of our respondents said, “I now have home delivery and shop online,” and another respondent said, “We moved fully to home delivery and COVID safe click and collect” (Appendix 1.7). This segment of respondents is different from the other segments. Despite the fact that they all see consequences in visiting a physical grocery store during the pandemic, this segment has such strong feelings of anxiety and uncertainty that they have completely chosen to turn their everyday life upside down and from that made a huge behavioural change. From our theory section 2.3.1, we learned that to be able to predict a person’s attitude toward a certain behaviour, you must know the individual’s behavioural beliefs, normative beliefs and perceived behavioural control. With this segment, we are in possession of just that. We already established that they have a negative attitude toward the behaviour, their normative beliefs could be argued to stem from avoiding transmitting the virus to elderly family members, and their perceived behavioural control is said to be low, as if this segment visited a physical grocery store during the pandemic, they would have no control over how the experience played out. Meaning that the low perceived behavioural control is determined as it seems that this segment, during a physical grocery trip, would be so influenced by different external factors such as a busy shop or other customers not following the rules, that they have decided that engaging in this behaviour would not provide them with a positive outcome. Therefore, they have chosen to fully convert to online grocery shopping. Thus, why their behaviour can be argued to be somewhat more extreme than the other segments.

To summarise, the most prominent finding within the first theme of our thematic analysis concerns the general change in our respondents’ intention to their actual behaviours. Through the theory applied to our data, we see that despite our respondent’s answers leaning towards being calm and having a ‘carry on’ mentality, they are, in fact, more anxious and uncertain in regard to the COVID-19 pandemic when it comes to grocery shopping at physical stores. It can be discussed whether our respondents are aware that they are contradicting themselves in relation to their responses in the survey and, therefore, we find this interesting as it could, furthermore, indicate that they are in denial in terms of feeling insecure about the pandemic. This shows us that one can easily have a strong attitude and an intention directed at something yet, if you peel off the outer layers, you risk finding that the attitude is, in fact, not what you first believed it to be. Therefore, we also argue that there lies a lot of different

opinions and reasons behind an attitude and determining someone's attitude and intention might, in some cases, not be a good predictor of behaviour. However, despite this, what is especially interesting here is that there, in fact, lies many considerations and reflections behind the decisions that our respondents have made. Thus, even though their general perception of COVID-19 is 'calm', this is proof of the fact that when our respondents have been faced with the particular behaviour; going to a physical grocery store during the pandemic, they have been forced to evaluate and question that exact action. We, therefore, argue that this is, in fact, why they hold an anxious and uncertain attitude towards going to a physical grocery store and not to the general pandemic itself.

#### 4.2.3 Calm and Indifferent

The second major theme of the analysis concerns those of the respondents' answers who, in one way or another, stood out from the rest of the answers of the survey, which were presented within the first major theme regarding anxiety and uncertainty. The theme is generated based on our interest in investigating the attitudes that underlie their actions together with the interest in providing a comparison between theme number one concerning anxiety and uncertainty amongst the respondents. Moreover, we find this theme to be of significant interest to us as the respondents representing this theme is clearly outnumbered by the remaining respondents of our survey. As with theme number one, this theme also illuminates the respondents' grocery shopping patterns in regard to the coronavirus outbreak. However, instead of depicting uncertainties directed at the dangers of grocery shopping in physical stores, we see a somewhat different approach among this segment of respondents, which are going to be analysed in the following section.

We have chosen to call this theme "Calm and indifferent" as this segment of our respondents expressed that they, in general, are carrying a somewhat neutral attitude towards the coronavirus outbreak. This theme will be divided into two sub-themes to best explain what behaviours the neutral attitude has influenced.

First and foremost, as with the first major theme, we will look into these respondents' general behavioural beliefs. Out of the 33 respondents who elaborated on how their grocery shopping behaviour has changed due to COVID-19, a small yet interesting portion of our respondents stated that they, in fact, have been shopping more at physical grocery stores than they did pre-COVID-19, and others



Study No:  
20167436  
20164100

indicate that the pandemic has not had that big of an impact on them and their behaviour, thus why they resort to humour and lack of commitment when answering our question. Some examples are:

1. *“I go more regularly because it’s one of the few things we have been allowed to do since the lockdowns”.*
2. *“I do a lot of shopping because it’s the only reason to go out/the only place to go to. I go about once a week and look forward to it. Most people follow the Covid regulations when shopping.”*
3. *“I’ve been buying more wine!”*
4. *“More takeaways”*

(Appendix 2.7)

Due to the fact that the statements listed above show that the respondents have made rather abnormal changes to their grocery shopping behaviour, it can be argued that they hold a rather different attitude toward the behaviour of going to a physical store to do their groceries during the pandemic than the majority of our respondents. As some of the respondents state that they have been going to physical stores more often than before the pandemic, we can argue that their behavioural beliefs are positive. We argue this because they seem to have determined that a physical grocery trip during the pandemic would provide them with some positivity in an otherwise abnormal and somewhat boring everyday life, where, for instance, social activities that one would normally engage in, have been shut down. This is also based on the fact that it seems that these respondents use grocery shopping as their way of coping with the lockdowns. Thus, these respondents do not seem to find any consequences in visiting a physical grocery store during the pandemic, and their behaviour is, therefore, quite out of the ordinary – at least in terms of what we have found in our survey. Despite the fact that we argue

that these respondents all have a positive attitude toward the behaviour, it seems as if there still exists a deviation in their behavioural beliefs. For example, we detect that the first sub-theme concerns **the respondents who visit physical grocery stores more often during the COVID-19 pandemic**. Here, we can take the examples of number one and two from the statements listed above. Because the respondents in both statements mention that they visit physical stores more often because it is one of the few things that you are actually allowed to do during the pandemic, it shows us that the respondents might feel lonely and bored during lockdown, hence going to physical grocery stores helps them cope with the negativity of the pandemic. However, we find it interesting how the respondent in statement two stresses that “(...) Most people follow the Covid regulations when shopping” (Appendix 1.7). This shows us that even though the respondent feels indifferent about physical grocery shopping during the pandemic, he/she is still affected by external factors that might influence his/her perceived behavioural control as the individual seems to measure his intention to shop at a physical store based on whether or not other people comply with the rules and regulations. Therefore, we argue that, despite this person having what we labelled as a calm and indifferent attitude towards grocery shopping during the pandemic, it is evident that the COVID-19 pandemic has, in fact, imposed a significant change in how we manage daily tasks such as grocery shopping. Because of the fact that this respondent is considering external factors, such as how other people follow the COVID-19 regulations, it shows us that the pandemic has also caused him/her to make a change in behaviour. Here, we just found that he/she shops more often than he/she used to, but if the individual believed that people did not follow the rules, his/her attitude would quite possibly lean more towards being anxious and uncertain because he/she would then lose the control he/she holds over the ability to carry out a physical grocery trip on his/her terms.

At the other end of the spectrum, we find a second sub-theme concerning the respondents **who resort to humour when trying to answer how the pandemic has changed their grocery shopping behaviour**. Here, one can argue that those who answered our survey with a sense of sarcasm and humour might use it as a coping mechanism to not become overwhelmed by the many risks that come with COVID-19. In that way, they might persuade themselves not to be afraid of what everyone else is showing their insecurities towards. Several studies show that humour has the ability to reduce fear and anxiety and, in that sense, keep the spirit up during times of crisis (Gordon 2020). However, one might also argue that these respondents have, in fact, not even considered the behaviour in question. For us to analyse their behavioural beliefs, we need evidence that they have considered if a trip to a

Study No:  
20167436  
20164100

physical store during the pandemic will provide them with a positive or negative outcome. For example, if we look at the respondent saying, “I’ve been buying more wine” (Appendix 2.7), it is evident that he/she has not given much thought to all the other consequences we have seen considered by the majority of our respondents. Therefore, it is difficult for us to determine this respondent's behavioural intention as it does not seem as if this respondent has made any changes because of the pandemic and the associated dilemmas. Despite this, we do argue that this respondent, as well as the person buying more takeaway, has made changes to their grocery shopping behaviour. The pandemic might not have had an effect on if the person buying more wine intended to visit a physical grocery store or not, but it has had some kind of effect on his/her grocery shopping patterns. Buying more takeaway and wine during a pandemic might indicate that these respondents, despite the fact that they feel indifferent and calm about the whole situation, have had a bigger need for self-care and self-pity as the lockdowns might have imposed a greater impact on their behaviour than they think. In times of crisis, things such as alcohol and junk food being delivered right to your door have the ability to contribute to ‘short-term happiness’ or to simply add a ray of comfort in a somewhat abnormal everyday life (Bakaloudi et al. 2021).

The reason for including the respondent saying, “More takeaways” (Appendix 2.7) was to underline the difference between this respondent and the ones from our first theme of anxiousness and uncertainty. Unlike the respondents from theme one, this respondent seems to have a very low perceived behavioural control. We base this on the fact that he/she does not seem to even bother with the weekly trip to a physical grocery store. This might mean that the respondent has determined that either personal or environmental factors could possibly hinder his/her attempt to carry out the behaviour of a pleasant trip to the store. Therefore, this respondent has no control over the situation, and the intention to even try is, therefore, non-existent. Thus, why it is much easier to sit back and have takeaway delivered to the door. Furthermore, studies show that the lockdowns are, in fact, making us feel exhausted, tired, depressed and sad as we have been forced to spend more time at home (Smith 2020). Therefore, some people might have no motivation to live an everyday life as they would do before the coronavirus outbreak.

### 4.3 The Elaboration Likelihood Model

On the basis of our thematic analysis, the following chapter will analyse the underlying thought processes of our respondents’ attitudes and behaviours through the Elaboration Likelihood Model. The

Study No:  
20167436  
20164100

analysis is going to illuminate the cognitive processes we see in our two major themes, “Anxiety and uncertainty” and “Calm and indifferent”, in order to investigate which route to persuasion the respondents under each theme has undergone.

As established in section 2.3.2, The Elaboration Likelihood Model states that there exist two routes to how people process a message or communication. As the case presented in this thesis concerns grocery shopping during the COVID-19 pandemic, we work from the standpoint that the respondents have been exposed to the message of the new restrictions and rules in UK supermarkets. Therefore, this analysis will be based on the respondents’ thoughts in terms of processing this information.

As the theory suggests, the first step to analyse how an individual processes a message is to look into whether or not they have the motivation and ability to do so. Here, the theory argues that individuals are high in involvement when they perceive an issue as personally relevant, however, they are low in involvement when they believe that an issue has little or no impact on their personal lives. Therefore, if we look into the first theme of the thematic analysis, one can discuss that the respondents that are anxious and uncertain hold high involvement together with the ability to process information that, hereby, makes them capable of influencing action based on the processed information. Thus, we argue that the respondents of the respective theme are taking the central route to persuasion in terms of processing information regarding the restrictions that the pandemic has brought with it. This is evident, as they have made choices on the basis of the message they have received. Here, we, for example, saw that some of the respondents had made the choice to only visit physical grocery stores once a week, and others chose to more or less purchase their groceries fully online. Based on this, we argue that these respondents had determined that the new restrictions would have a huge impact on their personal lives as most of these decisions were made to avoid getting infected with the coronavirus. Therefore, they are also more likely to engage in more issue-relevant thinking concerning the different arguments for and against, for example, grocery shopping in physical stores during the pandemic. The theory suggests that if you are highly involved, you would also start digging for more information on the issue. However, with the case of the respondents being anxious and uncertain, we argue that they have probably not looked into if, for instance, social distancing is a good measure against getting infected with the coronavirus. The reason that we still argue that they have taken the more central route to persuasion is, however, because we still find that they have had a systematic way of thinking. These respondents were determined to make a decision based on the message they have received and,

therefore, they have considered the information presented to them by the government, looking for the best possible way to still find it 'okay' to visit a physical grocery store. We mentioned in the thematic analysis that the majority of the respondents under the theme "Anxiety and uncertainty" had full control over their behavioural performance. This is also something that indicates that they have undergone a central process as it shows us that the respondents have really thought the decision through to the point where they, again, are in control.

However, if we look into the second theme of the thematic analysis, one can argue that the respondents that are calm and indifferent hold low involvement as there does not seem to be many personal or external factors that have influenced them in their daily actions in relation to shopping for groceries in physical stores. Thus, we argue that the respondents of the respective theme are taking the peripheral route to persuasion in regard to processing information about the restrictions caused by the pandemic. To support our findings, we can draw examples from the thematic analysis where we, for instance, saw that some of the respondents were visiting physical grocery stores more often as it is one of the few things that are still allowed during lockdown. On the basis of this, we, therefore, claim that these respondents may not have considered how or if the restrictions and risks that come with the coronavirus would have an impact on their personal lives. Thus, they are not likely to engage in issue-relevant thinking in regard to grocery shopping in physical stores during COVID-19. Moreover, we find it interesting how these respondents also were the respondents that provided us with the least elaborating data and the shortest answers. We find this to be another indicator of their peripheral processing as if they had thought about arguments for and against physical grocery shopping during the pandemic, we anticipate that they would have let us know their thoughts and their reasons for making these decisions. They ticked "yes" when asked if their grocery shopping behaviour had changed due to COVID-19, however, the elaborating answers such as "I've been buying more wine" shows us that they, in fact, have not made that major changes and because they answered our survey with an attitude that is neutral and somewhat frivolous, it shows us how these respondents rely on mental shortcuts and peripheral cues trusting individuals with high credibility such as the British government.

#### 4.4 Sub Conclusion

In the thematic analysis, we, first and foremost, established that we had found two distinctive themes that best describe the attitudes UK consumers hold towards grocery shopping during the COVID-19

Study No:  
20167436  
20164100

pandemic. The first theme we looked into concerned an attitude of anxiety and uncertainty and showed us that the respondents within this theme, in general, hold a negative attitude toward the behaviour of going to a physical store to purchase groceries. Furthermore, through their answers, we found it hard to determine the overall segments' behavioural intention, however, through our four sub-themes, we could determine that there were, in fact, different levels of behavioural intention among the respondents which, among others, were seen in their decisions regarding grocery shopping during the pandemic. The first sub-theme we generated concerned the respondents who hold a strong intention to only visit physical groceries stores once a week. Here, we concluded that this segment was a good example of how a strong intention can cause behavioural change as we saw that they, despite feeling risks of grocery shopping at a physical store, still continue to do so, but through a fully controlled behavioural performance which is evident in their very goal-oriented behaviour. Sub-theme number two represented respondents who we determined did not have the same ability to hold full control over their behavioural performance. Here, we concluded that these respondents' behaviour was more likely to be affected by external factors. Our generated third sub-theme revolved around respondents who were concerned about the health of others. We argued that these respondents' attitudes had been influenced by social normative pressures and, therefore, changed their behaviour accordingly. The fourth and last sub-theme were generated through the respondents that were fully committed to online grocery shopping. We found that this segment was different from the others as these carry such a strong attitude of anxiety and uncertainty that they made a huge behavioural change because of it. Moreover, we concluded that these respondents were the segment that seemed to be influenced by a lot of different factors, thus why we argued that their change in behaviour was more extreme than the others.

The second major theme that we generated revolved around respondents who showed us a calmer and more indifferent attitude towards grocery shopping during the pandemic than the respondents within the first theme. Within this theme, we were able to draw comparatives from theme number one by showing a group of respondents who were carrying a somewhat neutral attitude towards the coronavirus and grocery shopping. Therefore, we determined that these respondents had a more positive attitude towards the behaviour of visiting a physical grocery store. Here, we also generated two sub-themes that represented the respondents' behaviours. The first sub-theme revolved around respondents who were visiting physical grocery stores more often. We argued that the reason for this could be because of boredom and loneliness, but we, furthermore, also found it interesting how external

factors such as other customers' ability to follow the COVID-regulations were important to these respondents. The second sub-theme concerned respondents who showed a sense of humour and sarcasm in regard to the pandemic. Here, we argued that the respondents might use it as a coping mechanism to reduce fear and anxiety. However, we also argued that their way of expressing themselves could be due to the lack of consideration. Lastly, we argued that the respondents within the last theme, unlike those from theme number one, had a low perceived behavioural control. This we determined based on the fact that they did not bother to arrange weekly trips to the grocery store and that it might be easier to have takeaway delivered directly at the doorstep. We argued that this might be because the COVID-19 pandemic has made people lose the motivation to have a normal everyday life when nothing during the pandemic has been 'normal'.

In the analysis of the Elaboration Likelihood Model, we learned that the respondents who were anxious and uncertain had taken the central route to persuasion as we argued they held high involvement in regard to processing information. Furthermore, we based our finding on the fact that these respondents had made a specific change to their grocery shopping behaviour. Lastly, we determined that they, based on their actions, engaged in issue-relevant thinking despite not necessarily having been searching for information, for example, on social distancing. Furthermore, we learned that the respondents who were calm and indifferent had taken the peripheral route to persuasion as we argued they hold low involvement due to lack of interest in personal or external factors in regard to the pandemic. We determined that they did not engage in issue-relevant thinking as they did not show any sign of considering the restrictions and the risks that come with the coronavirus. Lastly, we supported these findings by the fact that they were the respondents who provided us with the least elaborating answers hence, we argued that they hold an attitude of being somewhat neutral and frivolous.

## 5.0 Reflection on our Master's Thesis

Before we are going to present our conclusion of this master's thesis, we have found several elements that we find relevant to discuss and comment on for the receiver to obtain a greater understanding of the overall research process and findings of this thesis. In order to provide the reader with the best possible overview of our points of interest, the following section will be divided into subheadings depending on the different topics that we will be discussing.

## Data Collection

When we reflect back on the research process of this thesis, there has been one particular element which has made a significant impact on our overall outcome of this thesis. Namely, our data collection. As we have briefly touched upon, earlier in this study, the original idea of collecting our data was to conduct in-depth interviews with UK consumers. This should have made the basis of a qualitative study in terms of understanding what impact the COVID-19 has had on UK consumers' attitudes towards grocery shopping. However, as the pandemic evolved and restrictions got tightened, the opportunity and ability to conduct this form of study became impossible for us and we, therefore, chose to conduct a survey instead. Thus, we made the choice to use a mixed-method approach where we could then combine quantitative and qualitative findings to gain further insight in regard to answering our research question. We see a topic of discussion in whether the quantitative findings for this study all have been significant to us as we, for instance, were not that interested in examining our respondents across gender and age, but instead interested in further elaborating on the overall attitudes we see among the respective respondents of the United Kingdom. However, we argue that the combination of quantitative and qualitative methods has in fact been very helpful to us, as it contributed to explore one of the most prominent findings for this study. Namely, we saw a discrepancy in some of our respondents' perception of the overall pandemic and how it affects them and their grocery shopping behaviour. Therefore, we believe that the overall outcome of this study might have turned out to be better than our original idea of how we wanted to collect our data.

The discrepancy that we found in this thesis were the fact that the majority of our respondents answered that they held a “keep calm and carry on” mentality towards the pandemic in general, however when examining their grocery shopping behaviours during the pandemic, we saw that they, in fact, showed signs of a more fearful and anxious attitude. We found that this attitude caused major behavioural changes for our respondents and, with this in mind, we find it interesting and relevant to discuss whether these new behaviours regarding grocery shopping is a permanent change or if the behaviour will go back to ‘normal’ as soon as the global crisis is over? Furthermore, this sheds a critical light on the findings of our analysis, as there is no denying that the COVID-19 pandemic is constantly evolving and, therefore, this also brings us to a topic of discussion about whether our findings are said to be reliable as well as applicable in the present stage of the pandemic outbreak.

## Reliability and Application of our Results



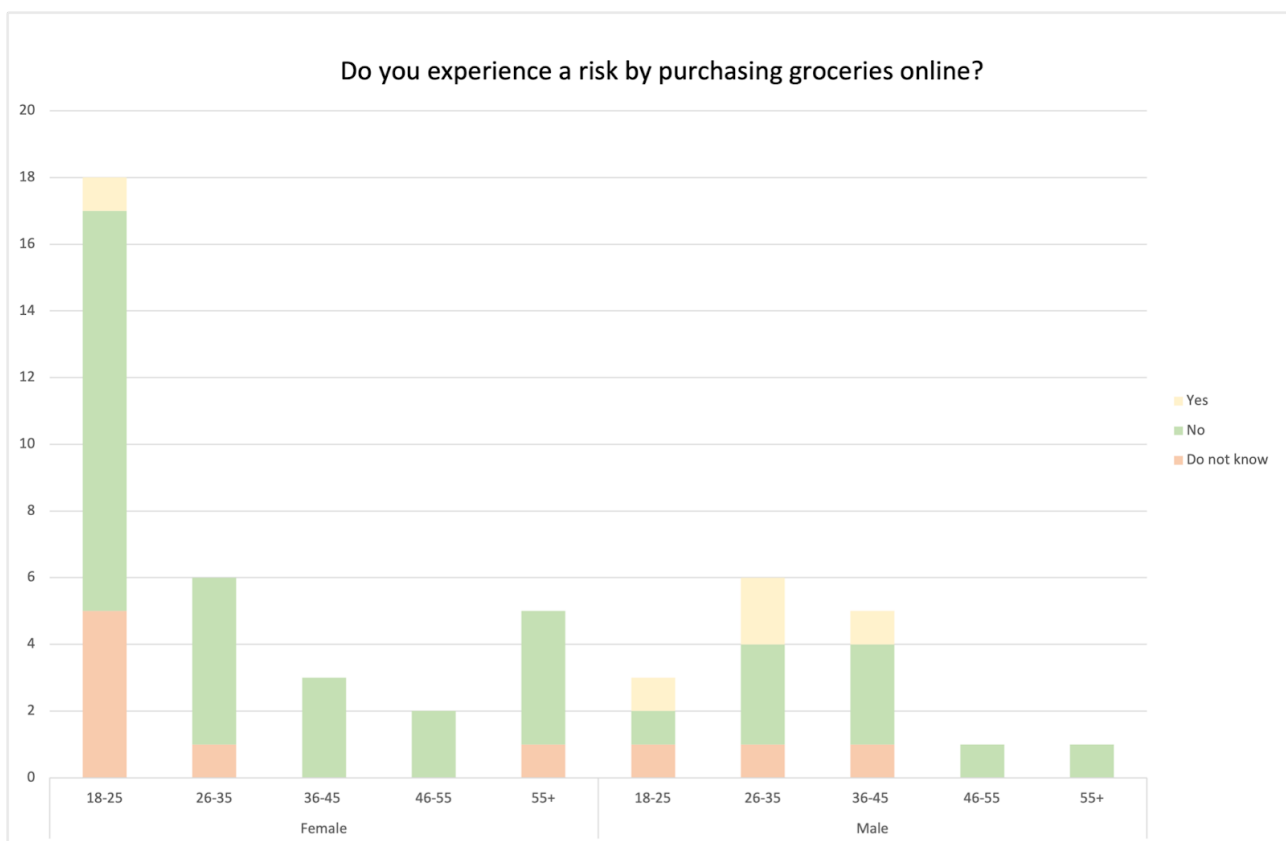
In our survey it emerged that the majority of the respondents of our survey felt anxious and fearful about grocery shopping in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. This was also evident in how more than half of the respondents believed that the behavioural changes they had undergone during the pandemic would still be in effect once the pandemic had subsided as they would continue to purchase groceries online as well as visiting physical stores. However, since the survey was first distributed, restrictions in the United Kingdom have been eased and society is slowly returning to 'normal' life as before the pandemic (Gov.uk 2021b). Following this, some UK consumers have stated that despite being happy about the ability to go out into public again after a year in lockdown, they are still experiencing a sense of anxiety and believe that returning to 'normal' will be a difficult task. YouGov reports that 49% of British citizens would find it hard to adjust back to the everyday life that they had before COVID-19 but when asked at the beginning of the pandemic, 42% said that they would find it easy (Welle 2021). Supported by these external sources, our findings of this thesis must be discussed to be reliable and applicable in today's stage of the COVID-19 pandemic as both the sources and our findings imply that UK consumers are carrying a rather anxious attitude towards grocery shopping both during and amid the pandemic. Furthermore, one can discuss whether the UK consumers have actually become more aware of their actual attitudes and feelings towards grocery shopping in a time of crisis than they were in the beginning of the pandemic. We build this discussion on the basis that our respondents answered one thing but then turned out to express something else and one can, therefore, discuss whether they have become more aware of the seriousness of the pandemic after undergoing lockdown and following restrictions for over a year. Moreover, it is arguable that people have become more and more accustomed to living in a state of fear of getting infected with the coronavirus, thus also of coming into close contact with strangers, in for example a physical grocery store. Following this it can be discussed that it is no surprise that the attitude and feeling of anxiousness and uncertainty is causing a somewhat lasting change in consumer behaviour.

## Online Grocery Shopping

When we first began our master's thesis, we, through our literature review, obtained the knowledge that there has been an increase in online shopping since the pandemic outbreak. However, we also learned that online shopping for many equals risk and uncertainty due to factors regarding data protection (Sheth 2020). We found this to be interesting as we learned that people also face risks when grocery shopping during the pandemic as it could potentially mean getting infected with the coronavirus (Sheth 2020). Therefore, when we first started conducting this thesis and collecting our data,

Study No:  
20167436  
20164100

we were originally interested in investigating whether consumers of the United Kingdom were experiencing risks in both physical and online grocery shopping and whether the risk of online shopping is diminished by the sudden risk of shopping in physical grocery stores. Therefore, our survey is also divided into two sections: one regarding grocery shopping at a physical store and a second regarding online grocery shopping. In both sections, we asked our respondents roughly the same questions. This involved questions such as if our respondents were shopping more or less at either physical stores or online and what the reasons thereof were. Our last section, furthermore, regarded if our respondents experienced a risk by shopping online. Here, we believed that more respondents would have answered “yes” and from that answer, we would have obtained more knowledge about the attitudes behind this feeling. However, our findings show that only 5 out of 50 of our respondents answered that they experienced a risk with shopping online. The table below shows a representation of our findings from this question.



**Table 9:** Risks in online grocery shopping

**Source:** Own creation based on data set

Study No:  
20167436  
20164100

Our findings show us that the majority of people answering are young adults. Therefore, we question why this age group seems to find no risk in online shopping. It can be discussed that because young adults in the age-group of 18-25 grew up in a globalised society, where the internet and technology has had a particular influence on them already in their childhood, they might not experience any risks with online shopping. Already at a young age, young adults of today's society have been used to ordering clothes and other items online and, the shift to online grocery shopping because of the COVID-19 pandemic might not have been that big of a behavioural change to them (Southern Phone 2018). Based on these findings, we find it relevant to discuss whether our data collection has been adequate. We did not obtain enough data for us to answer the question of whether the risk of online shopping is diminished due to the sudden risk of visiting a physical grocery store because of the COVID-19 pandemic. This can, therefore, be argued to be a source of error, as we did not necessarily have in mind when creating our survey, that we primarily were going to distribute it through survey exchange groups on Facebook. Hence, we did not take into consideration that the decision might have meant excluding answers from an older segment which one can argue might be more prone to holding a sense of risk and fear toward shopping for groceries online as they grew up in a time without easy access to the internet and they are often said to be reluctant about trying new technologies, precisely because they are not used to it (Southern Phone 2018). Here, we therefore see a topic that is worth taking up for further investigation and research, as the topic of discussion still stands if an older segment of consumers would have provided us with totally different attitudes regarding the shift to online grocery shopping.

## 6.0 Conclusion

To complete this master thesis, we are in the following section going to conclude on our findings and answer our research question:

*How does the COVID-19 pandemic affect UK consumers' attitudes towards grocery shopping?*

Through the analysis of our statistics, we detected more than one attitude towards grocery shopping during the pandemic. In general, we saw that the majority of the respondents within our survey had an anxious and uncertain attitude towards the pandemic. This was especially interesting as we also found a rather significant contradiction between our respondents' overall attitude towards the general phenomenon of the COVID-19 pandemic and their grocery shopping behaviour. Namely, it was concluded that the respondents generally showed behaviour that was performed on the basis of an anxious and uncertain attitude rather than a calm attitude as they otherwise primarily had stated.

We further examined this in our thematic analysis through our two generated themes, which were concluded to represent the two most significant attitudes found within our respondents' elaborating survey answers. Within the analysis of theme number one, it emerged that our respondents showed several different behaviours despite the fact that they held the same overall attitude towards grocery shopping during the pandemic. Despite having a fear of getting infected with the coronavirus, all respondents within the first theme showed different reasons to why they have obtained that feeling. Therefore, we concluded that there existed different sub-themes within theme number one which each represented a different behaviour of grocery shopping during the pandemic. We concluded that the sub-themes represented respondents who strived to maintain control by limiting their grocery shopping at physical stores to only once a week. Moreover, others were heavily impacted by external factors which affected how they carried out the actual shopping behaviour and some determined that the best way to avoid getting infected with the coronavirus was by fully committing to purchase their groceries online. Within theme number two, we, however, concluded that the respondents portrayed an attitude that was completely different from the respondents within theme number one. This was due to their exceedingly different way of approaching the survey questions which namely showed us an attitude that was calm and neutral. Here, we further concluded that there, within this theme, also existed sub-themes which represented respondents who were, in general, holding an attitude of

Study No:  
20167436  
20164100

humour and sarcasm and respondents who seemed to not have given the subject of grocery shopping, during a pandemic, much thought. On the basis of our findings of, respectively, the descriptive statistics and thematic analysis, we by the use of The Elaboration Likelihood Model found that the respondents within the first theme generally had opted for the central route of persuasion. This we concluded based on their systematic way of thinking which showed us that they had made significant changes to maintain control over their behaviour. However, we concluded that the respondents who generally held a neutral attitude in regard to the pandemic in terms of shopping for groceries at physical stores, opted for the peripheral route to persuasion. This we concluded based on their rather frivolous way of thinking.

We thereby conclude this master's thesis by stating that the COVID-19 pandemic has greatly affected UK consumers' attitudes towards grocery shopping, as we have seen clear evidence that the coronavirus has created uncertainty and anxiety among the majority of the respective UK consumers who answered our survey. We conclude that this has impacted their overall grocery shopping behaviour as most of our respondents, based on the uncertain and anxious attitude, have made major behavioural changes. For example, only visiting a physical grocery store once a week, conveying fully to online shopping or have given thought to the well-being of friends and family. Therefore, we conclude that it is only a minor percentage of the respective UK consumers who do not hold the attitude of being anxious and uncertain. Thus, it is evident that the COVID-19 pandemic has a huge influence on people's actions and attitudes in even the most ordinary daily routines.

Study No:  
20167436  
20164100

## 7.0 Bibliography

Ahmad, Munir, Khadeeja Iram and Gul Jabeen. 2020. "Perception-based influence factors of intention to adopt COVID-19 epidemic prevention in China". *Environmental Research*. Vol 190.  
doi: 10.1016/j.envres.2020.109995

Ajzen, Icek. 2011. "The Theory of Planned Behaviour: Reactions and Reflections". *Psychology & Health*. 26:9, 1113-1127.  
Doi: 10.1080/08870446.2011.613995

Andersen, Ole E. 2011. *Forstå forbrugerne – og bliv en bedre markedsfører*. 1st edition. Samfundslitteratur.

Andersen, R. Finn, Barne Warming Jensen, Mette Risgaard Olsen, Susanne Østergaard Olsen, Ivan Hassinggaard and Mia Post-Lundgaard. 2019. *International Markedsføring*. 6th Edition. Gads Publisher.

Aull, Bill, Dymfke Kujipers, Alex Sawaya and Rickard Vallöf. 2020. "What food retailers should do during the coronavirus crisis". McKinsey & Company. Accessed on 27 May 2021.  
<https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/retail/our-insights/what-food-retailers-should-do-during-the-coronavirus-crisis>

Bakaloudi, Dimitra Rafailia, Dhanushya T. Jeykumar, Ranil Jaywardena and Michail Chourdakis. 2021. "The Impact of COVID-19 Lockdown on Snacking Habits, Fast-Food and Alcohol Consumption: A Systematic Review of the Evidence" *Official Journal of ESPEN, The European Society for Clinical Nutrition and Metabolism*. Vol. 40.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.clnu.2021.04.020>

Bakhtiari, kim. 2020. "How Will the Pandemic Change Consumer Behaviour". Forbes. Accessed on 22 March 2021.  
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/kianbakhtiari/2020/05/18/how-will-the-pandemic-change-consumer-behavior/#463db9fe66f6>

Bastalich, Wendy. 2020. "Interpretivism, Social Constructionism and Phenomenology". University of South Australia. Accessed on 15 April 2021.  
<https://lo.unisa.edu.au/mod/page/view.php?id=489362>

Bellamy, Rachel. Wendy A. Kellog, J. T. Richards and C. B. Swart. (2002). "Exploring A New Paradigm for E-Groceries." Last Accessed 1 March 2021.  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228402561\\_Exploring\\_A\\_New\\_Paradigm\\_for\\_E-Groceries](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228402561_Exploring_A_New_Paradigm_for_E-Groceries)

Braun, Virginia and Victoria Clarke. 2006. "Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology". *Qualitative Research in Psychology*. 3(2):77-101.  
Doi: 10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Brinkmann, Svend and Lene Tanggaard. 2015. *Kvalitative Metoder – En Grundbog*. 3rd. Edition. Hans Reitzels Forlag.

Study No:  
20167436  
20164100

Bryman, Alan and Emma Bell. 2011. *Business Research Methods*. 3rd Edition. Oxford University Press.

Bryman, Alan. 2012. *Social Research Methods*. 4th Edition. New York: Oxford University Press.

Bryman, Alan. 2016. *Social Research Methods*. 5th. ed. New York: Oxford University Press.

Carlyle, Julie and Silvia Rindone. 2020. "Future Consumer Index: How COVID-19 is reshaping UK Consumer Behaviours" EY. Accessed on 2 March.

[https://www.ey.com/en\\_uk/consumer-products-retail/how-covid-19-is-reshaping-uk-consumer-behaviours](https://www.ey.com/en_uk/consumer-products-retail/how-covid-19-is-reshaping-uk-consumer-behaviours)

Charm, Tamara, Anne Grimmelt, Kim Hyunjin, Nancy Lu, Mianne Ortega, Yvonne Staack and Naomi Yamakawa. 2020. "Consumer Sentiment and Behaviour Continue to Reflect the Uncertainty of the COVID-19 Crisis". Accessed on 22 March 2021.

<https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/marketing-and-sales/our-insights/a-global-view-of-how-consumer-behavior-is-changing-amid-covid-19>

Cheung, Tracy TL, Floor M Kroese, Bob M Fennis, and Denise De Ridder. 2015. "Put a Limit on It: The Protective Effects of Scarcity heuristics When Self-Control is Low". *Health Psychology Open*. 2: 1-11.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/2055102915615046>

Chiu, C. Min and Eric T. G. Wang. 2008. "Understanding Web-based learning continuance intention: The role of subjective task value". *Information & Management*. Vol. 45, Issue 3: 194-201.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.im.2008.02.003>

Clements, Mark. 2020. "COVID-19 Accelerating Online Grocery Shopping in UK" WattPoultry.com. Accessed on 26 May 2021.

<https://www.wattagnet.com/blogs/23-poultry-around-the-world/post/40994-covid-19-accelerating-online-grocery-shopping-in-uk>

Cooley, H. Charles. 1902. *Human Nature and the Social Order*. 1st. Edition. Charles Scribner's Sons.

Creamer, Elizabeth G. 2018. *An Introduction to Fully Integrated Mixed Methods Research*. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE Publications.

Creswell, John W. and Vicki L. Plano Clark. 2007. *Designing and conducting Mixed Methods Research*. CA: SAGE Publications.

Cronin, Patricia, Frances Ryan and Michael Coughlan. 2008. "Undertaking A Literature Review: A Step-By- Step Approach". *British Journal of Nursing*. Vol. 17: 38-43.

Doi: 10.12968/bjon.2008.17.1.28059

Cummins, Steven, Nicolas Berger, Laura Cornelsen, Judith Eling, Vanessa Er, Robert Greener, Alexandra Kalbus, Amanda Karapici, Cherry Law, Denice Ndlovu and Amy Yau. 2020. "Covid-19:

Study No:  
20167436  
20164100

impact on the urban food retail system and dietary inequalities in the UK. *Cities & Health*.  
Doi: 10.1080/23748834.2020.1785167

Davis, Barney. 2021. "A timeline of the year since the UK officially went into lockdown." Evening Standard. Accessed on 17 April 2021.  
<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/health/covid-timeline-uk-lockdown-vaccine-pandemic-boris-johnson-b923362.html>

Davis, Fred D. 1989. "Perceived Usefulness, Perceived Ease of Use, and User Acceptance of Information Technology." *MIS Quarterly* 13, Vol. 3: 319-40.  
Doi:10.2307/249008.

Ducharme, Jamie. 2020. "World Health Organization Declares COVID-19 a 'Pandemic'. Heres What That Means". Time. Accessed on 22 March 2021.  
<https://time.com/5791661/who-coronavirus-pandemic-declaration/>

Duddu, Preveen. 2020. "Coronavirus: COVID-19 UK outbreak, measures and impact. Pharmaceutical Technology. Accessed on 22 March 2021.  
<https://www.pharmaceutical-technology.com/features/coronavirus-affected-uk-ncov-measures-impact/>

Elmore, Charles. 2017. "Irma: Frenzied Buying in Palm Beach, St. Lucie Regions Led State". The Palm Beach Post. Accessed on 26 February 2021.  
<https://eu.palmbeachpost.com/>

Esmark, Anders, Carsten Bagge Lausten, and Niels Åkerstrøm Andersen. 2005. *Socialkonstruktivistiske analysestrategier – en introduktion i Socialkonstruktivistiske analysestrategier*. 1st. Edition. Roskilde Universitetsforlag

Fishbein, Martin and Icek Ajzen. 2010. *Predicting and Changing Behaviour. The Reasoned Action Approach*. New York: Psychology Press.

Fishbein, Martin. 2008. "A reasoned action approach to health promotion." *Medical decision making: an international journal of the Society for Medical Decision Making*. Vol. 28: 834-844.  
Doi:10.1177/0272989X08326092

Franklin, Neil. "Working from home parents have struggled during lockdown". Insight. Accessed on 08 May 2021.  
<https://workplaceinsight.net/working-from-home-parents-have-struggled-during-lockdown/>

Gallagher, Sophie. 2020. "Coronavirus: How to Help the Elderly and Other Vulnerable People During the Outbreak". Independent. Accessed on 16 May 2021.  
<https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/coronavirus-update-help-elderly-people-support-food-banks-uk-a9408871.html>

Gordon, Sherri. 2020. "How Humor Can Ease the Stress of COVID-19" Very Well Mind. Accessed on 16 May 2021.  
<https://www.verywellmind.com/it-s-ok-to-laugh-even-during-a-pandemic-4843082>



Study No:  
20167436  
20164100

Gov.uk. 2021a. "Guidance. National Lockdown: Stay at Home." Government UK. Accessed on 22 March 2021.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-lockdown-stay-at-home#face-coverings>

Gov.uk. 2021b. "(COVID-19) Coronavirus restrictions: what you can and cannot do". Accessed on 23 May 2021.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/covid-19-coronavirus-restrictions-what-you-can-and-cannot-do>

Günday, Gizem, Arshiya Nagi, Peter Saffert, Julia Katharina Schmidt and Yvonne Staack. 2020. "Survey: UK Consumer Sentiment During the Coronavirus Crisis". McKinsey & Company. Accessed on 2 March.

<https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/marketing-and-sales/our-insights/survey-uk-consumer-sentiment-during-the-coronavirus-crisis>

Jackson, L. Sherri. 2011. *Research Methods and Statistics: A Critical Thinking Approach*. 4th Edition. Cengage Learning.

Janes, Lisa-Marie. 2021. "Shopping rules: latest restrictions at Asda, Sainsbury's, Tesco & more supermarkets explained". LoveMoney. Accessed on 26 May 2021.

<https://www.lovemoney.com/news/94072/supermarket-policies-aldi-asda-lidl-tesco-sainsburys-morrisons-waitrose-coronavirus-pandemic>

Kameda, Tatsuya, and Reid Hastie. 2015. "Herd Behaviour in Emerging Trends" in the Social and Behavioural Sciences, edited by Robert A. Scott and Marlis C. Buchmann. John Wiley and Sons.

<https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118900772.etrds0157>

Kitchen, J. Philip, Gayle Kerr, Don e. Shcultz, Rod McColl and Heather Pals. 2014. "The Elaboration Likelihood Model: Review, Critique and Research Agenda". *European Journal of Marketing*. 48:2033-2050.

Doi: 10.1108/EJM-12-2011-0776

Koch, Tina. 1995. Interpretive Approaches in Nursing Research: The influence of Husserl and Heidegger. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*. 21, 827-836.

<https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1365-2648.1995.21050827.x>

Kotler, Phillip, Kevin L. Keller, Mainread Brady, Malcolm Goodman, Torben Hansen. 2019. *Marketing Management*. 4th European Edition. Pearson Education Limited.

Kurnia, Sherah and Ai-Wen Jenny Chien. 2003. "The Acceptance of Online Grocery Shopping". Bled eCommerce.

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228926426\\_The\\_Acceptance\\_of\\_the\\_Online\\_Grocery\\_Shopping](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228926426_The_Acceptance_of_the_Online_Grocery_Shopping)

LaBerge, Laura, Clayton O'Toole, Jeremy Schneider and Kate Smaje. 2020. "How COVID-19 has Pushed Companies Over the Technology Tipping Point and Transformed Business Forever". McKinsey & Company. Accessed on 2 March.

<https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/strategy-and-corporate-finance/our-insights/how->

Study No:  
20167436  
20164100

[covid-19-has-pushed-companies-over-the-technology-tipping-point-and-transformed-business-for-ever](#)

Liu, Nianqi, Fan Zhang, Cun Wei, Yanpu Jia, Zhilei Shang, Luna Sun, Lili Wu, Zhuoer Sun, Yaoguang Zhou, Yan Wang, Weizhi Liu. 2020. "Prevalence and predictors of PTSS during COVID-19 outbreak in China hardest-hit areas: Gender differences matter. *Psychiatry Research*. Vol. 287.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychres.2020.112921>

Loxton, Mary, Robert Truskett, Birgitte Scarf, Laura Sindone, George Baldry, and Yinong Zhao. 2020. "Consumer Behaviour during Crises: Preliminary Research on How Coronavirus Has Manifested Consumer Panic Buying, Herd Mentality, Changing Discretionary Spending and the Role of the Media in Influencing Behaviour." *Journal of Risk and Financial Management* 13, no.8: 166.  
<https://doi.org/10.3390/jrfm13080166>

Mastercard. 2008. "Online shopping in Asia-Pacific: Patterns, Trends and Future Growth". Accessed on 15 February.  
[http://www.mastercard.com/us/company/en/insights/pdfs/2008/Asia\\_Pacific\\_Online\\_Shop.pdf](http://www.mastercard.com/us/company/en/insights/pdfs/2008/Asia_Pacific_Online_Shop.pdf)

McCracken, Grant. 1986. "Culture and Consumption: A Theoretical Account of the Structure and Movement of the Cultural Meaning of Consumer Goods". *Journal of Consumer Research*. Vol. 13, 1: 71-81.  
<https://doi.org/10.1086/209048>

McKevitt, Fraser. 2020. "Grocery Growth Slows and Habits Change as UK Adapts". Kantar World Panel. Accessed on 2 March.  
<https://www.kantarworldpanel.com/global/News/Grocery-growth-slows-and-habits-change-as-nation-adapts>

Muijs, Daniel. 2004. *Doing Quantitative Research in Education with SPSS*. 1st Edition. SAGE Publications Ltd.

Nielsen. 2020. "COVID-19: UK Quarantine Living Preparations Lead to a Massive Spike in FMCG Sales". Accessed on 2 March.  
<https://www.nielsen.com/uk/en/insights/article/%202020/covid-19-uk-quarantine-living-preparations-leadmassive-spike-fmcg-sales/>

O'Keefe, J. Daniel. 2008. "Elaboration Likelihood Model". In *The International Encyclopedia of Communication*, edited by Wolfgang Donsbach, 1475-1480. Blackwell publishing Ltd.

Ozili, Peterson K., and Thnakon Arun. 2020. "Spillover of COVID-19: Impact on the Global Economy". *Social Science Research Network*. Last revised 24 April 2020.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3562570>

Petty, E. Richard and John T. Cacioppo. 1986. "The Elaboration Likelihood Model of Persuasion". *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*. 19:123-205  
**Doi:** 10.1016/S0065-2601(08)60214-2

Study No:  
20167436  
20164100

Puttaiah, Mahesh H, Aakash Kiran Raverkar and Evangelos Avramakis. 2020. "All Change: How COVID-19 is transforming consumer behaviour". Swiss Re Institute. Accessed on 5 april 2021.  
<https://www.swissre.com/institute/research/topics-and-risk-dialogues/health-and-longevity/covid-19-and-consumer-behaviour.html>

Perloff, M. Richard. 2017. *The Dynamics of Persuasion. Communication and Attitudes in the 21st Century*. 6th edition. New York: Routhledge.

Rideout, Victoria. 2021. "Coping with COVID-19: How Young People Use Digital Media to Manage Their Mental Health" Common Sense. Accessed on May 9 2021.  
<https://www.chcf.org/publication/coping-covid-19-young-people-digital-media-manage-mental-health/>

Safi, Michael. 2020. "Coronavirus: The Week the World Shut Down". The Guardian. Accessed on 22 March 2021.  
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/mar/20/coronavirus-the-week-the-world-shut-down>

Sethna, Zubin and Jim Blythe. 2016. *Consumer Behaviour*. 4th edition. London: SAGE.

Sheth, Jagdish. 2020. "Impact of Covid-19 on Consumer Behavior: Will the Old Habits Return or Die?" *Journal of business research* vol. 117: 280-283.  
Doi:10.1016/j.jbusres.2020.05.059

Silberstein, Nicole. 2021. "5 Ways COVID has Reshaped Consumer Behaviour". Retail Touchpoints. Accessed on 5 March 2021.  
<https://retailtouchpoints.com/features/trend-watch/5-ways-covid-19-has-reshaped-consumer-behavior>

Sim, Bérengère. 2021. "Roadmap to lift UK's third lockdown: Here's the timeline plus what you can and can't do. Financial News. Accessed on 17 April 2021.  
<https://www.fn london.com/articles/uks-third-lockdown-lifted-heres-the-timeline-plus-what-you-can-and-cant-do-20210222>

Slovic, Paul, Melissa L. Finucane, Ellen Peters, and Donald G. Macgregor. 2004. "Risk as Analysis and Risk as Feelings: Some Thoughts About Affect, Reason Risk, and Rationality". *Risk Analysis. An international journal*.  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0272-4332.2004.00433.x>

Smith, Lydia. 2020. "Why lockdown is making us feel exhausted". Patient. Accessed on 16 May 2021.  
<https://patient.info/news-and-features/why-lockdown-is-making-us-feel-exhausted>

Solomon, Michael R., Gary J. Bamossy, Søren Askegaard and Margaret K. Hogg. 2016. *Consumer Behaviour. A European Perspective*. 6th edition. Pearson Education Limited.

Southern Phone. 2018. "Growing up in the Digital Age – Implications for Our Youngest Citizens". Southern Phone Limited. Accessed on 23 May 2021.  
<https://www.southernphone.com.au/Blog/2018/Sep/growing-up-in-the-digital-age>

Study No:  
20167436  
20164100

Sukamolson, Suphat. 2007. "Fundamentals of Quantitative Research". Phd Thesis. Chulalongkorn University, Language Institute.

Taub, Jodi. 2021. "The Impact of Covid-19 on Young Adults: More than Fear of Missing Out ("FOMO"). Jodi Taub Therapy. Accessed on May 9 2021.

<https://www.joditaubtherapy.com/blog/fomo>

The Nielson Company. 2015. "The Future of Grocery" Accessed on 11 February.

<https://www.nielsen.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2019/04/nielsen-global-e-commerce-new-re-tail-report-april-2015.pdf>

Torlak, Ö. 2000. "Tüketim: Bireysel Eylemin Toplumsal Dönüşümü". İstanbul: İnkılap Yayınları

Wang, Xueqin, Kum F. Yuen, Fei Ma, and Kevin X. Li. 2020. "The Psychological Causes of Panic Buying Following a Health Crisis". *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 17: 3513.

Doi: 10.3390/ijerph17103513

Welle, Deutsche. 2021. "COVID-19: Why we're Anxious About Returning to Normal, and What We Can Do About It". Your Story. Accessed on 23 May 2021.

<https://yourstory.com/2021/04/anxious-returning-new-normal-mental-health-experts-covid19-lock-down/amp>

World Health Organization. 2021. "Coronavirus". Accessed on 22 March 2021.

[https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus#tab=tab\\_1](https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus#tab=tab_1)

Yoon, Jiho, Ram Narasimhan, and Myung K. Kim. 2017. "Retailer's Sourcing Strategy Under Consumer Stockpiling in Anticipation of Supply Disruptions". *International Journal of Production Research* 56: 3615-35

Yuen, Kum F., Xueqin Wang, Fei Ma, and Kevin X. Li. 2020. "The Psychological causes of panic buying following a health crisis". *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 17: 3513.

Doi: 10.3390/ijerph17103513

Zeren, Deniz. 2021. "Using Theory of Reasoned Action to Explain Consumer Behaviour During COVID-19 Pandemic." In *Understanding the Consumer Behaviour During COVID-19 Pandemic*. Edited by Murat Gülmez, 69-83. Akademisyen Kitabevi.

Zwanka J. Russell & Cheryl Buff. 2020. "COVID-19 Generation: A Conceptual Framework of the Consumer Behavioral Shifts to Be Caused by the COVID-19 Pandemic". *Journal of International Consumer Marketing*. 33:1, 58-67.

Doi: 10.1080/08961530.2020.1771646