

# Elimination of the online shopping experience: An initial Examination

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## ABSTRACT

In an online shopping context, many new businesses have taken off to provide services that eliminate the whole shopping experience. It is assumed that this elimination can be a factor of attractiveness to the rarely researched apathetic shopper, who dislikes shopping in many ways. This paper evaluates, referring to the online stores: Outfittery and Modomoto, whether the online shopping experience elimination in these apparel stores acts as a factor for customer attractiveness. Especially the apathetic shopper will be taken into account when analyzing, which elements of the elimination can be figured out to be a main driver for choosing such an online store. The current literature used in the literature review serves as a cornerstone for the research that has been done with twelve male respondents that have experience with online shopping experience eliminated stores and twelve that doesn't.

To get to know the customers behavior in regard to these new businesses is crucially important for marketers and retailers. Especially the research on the apathetic shopper and its behavior in this business context can be an advantage for marketers and strategists.

After an evaluation of the present literature and the interview results the current paper analyzes, whether the eliminated shopping experience of an 'usual' online store can also act as drivers for customers to be attracted by such an online store.

The results indicate that the apathetic shopper is likely to be attracted by the eliminated shopping experience in order to handle the necessary evil called 'shopping' in a more time saving process. Furthermore the respondents gave a more in-depth view in the shopping behavior and drivers of an apathetic shopper in order to apparel shopping.

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## Keywords

Apathetic shopper, online apparel retail, strategic marketing, elimination, shopping experience, customer typology

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Relevance of topic

Since the first apparel factory was constructed, decades ago, the cornerstone of a steadily increasing shopping industry was set. Even if there is no need for shopping, the apparel sector provides a possibility to find one. According to Tauber (1972) there are three reasons for shopping, namely (1) personal motives, (2) social motives and (3) impulse buying. Particularly personal and social motives seem to play a popular role in the apparel sector. Phrases such as 'I shop therefore I am' (Reid and Brown, 1996), depict the change of the implication of shopping into other dimensions. Clothing is linked to how consumers view themselves, for example, as part of the extended self (Belk, 1988). Horn defined clothing 1975 as a 'second skin'. Apparel shopping is about making decisions about one's appearance and is part of an overall life pattern that reflects attitudes towards stores and fashion as well as complex values and interest such as aesthetics and materialism (Tatzel, 1982). All aspects seem to be positively related to apparel shopping. Nevertheless, there are aspects like the statement that 48 percent, apparently 'dislike waiting' (East et al. 1994). This is only one of several aspects that harm the positive effects of apparel shopping. As a respond to 'usual' retail shopping problems, the online retailing stores were born. With the first online store an exponential increase in online shopping and the unprecedented rate of growth in the number of retailers selling online have created an extremely competitive marketplace (Szymanski & Hise, 2000). There is certain evidence suggesting that those who shop online behave in fundamentally different ways compared to traditional retail shoppers (Alba et al, 1997), thus a new bases for research was established. According to the current literature are several drivers to buy online over 'local' offline stores obvious. The inability to find merchandise, coping with crowds, sales personnel, financial considerations, obesity and avoidance are only a few to mention (Tatzel, 1982). Additionally, there is evidence to suggest that the try on in the comfort of peoples own home behavior is also a dominant driver for online apparel shopping (Tatzel, 1982). These drivers have been occurred out of shopping experiences that forced the people to buy favorable online than offline. This paper goes a step further and focuses on the new developed online stores that provide the customers an eliminated online shopping experience (OSE) and whether this elimination addresses the rarely researched apathetic shopper as target group. The online shopping experience conceptualization of Trevinal & Stenger (2014) acts as cornerstone for the components that might be eliminated and influence the drivers of customers to choose a shopping eliminated online store.

## 1.2 The importance of the apathetic shopper

The apathetic shopper is known as a person who has no real interest in, or actively dislikes shopping and appears to endure rather than enjoy the whole shopping experience. Tatzel (1982) characterized the apathetic shopper as being a male person who positively avoids shopping environments. This notion of the apathetic shopper is still common today. Additionally, not only the notion is still common today, but as Reid and Brown (1996) stated does the apathetic shopper indeed shop and is ignored by the academic community hitherto, this is still an actual problem. The academic literature has a lack of research on how to attract the apathetic shopper, even if the apathetic shopper is an umbrella category; with several sub-types it is still researchable. There is certain evidence suggesting that the apathetic shopper is a profitable market segment, because an apathetic shopper knows what he wants, expects to find it and is highly intolerant

of any form of interruption or delay (Reid & Brown, 1996). Furthermore, the apathetic shopper as shopping type is gaining more and more importance. With research findings that claim that the apathetic shopper actually does shopping activities even if he dislikes it (Reid & Brown, 1996) is proven that the apathetic shopper not only was ignored by the literature hitherto, but also got into the light of being an interesting target group. Resulting of a research study from Ahlert et al. (2006) are apathetic shoppers mainly shopping online, with more than 95% of her respondents. According to the high amount of apathetic shoppers that shop online and the discovery that they are likely to have an overall positive attitude towards new technologies, new aspects about the apathetic shopper have been researched. This openness paired with their preference for buying online, results in high potential for being the online shopper target group of the future (Ahlert et. al, 2006).

## 1.3 Description of situations

With the foundation of Outfittery and Modomoto in 2011 and 2012 a brand-new online shopping concept has been developed. The elimination of the online shopping experience is their basis to be attractive for customers. According to the present literature does online shopping experience not always accompany with positive aspects. Moreover, former research has shown that aspects like time distortion, which was tested in the context of online customer experience (Novak, Hoffman and Yung, 2000) can lead to dissatisfying online shopping experiences for customers. Consequently, Outfittery and Modomoto are focusing on OSE elimination.

## 1.4 Definition of the apathetic shopper

It is useful to get an in depth view of the potential shopping character that seems to be eligible to fit to the customer profile that makes use of an OSE eliminated store. The development of shopper typologies has been researched in over 40 studies investigating retail patronage behavior using a variety of bases, such as retail attribute importance, shopping motivations, attitudes towards shopping, shopping frequency and store loyalty (Ganesh et al., 2010).

Stone's first typology from 1954 has already shown the two characterizations of the (1) economic shopper, who is oriented towards price and quality and the (2) apathetic shopper who is shopping because it is a necessity and a core (Westbrook & Black, 1985). The distinction Stone made in 1954 has been continued in several research studies. Ganesh et al. (2010) still stick to Stones definition and characterize the apathetic shopper by a lack of strong motivation on any shopping dimension and consistent low ratings on attribute importance.

## 1.5 Goal of study

The main goal of this study is to get an in-depth understanding of the drivers for customers to choose OSE eliminated stores over 'usual' online stores. This research investigates the evidence that suggests that the OSE eliminated stores are attractive to apathetic shoppers as far as possible. Another objective of this study is to familiarize the reader on the one hand with the brand-new dimensions of OSE eliminated stores and on the other hand to get it connected with the rarely researched apathetic shopper as possible target group. The aim is to find out on the basis of OSE components, which of them are eliminated in the concepts of Outfittery and Modomoto and furthermore in how far these components are influencing the drivers for customer to buy there.

### *Academic relevance*

This paper investigates the drivers for customers to choose OSE eliminated online stores over 'usual' online stores and whether this elimination is attractive to the apathetic shopper (Figure 1). At the current state there does not exist any literature covering this topic with regard to the OSE elimination and the vast majority of studies regarding shopping experience were conducted with female samples only, even though there is ample evidence of increasing male participation in shopping-related activities (Davies & Bell, 1991). This paper can be seen as a continuation on OSE research with current case examples of eliminated OSE stores, which also provide male clothing. It is expected that with publishing of the present paper the world society will get an in-depth view on the 'new' occurring OSE eliminated stores and that it serves as cornerstone to future literature of this topic.

### *Practical relevance*

Regarding the practical relevance of this paper it is providing businesses, which operate with online stores, revealing information about their online buying customers. This paper will analyze the OSE eliminated stores and give answers in the business context that are already known for 'usual' online stores. It is researched that an online shopper expects to be able to interact through, mail, phone or what ever means they choose and demands 24/7 access and memorable shopping experiences (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). Therefore the present paper is focusing on the understanding of customer's drivers to choose OSE eliminated stores over 'usual' online stores. These customer drivers are crucial if retailers and marketers are in need of new strategic marketing concepts and want to gain a higher attractiveness to the customers.

Based on the introduction with its argumentations to this topic and to support this research paper the following research question evolved:

*What are the main drivers for customers, especially the apathetic shopper, to choose online shopping experience (OSE) eliminated stores over 'usual' online stores?*

To support this research on answering the main research question the following sub-questions are developed:

*What is online shopping experience (which components are included under this term)?*

*Which components of the online shopping experience (OSE) are eliminated?*

*What is the shopping behavior of an apathetic shopper?*

*How strong is the store loyalty of eliminated OSE store customers?*

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

In order to identify the main drivers for customers to choose eliminated OSE stores over 'usual' online stores, this paper refers to and analyzes relevant numerous scientific literature concerning, drivers to shop online, online shopping experience as a whole and eliminated and the apathetic shopper. In order to receive an in-depth view of the current literature regarding this topic an initial literature review is chosen as first method. The scientific literature is gathered through the search engines Scopus and the Library of the University of Twente online as well as offline. The literature was individually read and

scanned. Afterwards were supporting notions insert to the matrix and analyzed. Additionally, a second method for qualitative data has been realized by interviews with 12 respondents that at least once made use of the OSE eliminated store concept, whether Outfittery and Modomoto and 12 respondents that at least bought once apparel online.

To find suitable literature that fits with this brand new style of online apparel selling, the following key search terms such as 'online shopping experience', 'elimination' and 'online apparel'. Moreover the key search terms 'apathetic shopper' and 'online customer' have been used and lead to numerous useful articles that helped analyzing this type of shopper in this paper.

### *2.1 The apathetic shopper*

A frequently discussed article in this research paper and also the cornerstone of the definition of the customer typology is the article of Stone (1954). In this paper the main focus is on the apathetic shopper and therefore the other typologies are not discussed in this paper. As already mentioned is Stones typology further developed in many following studies, as Westbrook & Black, 1985 state that for an apathetic shopper, shopping is a necessity and a core. Darden and Reynolds (1972) have also used Stones typology as a cornerstone for their study and as it was expected was the apathetic shopper also present in their research. From great interest for this study is the research done by Shim and Kotsiopoulos (1993) who focused especially on apparel and discovered during their study also the so called 'apathetic apparel shopper'. One of the most present literature, but very similar to the research findings of former literature was the research of Mc Kinney (2004). He segmented Internet user on behalf of his shopping orientation while doing online shopping. The apathetic apparel shopper defined by Shim and Kotsiopoulos (1993) and the apathetic shopper of Mc Kinney are showing very similar definitions. The research of Ganesh et al. (2010) showed that the five common shopper types found in previous research that focused on traditional retail formats are also present in the online environment. Therefore it can be said that based on Stone's typology and all further developed definitions based on Stone for the special fields, what is in this case the definition of the apathetic online shopper and apathetic apparel shopper. The typology of the apathetic shopper can therefore be defined and based on this literature further developed though the own conducted research. As already mentioned the results of Ahlert et al. (2006) research of the apathetic shopper showed that more than 95% are likely to buy online. Moreover it has been discovered that the apathetic shopper like in most of the literature assumed, is with 80% of the conducted research a male customer (Ahlert et al., 2006).

Ahlert et al. (2006) is not only one of the most current researches regarding the 'apathetic shopper'; she does also strengthen the importance of marketers to focus on being attractive for this type of customer. Based on the above-mentioned results, their preference to shop online and the fact that most of them are male customers, first assumptions can be made in regard to the main target group of Outfittery and Modomoto. Unfortunately is the shopping concept of both online stores not yet researched and therefore is suitable literature regarding their marketing techniques as well as their strategy and tools nonexistent.

### *2.2 Online shopping experience (OSE)*

In order to detect the main drivers for customers to choose for such a kind of online store, it is important to define and understand what is meant with online shopping experience and

which components are included under the term OSE. With the proper analysis of former literature the research of Trevinal and Stenger (2013) are the most recent one. They performed a research on the difference between online and offline online shopping experience. Overall, Arnould et al. (2004) stated that the shopping experience is all-encompassing and Edgell et al. (1997) remarked that consumers might experience it in many ways that depend on the social context, on the products and services for which they are shopping and on the personal relationships that help form the situation. The current paper is focusing on the online shopping experience in an eliminated context. Based on the results of the four expected dimensions of the OSE provided in the paper of Trevinal and Stenger (2014), namely Physical, Ideological, Pragmatic and Social, does this paper evaluate the elements that are included under these dimensions.

### *2.3 Elements of OSE that are applicable in the eliminated context*

In the following the most important elements of OSE for this paper are shortly defined. This paper will analyze whether the following elements of OSE that are found by Trevinal and Stenger (2014) will act as drivers for customers of OSE eliminated stores if some or all of them are eliminated. Therefore it is necessary to understand which OSE elements of a 'usual' online store are detected and how they play a role to the customer.

#### *2.3.1 Time*

In 2004 Mathwick and Rigdon's performed a research that showed that the transfer of control to the consumer is the key to creating compelling online experiences. This means that the control over time and time management are highly important to gain positive online shopping experience. The research of Trevinal and Stenger (2014) has again showed that time distortion during the online shopping experience occurs and that time is not experienced the same way on the Internet than offline. It seems that time passes slowly if the consumer cannot directly find what they need.

#### *2.3.2 Shopping orientation*

Two shopping orientations are known, either hedonistic or utilitarian. As the research of e.g. Babin et al. 1994 and also the research of Trevinal and Stenger (2014) showed are those two orientations reasons to for shopping. This means nothing less, than the consumer shops online because they want to treat themselves and it is nothing less than useful or because they are looking for the best price.

#### *2.3.3 Rituals*

Former studies have shown that consumers have shopping rituals. The study of Trevinal and Stenger (2014) with the focus on OSE states that, because online shopping occurs at home, consumers are performing other activities while shopping. The rituals of consumers are regardless of their shopping orientation.

#### *2.3.4 Online tools*

One important part of the OSE is the browsing and shopping tools via specific routines. These include for example the routines that customers follow when buying at an online store. Trevinal and Stenger (2014) compare it with the routine when the customer puts things on the virtual shopping cart. The way

customers handle the virtual shopping part is an online routine through the online tool of the virtual shopping cart.

#### *2.3.5 Socialization*

The term socialization includes not only direct online social interactions with friends on socio-digital networks, but also the consumer reviews and ratings can be considered as part of the socialization of OSE. The literature does not provide a lot of research specific on the interaction of online shopping experience and socialization. This might be the reason why Trevinal and Stenger (2014) in their qualitative interview research found out that male respondents only refer to consumer reviews and ratings instead of female respondents that but forward the role of companions, which means chatting with a friend via socio-digital networks especially over the products that will be bought.

## **3. METHODS & DATA**

### **3.1 Survey**

In general the most appropriate and logical manner in which to identify and study online consumers is through an online approach (Szymanski and Hise, 2000). However, in this case the data collected for this study arises from 12 personal interviews with people that at least once made use of one of the OSE eliminating stores and 12 that at least once bought apparel online.

Due to the results and findings made by former literature, it can be assumed that the apathetic shopper is mostly male and positively avoids shopping (Tatzel, 1982). Therefore the chosen sample group for the interviews is male and in favour of dislike apparel shopping or overall shopping. In addition are most of the studies that research on shopping experience conducted with female samples only (Davies & Bell, 1991). This leads to the assumption that the main apathetic shopper, who is male, is not yet researched in connection with the online shopping experience. Therefore this study is going to fill the current literature gap. Regarding the small sample group this study will be in favour of presenting qualitative instead of quantitative results. It is in this case with personal experience more in favour to hold individual interviews, to gain the most clear as well as true answers from the respondents.

The interviews have been held on basis of a developed survey template that is asked to every respondent. It serves all questions regarding online shopping experience and their behavior towards apparel shopping. In the following the interview questions will be explained. The sample group was told about the necessity to record their age and income. According to the findings by Ahlert et al. (2006) are apathetic shoppers in the age 25-29 with an over average percentage on highly academic people. Of course, the respondents are chosen on the basis of the researched age range with different income to test whether this age dependency is still present in the case of OSE stores. Furthermore the money spent on online apparel shops must be recorded to get to know how much of their income is spend on online apparel stores.

One of the most important parts of the interview, are the four questions that detect whether the respondent is an apathetic shopper or not. These questions are developed by Mägi (2003) in her research paper she developed a questionnaire that should detect the apathetic shopper on behalf of these questions. For this paper the four questions are enough to see whether someone is an apathetic shopper. The respondent has to rank their answer from one up to ten where one is totally disagree

and ten totally agree. These questions shall serve this paper to make sure that the right respondents, namely the apathetic once, have been chosen.

In the following the respondents are asked to describe reasons why to shop in an OSE eliminated store instead of a usual online store. Furthermore they are asked to explain their benefits, when they shop at on OSE eliminated store and whether they have a feeling of convenience if someone handles the main shopping for them. This means nothing less, than the elimination of making decisions during shopping on color or other specific choices. Regarding the price of the OSE eliminated stores it is necessary to ask the interviewees if the price matters or if they have the feeling of best price guarantee. This is especially necessary to ask, due to the fact, that the prices of all apparel items is fixed and on basis of the price range that the customer reports is the whole outfit assembled. According to the attraction of an OSE eliminated online store it is crucial to know what is important to the customer to make use of such a service. In the case of making use of Outfittery, the customer has the choice between his fashion stylists, the person that assembles the outfit. It is interesting to know what the main drivers of the customers were to choose especially for this one person. Regarding the process of return it is necessary to evaluate how many items are kept by the customer and the average price of the items kept. For the customer well-being it is also interesting to know how easy the process of return was and if the customer will make use of the service again.

#### 4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Due to a lack of appropriate theoretical models in the currently available literature regarding this topic, this present paper shows a new model that considers all shopping experience eliminating components that may act as influence on the drivers for customers to choose such a special online service. This elimination of the online shopping experience can be resulting in attractiveness to the customers and maybe especially to the 'apathetic shopper'.



Figure 1: Theoretical Framework

The framework shows all 'usual' online shopping experience (OSE) components of former research done by Trevinal & Stenger (2014), namely time, shopping orientation, senses, values, rituals, patronage routines, online tools, socialization and decision aid. The OSE elimination shows all components that are applicable to this type of online shopping experience and it will be tested if these components have possible influence on the customers drivers to choose such an OSE eliminated

store. Both sides, can have a possible impact on the attractiveness for customers to choose either an 'usual' online store or an eliminated OSE store. This paper does also evaluate to what extent especially the apathetic male shopper is attracted and what his drivers to shop in one of the stores.

#### 5. ANALYSIS

As indicated by former literature was the age of the sample group in a range from 25-29 and male. Regardless of the group whether they shopped at an OSE eliminated or a 'usual' online store was the income. The income of the research groups is ranging from 30.000€ yearly income up to 40.000€ yearly income. This income indication is researched to investigate how much money of their overall income is spent on online apparel shopping. As the research of Ahlert et al. (2006) showed is the apathetic shopper from a highly qualified academic level. This income indication echoes the research of Ahlert et al. (2006), due to the young age range and above average income.

The respondents indicated that their monthly amount money spent on online apparel shopping ranges between 50€ up to 200€ but no one indicated more than 200€. This indication came from both research groups. Nevertheless indicated eight of the 12 respondents of the OSE eliminated group that they do not shop monthly, because they do not have the feeling that it is necessary, and therefore spend every three month summed up more than 200€.

##### 5.1 The apathetic shopper

According to the four questions that have been developed by Mägi (2003) to test whether the respondent is really an apathetic shopper this research study has to exclude four respondents in order to analyze only clear indicated apathetic shoppers. The research group of the 'usual' online stores has two respondents that indicated that they enjoy shopping for apparel even if the other three questions lead to an apathetic shopper. Similarly, the OSE eliminated research group has two respondents that gave weak answers to be an apathetic shopper. One respondent totally disagreed with spending at less time as possible on apparel shopping, which results in being not the right respondent for this research. The other one indicated that he, like the two 'usual' online shop responded, enjoys shopping for apparel. In the ten remaining cases was the evaluation of the apathetic shopper questions, conform the same principle as Mägi (2003), successful.

##### 5.2 Time

The following question about the reasons to shop online, either 'usual' or eliminated, has brought the biggest variety. Respondent of the 'usual' online group indicated that they shop online, because it is convenient and they claim that they have the best overview about all the apparel products. If they have to shop offline they have the feeling of not getting the whole overview in time and if they search for one specific thing it is troublesome to find it in a big store. The respondents have often evoked this: 'If I shop online I have the best overview about all products and I am not under time pressure due to opening hours' (Nino, 28 year old). These results are closely connected with the research findings of Burke (1997) and Syzmanski and Hise (2000), they indicated that online shoppers may demand more product information, more product variety and more personalized or specialized products compared to regular offline shoppers. This need for variety and specialized products is not found in the OSE eliminated group. They also support the personalized driver but in comparison have the OSE eliminated

shopper indicated that it is time saving to shop online, because they do not have to search for special apparel that fits to their style. As Mathias, 27 year old evokes: 'There is no need to search through the multiple options of the apparel stores in the World Wide Web'. Furthermore did 5 of the 10 OSE eliminated respondents state that shopping online gives them different variations how to improve their style, because they are quite unsure which apparel fits. 'The people are professional outfitters and probably know best what fits best to you with regard to your personal style-type and how you appeal to others' (Alexander, 29 year old). Moreover do both research groups indicate that they prefer the possibility to shop independent of time and day and do not have to deal with overcrowded stores. 'There is no need to try the apparel in overcrowded stores with long lines for the dressing rooms, under time pressure because the store will be closed' (Michael, 25 year old). This result does also fit to the convenience definition found by Ganesh et al. (2010), where he did a research on the online shopper. It does also echo the finding of Cyr (2000) and Pine & Gilmore (1999), who have claimed that the online shopper expects to be able to interact through whatever means, demanding personalized service and having 24/7 access with memorable shopping experiences.

### 5.3 Shopping orientation

After a short explanation to the 'usual' online store group the question about the benefits and reasons to shop at an OSE eliminated store instead of a 'usual' online store is asked. The answers of both research groups are nearly the same. The group that has at least once shopped at an OSE eliminated store recommended the service that is provided by the personal stylist and that the possibility of a perfect outfit with personal service is given while it is a time saving process to shop there. The respondent Steffen, 25 year old evokes: 'The decision on the outfit via pictures is a visual pleasure and time saving, furthermore does the professional outfit stylist know best which apparel items fit and which not'. The second group that only knows OSE eliminated stores but never shopped there assumes the same, namely that the professional outfitters can be very beneficial in comparison to a 'usual' online store that does not provide this service. Moreover did the respondents of this group indicate that they think finding an outfit via those stores is easier and does look better, because you can better imagine how it will look like if you can choose your outfit on behalf of pictures that should serve as model of what you are looking for. Four out of the ten respondent of the OSE eliminated group find it also beneficial that the professional outfitters not only know which outfit fits best with your wishes, but also choose good quality clothes with regard to be up to date and trendy. The respondent Fabian, 28 year old indicates: 'I prefer that the stores only deals with high quality fashion, otherwise I would not like to use the service anymore, if I buy low budget apparel I have to order more often because the miserable quality will not last that long'. Six respondent out of ten of the OSE eliminated group stated that the possibility to get matched outfits instead of trying to match the outfit themselves results in giving them more self-esteem, because he knows that what he wears is fitting. This statement is also supported by the literature, Belk (1988) stated that clothing is linked to how consumers view themselves and acts as part of the extended self. As mentioned above, apparel can act as a 'second skin' and therefore enhances one's psychological and social well being (Horn, 1975).

### 5.4 Rituals

One main benefit has been discovered in both groups, namely that you do not have to visit a store and if it does not fit you can return it. This noncommittal process paired with the anonymity that is related with the Internet is noticed as the main benefit of both groups. The respondents of Outfittery do also indicate that it is not time consuming and that it has something like a surprise effect that gives the whole shopping experience a kind of extra attractiveness. Respondent Mathias, 27 year old, mentions: 'It's kind of exciting to see the outcome of the limited information I gave beforehand, this is attractive to try it more often' While five out of ten of the 'usual' online group state the opposite, namely that they benefit the wide range of apparel and the possibility to create every detail of the outfit himself. 'I enjoy the variety of the different apparel items and it is good that sufficient information on the things is provided'. Moreover is the anonymity at an OSE eliminated store not as strong as it is given in an 'usual' online store, but nevertheless are 8 out of 10 respondents benefiting the personality with distance and being still more or less anonym. As the respondent Daniel, 28 year old, indicates: 'When I do 'usual' online shopping I am missing the help of an adviser as it is provided when you shop offline, but at an OSE eliminated store (in this case Outfittery) do I have a fashion stylist that serves my wishes while I can stay at home and be anonymously'.

### 5.5 Online tools

As mentioned above is online shopping overall linked with the term: convenience. Therefore the OSE eliminated group has been asked whether they have a feeling of convenience if someone 'handles' the main shopping for them. The respondents of this group answered nearly the same. If they had a successful order and the items fitted them, they all had the feeling of convenience. Seven out of ten stated that they have a feeling of convenience when the items fit and they do not have to return them. Their main intention of buying at an OSE eliminated store is nevertheless not the feeling of convenience as usual, but rather the convenience that they do not have to decide on the different items. Two out of ten had an unsuccessful order and had to return the whole outfit. Their feeling of convenience was through the bad chosen outfit of the fashion stylist not present. The 'usual' online shopper group was asked whether they would like to make use of an OSE eliminated store and why. Ten out of ten indicated that they would like to make use of an OSE eliminated store, to save time that is normally spend on browsing different apparel online stores for the perfect outfit. Moreover do they in overall dislike shopping and if the process of shopping can be handled in an easier way than at a 'usual' online store it will be in their favor.

As mentioned above the prices of apparel are also crucial in this research. Therefore the respondents have been asked to investigate whether they have the feeling of the best price or if the price does not matter. The respondents of the OSE eliminated shopper have claimed that if they were happy with their order and the outfit was matched successfully they had the feeling of the best price. In order to the price range that can be set by every shopper in the beginning they know how expensive the outfit will be. Three out of ten respondents claimed that their order was not that successful and that they had the feeling of being more charged than they would have actually paid for in a 'usual' online store. The 'usual' online shopper respondents have been asked what their average price is of apparel items that they buy online. This has been asked because the lowest apparel prices at OSE eliminated stores is round 50€ per item. It is interesting to investigate how much money from 'usual' an online store shopper is spent on apparel items. Eight out of ten

respondents spend in average for one apparel item round 70€. The other four respondents less than 70€, they spend round 40€ on an apparel item.

The attractiveness of a 'usual' online store as it is already researched in former literature, e.g. by Trevinal & Stenger (2014) has been clearly defined and is not researched again. Therefore the questions of attractiveness, has only been asked to the OSE eliminated shopper respondents. Six out of ten indicate that the easy way of shopping a whole outfit under these circumstances and the online tool of virtual images that show the style was the main point of attractiveness to them. Furthermore they wanted to experience something new that might have the potential of giving them more self-esteem. Moreover, the anonymity paired with personality from the one stylist for one person was a big point of attraction.

The following questions are especially focusing on the OSE eliminated stores and where therefore only asked to the research group that has experience with it. The amount of kept items of the Outfit box is answered with a range from nothing up to six pieces. More precisely have five out of the ten respondents indicated that they have kept the half box and more and the other five respondents have clearly kept less than half of the box. The average price of the items that OSE eliminated shopper have paid is ranging from 50€ up to 110€, with 8 respondents that claimed that they have in the beginning already installed that apparel items might not be more expensive than this. The process of return was answered by all ten respondents with easy and no problems at all.

### 5.6 Socialization

Concerning the store loyalty and socialization the respondents have been asked to state if they would make use of the service again. Eight of the ten respondents stated that they would definitely make use of the service again. Even if their outfit was not perfectly matched and they did not like all of the items, they do still have the feeling that it is quite comfortable to order an outfit. Respondent Marcus, 26 year old, evokes: 'My outfit did not fit as I thought that I will, but after very nice email contact and customer support by the fashion stylist I made the decision to try the service again – with an successful second order'. Furthermore, the process of return is very easy and it is more time saving than sending different apparel items back to different online stores. 'I became the order within a few days, but some of the apparel did not fit so I decided to exchange it, after a short chat with the customer support everything was organized' (Maximilian, 27 years old). Three out of the ten will not make use of the service again. They have been not sufficient satisfied with the outfit on behalf of style and fit. They indicate that their following online apparel purchase will occur via a 'usual' online store. Since the part of socialization is very little in this research it is not seen as a main driver for customers to choose for an OSE eliminated store. Nevertheless, store loyalty is still evaluated for this paper.

## 6. RESULTS

As the analysis showed had the selection of apathetic shopping candidates behalf of two from each group, the 'usual' online shopper and the OSE eliminated store shopper, been successful. Furthermore have the interviews provided sufficient answers on the main research question that was the research cornerstone of this paper. The results indicate that the main drivers for customers, in this case especially the here researched male apathetic shoppers, to choose for an OSE eliminated store over 'usual' online stores are: Time, Shopping orientation and online

tools. Nevertheless, is it relevant to propose the conceptual framework of OSE eliminated components not alone with the now detected drivers, it is necessary to take the apathetic shopping behavior as well as store loyalty into account to conclude a sufficient answer. Otherwise it might be the case that the apathetic shopper is a one time user that will never use the service again, what means that the drivers are not as attractive as here assumed.

### 6.1 Shopping behavior of the apathetic shopper

The four test questions, on the selection of the apathetic shopper, are of course without guarantee but the respondents indicated to have answered truly. These questions investigate that the apathetic shopper sees shopping as a necessary evil that is time consuming and troublesome. The income indication of the OSE eliminated respondents has shown the already researched high level of academics or in this case because we are not sure about the level of academics a high income, what mostly refers to a high positioned job of the apathetic shopper. The average spending money on apparel shopping monthly or every three month has proven that the apathetic shopper is a customer that indeed does online shopping as already researched by former literature, but indicates that he does this as rarely as possible.

### 6.2 OSE components

The difference between the 'usual' online shopper sample group and the OSE eliminated sample group has its climax on the OSE element 'Time'. As the analysis has shown, does an 'usual' online shopper claim that shopping online is a time consuming process, due to visiting different online stores to get all apparel items for one outfit together. On the opposite does the OSE eliminated online shopper indicate that shopping online is a time saving process, because of the selection of role model outfits on behalf of pictures. Therefore it can be assumed that the apathetic shopper seems to be attracted by an OSE eliminated store, because it is time saving and the overall annoying process of online shopping can be handled in a way shorter than at 'usual' online stores. Moreover, based on the results of the analysis, did the 'usual' online shopper sample group indicate, that they would like to make use of an OSE eliminated store because they have a time saving aspect. This paper evaluates the drivers for customers, especially the apathetic shopper, to choose for an OSE eliminated store over a 'usual' online store. It has been evaluated that the component time is known as the main driver for customers to choose for an eliminated OSE store. Another interesting result deals with the shopping orientation. The 'usual' online shopper, shops online because they are in the need of variety and looking for the best price. The apathetic shopper of the OSE eliminated group, as it was found out in the analysis, is not in the need of variety anymore even if he is still looking for the best price. Therefore the 'Shopping orientation' is not differentiated in the two groups of utilitarian or hedonism anymore. It seems to be correlating into one orientation, on the one hand it is necessary to shop apparel and on the other hand they want to get it for the best price. The component 'Shopping orientation' is therefore new defined and acts with its new definition definitely as a driver for customer to shop at an OSE eliminated store. Moreover, the result regarding the online tools is detected as a main driver for customers to choose for buying at an eliminated OSE store. The respondents indicated that they experience the shopping process at an eliminated OSE store as convenient and easy. This convenience and easiness has been gained though the layout of the shop principle. The customers have via several

online tools, which make the shopping process as convenient as possible, like for example the price range tool and the style selection via photos, the possibility to experience their shopping process in an apathetic friendly way.

### 6.3 Store loyalty of eliminated OSE store customers

As the analysis indicated is the store loyalty toward online shopping as a whole highly present. Due to the apathetic shopper, who dislikes crowds, music and long shopping tours is the use of the online stores perfect. Moreover has the analysis shown that the OSE eliminated shopper prefer the eliminated shopping experience in such a way that they stay loyal to the store and will make use of it in the future or did even use it for some time. The results of the 'usual' online shopping group indicated that in regard to eliminated OSE stores they would also like to try it and if they get they will feel that the eliminated makes shopping more easy they will also use it more often.

## 7. CONCLUSION

The objective of this research was to investigate the main drivers for customers, especially the apathetic shopper, to choose an eliminated OSE store over 'usual' online stores. The present paper provided a detailed overview of current literature and a qualitative analysis on the apathetic shopper and his shopping behavior. When taking the analyzed and reviewed literature with the interview outcomes into account, one can conclude the following:

The OSE as it was analyzed by Trevinal and Stenger (2014) covers nine different elements, namely time, shopping orientation, senses, values, rituals, patronage routines, online tools, socialization and decision aid. This paper has evaluated that an OSE eliminated store like, Outfittery or Modomoto, has five different components of OSE to deal with, namely time, shopping orientation, rituals, online tools and socialization. These components of the eliminated OSE, as they have been researched above, not all of them acting as drivers for customers to choose such an eliminated OSE online store. They have been discussed more in detail above. The shopping behavior of the apathetic shopper has been researched on the respondents of both sample groups. The analysis of this term has been conducted on the basis of their income, shopping frequency and mainly overall shopping concerning questions. As the results have shown does the apathetic shopper, as it was partly researched by former literature, shop as rarely as possible. Due to the fact, that the apathetic shopper sees the process of shopping, whether in a 'usual' online store or in an OSE eliminated online store, as necessary evil, is his shopping behavior still difficult to name. He conducts the process of shopping favorable as fast as possible and as this paper has shown with regard to his amount of money that he spends on the apparel items. As the reviewed literature already implicated has the apathetic shopper no technical reluctance, what in this case results in a barrier free online shopper to be attracted by OSE eliminated stores. This raises the question of whether the apathetic shopper shows store loyalty. As the respondents of the OSE eliminated sample group has indicated, will more than 50% make use of the store again. Likewise, does the 'usual' online shopper sample group indicate, that they will also with more than 50% try the service of an OSE eliminated online store in the future.

## 8. DISCUSSION

After an in-depth evaluation of the apathetic shopper in connection with eliminated OSE stores, it became clear that not all of the OSE components of an eliminated online store act as drivers for customers to buy there. As it can be seen in Figure 2, there are three out of five applicable eliminated OSE components, closely related with the drivers for customers to choose for buying at an eliminated OSE store. The two components rituals and socialization has not shown any effect as driver for the researched sample groups to buy at an OSE eliminated store.



Figure 2: Theoretical Framework after evaluation

The second developed framework shows, which components of the OSE elimination are actually influencing or acting as drivers for customers, to choose for an OSE eliminated online store and especially attract the here researched apathetic shopper. The eliminated OSE components that act as drivers for customers are shown in Figure 2 within the green blocks. They are sorted with regard to its importance and show for example that Time was the element of OSE elimination that had the greatest difference to the 'usual' online shopping experience and is therefore the most attracting driver for customers to choose an OSE eliminated store.

## 9. LIMITATIONS

The present paper does not only provide new insights on the apathetic shopper as well as on the OSE eliminated stores, it has obviously some limitations that have to be taken into consideration.

First of all, it has to be considered that the time limit was bounded up to 10 weeks in total and therefore the research on literature and the review on it are banded on a short timeframe. Furthermore, not only the scanning and analysis of the literature was bound to the short timeframe, it was also the selection of the sample groups that was limited with its size to in total 24 respondents.

Nor is it examining all genders. This paper is only focusing on the male apathetic shopper in the age of 25 to 29 that have been selected via advertising for respondents on social networks and word-of-mouth advertising. This results in a limited geographical area of the respondents that have been selected for this study.

## 10. FUTURE RESEARCH

Concerning the future research possibilities on the apathetic shopper and eliminated online shopping experience stores, this paper shows areas of specific concern for marketers. Due to the case that the research on the apathetic shopper is still not at its



end and on the male customer in its infancy, it might be from special interest to conduct a study that is from more extent that this paper provided. The sample group can be broader and an evaluation on the difference between the female and male apathetic shopper will provide new topics that can be researched.

Furthermore, it is advised to put more importance on the components of eliminated OSE and especially on those who act not as drivers for customers. If these elements can also act as drivers for apathetic shoppers or if they can be totally excluded, the attractiveness might rise.

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### 13. APPENDIX



**Framework 1: OSE elements of an 'usual' online store, OSE elements of an eliminated store that may act as attractiveness to the customer**



**Framework 2: OSE elements of an 'usual' online store, OSE elements of an eliminated store, green elements are the drivers for customers, especially for apathetic shopper to shop in an OSE eliminated store**