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Module: LCBB6000

DISSERTATION PROPOSAL

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The Impact of Covid-19 on the Retail Sector in UK:

A Case Study of Guess Inc.

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research

The retail industry in the UK has been one of the largest industry both locally and globally. The retail industry of UK covers a large global market share and has been one of the largest income sector in the economy (Fairlie, 2020). The retail industry in the UK is very versatile as the industry covers a vast array of products and services such as foods products, clothing items, sports wears, home necessities, gadgets, etc. There are more than 300,000 businesses in the retail industry in the UK and this industry employs almost 8% of the total jobs in the UK which is over 3 million jobs. The retail sales is currently considered to be worth of £465 billion as of 2021 (Maliszewska et al., 2020).

The year 2020 has witnessed the global spread of the pandemic Covid-19. This pandemic has taken a global form shortly after the year 2020 stated and has caused the world a massive amount of trouble. This pandemic has severely affected the economic, social, political, and administrative aspects of almost every country in the world. The global business sector has suffered greatly due to the pandemic and the clothing and retail industry is one of the many (Zhang and Ma, 2020).

The global clothing and retail industry has seen a sharp downturn in the revenues, profits, etc. and many firms around the globe had to permanently shut down their operations and thousands of employees and workers had to face layoffs in this industry like many others. The UK clothing industry is among the leading industries and the pandemic has caused a significant contraction in the local and global market share (Zhang and Ma, 2020). Guess Inc. is one of the leading retail businesses in the UK and for this paper, the case of Guess? Inc. will be considered. Just like other firms in this industry, Guess Inc. suffered significant losses and had to go through several changes in its policies.

1.2 Significance of the Research

The paper will contribute to the existing literatures and will provide valuable insights for future research regarding the subject matter. As the global pandemic and its impact on various socio-economic factors have become growing concerns for both researchers and business organizations, this paper will serve to these needs and may act as a guide for future researchers.

1.3 Purpose of the Research

This paper will be prepared to analyze the significant aspects of changes that has happened in the selected firm during this global pandemic situation. This paper will also focus on the policy changes and their impacts on the firm's performance and profitability.

1.4 Aims and Objectives of the Research

The research paper will be conducted to fulfil the following aims and objectives:

- To investigate the significant issues faced by Guess Inc. due to the Covid-19 in the UK.
- To identify the severity of the impact on the profitability and performance of Guess Inc. during the Covid-19 in the UK.
- To measure and compare the before and after pandemic scenario and performance of Guess? Inc. in the UK.

1.5 Research Questions

The paper will be investigating the following research questions:

- *How the global pandemic Covid-19 did affect the performance and profitability of Guess? Inc. in the UK?*
- *What is the extent of impact of the Covid-19 on Guess Inc. in the UK?*

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Company Overview

Guess? Inc. is an American lifestyle and clothing brand. Guess Inc. offers menswear, women's wear, athlete wear, and fashion accessories for example, jewelry, perfumes, bags, watches, etc. Guess? Inc. was founded by Georges Marciano, Maurice Marciano, Paul Marciano, Armand Marciano in 1981 and is headquartered in Los Angeles, California, US (Maliszewska et al., 2020). Guess? Inc. has operations in approximately 100 countries across the globe and has 1,169 directly operated outlets in the Americas, Europe, and Asia as of 2020. Guess? Inc. also has 560 additional outlets operated by its partners and distributors.

2.2 Empirical Research

Numerous studies have been conducted across the globe to determine the effects of the global pandemic in various aspects of economy and social lives. The socio-economic sectors of all the countries have been affected by this global pandemic Covid-19. The social, economic, political, environmental factors of every economy has suffered due to the outbreak of the global pandemic Covid-19.

Researchers have studied these impacts on multiple industries in order to get a clearer view on the subject matter. It has been indicated by many researchers that global firms have suffered severe losses in the pandemic situation and one of the main reason is that those firms highly depended on the raw materials from other countries and as the communication between countries were closed off due to the outbreak of Covis-19, the firms had failed to manage and maintain their inventory and production level (Donthu and Gustafsson, 2020). The firms also had to face contraction in the global market shares.

The researchers have found that almost every industry has suffered losses in the USA due to the global pandemic Covid-19. Moreover, African American firms had to face approximately 41% contraction in their business activities (Fairlie, 2020). Some researchers have found that the GDP (Gross Domestic Product) of developed and developing countries saw a downturn of approximately 1.8% and 2.5% respectively (Maliszewska et al., 2020).

Studies on the impact of the global pandemic Covid-19 on commerce indicated that the retailers had to face various short-run difficulties in areas such as manpower, supply chain, customer demand, revenue, health and safety, etc. (Donthu and Gustafsson, 2020). One study on the impact of the global pandemic Covid-19 on entrepreneurship specified that in case of startups or new firms, even if there is unintentional harm done to the business, innovation, and growth of the firms can continue for the firms in the long-run (Naudé, 2020).

RESEARCH METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Philosophy

The research topic “The Impact of Covid-19 on Guess In the UK” has been selected keeping in mind the current global crisis in clothing and retail industries due to the pandemic Covid-19. The current scenario of the clothing industry is not much favorable as most of the firms in this industry has suffered severely due to the global pandemic. As Guess Inc. is a globally recognized firm in the clothing industry, the pandemic has affected the firm as well. This research will assist in analyzing the effects of the pandemic on the firm’s operation in the UK and the ups and downs that the firm has faced since the outbreak of the pandemic in the UK market.

3.2 Research Paradigm

The research topic of this paper is to determine the impacts that the global pandemic Covid-19 has on the selected firm Guess Inc. Since the outbreak of the global pandemic, many researches have been conducted in numerous countries to measure the impact on the economic and social sectors of an economy. The pandemic has severely affected the clothing and retail industries in every country. The existing researches show that the pandemic has had a negative impact on the overall growth, profitability, and performance on the clothing industry. But the online and e-commerce service of this industry has witnessed rise since 2020. Many researches show that the Covid-19 had forced the firms in many industries to change its value chain and other managerial policies and the workforce of these industries has suffered layoffs and other difficulties too. Most of the researches show that the global pandemic Covid-19 has greatly negatively affected the clothing and other retail industries and the firms across the world are still bearing those losses.

3.3 Research Approach

This paper will include quantitative approach in conducting research. The research topic selected for this paper demands this approach as all of the impacts of the global pandemic on the selected firm cannot be quantified in terms of cash flow or profitability.

3.4 Research Methodology

The paper will follow a statistical approach to measure the quantitative impact of the global pandemic Covid-19 on the selected firm. Descriptive statistics along with various graphs and charts will be utilized to represent the data of the selected company. A comparative approach will also be taken to measure the before pandemic scenario and after pandemic scenario of the selected firm. The policy and managerial changes due to the Covid-19 will also be analyzed in this paper.

3.5 Research Strategy

The research strategy for this paper will include the collection of information and data regarding the impact of the global pandemic Covid-19 on the UK clothing industry and collecting data regarding the selected firm to visualize the different impacts of the global pandemic on the firm. The collected data will be measured and presented in appropriate manners that will assist in drawing concrete suppositions regarding the research topic.

3.6 Sampling Methods

The sample size of the paper includes only one entity which is Guess Inc. The company has been selected as the focus of the research due to its local and global impact on the clothing and retail industry. Will be collected 6 interviews from the management team of one of Guess brunches in London, located in Knightsbridge and 20 questionnaires from the other staff of this brunch.

3.7 Data Collection Methods/Tools

The required data will be collected from various primary and secondary sources. The primary sources of data will be collected through interviews and questionnaires. Multiple secondary sources will be used such as financial statements of GUESS Inc., press release, research papers, publications, articles, websites, etc. As the impact of Covid-19 will be analyzed on the performance of Guess Inc., both the primary data and the secondary data will help in comparing the situation of the company before and after the global pandemic situation.

3.8 Interpretation of Data

The collected data will be analyzed and interpreted in this paper to draw inferences regarding the research topic. For the interpretation of the analysis that will be conducted in this research, various

graphical tools such as charts will be used and proper methods will be applied to interpret the results or research findings from the analysis.

3.9 Gantt Chart

The research schedule can be described using Gantt's Chart. The following Gantt's chart shows the timeline and work done during that period for this research:

Task name	Week 1	Week 2-3	Week 4-5	Week 6	Week 7-8	Week 9-11	Week 12
Development and analysis of ideas							
Writing proposal							
Literature review							
Methodology							
Data collection							
Analysis							
Discussion and conclusion							

3.10 Ethical Consideration of the Research

The following ethical issues will be considered while preparing this paper:

- The data and information that will be used in this paper will be utilized only for academic purposes.
- The secondary data and information that will be used for this research, will be referenced and cited in the appropriate manner.
- The research findings will not be used for bringing any harm to the readers of the paper.
- No personally identifiable data will be collected and applied in this paper.

CONCLUSION

The research paper will be prepared to deduct the significance and severity of the global pandemic Covid-19 on the performance, profitability, and operation of Guess Inc. in the UK. As the UK clothing industry along with the global clothing and retail industry has suffered losses during the pandemic, it is expected that the same has happened to the selected firm. This paper will analyze these quantitative changes along with several qualitative changes in the firm such as managerial policy changes, employee benefits, healthcare and safety measures, etc.

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APPENDIX: Ethics for primary data collected (Interview)

Participation Consent Form



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PARTICIPATION CONSENT FORM

Titl Y Prosiect: / Project Title:

THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE RETAIL SECTOR IN UK: A CASE OF STUDY OF GUESS

Enw'r Ymchwilydd / Name of Researcher: VLADA POPOV



1	I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated 29.04.2022 for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.	YES
2	I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.	YES
3	I understand that any information given by me may be used in future reports, articles or presentations by the research team.	YES
4	I understand that my name will not appear in any reports, articles or presentations.	YES
5	I agree to take part in the above study.	YES
Name of Participant		Signature
Researcher	VLADA POPOV	Signature POPOV



Participant Information Sheet



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**SAMPLE PARTICIPANT INFORMATION
SHEET**

~~Titl Y Proiect:~~ / Project Title:

THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE RETAIL SECTOR IN UK: A CASE OF STUDY OF GUESS

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is VLADA POPOV and I am a student in the School of Business, Finance and Management (London Campus), Faculty of Business and Management in University of Wales Trinity Saint David, United Kingdom. At present, I am conducting research on THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE RETAIL SECTOR IN UK: A CASE STUDY OF GUESS. The purpose of this research is to PROVIDE VALUABLE INSIGHTS FOR THIS RESEARCH REGARDING THE SUBJECT MATTER.

I would like to invite you to participate in my research project by answering the attached short questions developed by the researchers. Those questions will assess your opinions, experiences, knowledge, suggestions and views. Through your participation in the interviews, I hope to ascertain my research purpose to get the best opinion from you. I believe your opinion will be extremely helpful to me to carry out this research.

All questions will be kept strictly confidential to the researchers involved and at **NO** time will individual questions will be released to the general public. This gives you a chance to express your views on your programme a confidential and anonymous forum and still be able to make a difference. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary so you can withdraw from the questionnaire at any stage.

Please note, questionnaire should take no more than 30 minutes to complete but however, there is no time constraint. There are also no right or wrong answers. Attached to this letter along with the questionnaire there is a consent form where you will better understand researchers intention As this is a new project, your feedback is also important to me and I would be much obliged if you could also

complete the feedback sheet along with the questionnaire. I understand that your time is at a premium, but your opinions are very valuable to me.

After careful and precise analysis of the data obtained from this questionnaires/interviews, I will be happy to provide you with a copy of the findings at your request. The results of this questionnaire will hopefully enhance my understanding of current level of knowledge and future findings. The results of the research will be feedback to Director of Studies, Supervisor, University and British Library.

I thank you in advance for your time and participation. If any questions do arise, feel free to contact me at your convenience.

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