

Challenges Traditional Firms Encounter when Launching Online Sales Services: Bangladesh Viewpoint

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Subject: Letter of Transmittal

Dear Sir,

As required by the MPhil program, I am sending in this research study titled "Challenges traditional firms encounter when launching online Sales Services: Bangladesh Viewpoint."

The purpose of this study was to determine what obstacles traditional businesses face when they start offering online sales services. A few difficulties were determined using first-hand information and previously published works.

I want to express my gratitude for all of your help in coming up with the concept and for providing me with never-ending motivation to finish the work.

Finally, I would appreciate it if you could once again offer your wise counsel on effort.

Sincerely

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IJISRT Authority

Subject: Letter of Authorization

Dear Sir,

I am writing to authorize the submission of my research paper to your esteemed journal. I am the sole author of this paper and have not submitted it to any other journal for publication.

I hereby grant permission to publish my paper in electronic format. I understand that the paper will be subject to peer review and that the final decision to publish rests with the editor.

Please find attached a copy of the manuscript, along with any supplementary materials required for publication. If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you for considering my submission.

Sincerely
Tasmia Jaigirder
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ABSTRACT

Brick-and-Click organizations (Brick and Click Organizations) have emerged as a new type of business that aims to provide consumers with a seamless experience while purchasing products online. This study seeks to identify and understand the challenges that traditional businesses face when attempting to launch online sales services. The study employs a descriptive research design to address the research issues. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with key-decision-makers in such enterprises to get qualitative insights into the challenges faced by the businesses. This study's target population consists of Bangladeshi brick and click businesses. Online data were collected from a total of 1,036 respondents. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The findings suggest that, businesses face a variety of online sales obstacles. Respondents from businesses indicate that their online sales difficulties were influenced by the product or service they sell and their interactions with customers, including their age, gender, and nature. Customers' distraction during online shopping is a common issue for click-only businesses. According to this study, however, brick-and-click retailers perceived it as a moderate challenge. The classic retail challenges of building personal relationships and providing a tactile product experience are not as daunting for brick and click businesses as they are for online-only businesses. By taking a proactive approach to the issues identified in this study, brick-and click businesses can not only overcome the immediate challenges but also position themselves favorably for future growth and success in the digital marketplace.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	945
Chapter 1 . Introduction	48-951
A. <i>Problem Statement</i>	
B. <i>Approach to the Problem</i>	
Chapter 2. Literature Review.....	952-958
A. INEFFICIENT RESOURCE ALLOCATION	
B. OPERATIONAL STRAIN.....	
C. CHALLENGES IN OMNICHANNEL INTEGRATION	
D. PERSONALIZED IN-STORE EXPERIENCE.....	
E. BRIDGING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE	
F. LEVERAGING TRADITIONAL MARKETING	
G. EDUCATE AND ASSIST.....	
H. BLEND BOTH WORLDS.....	
2.2. Low-cost item Purchasers' impact.....	
2.3. Customers' Reluctance to Pay Delivery Charges on Brick and Click Organizations.....	
2.3.1 E-COMMERCE GIANTS' INFLUENCE	
2.3.2 PERCEIVED VALUE PROPOSITION.....	
2.3.3 COMPARATIVE SHOPPING	
2.3.4 PROFIT MARGIN EROSION	
2.3.5 OPERATIONAL STRAIN	
2.3.6 INVENTORY CHALLENGES	
2.3.7 BRAND PERCEPTION	
2.3.8 COMPETITIVE DISPARITIES	
2.4 The distraction of customers	
2.5 LESS OPPORTUNITY TO CREATE A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH CLIENTS:.....	
2.6 Lack of touch and feel of product.....	
Chapter 3. Research Methodology	959-960
3.1 Research Design	
3.2. Target Population:.....	959
3.3. Scaling Method:.....	
3.4 Nature of the questionnaire:.....	
3.5 Sample design and size:.....	
3.5.1 FRAME FOR SAMPLING:	
3.5.2 METHOD OF SAMPLING:	
3.5.3 SAMPLE SIZE:	
3.6. Data Collection:	
3.6.1. SURVEYS AND QUESTIONNAIRES:	
3.6.2. OBSERVING THE DAY-TO-DAY OPERATIONS.....	
3.6.3. LITERATURE REVIEW	
3.6.4. INDUSTRY REPORTS:	
Chapter 4. Data analysis and Findings	961-964

4.1. Data Analysis:.....	
4.1.1 DATA EDITING AND CODING:	
4.1.2. DATA ENTRY:	
4.1.3. DATA CHECKING FOR ACCURACY:.....	
4.1.4. QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS:	
4.1.5. SCALE CHOICE RATIONALE:	
4.1.6 INSTRUMENT DEVELOPMENT AND VALIDATION FOR SURVEY DESIGN:.....	
4.1.7 INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS:	
4.1.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS: (INFORMED CONSENT)	
4.1.9 DATA CONFIDENTIALITY:	
4.1.10 STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK:	
4.1.11 ENDNOTE AND SYNTHESIS:	
4.1.12 RATIONALE FOR THE RESEARCH APPROACH:	
4.1.13. TECHNIQUES APPLIED FOR ENHANCING DATA VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY:	
4.2 Findings.....	
Chapter 5. Limitations, Conclusion and Recommendations	965-968
5.1. Limitations:.....	965
5.1.1 EXCLUSIVITY OF BUSINESS OWNERS' PERSPECTIVE:	
5.1.2. LIMITED EXPLORATION OF CLIENT PERSPECTIVES:	
5.1.3. SMALL SAMPLE SIZE:	
5.1.4. LIMITED LITERATURE REVIEW:	
5.1.5. QUALITY OF SECONDARY DATA:	
5.1.6 LESS FOCUS ON EMPLOYEE PERSPECTIVE:	
5.1.7 LESS FOCUS ON SERVICE PROVIDERS PERSPECTIVE:	
5.1.8 SIZE AND GEOGRAPHIC REPRESENTATION:	
5.1.9 SCOPE OF LITERATURE REVIEW:.....	
5.1.10 CREDIBILITY OF SOURCES:.....	
5.2 Conclusion.....	967
5.3. Recommendation	
Acknowledgement	969
References	970
List of Tables.....	974
List of Figures.....	974

CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

The advent of the internet has revolutionized, the way businesses operate, forcing traditional firms to adapt to the digital age. One significant adaptation is the launch of online sales services, which allows companies to reach a wider customer base and increase their revenue potential. However, this transition is not without its challenges. Traditional firms encounter various obstacles when venturing into the world of online sales services. In developing nations such as Bangladesh, brick-and-mortar stores are the most common business model. If a brick-and-mortar store adds online distribution service concurrently, the model is referred to as bricks and clicks (Kotler & Armstrong, 2017).

Historically, traditional businesses have been the lifeblood of communities, providing not just goods and services, but also playing a role in shaping the socio-economic fabric of societies (Turner, L., 2015). From family-owned corner shops to larger retail chains, these entities have evolved over the years, fine-tuning their practices based on societal shifts, technological advances, and changing consumer preferences. For decades, the essence of business remained consistent. The emphasis was on tangible elements: a physical location, on-site inventory, face-to-face interactions, and a direct sensory experience for consumers, where they could touch, feel, or even taste products before making a purchase decision. These businesses also held a significant place in the local community. They provided employment, supported local events, and were part of everyday life (Wright, M., 2016). However, as globalization intensified in the late 20th century, the rise of multinational corporations and big-box retailers started to pose threats to these traditional business models. And while they grappled with these macro-level changes, another seismic shift was on the horizon—the digital revolution.

The term "digital disruption" was coined to describe the rapid changes technology brought about in various sectors. The retail sector was no exception. The 1990s saw the dawn of e-commerce, with pioneers like eBay and Amazon entering the fray. While initially perceived as a novelty, it wasn't long before the potential of online sales was recognized (Barnes, D., 2017). The allure of online shopping was multifaceted. For consumers, the convenience was unparalleled. They could browse products from multiple sellers, compare prices, read reviews, and make purchases, all without leaving their homes. This was not just a change in shopping methods; it was a complete transformation of the shopping experience. For businesses, the digital realm opened doors to larger markets. Geographical constraints that once restricted a shop to its local community were suddenly rendered moot. A business could be located in a small town in Europe and still cater to customers in Asia or North America. The growth potential was explosive. The Impetus for Traditional Businesses to Adapt: By the 2010s, the narrative was clear—adapt or perish. The retail landscape was rife with stories of long-standing businesses, some with histories spanning over a century, going bankrupt. The reasons often pointed towards an inability or reluctance to adapt to the digital age (Harper, T., 2019). But why was there resistance in the first place? The answer lies in understanding the complexities of transitioning online. Traditional businesses had their operations, practices, and strategies deeply rooted in a different kind of commerce. Their strengths, which lay in offering personalized experiences, relying on generations of customer loyalty, and understanding local market dynamics, didn't necessarily translate easily to the digital space. Their brand narratives, often built over the years, needed to be communicated differently online. Furthermore, the investment required for this transformation—in terms of money, time, and effort—was substantial. However, the rise of digitally native businesses, which operated solely online and were adept at utilizing digital tools, meant that competition was fierce. These enterprises were agile, data-driven, and often, more in tune with the digital-savvy consumer. Traditional businesses not only had to compete with them but also had to contend with the rapidly changing technology landscape, from the growth of mobile commerce to the advent of artificial intelligence in retail.

In the face of such compelling dynamics, the migration from traditional to digital is not just about staying relevant. It is a quest for survival, growth, and tapping into new avenues of opportunities that the digital age offers. This study's subsequent sections will delve deep into the myriad challenges traditional businesses face during this transformation and provide insights and recommendations to navigate this complex journey (Barnes, 2017) (Harper, 2019) (Turner, 2015) (Wright, 2016).

Nowadays Online business organizations are gradually gaining popularity in developing nations such as Bangladesh, leading to a growth in the number of online business organizations in our country. Due to the growing popularity of e-commerce, brick-and-mortar firms are converting into brick-and-click enterprises by adding online distribution capabilities to their existing services (BCCG, 2018). There are currently more than 1886 e-commerce enterprises functioning in our country (e-CAB.net). They operate their enterprises using websites and 8,000 Facebook Commerce entrepreneurs operate their firms through Facebook pages. In addition, there are about 500 e-CAB companies registered (Mehedi& Fakhruddin, 2017). Traditional businesses are losing customers to these online firms. It poses a significant challenge to conventional brick-and-mortar enterprises. Traditional firms are launching online distribution systems to compete with internet competitors. However, they face numerous obstacles as they develop into brick-and-click businesses. This study seeks to identify the obstacles faced by conventional firms while adopting an online distribution strategy.

Challenges Traditional Businesses Encounter When Launching Online Sales Services In the age of digital transformation, traditional businesses are constantly striving to integrate into the modern e-commerce landscape. The migration from brick-and-mortar to digital storefronts is not merely a trend but has become a requisite for survival for many businesses. The reasons are evident - the reach and convenience of online shopping have driven an increasing number of consumers to opt for this mode (Smith, A., 2019). Background of traditional businesses and the digital age: Traditional businesses, often characterized by their brick-and-mortar operations, have operated on foundational principles that have withstood the test of time. They rely on physical presence, face-to-face customer interactions, tangible product displays, and an entrenched method of operation. They've been a staple of commerce for centuries, forming the backbone of local economies (Johnson, B., 2018). However, the advent of the digital age in the late 20th century, marked by the proliferation of the Internet and digital devices, reshaped the consumer landscape. E-commerce giants like Amazon and Alibaba began their foray into the market, indicating a paradigm shift (Evans, P., 2020). These platforms offered consumers unprecedented convenience — shopping from the comfort of their homes, a variety of choices, user reviews, and often, more competitive prices.

The 21st century saw the steady growth of e-commerce, with a significant spike in the 2020s, particularly attributed to global phenomena like the COVID-19 pandemic. This period accelerated the need for businesses to have an online presence as lockdowns and safety concerns made online shopping a norm (Parker, G., 2021). For traditional businesses, transitioning to online sales is not just about capturing a share of the growing e-commerce market. It's also about business resilience, diversification, and ensuring they remain relevant in an increasingly digital world. A report by McKinsey & Company (2022) highlighted that companies without a digital presence are expected to see a decline in growth by 30% over the next decade.

While the reasons to transition online are compelling, the challenges are manifold. This study seeks to identify and understand the challenges that traditional businesses face when attempting to launch online sales services. It aims to provide insights into the technological, operational, financial, and other barriers they encounter and offer recommendations to overcome them. Understanding these challenges is not just academic. For business leaders, policymakers, and stakeholders, these insights can form the basis of strategy, decision-making, and policy formulation. It can guide businesses on their digital transformation journey and ensure they're equipped to navigate the complex digital marketplace (Watson, R., 2020).

In Summary The digital era, while promising opportunities, has also posed challenges for traditional businesses. The journey from physical storefronts to online platforms is fraught with obstacles. Through this study, we delve deep into these challenges, drawing from real-world examples, expert opinions, and empirical data to provide a comprehensive overview. (Smith J. , 2020)

There are so many challenges traditional firms face when launching online sales services. Many traditional firms have been operating in a brick-and-mortar environment for years, relying on traditional methods of conducting business. The shift to online sales requires a deep understanding of e-commerce platforms, website development, and digital marketing strategies (Faster Capital, n.d.). Without the necessary technical knowledge, firms may struggle to establish a robust online presence and effectively engage with customers.

Traditional firms invest in training programs or hire professionals with expertise in e-commerce and digital marketing. By building an in-house team or partnering with external agencies, firms bridge the technological gap and ensure a smooth transition into the online sales realm.

Traditional firms struggle to integrate online sales services with the existing systems. They often have well-established supply chains, inventory management systems, and customer relationship management (CRM) tools that are tailored to offline operations. Integrating these systems with online sales platforms can be complex and time-consuming.

Firms adopt cloud-based solutions to seamlessly integrate with their existing systems. Cloud-based platforms offer flexibility, scalability, and compatibility, allowing firms to streamline their operations and synchronize data across different channels. Additionally, seeking guidance from experts in system integration helps firms navigate this process effectively.

Establishing trust and credibility is crucial for any business, and it becomes even more challenging in the online realm. Traditional firms face skepticism from customers who are accustomed to physical stores and face-to-face interactions. Building trust in an online environment requires effective communication, transparent policies, and a strong online presence.

Firms focus on creating a user-friendly website with clear product information, customer reviews, and secure payment options. Implementing robust cybersecurity measures and displaying trust seals also enhance customers' confidence in the firm's online sales services. Additionally, actively engaging with customers through social media platforms and promptly addressing their concerns helps build their trust and credibility.

Traditional firms entering the online sales arena often face fierce competition from online-only retailers. These online giants have already established a strong digital presence, possess extensive customer databases, and have optimized their operations for online sales. Competing with such firms can be daunting for traditional businesses.

Firms differentiate themselves by offering unique value propositions and personalized customer experiences. Leveraging their existing brand reputation, customer loyalty, and physical store networks can give traditional firms a competitive edge. Collaborating with online influencers or partnering with complementary online retailers also helps expand their reach and attract new customers.

So it can be summarized that traditional firms encounter several challenges when launching online sales services. Overcoming these obstacles requires a strategic approach that includes acquiring technological expertise, integrating existing systems, building trust and credibility, and effectively competing with online-only retailers. By embracing digital transformation and adapting their business models, traditional firms can successfully navigate the online sales landscape and unlock new growth opportunities.

A. Problem Statement

The advent of the digital age and the consequent rise of e-commerce has revolutionized the way businesses operate and how consumers shop (webapi, n.d.). Traditional businesses, primarily defined by their brick-and-mortar operations, have been a foundational element of commerce for centuries, anchoring local economies and fostering community relationships. Yet, the digital shift has compelled these businesses to consider online sales services as a means to remain competitive and relevant in today's market.

While the transition to online platforms offers a plethora of opportunities—ranging from broader market reach, and 24/7 operational hours, to data-driven insights—it also brings forth a set of unique challenges. Many traditional businesses struggle with aspects like technological integration, digital marketing strategies, online customer service expectations, and navigating the regulatory landscape of online sales. Additionally, there's the intrinsic challenge of translating their physical brand presence and reputation into the digital domain. The stark difference between operating a physical storefront and managing an online portal means that these businesses often grapple with not just operational and financial issues, but also with strategic and cultural shifts.

The need to address these challenges is pressing, especially given the rapid growth of e-commerce giants and digitally native startups that have set high standards for online shopping experiences. Traditional businesses risk not only losing market share but also becoming obsolete if they don't effectively transition to online platforms. However, without a clear understanding of the specific challenges they face, these businesses might commit avoidable errors, wasting resources and time. For stakeholders, from business owners and employees to policymakers and consumers, understanding these challenges is paramount. It's not just about the survival of individual businesses; it's about the preservation and evolution of an entire segment of commerce that has historical, cultural, and economic significance.

While there is a plethora of literature on the rise of e-commerce and strategies for online success, there is a comparative dearth of focused research on the unique challenges faced specifically by traditional businesses when they transition online. These businesses, with their distinct histories, operational models, and community ties, require tailored insights and solutions, not generic e-commerce strategies.

This study aims to delve deep into the specific challenges encountered by traditional businesses as they launch online sales services. By identifying, understanding, and analyzing these challenges, the study seeks to offer actionable recommendations, thereby equipping traditional businesses with the knowledge and strategies they need for a successful online transition.

In emerging countries, brick-and-mortar enterprises are highly common and becoming increasingly profitable, but the business climate is somewhat different. The problems vary based on the environment, culture, socioeconomic position, and mentality of the people, among other variables. (Murray & Efendioglu, 2005). The majority of developing nations are plagued by a lack of technology infrastructure, skilled labor, affordable internet access, ICT regulations, government hurdles, and an online payment system. However, there is ICT-friendly legislation in our country, and we have already entered the era of digitization. The country has experienced exponential development in internet connectivity, mobile phone usage, IT export revenues, the use of ICT in education, and access to public services as a result of broad digitization and legislative backing. Taking into account prior research, this study will attempt to identify the obstacles that conventional enterprises in our country confront.

There is research on the obstacles facing international e-commerce (PrashadBingi,2000), cyber infrastructure, and major e-Commerce problems (Winter, 2000), (Barriers to e-Commerce in Developing Countries, , 2010)and so on, but no research was discovered on the obstacles brick-and-mortar enterprises in Bangladesh encounter while launching online services. If the obstacles can be identified, it will be easier for conventional firms to deal with the situation when launching an online business.

B. Approach to the Problem

The purpose of the study is to identify the obstacles a business faces while adopting online sales services with a conventional infrastructure. If corporate organizations can accurately identify the obstacles, it will be easier for them to overcome them. In light of this, this study sought to address the following questions:

- Does client computer/technology illiteracy offer a difficulty for brick-and-mortar and online businesses?
- Does collecting delivery fees from clients provide difficulty for brick-and-mortar and online businesses?
- Are low-cost item purchasers a hurdle for brick-and-mortar and e-commerce businesses?
- Does client distraction during online buying (sudden switch from one site to another due to a pop-up commercial or other reason; Marci, 2017) constitute a difficulty for brick-and-click businesses?
- Does the inability to develop a human relationship with customers provide difficulty for brick-and-mortar and online businesses?
- Does the lack of touch and feel of things present a barrier for brick-and-mortar and online businesses?

This study, like all others, has a set of objectives. This study's primary purpose is to identify the obstacles experienced by traditional firms that provide Internet services. The large objective is subdivided into several smaller ones.

- To determine whether or not the computer/technology illiteracy of clients poses a challenge for brick-and-mortar and online businesses.
- To determine whether collecting delivery fees from clients poses a challenge for brick-and-mortar and online firms.
- To determine whether low-cost item purchasers present a barrier for brick-and-mortar and online enterprises.
- To determine whether the distraction of clients during online buying (sudden transfer from one site to another due to a pop-up commercial or other reason; Marci, 2017) poses a problem for brick-and-click businesses.
- To determine whether fewer opportunities to develop a personal relationship with clients provide a challenge for brick-and-mortar and online businesses.
- To determine whether or whether "loss of feel and touch of products" is a barrier for brick-and-mortar and online enterprises.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

The foundation of commerce has always been rooted in traditional, brick-and-mortar businesses (Smith, A., 2019). Johnson (2018) emphasized the profound socio-cultural and economic impact these businesses have had, serving as the backbone of communities and local economies. With the technological shift, there emerged a clear bifurcation between these traditional models and newer, digital-first enterprises.

Evans (2020) charted the rapid rise of e-commerce, highlighting the paradigm shift in consumer behavior and preference. According to him, the allure of convenience, variety, and competitive pricing has driven consumers towards online platforms. This evolution, while beneficial for consumers, has posed a significant challenge for traditional businesses. The challenge is not merely technological but extends to understanding new market dynamics, consumer behaviors, and competitive landscapes (Parker, G., 2021).

The technological nuances of transitioning online are manifold. Barnes (2017) detailed the intricacies involved in setting up an e-commerce platform, from the choice of platform to its customization and integration with existing systems. Moreover, as Watson (2020) noted, traditional businesses often grapple with integrating their existing Point-Of-Sale (POS) systems, inventory management, and customer databases with new online platforms. This technological leap requires not only financial investment but also a shift in skills and organizational culture.

With the digital shift, the market dynamics have undergone a significant transformation. Traditional businesses are no longer competing solely with their local counterparts. The online space has leveled the playing field, pitting these businesses against e-commerce giants and nimble startups (Turner, L., 2015). This change means traditional businesses must understand and adapt to a much broader competitive landscape, requiring not only a shift in strategy but also a reevaluation of their unique value propositions.

Digital platforms have changed consumer expectations. Harper (2019) explored how consumers now anticipate a seamless shopping experience, bridging both offline and online realms. This "omnichannel" expectation means that businesses cannot view their online and offline entities in isolation. Instead, there needs to be a convergence, ensuring that the consumer experience is consistent and complementary across platforms.

The financial implications of transitioning online are multifaceted. While there's potential for increased revenues through expanded reach, there's also a significant upfront investment required in technology, training, and marketing (Barnes, D., 2017). Furthermore, Watson (2020) highlighted the often-overlooked operational costs associated with maintaining online platforms, from hosting fees to digital marketing expenses.

Traditional businesses often have deep-rooted ties with their communities, and this relationship can be both an asset and a challenge when transitioning online. Turner (2015) emphasized the importance of these businesses maintaining their community ties even as they expand their digital footprint. There's a delicate balance to be struck, ensuring that in the quest for global reach, the local, loyal customer base isn't alienated.

Analyzing the above challenges we can find out more specific challenges that Brick-and-mortar firms attempting to launch new online sales services may confront. They must contend with the challenges of both the Internet and traditional business. In (Barriers to e-Commerce in Developing Countries, , 2010) the difficulties faced by internet enterprises in developing nations are examined. Infrastructure, socio-culture, socio-economics, and a lack of government assistance comprise the four categories of obstacles. According to the survey, the majority of people in developing nations are illiterate and unable to operate technical devices. People who can use technology are not necessarily interested in purchasing expensive items online. Even if a consumer spends hours on the Internet, another study demonstrates that no relationship is formed between the customer and the online store in the presence of perceived online risk. (Zuroni Md Jusoh, 2012). Men and women dislike the inability to touch and feel the merchandise the most while purchasing online. (Mohammad Anisur Rahman, 2018). The timely delivery of merchandise to remote locations is another significant obstacle for retailers. (2018) Bangladesh Country Commercial Guide.

Reviewing the extant literature on the subject, the researcher identified several obstacles, which are explored in light of other related studies.

The transformation of commerce in the digital age has necessitated a shift in business strategies, and this is particularly palpable for traditional businesses. Over the last few decades, several studies have delved into the evolution of e-commerce, offering a glimpse into the journey traditional businesses undergo when integrating online sales services.

The literature on the challenges faced by traditional businesses in integrating online sales services is both vast and varied. From technological hurdles to understanding new-age market dynamics, these businesses face a steep learning curve. However, with the right strategies, informed by comprehensive research, traditional businesses can successfully navigate the digital transformation, leveraging their unique strengths while harnessing the opportunities offered by online platforms. (Smith A. , 2019), (Johnson, 2018), (Evans, 2020), (Parker, 2021), (Turner, 2015), (Barnes, 2017) (Harper, 2019), (Watson, 2020).

A. *Technology Illiteracy of Customers:*

Bangladesh's emerging economy has several social, economic, political, and technological disadvantages. According to a 2016 study conducted by Kaymu.com.bd, the majority of e-commerce users in Bangladesh are between the ages of 25 and 34, and three areas account for more than 80 percent of the country's e-commerce traffic. Dhaka tops the list with 35% of total traffic, followed by Chittagong (29%) and Gazipur (15%). Based on the aforementioned data, we can conclude that the majority of online consumers are young and reside in large cities such as Dhaka, Chittagong, and Gazipur. People who cannot use the internet, such as the elderly and the uneducated, are less likely to shop online.

The advent of the internet era has dramatically transformed the business landscape, giving rise to the "brick and click" model where organizations operate both physical stores and online platforms. While many customers have readily adapted to this digital shift, a significant portion remains technologically illiterate. This technological divide has cascading effects on brick-and-click businesses, shaping their strategies, operations, and bottom line. It's vital to understand what technology illiteracy entails. At its core, it represents a gap in knowledge or confidence in using digital tools and platforms. Those who are technologically illiterate may struggle with online shopping, digital payment methods, or even basic tasks like browsing or email. This gap can stem from various sources, including generational differences, economic disparities, and educational backgrounds. Challenges Posed to Brick and Click Organizations.

- **Limited Online Market Reach:** For a brick-and-click organization, a technologically illiterate customer base means a constrained online market. These customers are likely to opt for in-person shopping due to unfamiliarity or mistrust of online platforms. This limits the potential growth and diversification that online platforms offer.
- **Inefficient Resource Allocation:** Businesses often face dilemmas regarding resource allocation. Should they invest more in their online platform, expecting future growth, or focus on traditional retail, catering to the current technologically illiterate demographic? This indecision can lead to suboptimal investments.
- **Operational Strain:** Balancing between online and offline operations can be challenging. When a significant portion of the customer base is resistant to digital adoption, companies may need to maintain larger physical infrastructures, leading to higher overhead costs.
- **Challenges in Omnichannel Integration:** One of the main advantages of the brick-and-click model is the seamless integration of online and offline channels, providing customers with a unified shopping experience. However, with technologically illiterate customers, achieving this integration becomes challenging. These customers may not use apps, loyalty programs, or digital coupons, making it difficult to create a cohesive customer journey. While the above points highlight the adversities faced by brick-and-click businesses due to technology illiteracy, it's not all bleak. That may add up to some more responsibilities on the back of the entrepreneurs.
- **Personalized In-store Experience:** Technologically illiterate customers often prefer human interactions to get personalized services. They add to the existing crowd to create extra pressure on the sales counter.
- **Bridging the Digital Divide:** Companies have to play roles in educating their customer base. Workshops, tutorials, and in-store tech assistance are provided to the customers to make them more comfortable with digital tools, thereby gradually increasing their online user base. That increases extra cost.
- **Leveraging Traditional Marketing:** While digital marketing is the rave, traditional marketing methods like TV, radio, and print still have significant reach, especially among the technologically illiterate demographic. Businesses have to use these channels also to target this segment. The Road Ahead for Brick-and-Click Organizations To navigate the challenges posed by technology illiteracy, brick-and-click organizations need to adopt a multi-pronged approach. That also enhances the expense.
- **Educate and Assist:** Brick-and-click businesses can proactively address technology illiteracy by offering training sessions and tutorials, which are cost-incurring and also bring extra hassles.
- **Blend Both Worlds:** Sometimes, to encourage online shopping Companies integrate the characteristics of both online and offline models. For instance, the ease of online browsing can be combined with the assurance of in-store purchases, allowing items to be reserved online and picked up in-store. That also incurs extra cost and crowd.

Finally, technology illiteracy presents both challenges and opportunities for brick-and-click organizations. While it poses limitations on the growth of online platforms, it also provides businesses a chance to innovate, connect, and create unique value propositions for their customers. As the digital divide narrows and more customers become tech-savvy, the landscape will undoubtedly evolve. However, for now, a balanced, empathetic, and strategic approach is the key for brick-and-click businesses to thrive in this diverse market.

B. Low-Cost Item Purchasers' Impact

In 2017, 78% of online shoppers purchased low-cost items, and the average basket size for online shopping remained below 1,000 BDT, according to a study done in 2017. This is another obstacle for traditional enterprises (Mehedi & Fakhruddin, 12:56 AM, 15 July 2017). Because the brick-and-mortar store cannot change its product type for internet clients if it currently sells high-end products. It may not always be viable to introduce a new, less expensive product line online. In today's digital age, the business landscape has dramatically transformed, giving rise to the "brick and click" model where organizations operate both physical stores and online platforms. An emerging challenge these businesses face is the preponderance of customers purchasing low-cost items. While it might seem innocuous or even beneficial initially, such purchasing behavior has significant ramifications for businesses. Understanding the Low-Cost Item Purchaser Phenomenon at the core of this phenomenon is the digital empowerment of consumers. Online platforms provide unparalleled access to a wide array of products, often at competitive prices. The ease of comparison shopping, coupled with aggressive digital marketing strategies, such as flash sales and deep discounts, has fostered a segment of consumers who predominantly purchase low-cost items.

The most immediate impact is on profit margins. Low-cost items often come with thin profit margins, especially when businesses use discounts to lure customers. When a large segment of customers only buys these discounted or low-margin products, it squeezes the overall profitability of the business. Fulfilling a high volume of low-cost items can put a significant strain on logistics and operations. Packaging, shipping, and handling costs remain relatively constant regardless of the item's price, which means the proportional cost for shipping low-cost items is higher. A surge in demand for low-cost items can lead to stockouts, while other higher-margin products might see less turnover, leading to overstock issues. This imbalance can cause increased holding costs and potential obsolescence for unsold items. If businesses base their marketing strategies on sales data without considering profit margins, they might be misled into over-promoting low-profit products, leading to further erosion of profits. Continual emphasis on low-cost items might position the brand as a "cheap" or "discount" brand in the minds of consumers. This perception can deter premium customers and reduce opportunities to upsell or cross-sell more profitable products.

In a brick-and-click model, online sales of low-cost items might reduce footfall in physical stores, leading to indirect costs such as underutilized staff or even the eventual closing of unprofitable outlets.

Understanding the broader market context is crucial. In many industries, particularly consumer electronics and fashion, products have a lifecycle where prices reduce over time. What starts as a premium product eventually becomes a low-cost item as newer models or styles emerge. The challenges lie not in the inherent existence of low-cost items but in the disproportionate focus and dependence on them.

One effective strategy is bundling low-cost items with complementary products, thereby increasing the overall purchase value and improving profit margins.

Encourage repeat purchases and larger basket sizes through loyalty programs, offering points or discounts on future purchases based on current spending (Avery, 2012), (Chen, 2017), (Kumar), (Verhoef P. C., 2007), (Walters, 2000).

C. Customers' Reluctance to Pay Delivery Charges on Brick and Click Organizations

The convergence of traditional brick-and-mortar retailing with online platforms has given birth to "brick-and-click" organizations. This hybrid model has transformed retail, offering consumers unprecedented convenience. However, one of the most significant challenges these organizations face is customers' growing reluctance to shoulder delivery charges for online purchases. This phenomenon, though seemingly simple, has profound implications for the retail landscape. Unraveling the Consumer Psyche Consumers' hesitation to pay for delivery can be traced back to several factors:

- **E-commerce Giants' Influence:** Dominant players like Amazon, with their Prime memberships, offer free shipping, shaping consumer expectations that delivery should be free or at a minimal cost.
- **Perceived Value Proposition:** Often, consumers can't reconcile paying delivery charges for a product that they might get for a similar price from a physical store without any added costs.
- **Comparative Shopping:** The ease of online comparison shopping means consumers can easily find alternatives that don't charge for delivery. Repercussions for Brick and Click Organizations.
- **Profit Margin Erosion:** To remain competitive, many retailers feel compelled to offer free shipping. This decision, while potentially driving sales, also squeezes profit margins. Especially for lower-priced items, absorbing delivery charges can represent a significant cost.
- **Operational Strain:** Offering free delivery can lead to increased order volumes, but these might be of lower individual value. The result is a heightened strain on logistics, with more parcels to pack, sort, and deliver, but less revenue generated per parcel.
- **Inventory Challenges:** If customers opt to buy more online due to free shipping offers, retailers may face rapid stock turnover challenges. Conversely, anticipating a surge in demand that doesn't materialize can lead to overstocking.

- **Brand Perception:** While free shipping can be seen as a positive, consistently emphasizing it might inadvertently signal to consumers that the brand is a “discount” or “low-value” brand. This perception can hinder the company’s ability to sell premium products or introduce higher-end services.
- **Competitive Disparities:** Smaller retailers, without the vast logistical networks of e-commerce giants, face a disproportionate challenge. They might find it financially unviable to offer free shipping but risk losing customers if they don’t.

When retailers introduce minimum purchase requirements for free shipping, it might lead to shopping cart abandonment. Customers might add items to meet the threshold, only to remove them and abandon the purchase upon reflection.

Hybrid Delivery Options can be adopted. brick-and-click organizations can offer "click and collect" services, where customers order online but pick up in-store, merging the online and offline experiences and saving on delivery costs. However, the total experience will not be online which may be a problem for online customers. And the offline ones may think if he has to get out of the home to pick up the product then why not to the real store for a spot purchase?

Educating customers about the actual costs of delivery can shift perceptions. Detailed breakdowns of costs, or even infographics explaining the delivery process, can demystify shipping fees (Beck, 2015), (Berman, 2004), (Verhoef P. C., (2013).) (Rigby, 2011).

D. The Distraction of Customers:

The distraction of customers is a sudden move from one site to another while online buying due to a pop-up commercial or other reason (Marci, 2017). During online research or shopping, shoppers are frequently interrupted by phone calls, emails, or chat windows. These disruptions cause customers to abandon their shopping carts or forget what they were doing, which is less probable at brick-and-mortar stores. (Hessinger, 2013).

The online shopping landscape, despite its convenience and expansive range, is fraught with numerous potential distractions that can disrupt the buying process. The phenomenon of a customer's distraction, as defined by a shift from one site to another because of pop-up ads or other stimuli (Marci, 2017), highlights a broader issue of online distractions. Unlike the tangible and mostly controlled environment of brick-and-mortar stores, the digital realm exposes consumers to an array of diversions that can significantly influence their buying behavior. Nature of the Digital Ecosystem The very nature of the internet, with its interlinked web pages, social media notifications, and streaming platforms, creates a breeding ground for distractions. A shopper could easily open multiple tabs, multitask, or even switch to an entirely different activity altogether. (Oulasvirta, 2006).

Impact of Pop-up Ads Pop-up ads meant to capture attention, can sometimes have the counterproductive effect of diverting users away from their primary task. These pop-ups, especially if not relevant to the user, can lead to annoyance and a quick exit from the primary shopping site. (Edwards, 2002) Forced exposure and psychological reactance are Antecedents and consequences of the perceived intrusiveness of pop-up ads.

Cognitive Load and Online Distractions are also experienced. The cognitive load in online environments, with multiple visual and auditory stimuli, can overwhelm users. This overburdening can lead to reduced focus, making users more susceptible to distractions (Sweller, 1994).

Social Media Intrusion With the ubiquity of social media, notifications from platforms like Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram can easily distract online shoppers. Such interruptions can be especially potent if they evoke stronger emotions or urgency than the shopping task (Kushlev, 2016).

External Environment Factors, Unlike the controlled ambiance of physical stores, online shoppers could be anywhere: at home, at work, or in transit. External factors, such as family interruptions, work-related tasks, or even the surrounding noise, can lead to breaks in the shopping journey (Gazzaley, 2016).

The Issue of Abandoned Carts Distractions is a significant reason for cart abandonment in online shopping. Customers, when interrupted, might not return to their carts, leading to potential revenue loss for e-commerce platforms. (Chaffey, 2019).

E-commerce cart abandonment rate. Smart Insights. Influence of Multitasking The digital era has made multitasking common. However, switching between tasks can reduce the effectiveness and enjoyment of each activity. For online shopping, this means reduced immersion and satisfaction. (Ophir, 2009).

Decreased Brand Recall and Loyalty Distracted shopping can lead to decreased brand recall. If consumers are frequently interrupted, they might not remember the brands they browsed or even purchased. (Bravo, 2009). The role of bank image for customers versus non-customers. International Journal of Bank Marketing.

Distractions can also have security implications. Shoppers, when interrupted, might fall prey to phishing attacks or share sensitive information without proper scrutiny. (Vishwanath, 2011). Why do people get phished? Testing individual differences in phishing vulnerability within an integrated, information processing model. *Decision Support Systems*, 51(3), 576-586. Impulse Buying and Distractions Ironically, while distractions can lead to cart abandonment, they can also spur impulse purchases.

A pop-up ad or a social media notification about a sale can lead users to make unplanned purchases. (Verhagen, 2011).

The online shopping environment, being nested within the vast and intricate digital realm, is subject to a multitude of potential distractions. From pop-up ads to external environmental factors, these diversions can critically influence consumer behavior, impacting the very essence of the online shopping experience. As e-commerce continues to evolve, understanding and managing these distractions will be paramount for businesses to ensure customer satisfaction and drive revenue.

E. Less Opportunity to Create a Personal Relationship with Clients:

In a traditional setting, salespeople can persuade customers to purchase a product, but in an online setting, there is no one to persuade the buyer. Traditional establishments can convert visitors into customers with relative ease. The interaction between salespeople and customers generates loyal, lifelong customers. In contrast, the internet salesperson has minimal influence over the customer. When using a mobile app to make an online purchase, no interaction with the vendor is required. Only selecting the goods and their size or color is required of the buyer. Therefore, the likelihood of developing a relationship is minimal. (BCCG, 2018).

Brick and Click Organizations In the era of digitization, maintaining both physical and online retail outlets, faces a unique challenge. While the online segment offers them vast reach and scalability, it often limits their ability to foster personal relationships with their clients. This limitation has some profound negative implications for such businesses. **Loss of Personal Touch and Brand Loyalty** Traditional brick-and-mortar stores thrive on face-to-face interactions, which foster trust and loyalty. Salespeople and clients often form connections over time, leading to repeat business and referrals. However, the impersonal nature of online interactions lacks the warmth and immediacy of face-to-face meetings. As a result, customers might not feel a strong allegiance to a particular brand or business. (Parasuraman A. &, 2000).

Higher Chances of Misunderstanding Online communications can be easily misinterpreted due to the absence of verbal cues, facial expressions, and tone of voice. Such misunderstandings can result in customer dissatisfaction, returns, or negative reviews, harming the brand's reputation. (Daft, 1986). **Increased Customer Churn Rate** Without a strong personal connection, customers might switch brands or platforms for minor price differences or promotions. Personal relationships act as a buffer against market fluctuations, whereas impersonal online interactions don't offer the same protective effect. (Reichheld, 2000).

Reduced Up-Selling and Cross-Selling Opportunities In physical stores, salespersons gauge a customer's preferences through direct interaction and can suggest additional products, leading to increased sales. Online, though there are recommendation algorithms, the absence of personal interaction might lead to lost opportunities. (Ansari, (2003).) **Difficulty in Handling Complaints and Returns** Online businesses often face challenges in handling complaints and returns due to the lack of immediate, personal interactions. A displeased customer can't be instantly appeased or guided in an online setting as effectively as in a physical store. (Maxham, 2001).

Potential for Reduced Customer Lifetime Value (CLV) Personal relationships tend to increase the CLV as they enhance customer loyalty and ensure repeated transactions. The impersonal nature of online interactions can limit the potential CLV for a business. (. (Kumar, 2009).) **Struggle with Building Trust** In an online environment, businesses face challenges in building trust due to the absence of physical interactions. Trust is a foundational element in commerce, and a lack of personal relationship-building opportunities can hinder its development. (Gefen D. K., 2003). **Limited Feedback Opportunities** Physical stores provide immediate feedback from customers, aiding in product and service improvements. In online settings, businesses may not receive as much spontaneous and candid feedback, leading to slower iterations and improvements. (Hennig-Thurau, 2002). **Dependency on Technology for Personalization** While technology can aid in personalization online, it can never truly replicate the human touch. Moreover, over-reliance on technology can sometimes lead to incorrect or impersonal recommendations, harming the customer experience. (Bleier, 2015). **Increased Marketing Costs** Without personal relationships, businesses may need to invest more in marketing campaigns to retain customers and build loyalty, increasing the cost of customer acquisition and retention. (Farris, 2010).

F. Lack of Touch and Feel of Product:

The majority of our customers desire to touch and feel the merchandise before making a purchase. Without viewing the product, consumers are unlikely to place an order. If the buyer is a return customer (customers who have made purchases and interacted with the company at least once before and have returned to do so at least once again (Ayaar, 2015)), s/he may have an idea of the product's actual appearance. However, a new customer is hesitant to place an order because the size and color of a product displayed on a computer or mobile screen may not always reflect the actual product. In some cases, returning a product requires formalities, and in other instances, the product is non-returnable (Barriers to e-commerce in Developing Countries, 2010).

Adverse Impacts of the Inability to Touch and Feel Products While Purchasing Online on Brick-and-Click Organizations

The evolution of the retail industry has been marked by the integration of online platforms into traditional brick-and-mortar models, leading to the emergence of brick-and-click organizations. One of the prominent challenges faced by such businesses is the consumers' inability to touch and feel products when purchasing online. This sensory limitation has multiple repercussions for retailers.

Impact on Impulse Purchases Physical stores benefit from impulse buys, often resulting from tactile interaction with products. The tangibility can trigger emotional responses, persuading customers to purchase. The inability to touch and feel online can reduce such impromptu decisions. (Peck, 2003)

Increased Product Returns Customers may be unsatisfied when the received product doesn't match their tactile expectations, leading to higher return rates for online purchases. (Petersen, 2009).

Challenges in Perceived Value Assessment Customers assess a product's value and quality based on tactile feedback. The absence of touch might lead them to undervalue products or doubt their quality. ((Krishna, 2008).

Trust Deficit Touch helps in building trust. In its absence, customers may hesitate to purchase, especially from new or lesser-known brands. (McCabe, 2003).

Complexity in Showcasing Product Features Certain features, like the softness of a fabric or the ergonomics of a gadget, are best understood through touch. Online platforms have to invest more in multimedia presentations to simulate such experiences. (Spence, 2011).

Elongated Decision-making Process Due to the inability to touch, consumers may take longer to make purchasing decisions, leading to shopping cart abandonment. (Lombard, 2009).

Increased Reliance on Customer Reviews In the absence of tactile information, consumers might rely more heavily on reviews. While reviews are valuable, they are subjective and can sometimes be misleading. Reference: Mudambi, S. M., & Schuff, D. (2010). What makes a helpful online review? A study of customer reviews on Amazon. com. *MIS Quarterly*, 185-200.

Higher Marketing and Operational Costs Brick-and-click businesses might face increased costs in trying to replicate tactile experiences through enhanced visuals, AR/VR integrations, detailed product descriptions, or offering free return policies. (Verhoef P. C., 2007).

Potential Overemphasis on Visual Appeal In the absence of tactile experience, there might be an over-reliance on visuals, which could lead to overlooking other essential product features or attributes. ((Krishna, 2008).

Dilution of Brand Experience For premium brands, tactile interactions often elevate the brand experience. The inability to touch can dilute this experience, potentially affecting brand loyalty. (Brakus, 2009).

Challenges in Differentiating from Competitors Without touch, products may seem more homogeneous online, making it harder for brands to differentiate themselves from competitors. (Hultén, 2011).

Reduced Engagement Levels Tactile engagements can enhance the overall shopping experience and immersion. The online absence of this sensory engagement might result in a more transactional and less engaging shopping experience. (Puccinelli, (2009).)

The inability to touch and feel products in online shopping presents unique challenges for brick-and-click organizations. These challenges encompass a wide range of facets, from consumer behavior and perception to operational and marketing complexities. While technological advancements, like virtual reality, offer potential solutions, the tactile gap remains a critical consideration for retailers. As the retail landscape continues to evolve, finding innovative ways to bridge this sensory gap will be pivotal for enhancing online shopping experiences.

The analysis assisted the researcher in determining six variables. These include customer computer/technology illiteracy, collecting delivery fees from consumers, low-cost item buyers, customer distraction, less opportunity to create a human relationship with customers, and lack of product feel and touch. This study sought to determine whether the aforementioned obstacles prevent traditional business owners from initiating Internet operations.

Decreased Opportunity for Cross-Selling In physical stores, the tactile experience can often lead customers to explore related products, thus increasing opportunities for cross-selling. This spontaneous exploration is curtailed online due to the absence of the tactile element.((Kumar, 2009).

Risk of Overcompensation To combat the lack of tactile interaction, online platforms might provide an overload of information, which can overwhelm the customer and deter them from making a purchase. (Lee, 2004).

Enhanced Pressure on Customer Service With customers unable to physically evaluate products before purchase, there's increased pressure on customer service teams to provide comprehensive product information and address concerns. (Parasuraman A. Z., 1988).

The barrier to Experiential Retailing Experiential retailing, where shopping is transformed into an experience, relies heavily on sensory interactions, of which touch is crucial. The inability to touch online poses a barrier to fully achieving this. (Pine, (1999).)

Need for Enhanced Logistics and Inventory Management Due to potential increases in product returns, brick-and-click businesses must enhance their logistics and inventory management systems, which could result in higher operational costs. (Ramanathan, 2014).

Challenge of Sensory Branding Brands often employ sensory branding strategies to connect with consumers. The tactile dimension becomes challenging to integrate online, making it less holistic. (Krishna, 2012).

Trust-building Necessitates More Time and Effort Building trust becomes a longer process, necessitating continuous efforts through verified reviews, certifications, and detailed product descriptions. (Gefen D. &, 2004).

Compromised Shopping Pleasure For many, shopping is recreational. The pleasure derived from physically handling and choosing items is compromised online, which can reduce overall satisfaction. (Arnold, 2003).

Requirement for Advanced Technology Integrations To simulate touch and feel, companies might need to integrate advanced technologies like AR or haptic feedback, which can be resource-intensive. (Ghosh, 2018).

Increased Dependency on Visual Aesthetics The product's visual presentation becomes paramount online, which might lead to potential neglect of other important aspects like functionality or sustainability. (Orth, 2008).

The shift in Product Development Focus Products might be developed with a bias toward visual appeal rather than tactile satisfaction, altering the traditional product development paradigms. (Ulrich, (2015).)

Potential Overemphasis on Price Competitiveness In the absence of

tactile differentiation, businesses might compete more aggressively on price, which can erode profit margins. (Monroe, 1990). Growing Importance of Influencer Endorsements Since consumers cannot touch products, endorsements by trusted influencers, who describe the tactile experience, become more crucial. (De Veirman, 2017).

The tactile void in online shopping presents an intricate challenge for brick-and-click organizations, affecting various facets of retailing, from consumer behavior to operational strategies. The dynamic retail environment necessitates continuous innovation and adaptation to effectively address this challenge. Understanding the profound influence of touch will guide businesses in optimizing their strategies for a blended online and offline retail experience.

CHAPTER THREE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. *Research Design*

This study utilized a descriptive research design to address the research issues. To perform successful research, the researcher emphasized the following.

The primary objective of this research is to identify the issues faced by brick-and-click enterprises. To obtain the necessary information, both primary and secondary sources are explored. However, the researcher focused primarily on primary data. The methodology chosen for this research is descriptive, to provide a comprehensive account of the issues faced by brick-and-click enterprises. This approach was adopted due to its ability to systematically and accurately capture the current state of the subject matter in depth. (Creswell, J. W.,2013).

B. *Target Population:*

This study's target population consists of Bangladeshi brick-and-mortar and Internet-based businesses. As the respondents are dispersed across the country, it was deemed useful to conduct a web survey to readily reach them. This survey is both cost-effective and time-efficient.

C. *Scaling Method:*

The Likert scale is used in the questionnaire to collect data from respondents. This scale is utilized because it is recognizable to respondents, simple to use and administer, and appropriate for web-based surveys.

D. *Nature of the Questionnaire:*

To collect data a questionnaire is designed. It comprises 09 structured questions. Most of the questions are dichotomous and MCQ questions. The Likert scale is also provided. The total number of questions is limited to nine, and the duration of the interview cannot exceed five minutes.

E. *Sample design and size:*

➤ *Frame for Sampling:*

There was no precise list of brick-and-click businesses in Bangladesh. So it was quite difficult to obtain a sampling frame to identify them. There are lists of internet stores, but it is difficult to determine whether they are brick-and-mortar or online-only. As a result, the researcher was compelled to include a screening question at the beginning of the questionnaire to identify the proper respondents.

➤ *Method of Sampling:*

This study utilized a non probability sampling method. The researcher collected samples using snowballs. We identified a small number of respondents and then gathered data from them about others.

➤ *Sample Size:*

With a 90% degree of confidence, a 10% margin of error, and a 20% proportion of the population, the sample size is 44.

F. *Data Collection:*

The researcher collected secondary data from published external secondary sources. Similar investigations conducted in other nations significantly enriched this work. Government and other business periodicals are also investigated, among other sources. To gather primary data, an online poll is used. Respondents were directed to a certain URL to finish the survey. We utilized the Monkey Survey and Google Forms to acquire online data. It was an online questionnaire. The link to the survey was emailed to the selected respondents, and responses were collected automatically. The following instruments were used for collecting data.

➤ *Surveys and Questionnaires:*

Questionnaires were distributed among entrepreneurs of brick-and-click enterprises, aiming to gather first-hand information about the challenges they face. The method enabled the collection of quantifiable data that can be statistically analyzed (Fink, 2013). Semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected participants, especially key- decision-makers in such enterprises to get qualitative insights into the issues faced by the businesses (DiCicco-Bloom, 2006).

➤ *Observing the Day-to-Day Operations*

Of a few selected brick-and-click enterprises offers a tangible perspective of the challenges on the ground (Kawulich, 2005).

➤ *Literature Review*

Existing literature on the topic, including research papers, articles, and reports, were reviewed to understand the established knowledge and identify gaps (Jesson, 2011), (L., 2011).

➤ *Industry Reports:*

Reports published by industry bodies, consultancies, and other relevant organizations were analyzed to understand the macro-level challenges and trends affecting brick-and-click businesses (Grant, 2016).

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

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A. *Data Analysis:*

➤ *Data Editing and Coding:*

After collecting the data, meticulous data editing is crucial. This process involves reviewing each collected response to ensure completeness and accuracy. It includes addressing any missing or inconsistent data to maintain the data's integrity. Coding is another essential aspect, where responses are assigned numerical values or labels, facilitating organized analysis. For instance, converting binary responses such as "Yes" and "No" to 1 and 0 simplifies subsequent computations.

➤ *Data Entry:*

Following data editing and coding, the prepared dataset is entered into computer software for analysis. Popular software choices include the statistical tool Excel, known for its versatility in handling various types of data.

➤ *Data Checking for Accuracy:*

Ensuring the accuracy of entered data is a critical quality control step. It involves running various checks to validate data integrity. These checks encompass confirming the consistency of data entry, identifying and addressing outliers or errors, and verifying that data is formatted correctly for analysis.

➤ *Quantitative Analysis:*

The study employs quantitative analysis techniques, indicating that numerical data are utilized to answer research questions. This analytical approach allows for a structured, numerical assessment of the collected data.

• *Calculating Mean Score*

A notable aspect of the analysis is the calculation of mean scores (M). This entails summing up the values associated with a particular variable and dividing this sum by the total number of values. Mean scores provide a central tendency measure, offering insights into the average responses of the surveyed businesses.

The most crucial aspect of the study is data analysis. After data collection, it is edited, coded, entered into computer software, and checked for accuracy. It is then analysed.

To answer the research questions, quantitative diversions were utilized. We entered all of the quantitative analysis data into an Excel file. Then, we calculated the mean scores (M) to identify and quantify the level of difficulties encountered by businesses during online sales. The mean score for each descriptor was interpreted according to the following scale: 3.5 to 4.0 (Mostly faced challenges), 3.0-3.5 (Moderately faced), and 2.50-3.0 (mildly faced challenges). According to Cicchetti et al. (2006), the equal interval scale delivers more trustworthy and valid data than other forms of scale.

• *Interpreting Mean Scores:*

To make sense of the calculated mean scores, the study utilizes a predefined scale with specific ranges. This scale categorizes the level of difficulties encountered by businesses during online sales based on the mean score. For instance, a mean score falling within the range of 3.5 to 4.0 signifies those businesses primarily encountered challenges in that particular area.

➤ *Scale Choice Rationale:*

The paragraph mentions the use of an "equal interval scale" for interpreting mean scores. This type of scale is favored for its reliability and validity in quantitative analysis. Equal interval scales maintain consistent intervals between values, enhancing the precision of comparisons and assessments. In conclusion, the data preparation and analysis process encompasses a series of essential steps, including data collection, editing, coding, data entry, and accuracy checks. Quantitative analysis, featuring mean score calculations, is employed to quantify and interpret the difficulties faced by businesses during online sales. The choice of an equal interval scale further ensures the reliability and robustness of the study's findings. Responses were collected automatically.

➤ *Instrument Development and Validation for Survey Design:*

The survey mustn't be just well-structured but also validated. This would involve a pilot test with a small subset of the target audience, followed by revisions based on the feedback received. (Fowler, 2013). Researchers run a pilot test on a small number of people before the final application.

➤ *Interview Protocols:*

To maintain consistency across interviews, a set protocol was developed. This included a list of questions, probes, and follow-up questions to delve deeper into the responses. (Rubin, 2011).

➤ *Ethical Considerations: (Informed Consent)*

Every participant, be it an enterprise or an individual representative, provided informed consent. This is important for understanding the purpose of the research, methods of data collection, potential risks, and the intended use of the collected data. (Emanuel, 2000).

➤ *Data Confidentiality:*

Ensuring that the data is stored securely, with access restricted only to the primary researcher and their team, is vital. Furthermore, when publishing or sharing results, care should be taken to anonymize data to prevent the identification of the participants (Saunders, 2015). Conducting interim analyses, especially after gathering data from a subset of participants, helps refine the research instruments and make necessary adjustments to the study's approach. (Curran, 2012). The researcher tried to ensure the above conditions carefully.

➤ *Stakeholder Feedback:*

Engaging stakeholders, like industry experts or representatives from Brick and Click enterprises, for feedback on the preliminary findings can offer unique insights and refine the analysis further. (Bryson, 2011).

➤ *Endnote and Synthesis:*

By incorporating a multifaceted research design, this study aims to comprehensively explore the challenges faced by brick-and-click enterprises. The iterative and inclusive approach ensures that the research is not just academically robust but also grounded in real-world challenges and scenarios. Synthesizing findings from both quantitative and qualitative data will provide a holistic understanding, making the research valuable for both academic scholars and industry practitioners. (Creswell, 2017).

➤ *Rationale for the Research Approach:*

Understanding the logic and reasoning behind selecting a descriptive research design is paramount. The Brick and Click enterprise landscape is vast and varied, with businesses ranging from small local retailers to multinational corporations. The descriptive approach captures a snapshot of this current landscape, helping identify commonalities and differences in the challenges faced by these businesses. (Babbie, 2015).

➤ *Techniques Applied for Enhancing Data Validity and Reliability:*

• *Triangulation:*

By employing multiple data collection methods, such as surveys and interviews the research can cross-verify findings. This enhances the validity of the data and ensures that the insights drawn are well-rounded and robust (Denzin, 1978).

• *Member Checking:*

Allowing participants to review and provide feedback on the research findings ensures that their perspectives are correctly represented. This not only bolsters the accuracy of the research but also builds trust with participants. (Lincoln, 1985).

• *Longitudinal Perspective:*

Though the primary research is cross-sectional, capturing the current challenges of brick-and-click enterprises, it may be beneficial to introduce a longitudinal element. Tracking a subset of businesses over time can provide insights into how these challenges evolve and the strategies businesses employ to address them. (Menard, 2002).

• *Operationalization of Key Concepts:*

To ensure clarity and consistency, it's essential to define key concepts operationally:

- ✓ **Brick and Click Enterprises:** Businesses that operate both a physical store (brick) and an online e-commerce platform (click). Challenges: Any operational, strategic, financial, or marketing hurdles that impact the seamless integration or profitability of the dual mode of business operations. (Kerlinger, 1986). Expansion of Participant Engagement.

- ✓ Stakeholders Workshops: Organizing workshops where multiple stakeholders from different Brick and Click enterprises come together can be a treasure trove of insights. Facilitated group discussions can uncover shared challenges and even potential solutions. (Checkland, 2000).
- ✓ Feedback Loop Implementation: Ensuring that there's a continuous feedback loop between participants and stakeholders can refine the research process in real time. It allows for the identification and rectification of any gaps or oversights early on. (Argyris, 1978).
- ✓ Addressing Potential Biases: Every research endeavor comes with potential biases. Being aware of them and proactively addressing them ensures the integrity of the study.
- ✓ Researcher Bias: The researcher must remain objective, ensuring personal beliefs or experiences don't color the data interpretation.
- ✓ Selection Bias: By adopting a stratified random sampling technique, the research can mitigate the risk of only including certain types of enterprises and overlooking others. (Rossi, 1983).

The expanded research design offers a comprehensive roadmap for studying the challenges faced by brick-and-click enterprises. By ensuring robustness in methodology, focusing on participant engagement, and addressing potential biases, the research aims to provide valuable, actionable insights. These findings can then serve as a foundation for future research, policy recommendations, and strategic guidance for businesses operating in the Brick and Click paradigm. (Yin, 2013).

B. Findings

This study evaluated the challenges that brick-and-click businesses face. Specifically, we determined the magnitude of the challenges encountered by the companies. The mean scores for the extent of the online sales hurdles faced by businesses are displayed in Table 1 and Table 2. Overall, the highlighted difficulties affected the organizations to a significant degree with mean scores between $x=3.5$ and 4.0 , to a moderate degree with scores between $x=3.0$ and 3.5 , and an insignificant degree with scores between $x=2.0$ and 3.0 . In particular, enterprises faced the greatest difficulty in collecting product delivery fees ($x = 3.69$). The next most difficult impediment was the buyers' lack of computer knowledge ($x = 3.30$). However, it was determined that dealing with low-priced customers caused the least amount of trouble ($x=2.53$). Less opportunity to develop personal relationships with purchasers ($x = 2.95$), is another difficulty rarely seen. With the same mean score of 3.18 distraction by other advertisements and lack of touch and feel were moderate challenges for businesses.

Table 1: Mean Scores for the Extent of the Online Sales Hurdles Faced by Businesses

Sl. No	Challenges	Mean Value
1	Computer Illiteracy	3.302325581
2	Less opportunity for Customer Relationship	2.953488372
3	Customer reluctance to pay a delivery charge	3.697674419
4	Low-cost buyers	2.534883721
5	Lack of feel and touch of the product	3.186047
6	Distraction by other ads	3.186046512

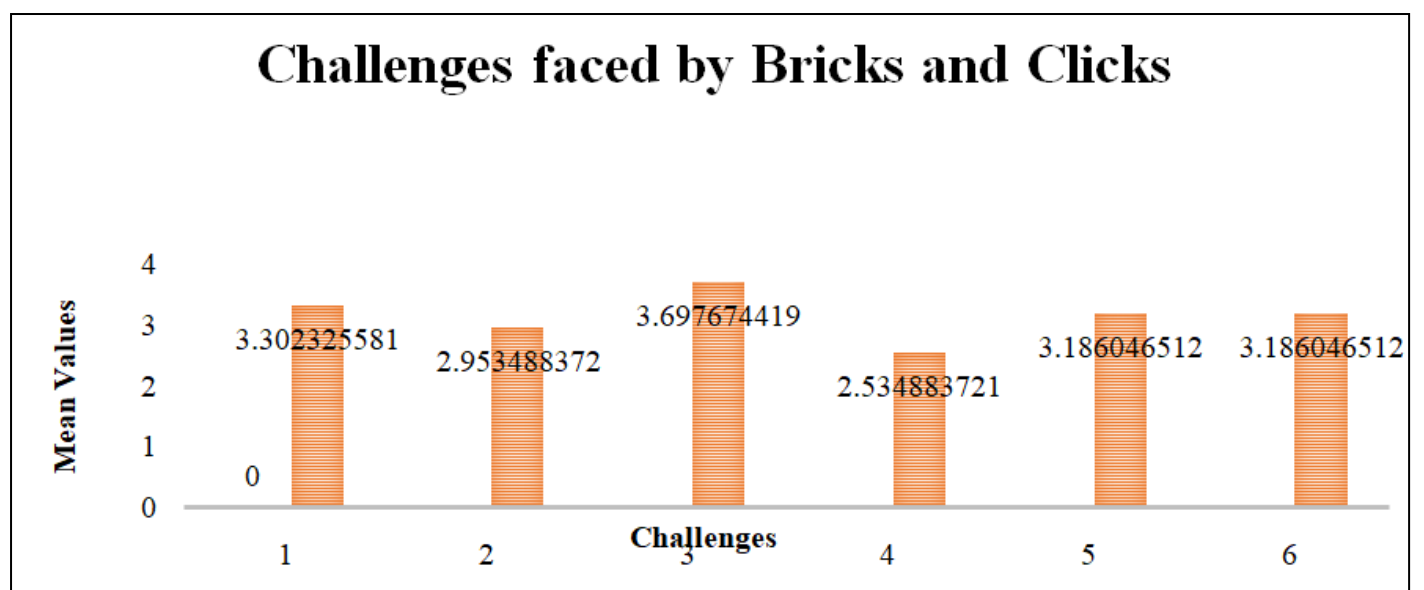


Fig 1: Mean Scores for the Extent of the Online Sales Hurdles Faced by Businesses

Table 2: Challenges Arranged Based on Mean Value

	Name of the challenges	Range of Mean
Mostly faced challenges	Customer reluctance to pay the delivery charge.	3.5-4.0
Moderately faced challenges	Distraction by another ad Lack of touch and feel Computer Illiteracy of customer	3.0-3.5
Mildly faced challenges	Low-cost buyers, Less opportunity to make a personal relationship	2.5-3.0

This is a numerical list of challenges ranked by mean value. The mean values likely represent the average severity or frequency rating of these challenges, as perceived by the study participants or measured by the study's methodology. The challenges are Computer Illiteracy, Lesser opportunity for Customer Relationships Customer reluctance to pay delivery charges Low-cost buyers Buyers' feel and touch of the product Distraction by other ads.

Bar Chart: Below Table 1, there is a bar chart that visualizes the mean values of the challenges listed above, providing a quick comparison of their relative significance or frequency.

At the bottom, the challenges are categorized into three groups based on the range of their mean values: Mostly faced challenges Moderately faced challenges Mildly faced challenges. Each category has a corresponding range of mean values and lists the challenges that fall within that range. This categorization helps to understand which challenges are most pressing and which are of lesser concern. In essence, this document page is a succinct representation of data regarding the operational challenges faced by businesses with both physical and online sales channels, aimed at identifying areas where businesses might need to improve to enhance their sales and customer experience.

CHAPTER FIVE

LIMITATIONS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research aims to provide a holistic view of the challenges faced by brick-and-click enterprises. By enjoying a blend of quantitative and qualitative research methods, the study seeks to offer both depth and breadth in its findings. The hope is that the insight derived will not only contribute to academic knowledge but also provide practical recommendations for businesses operating in this space.

For this study, participant selection is critical. The inclusion criteria might encompass enterprises that have both an online and physical presence for at least two years. This duration ensures that the selected businesses have had enough time to encounter challenges inherent to the brick-and-click model. Exclusion criteria might be businesses that only recently adopted the online model or those that primarily function as third-party sellers on other platforms. (Patton, 2002). Maintaining a transparent communication strategy with the participating enterprises ensures their continuous engagement throughout the research process. Periodic updates, feedback sessions, and a promise to share the final research findings can foster trust and ongoing participation. (Bagnoli, 2009).

Every research has some limitations. Potential limitations for this study might include sample representation, response bias from participants, and the evolving nature of the brick-and-click industry which might make some findings time-sensitive (Simon, 2013).

A. *Limitations:*

➤ *Exclusivity of Business Owners' Perspective:*

One notable limitation of this study is its exclusive focus on the perspective of business owners. While this perspective is undoubtedly valuable, it may not provide a complete picture of the entire ecosystem. Future research could consider expanding the sample to include other key participants in the online sales procedure. This might encompass employees, customers, or even third-party service providers. By including a broader range of perspectives, researchers can gain a more holistic understanding of the situation and how various factors interact or influence one another in the context of online sales. While this focus offers valuable insights into the challenges faced by those running and managing businesses, it inherently leaves out the voices and experiences of other key stakeholders. In the complex world of online sales, various players interact, and their perspectives can provide a more comprehensive understanding.

➤ *Limited Exploration of Client Perspectives:*

Building on the previous point, future research opportunities lie in delving deeper into client perspectives and experiences. Understanding how customers perceive and interact with businesses online is crucial for a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities in the online sales landscape. Factors such as the type of product sold, the type of clients served, and even demographic characteristics like age and gender of customers can significantly influence their experiences. Exploring these dimensions can provide valuable insights into tailoring online sales strategies to different customer segments.

Considering the viewpoint of the customers themselves is crucial. Understanding their preferences, pain points, and satisfaction levels is fundamental to tailoring online sales approaches effectively. A customer-centric approach can lead to more informed decisions regarding website design, product offerings, and the overall online shopping experience. Building upon the previous point, a limitation of this study is the lack of an in-depth exploration of client perspectives and experiences in the online sales process. Customers are the lifeblood of any business, and their interactions and feedback are instrumental in shaping business strategies. Future research should prioritize understanding how customers perceive and navigate online shopping platforms. Factors such as the type of product being sold can significantly impact customer experiences. For example, purchasing digital products like software may entail different challenges and expectations compared to buying physical goods. Examining these distinctions can lead to tailored strategies for improving the online shopping experience for various product categories. Demographic characteristics, including age and gender, can also influence how customers engage with online businesses. Younger consumers may have different expectations and preferences than older generations, and understanding these generational dynamics can inform marketing and user experience design. Furthermore, the study could delve into customer feedback mechanisms and how businesses collect and respond to customer complaints or suggestions. Analyzing customer reviews, surveys, and direct feedback channels can uncover valuable insights into areas where businesses can enhance their online operations.

➤ *Small Sample Size:*

The study acknowledges that it had limitations regarding the sample size. Due to constraints, responses were restricted to a few countries, which may not fully represent the diversity of experiences and challenges faced by businesses in different regions or markets. A larger and more geographically diverse sample could offer a more comprehensive view of the challenges encountered during online sales. Expanding the sample size could enhance the generalizability of the study's findings and provide a broader understanding of the topic.

➤ *Limited Literature Review:*

Another limitation mentioned in the paragraph relates to the researcher's access to literature. Due to time constraints and restricted access to a wider variety of literature, the researcher couldn't review all relevant study publications. A comprehensive literature review is essential to build on existing knowledge and identify research gaps. The lack of an exhaustive review might lead to overlooking important prior studies or concepts that could have informed the study's design and analysis.

➤ *Quality of Secondary Data:*

Lastly, the paragraph raises concerns about the quality of the secondary data used in the study. When relying on existing data sources, researchers must consider the accuracy, reliability, and relevance of the data. Ensuring the data's quality is essential to draw valid conclusions and make meaningful interpretations. Future research should aim to address this limitation by carefully evaluating and validating the secondary data sources used. In summary, this study has several limitations, including its exclusive focus on business owners' perspectives, the potential for a more comprehensive exploration of client experiences, the constraints imposed by small sample size and limited geographic representation, the scope of the literature review, and concerns about the quality of secondary data. Acknowledging these limitations is essential for understanding the study's boundaries and opportunities for future research improvements.

➤ *Less Focus on Employee Perspective:*

Expanding the scope to include employees involved in the online sales process can shed light on the challenges and opportunities faced by the workforce. For example, employees responsible for customer service may have unique insights into customer complaints and difficulties. Their perspectives could inform strategies for improving customer experiences and addressing common issues.

➤ *Less Focus on Service Providers Perspective:*

Furthermore, exploring the experiences of third-party service providers, such as payment processors or logistics companies, can provide a deeper understanding of the broader ecosystem. These service providers often play a vital role in ensuring smooth online transactions. Their insights can help identify bottlenecks or areas where businesses can enhance their partnerships for better outcomes.

➤ *Size and Geographic Representation:*

As previously mentioned, this study acknowledges its limitations regarding sample size and geographic representation. The sample size of respondents was constrained, and the study was conducted in a limited number of areas. While research constraints such as budget, time, and access to participants often necessitate a focused approach, these limitations can affect the study's generalizability and comprehensiveness. A small sample size may limit the statistical power of the study, reducing the ability to detect subtle trends or differences in the data. It's important to recognize that online sales experiences can vary significantly by region, market maturity, and cultural factors. Therefore, a broader geographic representation is essential to capture the diversity of challenges faced by businesses in different parts of the world. Future research can consider strategies to expand the sample size and geographic reach. Collaborations with international partners or leveraging online survey platforms that can reach a global audience could help overcome these constraints. Additionally, exploring the challenges and opportunities specific to various regions can yield valuable insights for businesses looking to expand their online presence globally.

➤ *Scope of Literature Review:*

The paragraph mentions limitations related to the scope of the literature review. A comprehensive literature review is essential for grounding a study in existing knowledge and identifying gaps. However, constraints such as time and access to resources can impact the thoroughness of this process. To address this limitation, researchers can employ systematic literature review methodologies. These approaches involve rigorous and structured methods for identifying, evaluating, and synthesizing relevant studies. By following systematic review protocols, researchers can ensure that their literature review is comprehensive, unbiased, and transparent. Additionally, leveraging digital libraries, academic databases, and citation management tools can streamline the process of identifying and accessing relevant literature. Collaboration with experts in the field can also help researchers gain access to resources and insights that may not be readily available.

➤ *Credibility of Sources:*

Researchers must assess the credibility of the sources from which secondary data is obtained. This involves evaluating the reputation of data providers, the methodology used in data collection, and the currency of the data. Inaccurate or outdated data can lead to misleading conclusions. To mitigate this limitation, researchers can employ strategies to verify and cross-reference secondary data. Comparing data from multiple reputable sources, conducting sensitivity analyses, and acknowledging potential limitations in the data sources are ways to address concerns about data quality.

In conclusion, while the study in question offers valuable insights into the challenges faced by businesses during online sales, it is essential to recognize its limitations. These constraints include the exclusive focus on business owners' perspectives, the potential for a more comprehensive exploration of client experiences, the small sample size and limited geographic representation, the scope of the literature review, and concerns about the quality of secondary data. Acknowledging these limitations is crucial for researchers and practitioners alike, as it guides future research directions and underscores the need for a holistic and inclusive approach to understanding the complexities of online sales environments.

B. Conclusion

This study investigates the hurdles encountered by businesses during online sales. According to the research, businesses face a variety of online sales obstacles. According to this study, collecting shipping fees from customers was the biggest obstacle. Limited potential to establish client relationships and dealing with low-cost consumers presented the least amount of difficulty. Customers' technological ignorance, distraction by other advertisements, and the inability to touch and feel the product posed a moderate challenge. This study expanded previous research and our understanding of the online sales experience of companies by highlighting the presence and magnitude of online sales obstacles. The data indicate that the severity of obstacles differs from respondent to respondent. Responses from businesses indicate that their online sales difficulties were influenced by the product or service they sell and their interactions with customers, including their age, gender, and nature.

Because online buyers are young and technologically savvy, the technology illiteracy of customers does not pose a problem for online businesses during online sales, according to a previous study. The current study confirms that this is also true for brick-and-click businesses.

According to the data, delivery charge collection was the greatest challenge for companies. This is a major concern for click-only businesses, as previous research has demonstrated that additional delivery fees are not well accepted. This study revealed that both click-only and click-and-brick businesses face the same challenge.

Past research indicates that the majority of online shoppers are price-conscious. Most people do not purchase expensive items online. However, this study revealed that Brick and Click businesses viewed this factor as negligible.

The absence of a personal relationship with customers is a concern for online sellers. This study revealed, however, that brick-and-click businesses did not view this as a challenge.

Customer distraction during online shopping is a common issue for click-only businesses. According to this study, however, brick-and-click retailers perceived it as a moderate challenge. Brick-and-click businesses also view the lack of feel and touch as a moderate obstacle during online sales.

C. Recommendation

Based on this study, future research can be conducted to examine the specific factors that contribute to determining the challenges faced by online sales businesses. There is study potential on expansive geographical territory. Similar studies can be conducted on businesses that offer a variety of products and services research aims to provide a thorough understanding of the challenges faced by businesses that have an online presence. It delves into the complexity of online sales and examines the obstacles that hinder the performance and customer experience of 'brick and-click' businesses. The primary finding of this study is the issue of shipping fees. The reluctance of customers to pay for shipping emerged as the most significant challenge. This is a critical insight, as it reflects a fundamental disconnect between customer expectations and business requirements in the online marketplace. Companies might need to explore alternative shipping fee strategies, such as membership models, tiered pricing, or including shipping costs in the product price to mitigate customer pushback. Lesser challenges included the limited potential for establishing client relationships and addressing the needs of low-cost consumers. These are significant but not as pressing as the shipping fee issue. Nonetheless, they require strategic responses. The potential to develop relationships may be enhanced through personalized marketing, customer engagement, and loyalty programs. Addressing low-cost consumer challenges might involve diversifying product offerings or creating value propositions that appeal to this demographic. The moderate challenges identified—technological illiteracy of customers, distraction by other advertisements, and the inability to touch and feel products—represent areas where businesses can differentiate themselves. Technological illiteracy may not be a significant barrier given the increasing tech-savviness of the consumer base, but it still requires attention to ensure inclusivity. Companies could offer more educational content and user-friendly interfaces to accommodate all customers. Distraction by other ads is an omnipresent challenge in the digital space, and companies need to develop more engaging content and retargeting strategies to

capture and retain consumer attention. Interestingly, the study suggests that the classic retail challenges of building personal relationships and providing a tactile product experience are not as daunting for brick-and-click businesses as they are for online-only businesses. These businesses already have a foundation for customer relationships through their physical presence, which can be leveraged online. Enhancing virtual interactions and providing detailed product visualizations and descriptions can partially compensate for the lack of physical touch and feel.

To further alleviate the cost concerns of online shoppers, such businesses can consider strategic pricing, sales, and bundled offers that highlight the value proposition of their products. While the research outlines the challenges of online sales, it also sets the stage for more targeted inquiries. For example, the impact of product type on online sales challenges is significant. Different products have varying levels of dependency on sensory evaluation (like touch, taste, or trial) and may thus encounter distinct hurdles in an online sales environment. Future research could dissect these product-specific challenges and the strategies that businesses adopt to overcome them. Moreover, the demographic factors of customers—such as age, gender, and socio-economic status—play crucial roles in shaping online shopping behaviors. A deeper understanding of these factors could lead businesses to more effectively tailor their online presence and sales approaches to the preferences of different consumer segments. The recommendation for future studies to cover broader geographical territories is also pertinent. Cultural and regional differences can vastly influence online shopping behavior and the subsequent success of brick-and-click business strategies. Comparative studies across different regions could uncover localized challenges and opportunities, informing more nuanced and effective business practices. Additionally, this study indicates a need for further research into the strategies that businesses employ to mitigate the lack of physical product interaction. With advancements in technology such as augmented reality and virtual reality, there might be innovative ways to enrich the online shopping experience and simulate the in-store experience to a greater extent. In summary, while this study has provided valuable insights into the online sales challenges faced by businesses with both physical and digital sales channels, it has also opened the door to numerous opportunities for further research. Businesses can use these insights to adapt and refine their strategies for online sales, enhancing their resilience in the face of evolving challenges and shifting consumer expectations. They can invest in technology and customer service to improve the online shopping experience, thereby driving sales and customer loyalty. By taking a proactive approach to the issues identified in this study, brick-and-click businesses can not only overcome the immediate challenges but also position themselves favorably for future growth and success in the digital marketplace.

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LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Mean Scores for the Extent of the Online Sales Hurdles Faced by Businesses

Sl. No	Challenges	Mean Value
1	Computer Illiteracy	3.302325581
2	Less opportunity for Customer Relationship	2.953488372
3	Customer reluctance to pay a delivery charge	3.697674419
4	Low-cost buyers	2.534883721
5	Lack of feel and touch of the product	3.186047
6	Distraction by other ads	3.186046512

Table 2: Challenges Arranged Based on Mean Value

	Name of the Challenges	Range of Mean
Mostly faced challenges	Customer reluctance to pay the delivery charge.	3.5-4.0
Moderately faced challenges	Distraction by another ad Lack of touch and feel Computer Illiteracy of customer	3.0-3.5
Mildly faced challenges	Low-cost buyers, Less opportunity to make a personal relationship	2.5-3.0

LIST OF FIGURES

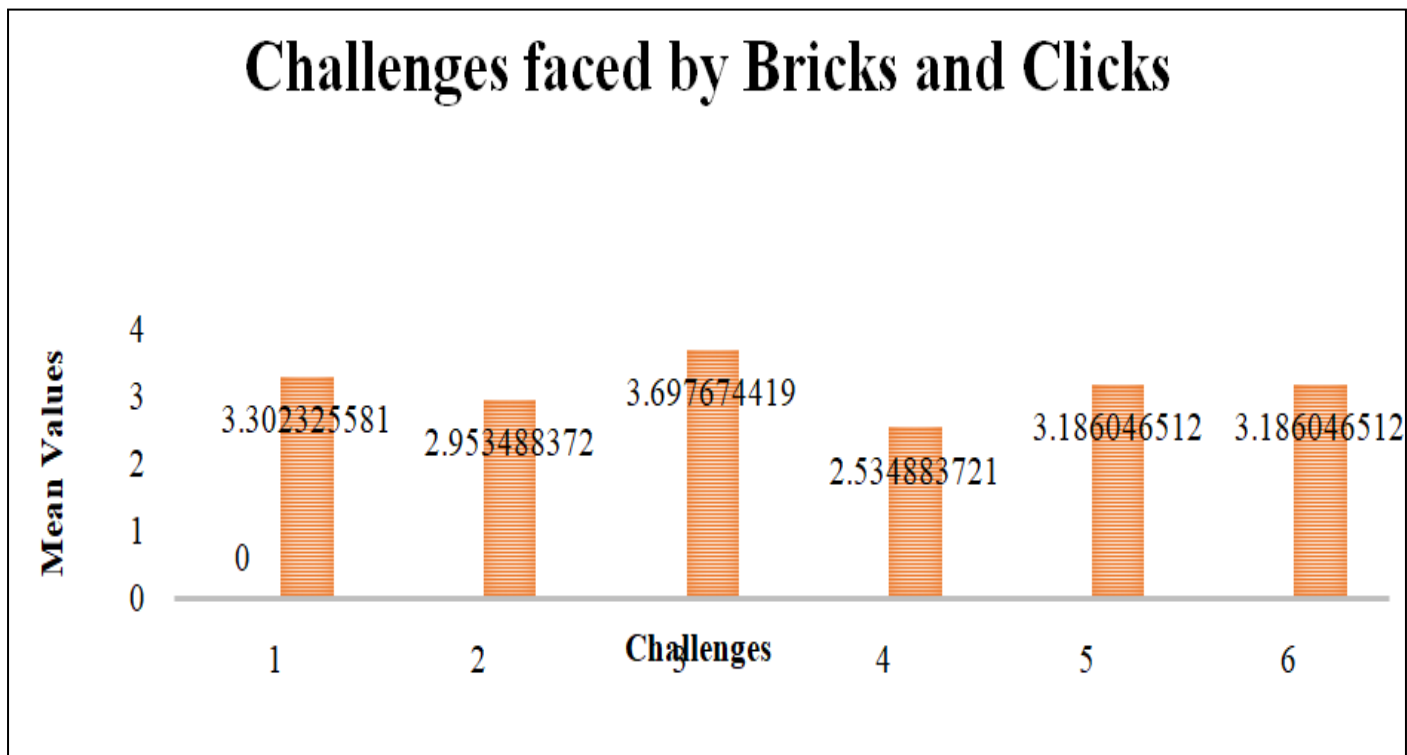


Fig 1: Mean Scores for the Extent of the Online Sales Hurdles Faced by Businesses