

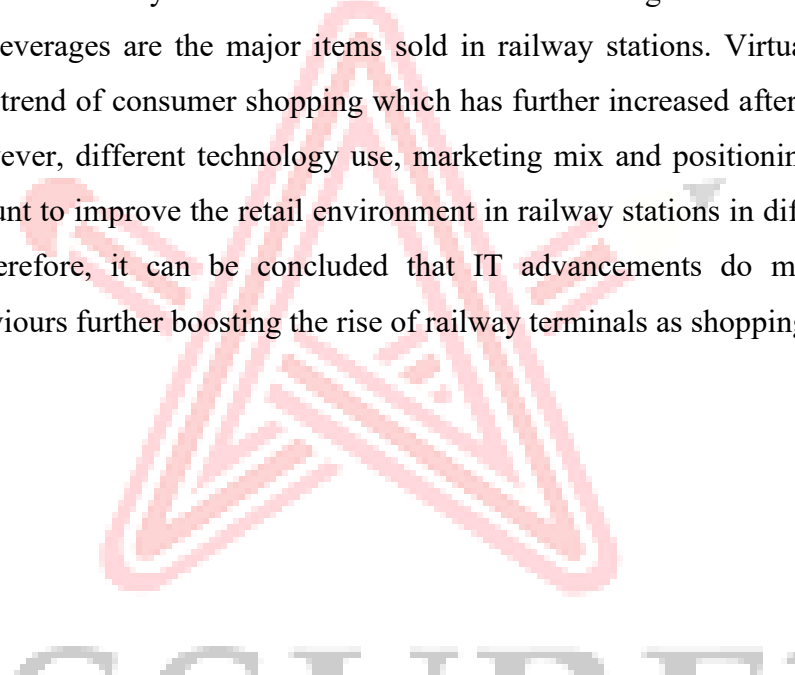
**AN EMPIRICAL EXPLORATION IN THE RISE OF TRAIN
TERMINALS AS SHOPPING STATION (DESTINATION)**

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Abstract

The dissertation has been conducted on the topic *an empirical exploration in the rise of train terminals as shopping station (destination)*. A general background of the topic has been given in introductory part and aim and objectives of the study has been given. According to the review of literature, the retail shopping in the railway station is developing at the present time which is not familiar as much as the airport retail hubs. The secondary data has been analysed through qualitative thematic approach. The themes have been developed in relation to the research objectives which has developed the understanding about the potentiality of transportation hub in railway station. Travel related items including electronics, entertainment and food and beverages are the major items sold in railway stations. Virtual shopping has been the recent trend of consumer shopping which has further increased after the COVID-19 pandemic. However, different technology use, marketing mix and positioning strategies are taken into account to improve the retail environment in railway stations in different countries worldwide. Therefore, it can be concluded that IT advancements do matter to trigger consumer behaviours further boosting the rise of railway terminals as shopping destinations.



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CHAPTER 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The dissertation has been produced based on the topic the rise of train terminals as the shopping destinations. It has been notified that the concept of retail shopping specially the travel retail has been transformed over the decades. Train terminals have been developed beyond shopping for a snack or a drink on the way to the destination. In this chapter of the dissertation, a general background of the research topic has been given to understand the topic. The rationale for choosing this topic for the research has been stated where the significance of the issue in the current scenario has been analysed. The aims and objectives of the research have been developed and the significance of the research has been defined. The problem of the research to be observed across the study has been identified and a brief discussion on the methodologies used to resolve the problem have also been considered in this chapter.

1.2 General background of the study

Retail industry in various countries has continued to be plunged due to several changes in which travel retail destinations as train terminals are bucking the trend. Consumers are captive audience in the railway station with free time to spare or just remain bored which can be added to the limited competition between ranges of products in such artificial markets. Self-checkout terminals allow customers to integrate as active co producers into the retail business process which has resulted in saving cost and increasing customer satisfaction (Vuckovac *et al.* 2017). Therefore, travel retailers have taken advantage of the popularity of the train terminals and needs of customers for shopping. Not only that but also, smart retailers are using digital technology by offering services like click and delivery of certain products which has motivated consumers to shop at the train terminals before getting to the station. Transport terminals in railway stations are a kind of junction between regional, local and international transport which also serve the transport demand. Therefore. Terminals are designed considering the actors along with activities contributing to the size of flows in the station, therefore, retail shopping in terminals has gained popularity (Oprea *et al.* 2016). Terminal retailers often focus on offering the products which are hardly found in high street. It also provides customers with duty-free shopping opportunities, also an attraction for

consumers in rail stations. It has also been identified that the travel retail environment is becoming more competitive day by day about which the seller needs to be concerned.

1.3 Rationale of the Research

What is the issue?

People from different backgrounds visit train terminals on a regular basis and hence, railway stations have been transforming to the ultimate shopping destination to provide customers with an improved shopping experience (Guo, 2020). However, Most of the retail shoppers face challenges with less space as well as less time in the environment of travel retail in the railway station. It is because train terminals are not developed so that it can accommodate many brands at the same space.

Why is it an issue?

The trend of buying patterns by consumers has been changing day by day, especially the traveller are keen to purchase from the place where they are able to purchase as per leisure (Mogaji and Erkan, 2019). Therefore, railway terminals have become a convenient pace for shopping for consumers. Customers on the other hand, remain in a hurry in railway terminals due to time deadlines and thereby, shoppers have to manage by providing products and services within less time.

Why is it an issue now?

The concept of transport retain is new and with the increase of public transport the demand for retail outlets have been rising. As a result, the competition has also been enhanced between the brands and all of them want to occupy the terminals for selling products. However, the space in train terminals is less and not with well infrastructure which hinder the improvement in consumer shopping experience, may affect the profit gained by the owners of the outlets (Monios and Bergqvist, 2017).

What does the research shed light on?

The current research has shed light on the potentiality of train terminals to become travel retail hubs in different locations. From the identification of the issue, it is required to focus on marketing mix in which the significance of a place to showcase various products and services

have been discussed (Thabit and Raewf, 2018). Along with that, the recent trend of shopping has been analysed to understand whether opening up of shopping malls at the railway station could increase profitability.

1.4 Research Aim

The research aims to understand the rising trend of using train terminals as a marketing destination.

1.5 Objectives of the Research

The following objectives have been considered for the research:

- To understand the positioning strategy along with its importance in marketing
- To explore the way marketing mix can be used for promoting products and services
- To place element in marketing mix
- To Evaluate the change in the trends of shopping
- To analyse the potentiality of railway shopping hubs in different country
- To observe technology use in retail shopping

1.6 Research Questions

There is the research question in the below:

What are the potential factors responsible for the rising trend of using train terminals as a marketing destination?

1.7 Problem Statement

Due to the changing pace of consumer behaviour in the retail industry environment, train terminals have been recognised and a popular marketing pace for retailers. Here in the current study, the focus is on the travel retailing as consumers on the way of travelling demand a number of retail products. However, it has been observed that infrastructure of the terminals is not well designed to accommodate all the retail brands and the space of the terminals is also very less where people may have faced difficulties in shopping (Baron, 2019). Therefore, the study is objected to understand the capability of retail brands to attract more consumers at the terminals to shop through technology advancement techniques. It is also important to analyse what possibilities could be found by enlarging the required space in the terminals.

1.8 Significance of the research

The research signifies the needs of customers, visiting railway stations and possibility of expanding retail businesses at the terminal to meet customer requirements. Many retailers are there which can earn greater profit at the train terminal rather than selling products and services at high street. Therefore, recognized brands can increase their profit by concentrating on travel retail. The study has analysed to what extent train terminals are improved infrastructural to provide improved consumer experience and necessity to establish shopping malls in the station to meet increasing demand (Sunet *al.* 2017). As consumer behaviour is changing over the decades and they are responding to the retail shop at the train terminal, the rail station can gain additional profit from the retail sales.

1.9 Overview of Methodology

As per the overview of methodology, the research in the dissertation has used secondary data using different sources including relevant literature, news, websites of companies and many others. The findings of the dissertation have been obtained through qualitative thematic analysis conducted in the research. The motive of using qualitative thematic approach is that it has helped the researcher to conduct the study flexibly in a detailed manner within the allocated time frame (Sherif, 2018). Interpretivism philosophy and deductive approach have been utilized to interpret the data with existing theories. With descriptive research design, the collected secondary data has been analysed maintaining subjective norms. On the other hand, non-probability purposive sampling has helped to add personal views and accountability to increase the quality of research.

1.10 Organization of the Dissertation

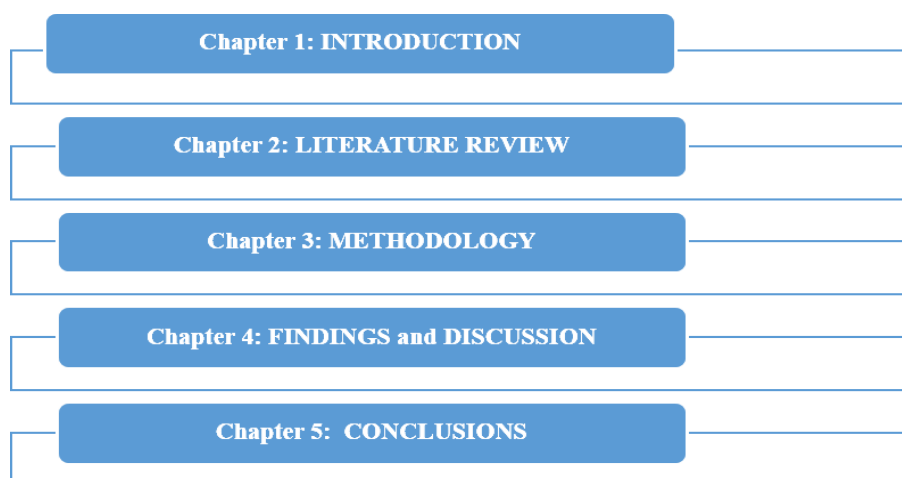


Figure 1: Dissertation Structure

(Source: Created by Self)

The first chapter is an introduction that deals with the description on the topic and rationale for selecting the topic for the research. The aim and objectives of the research have been set in this chapter.

In the second chapter, literature review, a number of literatures have been studied to gain knowledge on different aspects of the topic. Different theoretical concepts regarding the topic have been taken into consideration and the gap between the past literatures and current research has been identified.

The third chapter is methodology in which methods and techniques have been used to conduct the research.

In the fourth chapter, data collected from the chosen sources have been analysed and the findings have been stated.

The fifth and last chapter is the conclusion where the summary of the overall discussion in the research has demonstrated.

1.11 Summary

In this chapter of the dissertation, the topic of the research has been introduced and aim, objectives and research questions have been formulated. The significance of conducting the research has been depicted. The rationale of the research has been recognized and according to the research has been shaped focusing on the topic. The problem of the study has been identified which helps to direct the research in the right way. A brief overview of the methodology has been given which has been utilized to conclude the study.



CHAPTER 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the gaps in previous literature have been observed. With the help of this chapter, the way marketing mix helps brands in promoting the product and services and focuses on the marketing plan are perceived through this chapter. The way technological invention has led to increasing the experience of retail shopping has been observed in this chapter. The way railway stations have become shopping hubs in different countries are observed in this chapter. Towards the end of this chapter, a conceptual framework has been drawn in order to understand or explore the rise of shopping hubs in railway stations. Along with this framework, a summary of this chapter has been presented as well.

2.2 Gaps in previous literature

There are studies related to the future railway stations where it is observable that the importance of shopping malls and other entertainment factors should be taken into considerations (Barash *et al.* 2018). On the other hand, there are few studies related to the basic functions of railway hubs. This study focuses on providing the passengers additional transfer services by taking the shopping and entertainment services into account (Laskar, 2017). In order to conduct this particular research, the researcher has chosen this topic for exploring the rise of train terminals as the shopping stations. There are very few research studies evident relating to this topic since few studies focus on the increase of railway shopping hubs in several countries. Therefore, it can be stated that through focusing on this topic, the way shopping hubs are rising in railway terminals are going to be understood with the help of marketing mix. This study focuses on the shopping hubs at the railway terminals that provide a possibility to expand the retail businesses for meeting the customer experiences.

2.3 Identifying the shopping habits of the passengers

As compared to the Airports that have always been used to flog perfumes, sweets to the passengers, the operators of train stations are much slower for making on-site retail. It is perceivable that in most countries, the rise of train terminals in the shopping hubs has long been evident. There are international brands such as Mac, The body shop, Hamleys and Rituals tend to be present in the railway terminals. As for example, in the UK, these above mentioned popular brands have booked a spot in the Network Rail's station of revamped London Bridge that contains around 2 thousand square ft with around 70 units that are

reserved for retailers. It is perceived that in different countries, the railway industry works in order to deal with the rise in passengers' numbers. From several reports, it is observable that due to the rise of these shopping stations in the railway terminals, the journeys of passengers have doubled in the past 20 years. As a result of the fact, in different countries, in terms of meeting the capacity demand, the railway industry has redeveloped as well as redesigned its stations.

This increased traffic of the passengers has led the manager of railway infrastructures to implement a greater retail experience. Therefore it is observable that in the most countries' railway terminals, the railway industry, by providing wider services like restaurants, bars as well as other forms of retail, try to achieve a larger retail experience among the consumers.

2.4 Analysing the new era of station retail

It is observable that the travel retail sector is considered as an all-time demanding sector as it entices as well as engages the passengers along with a shopping experience that is convenient. This station retail, irrespective of the currency that customers use or what passengers speak tries to provide a convenient experience to the passengers. In recent times, the era of station retail has taken place where travel terminals have considerably evolved beyond purchasing snacks as well as drinks. The station retail has not only become a hub for the luxury retailers who have led to the innovation of its own sector within the highly competitive retail industry (Wang *et al.* 2018). It is observable that passengers, while going on a business or holiday trip by train, consumers create a mindset of treating their own self. As per the retailers, while passengers get bored by waiting for the arrival of the train, at this point of time, the retailers take advantage of it by enticing the customers.

In this new era of the station retailers, some of the smart travel retailers have been taking advantage of the digital as well as offering services like clicking and collecting or delivering products to certain areas for offering the customer convenience. These retailers, with the help of its digital marketing, try to encourage the customers to spend before they reach the train.

It is also perceivable that the brands try to recognize that the travel environment has become more competitive by providing the customers with several opportunities such as picking up essentials for travel etc. In this manner, the station retailers are revamping up the offerings. Therefore, it can be stated that the train stations have become much updated than just grabbing a cup of coffee to go. Since the customers are making an intentional journey, they can identify the customer demographics (Eshra 2018). It is also observable that some of the

firms, by holding marketing campaigns, these retailers are trying to encourage the people to think in a different manner regarding travel.

2.5 The effects of Transit-Oriented shopping mall developments

The Transit oriented shopping mall development is considered as the novel concept in the practice of urban planning. This development is referred to the shopping mall that is near the rail station within the context that is transit-oriented. This transit oriented is also referred to as the planning as well as the strategy of design that comprises with promoting the urban development which is compact. This development is likely to increase clustering jobs, housing as well as services around the stations of public transport. As a result, this development planning also helps firm to increase its profits (Chen *et al.* 2018). Therefore, it can be stated that this development planning increases business's revenue growth along with focuses on the country's development.

2.6 Understanding the positioning strategy and its importance in marketing

The positioning strategy attempts at highlighting one or two features of the brand, this strategy also aims to emphasize on the brand image that impacts the customer's minds. Through using this positioning strategy, firms are able to create brand images that are significantly different from the competitors. There are several strategies of positioning. Firms use marketing in order to communicate the market position, in this manner, these shopping hubs are able to influence customers and this influences the products or services of the brand. The brand positioning of such retailers are based on the characteristics of products. It is perceivable that products that are sold at these shopping hubs are more likely to be unique and travel friendly. At the same time, the prices of such products are competitive. These brand's products often communicate in order to create high quality products that creates a desire among the consumers. As a result, the customers want the products irrespective of the price. Through focusing on the positioning strategy, the retail organisations are able to obtain a greater profit instead of selling products or services in the high streets. In this manner, it is observable that the shopping hubs at the railway, by establishing a competitive pricing strategy and providing unique products, the station retailers are able to entice a number of customers by highlighting the a key difference that their products offer as compared to other products. Therefore, it can be stated that these strategies act as the marketing strategies through which brand promotion is possible in an effective manner.

2.7 Influence of cross-cultural tradition in shopping

It is to be noted that the cultural differences make a significant impact on the customer experience. There are several cultural differences that affect the retail organisations in the railway terminals. Since there are different passengers with different languages and cultural backgrounds evident, the station retailers have to communicate with the international consumers. However, customer experience significantly matters to the foreign as well as to the domestic customers. As a result of the fact, the retailers and its existing customers need to overcome the language barriers by providing cross cultural training to them. Since consumers from different countries tend to be more detail as well as fact oriented. The retailers use exact numbers, details as well as trust badges. As a result of the fact, the customers are able to acquire product certainty (Abutaleb *et al.* 2019). As a result, a higher customer satisfaction can be achieved that leads to a higher brand loyalty. Therefore, by creating effective advertising strategies and cultural values, the firm will be able to entice different customers of different cultural backgrounds. The station retail focuses on cultural awareness as well by ensuring the customers 'preferences as well as purchasing behaviour. Since different cultured people are likely to shop at a discounted rate, the station retailers have been providing products at special offers or discounted rate based on different customer's culture. Thus, it can be stated that cross-culture provides a significant impact on customer's shopping behaviour.

2.7 Theoretical approaches

The Hofstede cultural dimension theory has been chosen as part of the cross cultural theory and the psychoanalytic theory has been taken into account as part of the consumer behaviour theory in order to understand the theoretical approaches.

Hofstede's Cultural dimension theory

In the cross cultural psychology, the uncertainty avoidance is considered as to how cultural differ on the amount of tolerance. Hofstede's cultural dimension theory focuses on distinguishing among several national cultures, the cultural dimensions. This theory analyses these cross culture's impact on the setting of the business (Peña-García *et al.* 2020). The power distance dimension focuses on to what extent inequality as well as power is tolerated. From the perspective of such station retailer in the railway terminals, the scope of selling to goods promoting culture of a specific country gains importance for the traveller and shopper from such terminals. As a result, these retail organisations encourage customers from

different cultures. The individual vs collectivism dimension places greater importance on obtaining the personal goals as well as the other on the well-being of the group. This is another area of referring the Hofstede's Cultural dimension theory. The station retailer in the Western countries mainly focuses on the individualism and thus shopkeepers of train terminals equally promote the culture of the destination along with current trend in their business for attracting shoppers across the globe. The masculinity vs femininity dimension focuses on the distinct gender roles and whereas femininity characterises, the fluid roles and concerned with the life's quality (Favaretto *et al.* 2016). The station retail that has considerably been rising in the railway terminals mostly focuses on the fluid gender roles. Thus, the firms mostly focus on the equality and the customers from different cultural backgrounds as well as no discrimination takes place. People with several cultures who visit the railway station in order to commute on a daily basis, through effective cross cultural characteristics, the shopping experiences get enhanced.

Psychoanalytic theory

The Psychoanalytic theory is considered as the theory of personality organisation that develops personality which guides the psychoanalysis. This theory distinguishes the human psyche between several forces such as id, ego as well as super ego. The id is considered as responsible for initial drives or urges such as hidden desires, the ego is considered as the conscious mind that operates on the reality principle. On the other hand, the super ego is considered as the moral as well as ethical human psychic structure's dimension. These psychological forces aim to shape the behaviour of an individual (Barchi, 2020).

In order to entice a considerable amount of passengers, it is observable that station retail, through using this theory of Freud, aims to make brand image. If the brand creates fantasy, aggression, then the customers are able to equate the brand or certain product line a desire manner. Station retailer, by focusing on digital marketing, is able to create a desire among customers to visit the stores.

2.8 Explore how marketing mix can be used for the promotion of any product and services

The concept of marketing mix is an essential component in marketing of products and services, especially for the purpose of promotion. It includes four factors of marketing strategy such as product, price, promotion and place. The retailers try to reach to the best place to promote a particular product to grab the attention of the target audience. With the

help of marketing mix, one can choose the best possible time and channels for the promotion to increase sales and profit for the business. Product market is operationalized through the concept of marketing mix to permit the normalization of sustainability considerations within business and consumption (Pomeroy, 2017).

In the case of retail business establishment in a train terminal, place in the marketing mix has a crucial role. As the train terminal is related to the travel and transport of local and international visitors, therefore, the retailers can consider travel related retail products. The way of distributing the products can be decided by observing the significance of the place and reach to the customers effectively. In this regard, market research is required to understand the requirement of consumers transporting in the railway station. In this way, the retailers can readily avail the products at the right place at right time. It is required to have a clear and concise understanding about the degree of competition in the train environment in a particular place which also helps to define what products are mostly sold at the place to maximize profitability. It has been illustrated that place refers to the managerial judgement about the location to deliver products to customers including both the physical and online distribution channels (Hanaysha, 2017). The location of train terminals have gained importance as the place of marketing mix because of changing customer needs as consumers are likely to shop travel related products including food and other necessities.

2.9 Analysing the change in trends of shopping

The consumer shopping trend has changed because of the evolution of new innovative technology and digitalization. At the recent time, ecommerce has been popularized over the next five years. The lifestyle of people has changed and now people hardly get any time to go shopping. Therefore, the digital age has perfectly supported and contributed to the changing lifestyle and the telecommunication system rapidly evolving in society has influenced the potentiality of retailers to expand the market beyond their capability (KUMARI, 2019). Most of the consumers feel comfortable to shop using social media channels as the channels provide accessibility for a broad range of products (Lyonset *al.* 2018).

According to the type of products, different shopping destinations have been arising. For instance, for travel retail, train terminal has been used as a retail destination, though it is associated with a number of challenges. Travelling may be for business or pleasure, is a break in routine which excludes the application of normal routine impulses. Therefore, it is most obvious that consumers while going shopping tend to have a mind-set to treat themselves. Retailers in train terminals have been emphasizing on other products that are not easily

available in the high street to increase their profit and customer satisfaction. However, duty free shopping also attracts many consumers at the train terminal shopping place which in turn, has developed the potentiality to expand the infrastructure to make the terminals as retail hubs or creating new shopping malls at the station.

2.10 Significance of the place element in marketing mix

The goods are generally produced with an aim to be sold to the customers and thus should be ready for the customers at a suitable place where they can readily get involved in making deals (Thabit and Raewf, 2018). Thus, it is important for the retailers to make the product ready for the appropriate markets where they can access maximum customers and be sold with greater profit margins. The shopping centres in the railway stations experience a wide base of customers on a daily basis that directly increases the customer traffic in these shopping centres resulting in increased sales and profit generation.

Another study has reported that the distribution or place in marketing mix is an important feature of delivering products to the potential customers which can also be explained as the place being the medium through which the customers can reach or find the specific products (Sudari *et al.* 2019). It has also highlighted that place in the marketing mix plays an important role in enhancing customer satisfaction. Inconvenient locations have highly contributed to the dissatisfaction of the customers which in turn has negatively influenced the organizational operations. The product offering is connected to customer satisfaction and it is one of the major components for the growth and development of an organization. Studies have identified that customer satisfaction has an influence on customer loyalty (Leninkumar, 2017). Customer satisfaction combined with customer loyalty creates a wide base of customers that can be retained for longer periods of time. From the above analysis it can be said that place is an important component of the marketing mix that ensures that the product or services offered by an organization has maximum reach and the customers can easily find the product enhancing customer satisfaction and loyalty. Thus the rise of shopping centres in the train terminals can expect to have an increased number of customers that can be retained for longer periods of time contributing to organizational success and business growth and development.

2.11 Analysing the potential rise of railway shopping hubs in different countries

The railway station and the shopping centre can be considered as two different buildings that have completely different functionalities but however there has been an increase in more and more of these projects that have combined these two functionalities with each other in different countries (Labuz, 2019). The study has been conducted in Poland that suggests that the major rise for these functionalities to be combined especially in the present times are generally due to the fact that the shopping centres in railway stations are highly accessible from different parts of the city and the fact that nowadays the railway station is not an independent structure has also contributed to the cause. It can also be said that as the shopping centre combined with transportation can be considered as an essential element in the structure of the region this combination has highly contributed to the urbanization of the region. This has also allowed an additional customer traffic as it has been built on the railway station that has numerous passengers commuting through the city on a daily basis.

Another study confirms that the multi functionality of the railway station also enhances the traffic frequency not due to the purpose of travel but for the shopping and service establishment within the stations (Dragan, 2017). Multi-functional shopping centres have become an important component of railway stations and these are mainly located near the ticket offices and lounges for the travellers. It has also mentioned that due to the location of the shopping centres they receive a potential number of customers on a regular basis. From analysing both the research information it can be said that there has been an increased rise of shopping centres in railway stations due to increased accessibility and the ability of the railway station to provide increased consumer traffic. On the contrary the use of railway stations for non-travelling purposes also increases the traffic in these stations. With an aim for rapidly urbanizing and developing the historical railway buildings most of the railway stations have been including shopping destinations that have direct impact on their influence of the railway station on the structure of the city and the type of space created in the surrounding region.

2.12 The recent challenges faced by the retail shopping hubs

As the information technology can be considered as the backbone of retail, it requires huge investments that can effectively connect every aspect of the business operations ranging from supplier to cash counters (Sriram *et al.* 2018). Finding the appropriate technological solutions

and selecting the proper resources and tools for the implementation of these technological solutions combined with the lack of investment in the process can be considered as major challenges that retail shopping hubs have been facing in recent times. The retail settings have been challenged for becoming smarter and providing an increased value to both the retailers as well as their consumers (Dacko, 2017). Considering this aspect it is a major challenge for the retailers in optimizing the entire experience for their customers with a lack of proper technological solutions. This will lead to reduced customer satisfaction and in turn will lead to a loss of potential customers.

Another study has stated that online retail channels aim in making the shopping experience more convenient securing customer activity when compared to that of traditional retail shopping (Lakhani and Örs, 2019). This has resulted in the major shift in customer base to online shopping mainly due to its increased accessibility through any point of time. Several other factors such as pricing, web design, user privacy and smoother delivery of products have also contributed to customer decisions supporting online shopping than that in the traditional shopping destinations. This has been a result of increased digital transformation and increased use of the internet in the general population which has popularized the concept of online retail shopping. Applying both the challenges identified to the current context, it can be said that shopping destinations in train terminals can also face similar challenges associated with retail shopping. Due to lack of proper technological solutions and its appropriate application the business operations of the retailers in railway stations are bound to suffer. Also with the increased ease of shopping through the online retail channels there might be a decreased flow of customers in the retail shopping destinations in the railway stations.

2.13 Use of technology in retail shopping

With the constant development in the retailing technologies, the retailers need to be involved in the application of innovative business practices that has been provided by the advancements in technology (Bakri, 2020). The use of technology in retail shopping has been implemented in various business operations that ensure good quality business and better shopping experience through product identification, increase in billing speed, electronic operations and logistic applications. It has been observed that the increased use of technology in retail shopping has positively influenced the economic performance of the business. The study has also mentioned that the technological innovations when applied to the retaining business operations ensures a better communication flow between the retailers and the

customers and thus can be implemented for increased operational and transactional services in retail shopping.

Another study has stated that the emergence of the Internet of Things (IoT) has been providing strategic opportunities to the retailers for increased customer engagement with improved shopping experience (Balaji *et al.* 2018). IoT has been increasingly used by retailers to provide a personalized shopping experience to their customers combining the physical as well as the virtual dimensions of the retail shopping especially catering to the needs and expectations of the customers. The increased use of this technological advancement has brought in several benefits to the retailers as well their customers in terms of cost saving, greater accessibility and time savings. A service based on IoT when applied to the field of retail shopping provides interactive shopping solutions through which the customers can complete the entire process by self-service thus ensuring that the shopping process is significantly smooth (Liu *et al.* 2018). This has been highly applicable with the increased use of digital payments and use of smartphones in the general population. From the above analysis it is quite evident that retailers have been adapting the technological advancements to provide a better shopping experience to the customers and ensure smoother business operations. This is also applicable to the retail shopping centres in the railway stations which will also provide the similar positive outcomes through the increased use of technology thus contributing to the rising trends of using train terminals as marketing destinations.

2.14 Impact on profitability through increased technology use

With the application of technological advancements such as block chain in the retail industry there will be an improvement in the transparency of the products, efficiency in the supply chain management, improved profiling of customers and various other benefits that will lead to increased customer satisfaction and high profit margins (Chakrabarti and Chaudhuri, 2017). There are several benefits of the increased use of technology in retail shopping that has a significant impact on the financial domain. These technological advancements highly contribute in enhancing the business operations of the retailers and assist in business growth and development through improving the supply chain, enhancing the customer profiling, increased transparency and validating product authenticity among many of its potential benefits. Thus a smoother business operation and a better customer service ensures high profitability.

Another study has also confirmed that due to the increased use of new and innovative technologies the firms tend to earn higher profits identifying a larger market share thus contributing to higher market concentration (Bessen, 2017). Industry concentration significantly influences the generation of higher profitability through influencing the market productions and generating higher earnings to assets. From the above analysis, it can be stated that due to the opportunity of generating higher profit margins from the increased use of technology in retail shopping in the shopping destinations located in the railway stations there has been an increased use of technology in these shopping hubs by the retailers and has also led to increased usage of train terminals for retail shopping.

2.15 Conceptual Framework

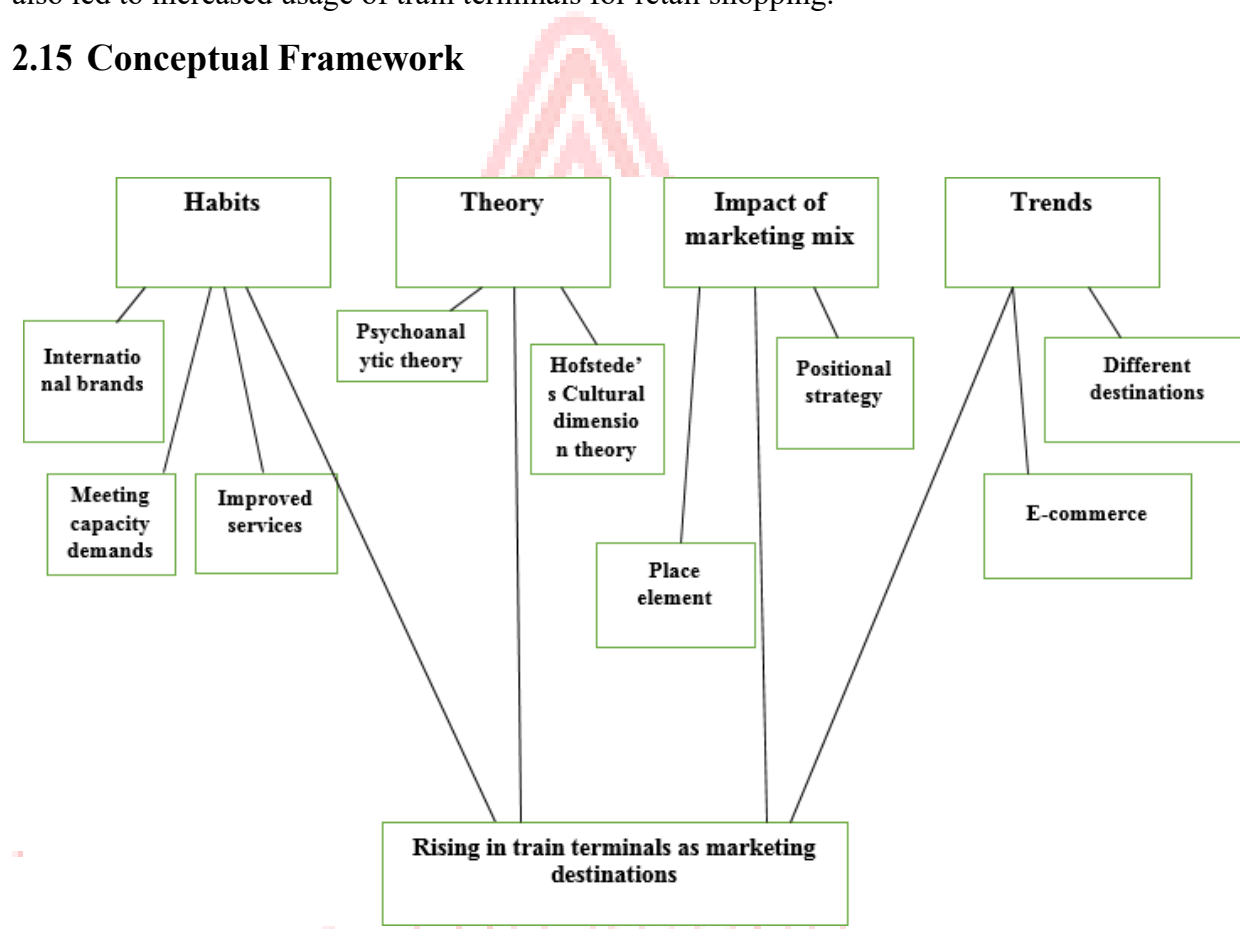


Figure 2: Conceptual framework

(Source: Self-created)

2.16 Summary

The chapter has discussed the various aspects of the topic with the help of existing literature highlighting the gaps in the prior studies and identifying the different consumer behaviour among passengers in the railway stations. The present trends of the train terminal retail shopping along with the impact of these transit oriented shopping destination development

have been discussed. Further analysis has been conducted on the positioning strategy and cross-culture influences in shopping with the help of relevant theories. Analysing the use of marketing mix in promotion and the importance of place element in marketing the rise of these hubs, the challenges it faces, the increased use of technology and its impact on profitability have also been discussed.



CHAPTER 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses different research tools and techniques that have been used in this dissertation to come to an end of the research systematically. The application of current methodology can pave the path of research in an effective way. In this chapter, research philosophy, research approach, research design, data collection method and analysis techniques have been described in detail with meaningful reasons for choosing these methods for the research. The ethical issues that have been considered and the limitations of the research have also been depicted. Lastly, the timeframe for completing the research has been provided.

3.2 Research Onion

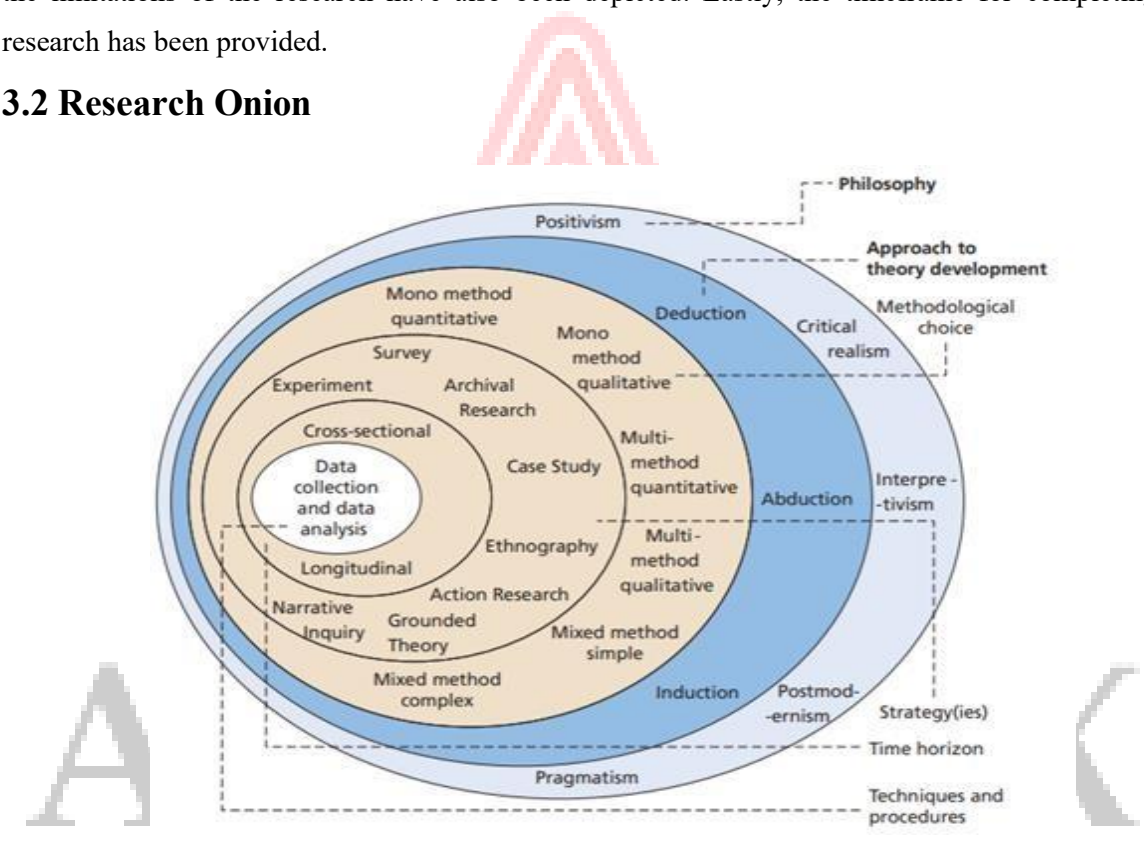


Figure 3: Research onion

(Source: Saunders *et al.* 2007)

In the above figure, the framework of research onion has been demonstrated and based on its features the research has been formulated. This framework contains three levels including axiology, ontology and epistemology. It has been observed that axiology helps to identify and include the ethics and values necessary to consider in the research, ontology is for considering the reality existing in the current topic of the research and epistemology helps to focus on different ways through which the reality can be met (Saunders *et al.* 2007). The

research and findings of the dissertation have outlined sequentially based on the layered approach of the framework.

3.3 Research Philosophy

Philosophy used in research is a belief that helps in collecting information about a phenomenon related to the topic which in turn, can use that information to analyse the topic. There are four types of philosophies generally used in academic research such as positivism, realism, post-positivism and interpretivism. In the current research, interpretivism philosophy has been utilized.

Justification for using interpretivism philosophy

Each type of the philosophies have their own justification for using which depend on the nature of the study and topic. Interpretivism philosophy allows researchers to interact with the subject of the topic directly based on which the research has been done. The rationale for selecting this research philosophy is that it has related the research with the objective and subjective nature of the topic (Alharahsheh and Pius, 2020). Therefore, with the adoption of interpretivism philosophy qualitative research areas on the rising factors of train terminals as shopping destinations has been explored. Apart from that, the concepts of the topic have been discussed in depth so that the research can find the anticipated results in a correct manner. Therefore, it can be stated that specific interests are considered in this philosophy while doing the research.

3.4 Research Design

Research design clarifies overall strategies chosen in the dissertation in order to integrate different components of the research logically. Mainly three kinds of research designs are used in research study including descriptive design, exploratory design and explanatory design. In case of the current research, descriptive research design has been used.

Justification for using descriptive design

Descriptive research considers the situation, people and phenomenon to be studied in the research. Besides, descriptive research helps to emphasize on the current issues in relation to the topic which enables the researcher to understand the situation in a complete manner. Thus, the research is involved in evaluating the factors which contribute to the rise of train

terminals in different countries as shopping destinations. Additionally, the recent shopping trend and consumer behaviour that are faced by the retail shops in the train terminals have also been described based on the design (Pålsson *et al.* 2018). In this way, descriptive research design has helped to analyse different aspects of the phenomena and observed population.

3.5 Research Approach

The research approach is used in the research with the aim of formulating a plan for the research. Efficient usage of research approach can bring different concepts and theories which perfectly underpin the research topic. There are two types of research approach like deductive approach and inductive approach. On one hand, inductive reasoning concentrates on developing theory whereas on the other hand, deductive reasoning is best where existing theories are applied to find new insights. Therefore, in the current study, a deductive research approach has been used.

Justification for using deductive approach

The deductive approach starts from the general setting of the research topic and then consecutively reaches to the main objective of the research. The main purpose of selecting the approach in this research is to use existing theories in relation to the topic and then develop hypotheses on the observed theories and test the hypothesis to find results (Wang *et al.* 2020). Therefore, a basic understanding on the use of train terminals as a shopping destination has risen and the casual relationship has been established between the variables and the topic.

3.6 Data Collection Methods

Two types of data collection methods are there in the research such as primary and secondary data collection technique. In the primary data collection method, only first-hand data are used directly from the sources whereas according to the secondary data collection method, it uses second hand sources of data that are relevant to the given topic of the research (Martins *et al.* 2018). In the current research, a secondary data collection method has been adopted where only existing literature and related information from news and websites have been collected to analyse information for the research.

Justification for using secondary data collection method

By using a secondary data collection method, the money and time have been adjusted with the requirements of the research which is the main rationale of taking this approach. Through the analysis of existing concepts from the literature along with theoretical base, new findings have been demonstrated in the study. The data sources used in the conduction of the dissertation, have been accessed easily only by searching via Google and search library (Martins *et al.* 2018). A vast amount of data has been collected for the research purpose without much effort of the researcher which has also saved time of the research.

3.7 Sampling Techniques

A specific sampling technique is always used in the research to take out a sample from the population in order to conduct the study. There are two types of sampling techniques including probability and nonprobability sampling. The sampling technique to be used is chosen based on some attributes of the topic. Herein, non-probability sampling has been used in the research.

Justification for using non-probability sampling

The main reason for using non-probability sampling is that unlike sampling technique, non-probability sampling suits the secondary data collection method. Herein, purposive sampling has been utilised which a type of non-probability is sampling. Therefore, based on purposive sampling, personal judgemental views and knowledge have been endorsed while selecting samples (Sarstedt *et al.* 2018). In this context, existing literature by scholars, news, websites and business reports have been collected. All the data obtained from these sources talk about the potentiality of train terminals for shopping destination. Some of the reports have been taken in this concern, which describe the how railway station in countries like UK, German, New York are developing as retail hubs and how investments are going on I the railway stations in big cities.

3.8 Data Analysis Techniques

In order to analyse collected data, three kinds of data analysis techniques are there to be used in the research such as qualitative, quantitative and mixed research approach. It is to be noted that quantitative analysis considers only statistical information that is numeric data and qualitative analysis considers descriptive data as well as regards phenomena that are observed (Queirós *et al.* 2017). In this dissertation, qualitative research techniques have been utilized.

Justification for using qualitative research

According to this research, qualitative data has been used in such a way that helps to analyse no-numeric data in order to interpret different opinions of other researchers and scholars on the topic. The reason for selecting a qualitative analysis technique is to find insights in a detailed and in-depth manner by focusing on the problem of the research. In this concern, thematic analysis has been used to observe and describe qualitative data as it is flexible in nature and at the same time, allow inclusion of past knowledge from the literature (Maguire and Delahunt, 2017). Hence, different themes related to the topic have been identified and discussed with the support of collected evidence. The results have been found through analysing the themes in which the collected data has been used. It is to be noted that almost 63 references have been collected in this concern from various sources including journal articles, reports, news, any many other sites by searching via internet.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

In accordance to secondary data collection, only relevant sources have been used to collect data that are related to the topic. It has been observed that the secondary qualitative research can be conducted effectively if the benefits derived from the research outweighs the risks including re-identification of individuals and retaining confidentiality of sensitive data. The data used in the research must not result in any distress or damage. Lastly, it is required to note that no unethical sources have not been used to avoid subscription costs.

3.10 Research Limitations

The lower budge is one limitation of the research due to which it was not possible to conduct quantitative research using primary data collection. It is because conducting surveys and interviews require high cost. Besides, there was limited time to complete the research. Due to such constraint, the research had to be completed within proper time with limited information.

3.11 Research Timeline

[Refer to Appendix]

3.12 Summary

In this chapter, the methods and tools that have been used to collect data and analyse the data and complete the research have been specified. The reason for using each of the techniques

has been described effectively. The ethics and limitations of the research have been provided.



CHAPTER 4: Findings and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter of the dissertation, several themes in relation to the research topic have been identified and discussed in order to analyse the data collected for the research. Based on the thematic analysis, the concepts and variables have been interpreted to meet the objectives of the research.

4.2 Thematic analysis

Theme 1: Discussion on the rise of train terminals as shopping destination

It has been observed that the travel retail sector always attracts passengers and engages them with convenient and unique shopping experiences. In recent era, train stations have become much more than just grabbing a coffee and hence, the terminals in retail stations have been ramping up their offerings which have improved customer experience (van Hagen and van Oort, 2019). However, it is also true that train travellers generally have less time intervals rather than passengers in flight. Therefore, the concept is found to be analysed in the research is quite new and a rising concept. For instance, one train station namely Waterloo in London has announced a huge retail transformation. As it is one of the busiest railway stations and millions of passengers enter this station, there is a huge opportunity for rising train terminals as being shopping destination. It has been identified that opening in spring 2021, Waterloo. London would feature 40 new glass fronted units over three floors along with malls, public space, a mezzanine and a new pedestrianized street, called Waterloo curve (Lcrproperty.co.uk, 2019). The upmarket retail offerings in various international train stations are appealing to the demographic of international tourists, especially the professionals who use the train terminals very often. Not only that but also, it has been viewed that the sales growth in train stations has grown at the end of financial year 2018-19 which is indicating a significant future potentiality of having increased revenue of the train station from retail shopping. It is because, the consumer behaviour over the past few years have changed a lot which is one of the main factors contributing to the flourish of train terminals as shopping destinations.

Theme 2: Shopping at a travel terminal is being regarded as a simple process by customers

It goes without saying that people are going through a hectic schedule in this current era. In other words, it can be stated that people are getting busy in their professional lives effectively and this is the main reason why they are not getting adequate chances to go shopping. By

considering this matter, online business practitioners are ensuring their profitability. Online shopping has peaked in the recent years due to the advancement of technology-related evolution and the increasing utilization of the internet (Rungsrisawat et al. 2019). However, the hectic lifestyle of people is also an effective reason behind the success of online business. Actually, online business practitioners are taking the advantage of the situation and they are trying to attract business buyers. The number of people buying online is also increasing. At the time when the matter comes to making a discussion regarding the current shopping trends of people, it also becomes important to make a discussion regarding the interest of people in buying their regular needs from train terminals and by considering this kind of requirements, retail markets are getting developed in train terminals. Actually this matter is getting advantageous for both buyers and shoppers. It is a fact that shopping at a travel terminal can be regarded as a simple process. Getting a snack or a drink at the travel terminal is a common matter. However, the matter is that the shopping-related factor is not limited to snacks or drinks now. Now, the overall matter has got an advancement and it is possible to find out a number of shops in the train terminals and it is helping people, who travel by trains, to buy their necessary items in the easiest manner. In the hectic schedule that people are habituated with in this current era, it is truly difficult for those ones who travel in a regular manner to go to a market just for buying one item (which might be highly necessary). The problem has been solved with the development of shopping markets in train terminals. By considering this matter, it can be stated that the busy lifestyle of people is an effective reason why business practitioners are using train terminals for developing markets. However, the matter is that if business practitioners would find that they are not getting an adequate number of customers while developing markets in the train terminals, then they would not show interest in this matter and these markets would not be developed in such an effective way. By considering the trend and the increasing range of markets in train terminals, it can easily be understood that the businesses that have been developed in these areas are getting adequate number of customers. Hence, it can be stated that this particular business trend is suiting the buying behavior of modern customers. In this regard, it is important to state about panic buying. It is about the process where consumers purchase usually large amounts in anticipation of a disaster (Loxton et al. 2020). When the matter comes to travel, people may buy things just by thinking that they may not get the items in the place where they are traveling. It is another kind of panic buying and people are expected to show interest in buying these items from train terminals.

Theme 3: Travel retail destinations such as train terminals are bucking the trend

It is a fact that major train stations have long been established locations for retail. In this regard, it is also important to remember that the visitor frequency is an important factor to be considered when the matter comes to developing a shopping market in a place. It goes without saying that traveling by transportation has become an integral part of the lives of people. No matter whether it's for professional purposes or a personal purpose, people face the requirement to travel by train. It means that the frequency of visitors in the train terminals is significantly high. This is the most important factor why business practitioners consider developing the business in these places. They are well aware of the matter that attracting customers becomes easier if an attractive item is placed in a crowded area for selling. In the train terminals, people belonging to different backgrounds and cultures visit. The visitors may have different needs and their reasons behind travelling may be different. In this regard, it is important to state that the needs of these visitors differ with respect to their purpose of traveling. Findings related to social science studies are stating that consumers and the consumption behavior of them is influenced by a range of social and institutional factors (Visser et al. 2018). By considering this matter, the business practitioners are keeping different kinds of items in train terminals and that is why their revenue generation process is getting easier. This is the main reason why developing shopping markets in train terminals has become a trend in this current era. It is a fact that advertising is an important promotion strategy that is used as a major tool in creating product awareness (Chukwu et al. 2019). However, in the case of developing a business in train terminals, reaching customers is easier as visitor frequency is higher there and that is why businesses in these areas do not face the requirement to be involved in an intensive business promotional or advertising process.

Theme 4: Developing markets in the train terminals can help businesses in regards to the profit making process

It is a fact that the industry mix in transport properties typically focuses strongly on travel needs. However, the matter is that in this current era, train stations are becoming more than cafes and newspaper kiosks. However, in this current era, it is possible to find out that major transportation hubs are becoming long housed numerous shops and supermarkets. In addition, in the train terminals, it is possible to get a number of clothing stores, shoe shops and much

more. By considering this matter, it can be stated that business practitioners of different industries are showing adequate interest in developing their stores in the traveling areas, especially in train terminals. By considering the business philosophy of most of the business practitioners, it can be stated that generating an effective revenue is the main objective of them. Behind developing the markets in the train terminals, such objective of them is definitely working. In other words, it can be stated that they are developing businesses in the train terminals for ensuring more profitability. This is the reason why the profitability-related factor is required to be considered when the matter comes to making a discussion regarding the reasons behind the development of a business in train terminals. It has already been stated that a number of people are visiting train terminals in a regular manner. If a business expert can keep an item of their daily needs in this place for selling, then the possibility of getting the item would be highest and this kind of business mind is definitely working behind the development of a shopping destination in the concerned area. By considering the result of the survey that has been conducted by EHI retail institute in 2014, it can be stated that 45% of the lettable area in German train stations has been devoted to retail. 43% of this area is devoted to gastronomy (www.across-magazine.com, , 2017). In the case of other countries, the picture is almost the same as different kinds of retail showrooms and food businesses are getting developed in the train terminals. However, by considering the current situation, it can be stated that more number of shops (no matter whether it is a retail shop or a food shop) would be developed in train terminals in the future as business practitioners are getting an idea regarding the profitability that they can gain while developing businesses in this area.

Theme 5: Ideas for different retail and food shopping at train stations

Train stations can be stated as ideal locations for setting up small business shops as the train stations are the hubs of human interaction, hundreds or thousands of people daily come and go across the stations. Each of the passengers in the flow of foot traffic are potential customers who may have the needs for specific items for purchasing on impulse while waiting for the train. In order to succeed with retail at the train terminals the retailers must provide an affordable and accessible shopping experience which offers merchandise or services that travellers could find hard to avail quickly elsewhere other than train stations. Most of the travellers look for the products and services that are needed while travelling to reduce the strain of travel. These types of products can be found commonly at the newsstands convenient stores that incorporate stationary. Stamps, pens, medicines, candy, regional maps and guidebooks and many others.

Apart from retail shops, food is a major item consumed by travellers as most of the travellers are likely to purchase different food items before or after their journey by trains. It has been often observed that MsDonald's and Starbucks set up their restaurants near the train stations because of having more revenues from the massive flows of people around the transportation hubs (Karamshuk *et al.* 2013). It is observed commonly at any train stations that foods including bagels, nutrition bars, egg sandwiches, hotdogs, donuts, pizza, fries, burgers, and prepared meals attract the travellers at the train stations. Besides, beverages such as tea, coffee, bottled water, soda, juice are also most favourite items of passengers for their refreshment.

On the other hand, if a traveller is making a cross country journey, he or she can suffer from boredom quickly. Therefore, an idea for creating value for customers with entertainment items including magazines, puzzle books, toys for children, electronic gadgets and games, DVD and blu-ray players, disposable digital cameras and many others. Along with that, travellers may have the need for clothing and fashion apparels for men, women as well as children and accessories at the train stations. Passengers who travel a long way to meet their friends and families might purchase some gift items which they could have forgotten to buy before. There is also an idea for including gift items in the trail shops at the train stations. Therefore, it has been found that there are many options for trail products that are sold at the train stations, eventually transforming the stations in the shopping destination. Customers also get pretty satisfied by getting their desired travelling items at the station or enjoying foods and beverages while waiting for the train.

Theme 6: Analysing how positioning strategy can be used for marketing the products sold at train terminals

Positioning strategies can be executed in many ways which may derive from competition, object attributes, types of consumers and characteristics of the products or services. In the past few years, a number of retailers have focused more on transport hubs, specifically in railway stations. Therefore, positioning strategies are of major concern of the retailers to market their products. As a positioning strategy, the characteristics of products in terms of buyers' benefits can be focused. Reliability and durability of the products can be considered here to position different items. Quality approach can also be taken into consideration as a positioning strategy where price-quality acts as the determinant of positioning products. Some of the products including tobacco and alcohol are sold duty-free in the railway stations

in Britain, reflecting the travel retailing stress for low price (Smigielska and Stefanska, 2017). Therefore, the retailers have to reposition their products by attributes other than price.

An effective product position strategy can be the approach of associating the product with the class of users. The idea behind this approach is that the personality of users would influence the image of the products through reflecting the characteristics and image of the model communicated as a product user. For instance, international brands like Rituals, Mac, Hamleys and the Body Shop have all booked a spot within the newly revamped London Bridge Station of Network's rail. Most of the railway stations in various countries are located within busy city centres and hence, attract a variety of audience (Rail.nridigital.com, 2018). However, critical positioning decisions are required to be taken based on the product class. In respect of food retail, instant food or beverages must be positioned as breakfast substitutes whereas virtually identical products can be positioned as dietary meal substitutes. In case of international railway stations, cultural symbols can also be used as positioning strategy to differentiate a brand from its competitors. Thus it can be said that effective positioning strategies can improve stimuli of train stations as shopping destinations for travellers.

Theme 7: Critically evaluating the ways through which marketing mix can be utilized for promotion

Marketing mix is used in business as a marketing tool which combines four Ps such as product, price, promotion and place. The concept of marketing is utmost important for the retail sellers in the railway stations who offer different ranges of products. The component price is the cost of purchasing any product by the travellers which depends on the perceived value of the products (Othman *et al.* 2020). As it has been identified that in the railway stations of the UK and outside of the UK, major products are sold at duty-free price which therefore make those products cheaper than the similar products in the high streets. Hence, it can be stated that low price makes a product more accessible to the customers.

Product is another element of marketing mix and the marketers are often likely to consider the life cycle of the product in order to address the potential challenges may arise. Most of the product categories that are sold in railway stations are electronic products, clothing and fashion appeals for men, women and children, and travel related items to address the customers' needs for entertainment, food and other necessities. Most of the customers tend to shop travel appeals particularly from the retail sectors in the railway terminals because of lower price other than outside of the stations.

Promotion is the third factor in marketing mix which is the most important element for the marketers to promote their retail offerings in the railway stations. In this regard, advertising, sales promotion, internet ads, direct marketing are some examples of promotional activities. Developing public reactions is the main objective of this marketing mix category which is encompassed through effective communication to reach out to the more consumers (Othman *et al.* 2020). It is quite effective to promote the retail products in the railway stations due to having the highest footfalls of any venues along with large spaces for launching products and attracting the eyes of customers. Therefore, global retail companies like Marks & Spencer have also opened their store in UK railway stations to grab the promotional opportunities. In order to gain the attention of travellers, discounts, coupons are most relevant for the retailers. Place is the last element of marketing mix where consumers use, access as well as purchase any product. At the present time transport hubs are developing as the most influential place for marketing as thousands of people visit the stations every day who might have needs for purchasing various products and services. However, train stations have been much slower for making the most of on-site retail compared to airports. Railway stations are the lucrative place for the retailers as they can earn profit from high footfall figures, common events and marketing, as well as professional management of the centre (Rail.nridigital.com, 2018). Thus, it has been shown in this theme that 4Ps of marketing have been used or can be used in the future to expand the retailing hubs in the railway stations.

Theme 8: Including place element in marketing to highlight the significance of train station for shopping

Place or location where a business sets up, markets and sells their products has a great significance. According to the topic of the research, railway stations should be focused as the place for providing retail offerings and its usefulness for making revenue and profits for the retailers. It has been observed that in the UK along with other countries like Europe are making substantial investments in developing the railway terminals as the shopping destination for travellers. An important example in this regard can be given as the Leipzig Hauptbahnhof station in German that houses the Promenaden, the biggest shopping centre in the city with almost 200 shops (Rail.nridigital.com, 2018). The railway stations offer a range of demographics which incorporates daily commuters for high visibility. Therefore, train stations are not only just the place for large national brands to promote their products but also suitable for small, medium and large companies for targeting the regular local audience.

The significance of using the railway stations as the place of conducting business is that the place captures high footfalls along with high dwell time (Apuk.net, 2021). Exclusive pricing structure can be utilized by the retailers by facilitating the duty-free shopping opportunities for customers. Thereafter mixed demographics allows them to position their products according to the needs of different age groups of people. For all such purposes and following the positive outlook of the retail business, New York Grand central Terminal which is one of the busiest rail stations of the US has decided to integrate restaurants and shops across the station, representing the future potentiality of the place of station (Rail.nridigital.com, 2018). As stated by Jang and Cho (2018), an effective place for marketing a product or service must deliver improved accessibility, offers of amenities, convenience of facilities and receipt of attraction to a wide range of demographics. It has also been notified that customer satisfaction is important for success of any retailer and in railway stations the opportunity of selling products or services at tax free price is another source of customer satisfaction. Therefore, because of all the points discussed in the above, the railway stations that are located in busiest cities are gaining locational importance for retailers and marketers.

Theme 9: Identification of the shopping trend by consumers

With the evolution of digitalization and globalization the shopping trend of consumers has shifted towards online shopping even if while travelling. The benefits of online shopping is that consumers do not have to travel to the physical shops to buy things, therefore, reducing in-store shopping trips of consumers (Kedia *et al.* 2019). With the advent of information and communication technology, the accessibility of consumers to the internet-based applications including e-commerce, e-education, as well as information searching have been improved effectively. All the changes recently looked in the shopping patterns of consumers are due to ever changing consumer demand for various products and services. For the same reason, travellers are not likely to carry heavy shopping bags while traveling as additional baggage fees are required for that. As a solution to this problem, the idea of virtual shopping was taking place in railway stations. It is often observed that small business owners, instead of setting up a physical shop at the station, purchase spaces for advertising and hold posters showing images of merchandise with quick response codes. Thus travellers find it easier to scan the codes with the help of mobile phones to purchase products online for home delivery.

According to the study of Network Rail Footfall, 25% of total people who come to this station are not travellers, rather actuary use railway stations as the hubs for dining and

shopping (Rail.nridigital.com, 2018). Therefore, this trend of consumer behaviour and their shopping patterns are producing opportunities for the retailers. The increasing popularity of Network Rail's managed station has helped to transform it into the home to larger brands than ever before as they can reach more people through its advertising partnership and creating more money for the railway. In the same context, with new shopping developments which have been appearing in London stations with the help of new technologies like WiFi and affecting the shopping habits of passengers. It has been identified from the profile of shopping trends in the railway stations that different classes of audience in busy city centres is another reason for which the retailers might have faced changing customer needs. For instance, Grand Central on one hand a railway station and on another hand a comprehensive shopping centre (Rail.nridigital.com, 2018). Therefore, its mix retail provides a diverse range of services or products according to different needs, interest and willingness to pay consumers. It has been observed that a railway shopping mall emphasizes convenience products, travel necessities, groceries, food and beverages as well as drugstore products which means shopping behaviours at this place is different from the customer structure.

Theme 10: Economic and political issues faced by the retail shops in the train stations

It has been tracked from the discussion in the sections above that the opportunity of shopping at the travel terminals of railway stations was eventually increasing in different countries especially in the UK, London. However, in the recent year, the COVID-19 pandemic has totally changed the way in which retail activities are operated and led the overall travelling to a plunge. First of all, a number of political restrictions were on travelling across the globe which has reduced the footfall of national as well as international travellers in railway stations. Due to this decreased footfall of passengers the retailers found it difficult to manage for earning profit. Moreover, during the long time lockdown in the UK, most of the retail shops were closed in different railway stations. The Government imposed the rules of physical distance and isolation which also therefore reduced the footsteps of regular passengers at the physical shops and restaurants in the transport hubs.

In addition to this, the consumer behaviour has changed significantly after the break out of COVID-19 pandemic. In words of Chauhan and Shah (2020), consumers throughout the world market exhibit varying degrees of confidence in the procedure of economic recovery and these sentiments tend to influence their awareness of the disease. Therefore the consumer

behaviour has been forced to be changed. Following the economic downturn and recession in several markets, the spending of consumers has been reduced for luxury products along with other retail items that are not necessary on a daily basis. Specially, due to travel restrictions, the demand for travel retail products and services have also reduced substantially.

Therefore, in the post COVID period, the management of the railway stations need to reopen the retail and food shops and follow the safety regulations as much as possible. The activities like sanitization and regular health check-up must be in the culture of the retailers to enhance customer satisfaction. Apart from financial uncertainty for the ongoing pandemic situation, the management has to raise investment in marketing mix for the products sold in railway stations. In this way, the negative political and economic implications of COVID-19 can be minimized.

Theme 11: Strategies for developing transport retail in railway stations

It has been found that there is a large potentiality for the transport retailers in the railway stations. In normal times, there remains a huge customer demand for a range of transport related products including food and entertainment. However, during the pandemic time, the demand of customers has fallen drastically which can be normalized by taking effective strategies. At the same time, the recent consumer demand must be followed by the retailers.

Searching for large scale demographics through Wifi solutions

The station managers require access to a wide range of data along with consumer analytics to target their services in a better way. Herein, the digital technologies in terms of WiFi solution can be valuable for operations for large scale consumer analytics. With the use of Wifi, the retailers can engage with passengers at the dwell time and make them aware about additional benefits and things are going on in the retail hubs in railway stations (Rail.nridigital.com, 2018). In this case the users have the ability to navigate between the different modes of transport which is a key necessity and at the same time, in regards to the future of WiFi in the environment of transport retail, it needs to be integrated with the transport services. The use of an integrated WiFi across the whole cities would give train operating organisations significant insights regarding the ways people are moving across different modes of transport.

Provision for online retail opportunities

After COVID-19 pandemic the demand of online retailing has been increased than before to avoid travelling to physical stores. The concern is retaining safety and security and getting online delivery at the doorstep. With the rapid expansion of internet penetration as well as

booming consumption rates have led the growth of e-commerce immensely worldwide (Vakulenko *et al.* 2019). It has been demonstrated by Vakulenko *et al.* (2019) that the total number of digital buyers is about to cross the 2 million mark by 2020. Hence, following this insight, the travel retailers need to adopt the online shopping facilities for attracting passengers travelling at railway stations. However, then the retailers need to concentrate on marketing and positioning their products effectively to increase revenue.

Theme 12: Railway shopping hubs in different countries are potentially viable

It is a fact that the railway stations of the UK are becoming shopping centers in this current era. Within only two years of Network Rail that runs 19 of the biggest stations in the UK, the retail space has been increased in an effective way. This matter is effective enough to imply that the railway stations are becoming an effective shopping hub in the UK. However, when the matter comes to making a discussion regarding the development of railway shopping hubs in different countries, it would be a mistake if the name of some other countries would not be taken. In German, it has also been seen that shopping centers are being expanded in the market of German as well. Rail shops are also found in Australia as well. Actually, in most of the countries rail shops can be founded out. Actually people are getting advanced in this current era and they are literally looking for something that can help them to earn and manage their needs in an effective way. However, the matter is that the job market is getting tougher to the toughest. The situation summary of May 2020 is showing that non-farm payroll employment rose by 2.5 million (Cheng *et al.* 2020). Now, almost all of the counties are looking for the most talented ones to be the employees and that is why the rate of unemployment is being increased. With the increasing rate of unemployment, the interest of people in starting a business independently is also being increased. In almost all of the countries, the number of entrepreneurs is being increased and the willingness of people to do something in an independent manner is the main reason why the number of entrepreneurs is being increased. Now, it is important to think of competition. As the number of entrepreneurs is being increased, the business market competition is being increased and businesses are showing interest in attracting customers while adopting intelligent strategies. Starting a business in railway stations can be regarded as an effective way to attract and reach customers in an effective manner and this is the main reason why retailers are showing interest in developing their business in station areas. Hence, it can be stated that there are

some potential reasons behind the development of such businesses. It is a fact that the business environment in different countries is different. It is also a fact that the requirement of people in different countries is also different. However, in most of the cases and countries, the railway shopping hubs are expected to be successful and there are some key areas that are common with respect to the behavior of consumers of all countries and convenience and attraction are two important areas to be considered in this regard. The items that are being sold in railway hubs can attract people easier as people visit this particular place in a frequent manner and secondly buying anything from rail station is less time consuming and convenient as well as an individual can do this kind of shopping whenever coming from any other station due to work or personal purposes. These potential benefits are ensuring the success of such businesses and by considering these beneficial factors of this shopping process and this trend, it can be stated that the number of railway shopping hubs would be increased in an effective way and it would definitely provide a significant effect on the countries' economic status. It is a fact that innovation can always be regarded as the main engine of an improved standard of living (Soni et al. 2020). This kind of business is definitely an innovative approach and this innovation is expected to have a positive potential effect on the socio-economic factors of a country.

Theme 13: Technology is being used in the retail markets effectively

The overall discussion is being made here by considering the enhancement of the shopping centers and it is a fact that mainly retail businesses are being expanded in the station premises. Hence, by considering the topic and the research question, it has been possible to understand that there is a need of making a discussion regarding the current trends that retail businesses are experiencing and it is also very important to understand whether the railway shopping hubs have the ability to deal with these advancements as the growth of their business is dependent on their ability to adopt these advancements. When the matter comes to making a discussion regarding the advancements that the retail businesses are experiencing, it becomes highly important to make a discussion regarding technology. IT advancements are producing innovative changes in the industries (Yun et al. 2019). In almost all of the countries, technology is being used in an effective way and in almost all of the countries, retailers are found using technology effectively. Here, an example of the business environment of the UK can be provided. If the retail market of the UK can be analyzed, it would be easier to understand that not only the big brands but also small and medium sized retailers are also showing interest in using technology in regard to their business process.

Online shopping has become a trend and almost all of the retailers in the UK are showing interest in providing online delivery services. It can easily be regarded as an outcome of effective utilization of technology in regard to the business process. In this regard, it is also very important to state that AI and ML are also being used effectively in regard to the retail business process. It has already been stated that the business market is getting highly competitive and business practitioners are looking for some effective ways that can help them to gain customer satisfaction as gaining customer satisfaction can be regarded as the best way to gain competitive advantage and dominate the business of customers in an effective way. At the time of making a discussion regarding the utilization of the internet in the retail market, an example of Tesco should be provided. Tesco has been found to be a leader in using data to track the buying behavior of consumers and the business is found to have a strong online presence. Now, the business is found using the power of big data, analytics and the internet of things. The business is thinking of improving their utilization of data in order to deal with the changing buying behavior of consumers in a regular manner (Information Age, 2017). By considering this matter, it can easily be stated that the business is using technology in an effective way and it can be regarded as one of the main reasons behind the success of the company. Now, it is important to think whether retailers who are expanding their business in railway stations would be able to adopt these new trends and would be able to sustain the business and market position that other companies of their industry are taking. Well, there is no need to think that they are not compatible enough to ensure their business success while adopting these technological advancements. As attracting customers is a bit easier for them, it is expected that they are buying their items to a significant number of customers and getting the chance to generate effective revenue. From this analysis, it can be stated that they should have adequate financial resources to adopt these technologies and if they can consider employing some technically advanced ones to supervise these processes, then it is for sure that they would be successful in regard to the technology adoption process and it would ensure the success of their business in railway terminals.

Theme 14: Railway shopping hubs can provide a positive effect on countries' economy

In the above-stated section, a detailed discussion regarding the expansion of businesses in railway terminals have been elaborated and now it is important to analyze the effect of it on the economy of a country. It is a fact that the expansion of such shops or the expansion of

shopping centers in railway terminals can provide a significant effect on the economy of a country. It has already been stated that the job market is getting tougher and starting a business in a railway terminal can be a good business idea for an unemployed one. Hence, it can be stated that this business idea can reduce the number of unemployed ones of a country. It is a fact that people of this society are aware of the need for actions that foster entrepreneurship (Tur-Porcar et al. 2018). Hence, if an individual considers starting a new business in a railway terminal, it is expected that people would help the business practitioner to continue the business. As more people visit railway stations, an effective level of consideration would be gained by the business and it would result in a better revenue generation process. Secondly, doing business in railway terminals can be economically profitable and it can also provide a positive effect on the economic status of a country. Hence, it can be stated that the railway shopping hubs can be an economically profitable business idea.

4.3 Summary

In this chapter, thematic analysis has been performed from which some unique findings have been obtained from the themes. The themes that have been chosen, all are associated with the topic and the objectives of the research. The existing research from different literatures and reports have been considered here to extract new insights in relation to the topic. In this concern, several themes have been identified and thereby named and explained in detail to understand the significance of variables in the research. From this chapter, the use of positioning strategies along with marketing mix have been understood. Description on railway retail hubs in different countries has been demonstrated including technological use, consumers' shopping trend and economic benefits.

CHAPTER 5: Conclusion and Recommendation

5.1 Conclusion

The chapter details the facts and concerns that have been emphasised and analysed critically within the above chapters. Information and findings have been concluded in this chapter projecting the importance of research objectives to either get successfully linked with the data findings results or to differ in the same consideration.

The initial chapter of introduction successfully highlighted the background of the research topic and by stating the rationale of the research as ‘the changing buying patterns of consumers’ are a matter of concern for the railway shopkeepers. The first chapter also gave a clear research aim and question depending on which the considerations for other chapters were successfully drawn for being critically analysed. As the research title projects, train terminals and its rise as a shopping station have been explored in the above stated rationale, so that, the faced difficulties due to the space of terminals, infrastructure of terminals while shopping can be focused more in the next chapter of literature review. The second chapter concluded with the general background study highlighting the facts associated with the stated research aims and objective in the first chapter. In this chapter researchers have shed light on the gaps identified already within the previous literature. As per the research title, the rise of train terminals as shopping stations is not much discussed by previous scholars or researchers and this is the reason the topic chosen has been given more consideration.

The third chapter concludes the specified selection of research methods that have been used by the researcher to proceed with the data analysis. The selection of research methods is only done after considering the ability of the selected method to meet the required answers for the stated research questions in chapter one. As per the discussion made in this chapter thematic analysis have been considered to stay able for meeting the aim, objectives and question of the research. The need to critically justify the topic from the viewpoint of other scholars have been considered so that proper reasoning for creating each theme can be developed. The next chapter of data analysis and finding follows the method of thematic analysis and thus total 14 themes have been set with an aim to justify the research question. As the research question targets to critically analyse the factors that trigger the rise of railway terminals as marketing or shopping destinations; the need to know views of other researches is equally required. Factors as less time in hands of travellers, business of the railway stations along with the constantly changing consumer behaviour have been found as a finding analysis.

5.2 Linking with objectives

Objective 1: *To understand the positioning strategy along with its importance in marketing*

The link of this objective can be observed with theme 1 and theme 3. The reason can be marked due to the facts observation of reasoning out the train terminals as shopping destinations. According to theme 1 terminals in retail stations offer more improved customer experience. This objective can be linked to support the understanding of the positioning strategy from the perspective of marketing. However, from theme 3 the bucking trend of travel retail destinations can be linked in terms of the one position in the mindset of travellers visiting such terminals across the globe. In order to position a brand companies also require focusing on a range of social and institutional factors (Visser *et al.* 2018).

Objective 2: *To explore the way marketing mix can be used for promoting products and services* and Objectives 3: *To place element in marketing mix*

The link of objectives as objective 2 and 3 can be associated with theme 7 and theme 10. In order to explore ways through which marketing mix can be used for promoting service and product and the placement of marketing mix as whole, both themes have successful contributions. From theme 7 a fair understanding of 4 key elements of marketing mix have been reasoned in relation to the train terminals and the facts that promote the shopping within such destinations.

From theme 10, the financial uncertainty during the ongoing pandemic situation have been also highlighted in a way that emphasized the need of pricing as one of the elements within the marketing mix to stay more in consideration by shoppers and the shopkeepers within railway terminals as a whole.

Objective 4: *To Evaluate the change in the trends of shopping*

This objective links with theme 2, theme 5, theme 9 and theme 11. The very common fact that has been critically analysed from each of the stated four themes are the various trends of shopping that constantly keep changing the consumer behaviour as a whole. As for example, from theme 2 shopping have been referred to as a simple process for some customers. Whereas, further research work in theme 5, specifies the need for those products and services that are most frequently required for the travelling purpose. Thus retail business of such commodities may thrive in the shopping business in railway terminals. Whereas, from theme

9 and 11 several other trends such as virtual shopping, concern of travelling with additional baggage, food beverages were also linked to meet this objective.

Objective 5: *To analyse the potentiality of railway shopping hubs in different country*

In order to link these objectives theme 4, theme 8, theme 6, theme 12 and theme 14 have been identified. From theme 4 train station to become more than cafes and newspaper kiosks have been analysed, whereas, different countries in relation to railways shopping have been stated in theme 8 specifying significance of place and location of such terminals. The theme 6, 12 and 14 considers positioning strategies, the in depth analysis on Network Rail and the facts boosting a country's economy.

Objectives 6: *To observe technology use in retail shopping*

This objective solely contributes to its link with the theme 13 where technology for enhancing the shopping experience of customers has been critical justified. This theme shed light on the IT advancements that successfully adapted to produce innovative changes within railway terminals tortoise as shopping centres.

5.3 Recommendation

In order to recommend, the researcher needs to focus on the two broad considerations in relation to the current research and its selected topic. The following are the two key recommended strategies that could be applied to obtain more specific findings from which one connects to the research method alternative and the other to the research title.

Adaptation of primary data through quantitative analysis

As stated by Disman and Barliana (2017), the ability of writing an academic paper is always required for achieving one's graduation at university level. Therefore, working on dissertation and thesis papers always require authentic sources for collecting data. The sources acquired from quantitative data are analysed only through primary data. In words of Disman and Barliana (2017), quantitative research is related to validity, analysis, experiment and research designs. Thus, for the current research work, the researcher is suggested to adapted primary data by conducting a survey through an online questionnaire. These questionnaires can be asked targeting the shop owners of different retail brands within railway terminals. As a result, the researcher can analyse depending on the assumption to be made by observing the collected response of the target survey participants. Moreover, the current situation of both shoppers and the shopkeeper can be reviewed to conclude whether railways terminals are gaining boost for converting to shopping destinations or not.

Conducting green marketing mix for retailers doing business in transport terminals

As commented by Mahmoud (2018), green marketing mix is a concept that considers the interest of an organisation within its environment. Thus, considering this approach, activities such as product modification, advertising, and packaging may help businesses within railway terminals to hold and keep retaining the interest of its global customers. As in this environment of high technology and quick shopping, the awareness of consumers has considerably increased (Mahmoud, 2018). Therefore, to know the track on the factors that may influence consumer's behaviour can be successfully met by adopting a green marketing mix. This will promote and make each shop owner's perceptions towards why they need to change their current packaging, or may be the means of advertising.

5.4 Future scope of the study

The future scope of this study can be said to turn out as an interesting piece of research. The reason can be marked for more research in terms of railways and how they can keep retaining the interest of its shoppers across the globe. Shopping has always been an important factor for boosting the economy of a country. Thus, future researchers may gain an idea from this research in relation to the trends that affect shopping even in the challenging situation of global pandemic. Moreover, future research work may involve the interest of technological advancement that will further get adapted within transportation terminals as a whole.

5.5 Summary

This chapter summarizes the overall conclusion of the entire research work. There are six main objectives that have been linked and justified with the themes generated in chapter four to create a successful understanding of research aim. In addition to the discussion, the recommendations have been stated considering two criteria as one to be a research method alternative and the other to address the issue of the considered research title. A brief on future scope of the study has been stated so that the required interest of the future researchers can be identified.

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Appendix: Research Timeline

Activities during research	1 st Week	2 nd Week	3 rd Week	4 th Week	5 th Week	6 th Week	7 th Week
<i>Developing problems</i>							
<i>Formulating aims and objectives</i>							
<i>Methodology followed in the research</i>							
<i>Literature search and review</i>							
<i>Collection of secondary data for research</i>							
<i>Thematic Analysis and interpretation</i>							
<i>Formulating conclusion and recommendations</i>							
<i>Final submission of the project plan</i>							

