



Master of Business Administration

Analysing the Relationship Between Customer Satisfaction and Brand Loyalty in Marks & Spencer (M&S)

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October 2025



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**Master's Degrees by Examination and Dissertation
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Acknowledgement

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Balendran Kandasamy for their guidance and valuable feedback throughout this Dissertation. I also thank my family and friends for their continuous encouragement, support, and motivation during the completion of this dissertation.

Thanking You.

Abstract

The relationship between customer satisfaction and brand loyalty remains one of the critical issues in the retail industry in the United Kingdom and particularly among well-established multi-category retailers like Marks and Spencer (M&S) because high levels of customer satisfaction do not necessarily translate to long-term brand loyalty. The main purpose of such exploration was to measure the extent of customer satisfaction as an influence factor on brand loyalty at M&S and to provide the mediating variables involved in this correlation.

The mixed-method design was used in the study. The quantitative data were collected with the help of a structured survey tool and processed with the help of SPSS, and the qualitative information was retrieved with the help of a systematic review of the relevant academic sources. Findings also point to a statistically significant and positive influence of customer satisfaction on brand loyalty; however, the relationship is non-linear. The measurement of satisfaction was not sufficient to ensure long term loyalty, and perceived value, pricing fairness, convenience, and trust were found to be key mediators.

The results indicate that the loyalty at M&S is largely contingent and situational. In line with this, the research suggests that M&S should strengthen value communication, intensify individual loyalty programmes, and increase the convenience of omnichannel. Academically, the study recommends that future investigations should use the longitudinal study design and introduction of value-based variables in the study, which will further propel the understanding of loyalty formation in contemporary retail settings.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The chapter presents the subject under research, which is the connection between customer satisfaction and brand loyalty at Marks and Spencer (M&S). Experience of customer satisfaction is a decisive factor of brand loyalty in the long-term, which leads to repeat purchases and enhances a solid market stance (Atieno et al., 2023). The UK retail sector is a very competitive and dynamic industry, where customer expectations are constantly changing, and organisations such as M&S have to change their products and service delivery to ensure customer loyalty. The chapter displays the background, problem statement, rationale, and relevance of the study, which forms the background on which the aims, objectives, and questions of the research are understood. The research issue discussed in this paper is the disjuncture between high customer satisfaction rates and the real loyalty behaviour of the M&S customers. Although M&S has scored a satisfaction of 86.7 out of 100, it is a competitive business with the intrusion of cheapness and value becoming the key factors of loyalty. This shows that satisfaction is not necessarily followed by repeat purchase or advocacy. To enable M&S to put up the right strategies to retain engagement and loyalty, it is important to understand the underlying factors and relationships.

1.2 Background

UK retail media networks market, 2018-2030

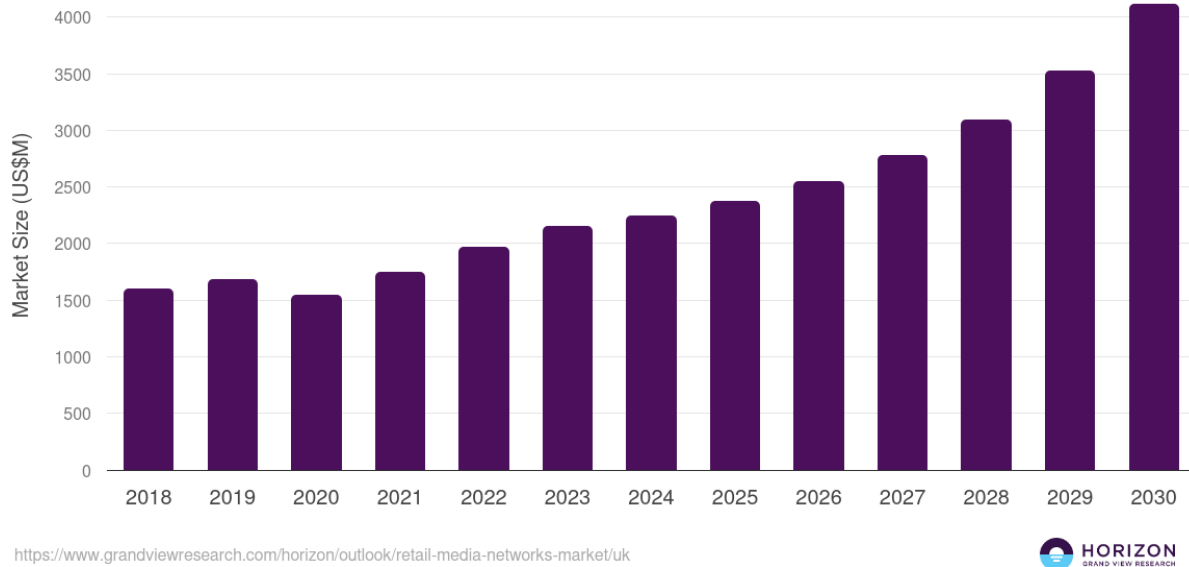


Figure 1.1: UK Retail Market Size

(Source: Grand View Research, 2025)

It is presenting that in 2024 the retail market size in the UK was US\$ 2252.0 million which will reach up to US\$ 4115.1 million by the year of 2030. The focal point of competitiveness within the UK retail market is customer satisfaction and brand loyalty, particularly among old guard brands struggling to maintain their relevance in the face of economic stress and strain, growing price sensitivity, and evolving expectations. Marks and Spencer (M&S) is a company that is situated in this environment as a large multi-category departmental store that deals in clothing, food, home, and beauty products to over 30 million customers. The connection between satisfaction and loyalty forms a foundation of the study of consumer behaviour in retail. The satisfaction normally arises when the perceived performance is up to or surpassing expectations, whereas loyalty is a commitment of behaviour involving repurchases, brand advocacy, and a lower probability of switching (Chigwende, 2021). These constructs tended to go hand in hand in the past, and high satisfaction normally meant high loyalty. Nonetheless, recent findings in the retail environment in the UK reveal that the issue of satisfaction is no longer enough to ensure long-term loyalty.

The importance of learning more about satisfaction and its role in loyalty at M&S is thus not only necessary due to the fact that the brand exists in a highly dynamic industry, but also due to the performance of M&S, which indicates that satisfaction is not necessarily fully paid back in behavioural loyalty (Lysenko-Ryba and Zimon, 2021). The introduction explains the organisational background, the genesis of the research problem, the rationale in the choice of the topic, and the general usefulness of the research on the satisfaction-loyalty dynamic in the context of M&S and the UK retail sector.

The heritage status of M&S as a British retailer has traditionally offered the company a competitive edge due to good brand image and the uniformity of service delivery. The UK retail environment has, however, changed structurally. Other industry players like John Lewis, Next, Primark, Aldi, and Lidl have transformed customer expectations with better price positioning, digital convenience, and value propositions (Collin-Lachaud et al., 2023). Consequently, the strengths that M&S has had since ancient times do not automatically bring a sense of loyalty. Although there was a high reported customer satisfaction of 86.7 (Grocery Gazette, 2025). M&S has to compete in markets where consumers are more focused on affordability than ever. The fact that 64% of UK retail consumers consider affordability as a crucial factor in their loyalty (Isatou Ndure, 2024) means that the level of satisfaction might not be enough to provoke a repeat purchase.

1.3 Problem Statement

Despite the high level of satisfaction indicators, M&S has a loyalty issue due to the shift in the priorities of customers and increased competition in the retail sector. The high level of satisfaction is not always the way to form loyalty since consumer behaviour in the UK has shifted to be more pragmatic, pricing-focus, and value-oriented. The research problem that arises as a result is the lack of understanding of the extent to which satisfaction leads to loyalty in the customer base of M&S and the dimensions of satisfaction that are sufficiently high to affect behavioural commitment in the long term. The problem statement will thus focus on finding out the strength and nature of the satisfaction-loyalty relationship in M&S, whether high satisfaction has any meaning to predict loyalty, and the conditions under which repeat purchasing behaviour fails.

1.4 Aim, Objective, and Research Questions

Aim:

The study aims to analyse how customer satisfaction influences brand loyalty at Marks & Spencer, focusing on key factors that drive repeat purchases and long-term customer relationships.

Objectives:

- To evaluate the level of customer satisfaction among Marks & Spencer customers.
- To identify key determinants of customer satisfaction, such as product quality, pricing, and service experience.
- To assess the degree of brand loyalty demonstrated by M&S customers.
- To examine the relationship between customer satisfaction and brand loyalty.

Research Questions/Hypothesis

Research Questions:

RQ1: How to evaluate the level of customer satisfaction among Marks & Spencer customers?

RQ2: What are the key determinants of customer satisfaction?

RQ3: What is the degree of brand loyalty demonstrated by M&S customers?

RQ4: What is the relationship between customer satisfaction and brand loyalty?

Hypothesis:

H0: Customer satisfaction has no significant positive effect on brand loyalty among Marks & Spencer customers.

H1: Customer satisfaction has a significant positive effect on brand loyalty among Marks & Spencer customers.

1.5 Rationale

The thesis behind this research can be attributed to the fact that there is a massive gap between satisfaction and the acquisition of sustained loyalty. M&S is operating in a competitive market where people are making their judgments on the brands based on a mixture of economic, experiential, and emotional factors. The proposal states that the post-pandemic behaviour has changed to be more affordable, perceived value, and convenient service (Hartini et al., 2021). Such a transformation leaves M&S to question which elements of satisfaction have the most significant effect on loyalty and what their interaction would be with pricing and the perception of value.

1.6 Significance

The research is organisational, industrial, and academic. In the case of M&S, the results will help understand the role of satisfaction in the loyalty process and what areas should be improved strategically. The interpretation of the satisfaction-loyalty relationship will be helpful in decision-making regarding the quality of the products or service enhancement, service refinement, pricing strategy, and customer engagement programs. In case satisfaction proves to be a strong predictor of loyalty, service quality or value-based improvements will be appropriate to invest in. In case the relationship is weaker, M&S might have to concentrate on emotional branding, experience marketing, or reformatted loyalty programs.

On an academic level, the work is significant in the context of applying the already existing theories of Expectation-Confirmation Theory (ECT) and the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) to the modern-day retail realities. These theories present how expectations, attitude, perceived behavioural control, and post-purchase evaluations influence loyalty. Their application to the M&S scenario enhances the conceptualization of the content of satisfaction and loyalty in contemporary retail, particularly where the price sensitivity threatens conventional loyalty motivating factors.

1.7 Methodology Insights

This study uses a mixed-method approach, combining a survey of 100 M&S customers with secondary data from journals and company reports. Convenience sampling is a non-probability-based sampling method, which selects participants based on their availability and proximity, but it can provide biased results as this sample does not represent the whole population (Golzar et al.,

2022). Quantitative data will be analysed using descriptive statistics, regression, and correlation in SPSS, while qualitative insights will be examined through Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis to identify patterns influencing satisfaction and loyalty.

1.8 Dissertation Structure

The dissertation is divided into 6 chapters. Chapter 1: Introduction gives the background, problem statement, rationale, significance and direction of the methodology. Chapter 2: Literature Review utilizes the major behavioural theories, analyses the existing studies on the topics of satisfactions and loyalty and analyses the situation in M&S retail and finds the gap in the research. Chapter 3: Methodology describes the research philosophy, methodology, strategy, data collection, data analysis methodologies and ethical considerations. Chapter 4: Findings reports analysed data of the primary and secondary data. Chapter 5: Discussion presents analysis of findings concerning theory and literature. Chapter 6: Conclusion and Recommendations summarises the insights, implications and the future research directions.

1.9 Chapter Summary

In conclusion, this chapter sets the scene, articulates the problem of the research, and defends the study. It identifies the relevance of the analysis of the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty to offer a foundation to the following methodology, literature review and analysis chapters so as to ensure a systematic approach of understanding and enhancing the customer engagement and brand loyalty to M&S. This research is justified by filling this gap, shedding light on the determinants of customer satisfaction including the quality of the offered products, prices, and the experience during the service delivery, as well as discussing the impact of the mentioned factors on the loyalty. The research has academic and practical value as it provides practical information on what M&S can do to enhance its relationship with customers, customer retention, and competitiveness in the UK retail market.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Underpinning

2.1.1 Expectation–Confirmation Theory (ECT)

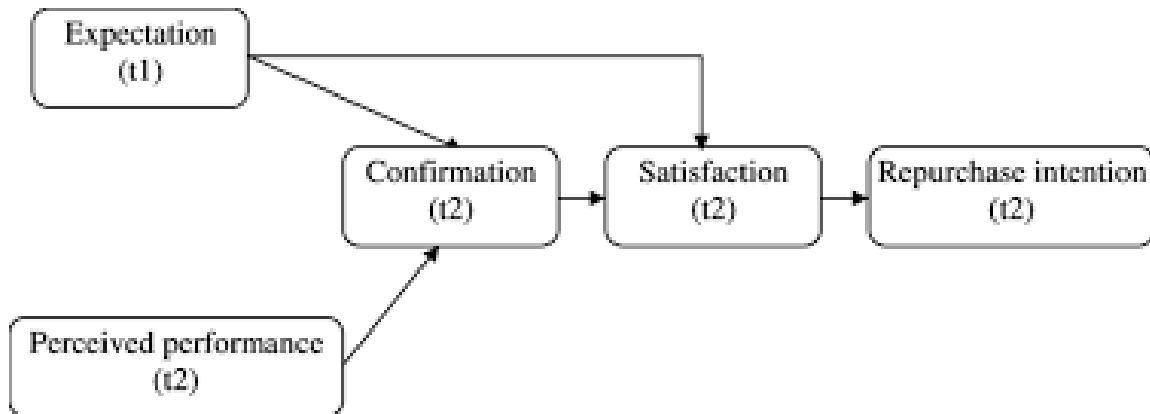


Figure 2.1: Expectation–Confirmation Theory (ECT)

(Source: Wu, 2025)

The figure above demonstrates the Expectation–Confirmation Theory (ECT), which highlights the steps to achieving customer satisfaction through methodical processes. Customers at M&S develop expectations well before they step into a store or even start surfing the internet and these expectations are pegged on the fact that the company has a long history of quality in its foods, quality clothing, and brand recognition as a reliable British retailer. Shoppers thus have been recorded to approach M&S with an attitude that the products must be superior to those found in the supermarket, and are worth rather higher prices, and provide a reliable and easy experience in store (McKinsey, 2025). These anticipations determine the ways of customers considering all price labels, product texture, and service interaction. To give an example, consumers of regular clothing demand durable material and a stable fit, whereas those who shop at food stores demand fresh material, ethical sourcing, and convenience (Dhir, 2022). As these expectations align with the actual experience, that is, when M&S food still serves treat-quality, or when personnel attend to customers with special care during the peak, confirmation ensues, leading to high satisfaction.

But confirmation does not occur in a consistent manner. The price-sensitive markets, especially following the cost-of-living crisis, have been experiencing heightened expectations on

affordability (Olivi et al., 2024). This relationship indicates that loyalty is not just based on the experience itself but on how that experience fits into the mental picture of the customer of what M&S should be. There is high alignment, that is, with the Christmas line of M&S Food, where the expectations on the indulgence and quality are always met, and the loyalty is highly stable (Mogire, 2024). In a situation of loss of alignment, particularly in pricing or irregularity in store service among stores, then satisfaction diminishes, and loyalty becomes diluted or even in the face of traditionally loyal shoppers.

2.1.2 Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)

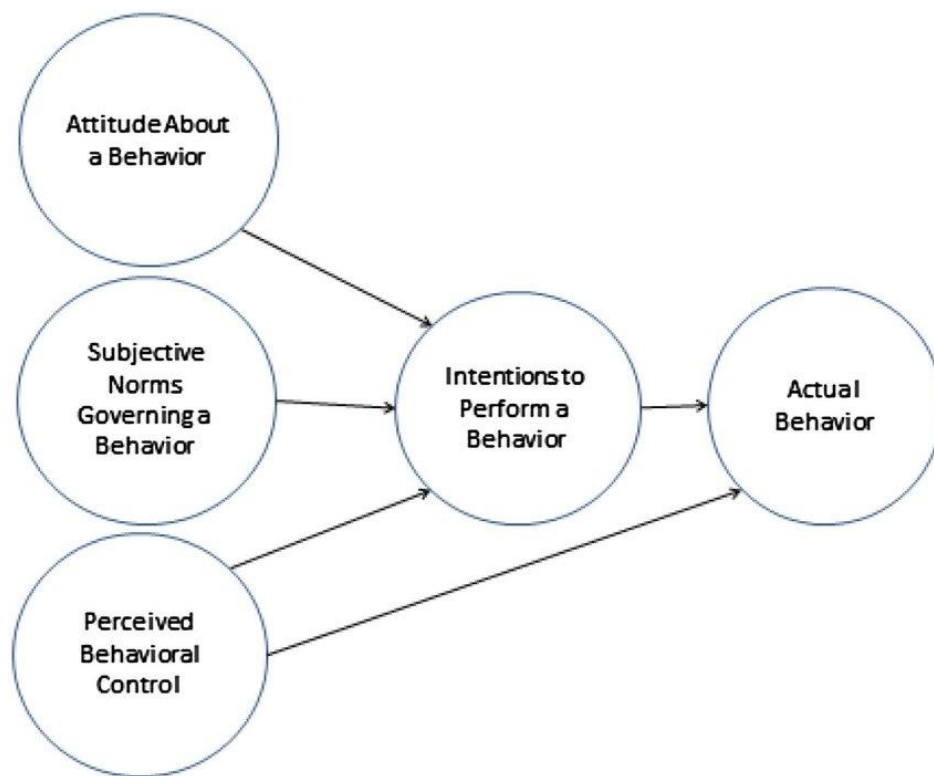


Figure 2.2: Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)

(Source: Ishoy, 2025)

TPB assists in understanding how customers convert satisfaction into loyalty intentions using the effects of their attitudes and social pressure in combination with the perception of ease of shopping. The perceptions of reliability, quality, and heritage have a strong influence on attitudes toward M&S (Mogire, 2024). The perceived behavioural control is an important determinant in the case of M&S as loyalty breaks down when customers have a feeling of an obstacle to buying. The

availability of stores in the UK differs widely. Consumers who have easy local stores say that they have more intention to remain loyal since shopping becomes effortless (Helm, Kim and Van Riper, 2020). In the same way, the perceived control and likelihood of loyalty are increased by enhancing features in the M&S app, Sparks rewards integration, and simpler returns.

2.2 Literature Insights

2.2.1 The concept and relationships between customer satisfaction and brand loyalty in the UK retail context M&S

Price sensitivity, value expectation and competitive intensity are the determinants of the satisfaction-loyalty relationship in the UK retail industry. This association is not stable in the case of M&S since the brand is associated with a premium image whilst in a market that has shifted to the low-cost-based loyalty. Retail satisfaction is usually attached to the product quality perceptions, service uniformity and total value, yet loyalty develops when such satisfaction is high, so as to counterbalance other decisions (Jaya Sakti, Widiyanto and Candra Susanto, 2021). In the case of M&S, the problem is that the level of satisfaction stays the same on paper, and loyalty behaviours are changing and indicate that the relationship behind it is not linear but conditional.

The sense of satisfaction in the UK market depends on the congruence of the expected and actual performance. M&S are perceived by their customers with the background of heritage, quality signalling and price-value comparisons. Satisfaction is enhanced when these expectations are met by the reliable quality of products, good service contacts or effective shop experiences. But satisfaction is not all that is needed for loyalty since there must be a perceived reason that causes one to buy the products again, as there are other products of the same quality but at a lower price in the competitive environment (Ebrahim et al., 2024). This point is important since UK consumers are becoming more discriminating about the difference between satisfaction and loyalty as something calculated, not something that is emotionally tied in.

Khan et al., (2020) pointed out that customer satisfaction as a key factor in long-term consumer relationship in the retail industry. Gerou, (2022) indicates that customer satisfaction is a cumulative assessment by customers on their shopping experiences and has a direct impact on future behaviour intentions. It has been showed up that increased customer satisfaction has a significant effect on

enhancing customers propensity to repeat purchase, their resistance to switching and enhancing positive word of mouth messages. Satisfaction becomes especially salient in the setting of high competition in retail business as switching costs are very low and products of this nature are too many to make the experience of the customers critical to their retention (Mishra et al., 2021).

This is further divided by the competitive environment that faces M&S. The Aldi, Lidl, Primark and Next retailers have transformed consumer demands by providing similar commodities at lower prices (Walls, 2023). This means that the UK shoppers are not so likely to keep using one retail store only, even after they are satisfied.



Figure 2.3: Customer Loyalty Filings in the UK

(Source: JS, 2025)

As shown in the above graph, the most persuasive loyalty influencer among UK consumers is affordability at 64% (Isatou Ndure, 2024). This turns the satisfaction-loyalty interaction into a value-oriented system, where even when people have been satisfied with the quality of M&S

products, loyalty would not be achieved when there are cheaper options that would perform better than M&S in terms of price, convenience or perceived value.

This is supported by the revenue trend mentioned in the proposal. The fluctuations in the revenues of M&S are not correlated with the consistent levels of satisfaction as the range of its revenue decreased between PS10,698.2 million and PS9,166.9 million and then increased to PS11,931.3 million (Statista, 2024). These changes suggest that there is a level of satisfaction that is not always strong enough to translate into repeat purchases. This difference implies a structural problem, which is that satisfaction can affect loyalty only in circumstances when customers view the price, product consistency, and value balance of M&S as favourable compared to those of competitors. Loyalty becomes weaker when economic pressure is high or a competitor has improved the value proposition, although this does not affect the satisfaction level.

According to literature, emotional connection and brand love have the potential to enhance the satisfaction-loyalty relationship in retail (Tijjag et al., 2023). M&S historically has enjoyed the effect as a result of being reputed as being reliable, trustworthy, and British (Mogire, 2024b). However, emotional loyalty is not so effective in the market where functional principles, such as price, convenience, and accessibility, have become dominant.

The other problem is the breakdown of loyalty behaviour by multi-category retailers. M&S are seller of clothing, food, home, and beauty. A customer can be loyal to food (because there is confidence in the freshness or flavour) but not to clothing (because of prices, inconsistent fit or other fashions) (Edirisinghe et al., 2020). The satisfaction is therefore category-specific, and the loyalty is behavioural and cross-category. This disintegration undermines the world satisfaction-loyalty association in M&S. A customer who is pleased with the quality of M&S clothes can still purchase groceries in other shops because of the price perception, and vice versa. This lessens the overall loyalty impact even in the case of category-specific satisfaction being high.

Strong factors of satisfaction are found to be service quality and perceived value (Devi and Yasa, 2021). M&S works well in service interaction, in-store environment and product display. But where satisfaction does not invariably translate to loyalty is perceived value, a calculation of quality in relation to price. The great content of the service does not pass the perception that the same quality can be bought at a lower price at other places. This lack of association indicates that

satisfaction does not show a direct relationship in predicting loyalty in M&S, but it is mediated by the evaluation of values and price benchmarks of the customers among the competitors.

Lastly, the UK retail loyalty is also becoming experiential and convenience-oriented. The conventional model of M&S focuses on product superiority, but is slower to experiment with intensive experiential marketing, digitalisation of personalisation, and flex pricing compared to its competitors (Carmo et al., 2022). This creates loopholes upon which satisfaction is high, though loyalty is low since contemporary retail loyalty is affected by the engagement more than the product itself. As aggressive rivals provide bespoke offers, leaner online experiences or more emotionally engaging branding, M&S will have to address those changing criteria in order to turn contentment into devotion.

2.2.2 Factors that influence customer satisfaction, engagement, and loyalty

Customer satisfaction comprises of several dimensions with the perceived quality of the products, service quality and price fairness being one of the most important (Masitenyane and Mokoena, 2023). Ismail, (2022) reveal that the high quality of products enhances the customer trust and confidence of a brand and supports their satisfaction and intentions of making purchases again. Similarly, the quality of service has been found to have enormous influence on the satisfaction, particularly via the influence of responsiveness, reliability, and procedures of handling complaints by the staffs (Gonu et al., 2023). Moreover, Ahmed et al., (2022) observed that the concept of perceived price fairness, and value of money are critical in the development of the concept of satisfaction since customers tend to be more loyal when they feel that the prices are fair as compared to those offered by the competitors. These findings highlight that there is no single factor that brings satisfaction but a combination of attitude-related attributes of experience.

The expectations and perceptions towards products, service emotions, and interaction combine to have a positive influence on customer satisfaction, engagement and loyalty in M&S. These factors work in conjunction, and their impact is based on the extent to which customers balance quality and affordability in the competitive UK retail market. The proposal emphasizes the fact that product quality and perceived value are closely related to satisfaction (Devi and Yasa, 2021). In the case of M&S, the quality of the product has been one of its main differentiators, especially in the food and high-end clothing sectors. Satisfaction level goes up when there is adherence to these quality standards, and when they vary, customers re-examine the reason they were loyal. In a retail market where substitutes provide a similar quality with lower prices, it becomes a requirement to

have consistently high performance of the product as an engagement factor and not a differentiator (Tojiri, 2024).

Pricing is also one of the greatest influencers of satisfaction and loyalty most particularly within a market where affordability plays a 64% role in determining the loyalty of the customers (Ahmed et al., 2022). The premium positioning that M&S occupies implies that customers demand more performance of products in return to higher prices. Customers are satisfied when they attain the perceived value in accordance with this expectation. The skewness of price-value balance, however, works against the satisfaction level, irrespective of the quality of the product. This renders pricing a sensitive loyalty measure (Lopez, 2020). Quality can make customers happy, but decrease their interaction due to the perceived gap in price between M&S and the low-end competitors. This indicates a change in the UK retail behaviour, which is to being satisfied is not enough to remain loyal unless there is a value message attached to it.

Satisfaction and involvement are also determined by the quality of service, especially to M&S customers who equate the brand to reliability and well-mannered in-store service (Vu, 2021). Good relations with employees strengthen the trust and increase the emotive component of the satisfaction that could help in retaining loyalty in moments of price wars. Loyalty can only be cushioned to a certain area based on the quality of service (Tarumingkeng, 2025). In the event of heightened economic pressure, the service effect declines as compared to the price and perceived value. M&S scores highly on service measures but the advantage dwindles as long as customers consider service based on affordability or convenience rather than interpersonal experience.

In-store and online experiences have an influence on customer satisfaction, turning into engagement. The design of the stores, product arrangement, and sensory perception by M&S, affect the emotional reactions, which are part of the engagement, since a memorable shopping experience will be recorded (Wang, 2024). Nevertheless, competition is turning towards frictionless online platforms, personalised suggestions and convenience-based options that redefine the form of engagement to contemporary retail buyers. Lack of similar digital personalisation means that M&S will lose interest even in instances where the individual transaction satisfaction is high. This is also indicative of the general drift towards omni-channel expectations: customer loyalty now demands not only unbroken bridges between online and offline experience, but also not isolated points of customer satisfaction.

The aspect of brand image and trust has a significant influence on satisfaction and loyalty. According to the proposal, brand image is the direct cause of the two constructs (Tahir et al., 2024). The history of M&S, along with the perceived trustworthiness and cultural familiarity, enhances the aspect of emotional satisfaction, which, in the past, was a contributing factor to loyalty. Nevertheless, emotional aspects are weakening in a price-sensitive environment. The confidence in the quality of the brand might not make the customers shift to M&S fully, and the confidence in the quality of the brand does not imply the regularity of the purchases made by clients when their expectations are met by cheaper rivals.

Engagement and loyalty are also based on convenience and accessibility. There is a growing preference in customers to have quick, less expensive, and easy shopping experiences. M&S has to compete with retailers who offer longer opening hours, a fierce delivery service, and an effective click and collect service. Losing M&S to competitors over convenience benchmark results in customers feeling hindered in interacting with the company, despite being satisfied with their products. This proves that loyalty is no longer based solely on emotional or functional contentment; loyalty has become dependent upon the ease and accessibility of the brand to the daily shopping processes.

2.2.3 Strategies to increase customer satisfaction, engagement, and loyalty for M&S

The value-based expectations that define the UK retail behaviour, in strengthening satisfaction, engagement and loyalty at M&S, need strategies that directly focus on the behaviour. The proposal reveals that experiential marketing enhances emotional and long-term loyalty (Carmo et al., 2022). In the case of M&S, it implies adding more items of sensory and interactive nature throughout the store's digital displays of products, sustainability storytelling, or curated in-store experiences to set the brand apart among discount rivals. Nevertheless, experiential value needs to be combined with more communicated price-value. As affordability motivates most of the customers in the UK to be loyal to it, M&S must become more transparent in its pricing, justify its superior quality more clearly, and make specific price changes in the competitive segments (Kelk, 2024).

Product consistency is another necessary factor that is needed to improve the perceived value (Samudro et al., 2020). Consumers need the clothing and food products sold by M&S to be reliable; thus any lessening of variability in clothing sizes, enhancement of durability in clothing, and the

control of quality in food products will assist in customer satisfaction and repeat buying (Parker-Strak et al., 2022). Improving service delivery by training the staff can enhance trust, yet the digital convenience should be enhanced through the service improvement. Online recommendations based on personal preferences, simplified checkout processes, and more adaptable delivery propositions would suit customer expectations and enhance customer interaction.

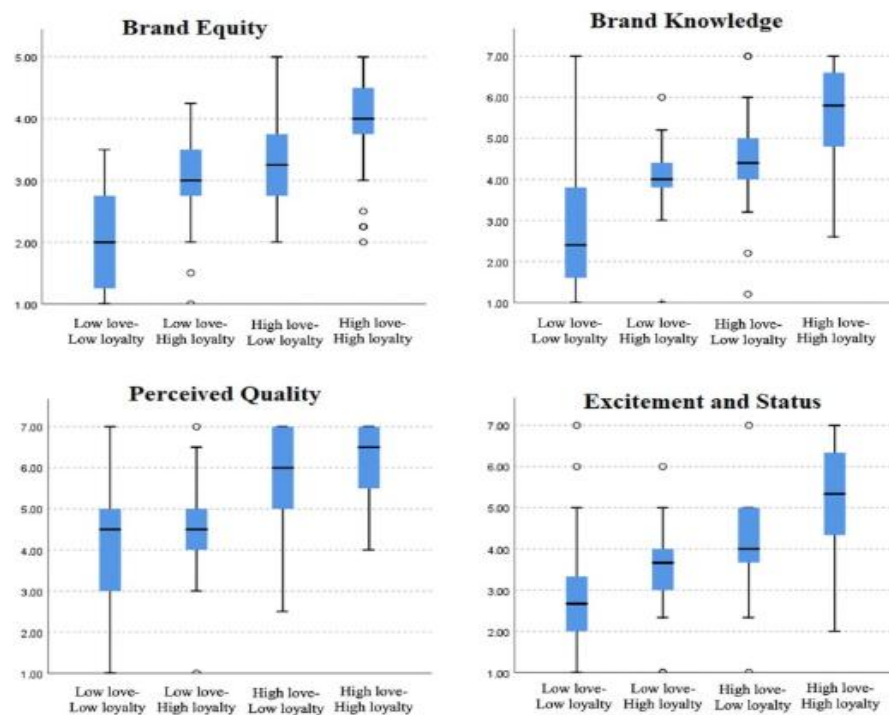


Figure 2.4: Brand Loyalty and Customer Satisfaction Correlation

(Source: Robertson, 2022)

As computed in the above graph, emotional loyalty can be restored by strengthening brand image using sustainability, ethical sourcing, and community-based programs (Colaco et al., 2025). These strategies can turn satisfaction into long-term loyalty that is stable when combined with high levels of value signalling and sustained performance that M&S has implemented. M&S can also reinforce loyalty through more personalised rewards based on customer buying behaviour by improving its Sparks loyalty programme. Specific rewards, significant discounts, and offers based on categories would be considered as perceived value as well as stimulating the idea of repeated buying (Kartomo, 2024). It is a strategy that matches satisfaction with material rewards, which strengthens

long-term activity in retail. Such changes would make M&S more competitive so that the customers receive the same level of value, greater emotional attachment, and practical reasons to stay loyal.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

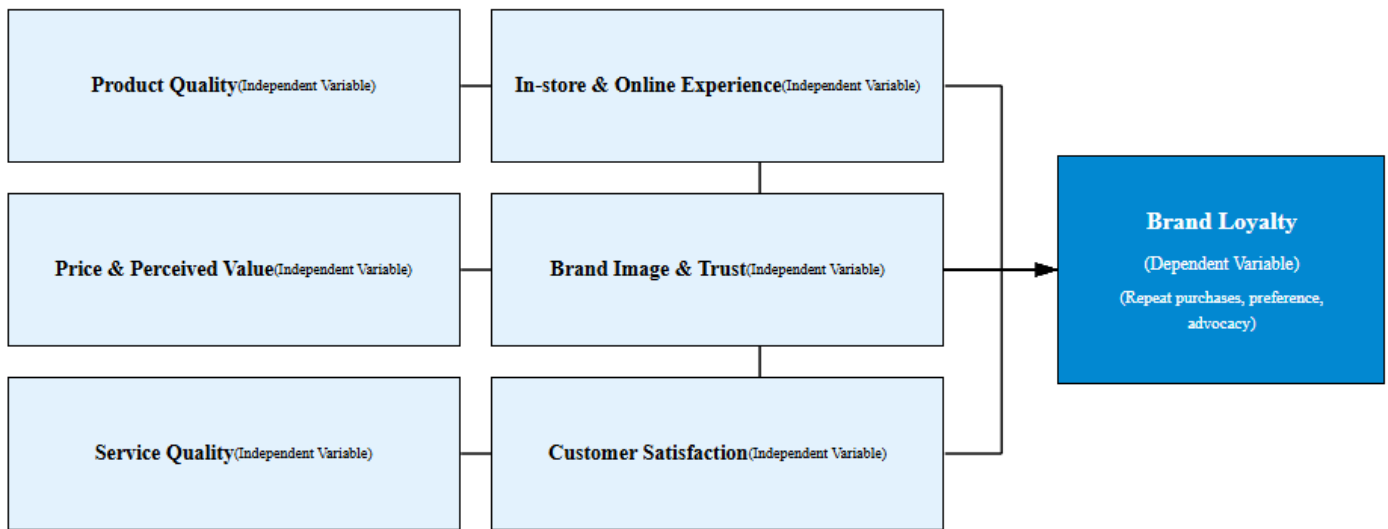


Figure 2.5: Conceptual Framework

(Source: Author)

This theoretical framework demonstrates a relationship between six independent variables and one dependent variable, which is based on Expectation-Confirmation Theory (ECT) and Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB). Product Quality, Price and Perceived Value, Service Quality, In-store and Online Experience, Brand Image and Trust, and Customer Satisfaction are the independent variables that are postulated to affect the dependent variable, Brand Loyalty. Brand Loyalty is measured using the repeat purchases, preference, and advocacy behavior. The framework also illustrates direct relationships existing between the individual independent variables and the brand loyalty by using a horizontal and vertical arrowhead, implying that the advancement of these elements can positively influence customer loyalty results.

2.4 Literature Gap

The majority of the studied literature identifies fundamental predictors of satisfaction and loyalty but creates a void when extended to a multi-category retailer such as M&S. According to the work

by Ahmed et al. (2022), service quality, perception, and satisfaction with the price influence loyalty; however, the model is designed within the framework of restaurant services. It does not touch on category fragmentation, tension on premium value, and variation across departments in food and apparel retail. This limits its applicability in explaining why M&S consumers can be loyal to food and inconsistent in clothing. It is found that the quality of products leads to more satisfaction and loyalty, but in the study by Ebrahim et al. (2024), the analysis is based on the general samples of retail and assumes that quality is a homogenous construct. M&S has classes of various quality expectations, turnover, and sustainability problems. The paper thus does not have the granularity to evaluate the quality inconsistencies in clothes that undermine loyalty, even in cases where food quality is rated very high. The article by Mogire (2024a) on M&S clothing clients in Dublin recognizes changing consumer trends and their influence on sales, but the geographic and single-department orientation restricts the possibility of applying the findings to the UK-wide and multi-category behaviour analysed in the present dissertation. It fails to take into account the interaction of food, homeware or digital experiences to define satisfaction overall. Collin-Lachaud et al. (2023) examine the in-store vs. omnichannel paradox and do not go so far as to consider how channel friction, such as delivery reliability, sizing uncertainty, and stock inconsistency, alters the satisfaction-loyalty channel. This is one of the biggest oversights of M&S, where online performance tends to go against a high offline brand trust.

2.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter reveals the research on the topic of satisfaction and loyalty provides good definitive relationships but presents significant gaps to a multi-category retailer such as M&S. The implemented theories show that the focal point is on the expectation fulfilment and behavioural intentions, but currently existing research seldom addresses the issue of a cross-category inconsistency, omnichannel friction or premium-value tension. The literature examined reveals that product quality, perceived value, and experience have a strong impact on satisfaction and that emotional attachment, clarity in pricing and convenience determine loyalty. Most studies, however, are sector specific, narrow or short geographically. This chapter sets the dissertation in a place to discuss the gap in integration between the category behaviour, channel experience and value signalling in the context of the M&S.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Chapter Introduction

This chapter will discuss the methodological framework that will be used in the analysis of the effect of customer satisfaction on brand loyalty among Marks and Spencer (M&S) customers. It describes the philosophical base, research method, research design, decisions, research strategy, time period, data gathering, sampling strategy, analysis methodology of data, and ethical aspects. All the methodological decisions are justified by their appropriateness to answer the research aim and questions. Specific concern is the benefits of mixed methods, a merger of quantitative values of surveys and qualitative values of secondary thematic evidence. The chapter also ends with the limitations of the methodology that can be used to interpret the findings.

3.2 Research Onion

Saunders has come up with the research onion, which is a systematic model that helps researchers make methodological decisions based on philosophy, then to techniques and procedures.

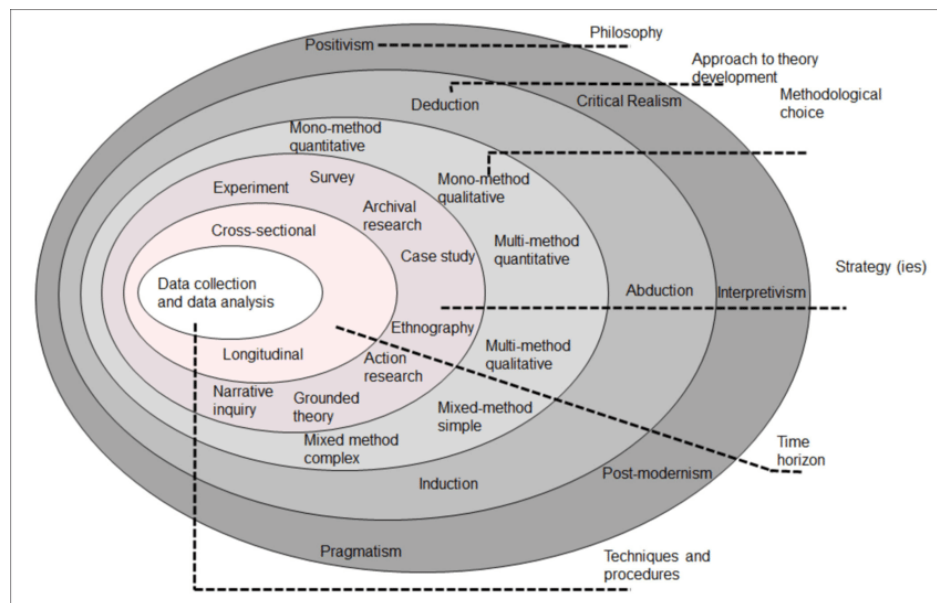


Figure 3.1: Research Onion

(Source: Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2019)

It consists of six layers, namely, research philosophy, approach, methodological choice, strategy, time horizon, and data collection and analysis (Abbasi and Bahrami Dehdar, Masoumeh, 2025).

This stratified arrangement makes every decision in the methodology consistent and logical. The current paper embraces the concept of the onion to support every aspect of the research in a systematic manner. The mixed-method research is suitable within this framework because the onion encourages the incorporation of both qualitative and quantitative processes. It also helps in the selection of an explanatory design and survey strategy to generate quantifiable relations between satisfaction and loyalty, and the inclusion of qualitative information to put findings into perspective. Therefore, the research onion offers transparency and rigour in achieving correlation of methodology choices to the study objectives.

3.3 Research Philosophy

Research philosophy deals with the suppositions regarding the process of knowledge production and interpretation (Turyahikayo, 2021). There are common philosophies such as positivism, interpretivism, realism, and pragmatism. Positivism focuses on objective and measurable information, interpretivism focuses on subjective meaning-making, realism focuses on observable and hidden causal processes, and pragmatism focuses on whatever method is most appropriate to answer the research question (Adil, Khan, and Ahmad, 2025). Pragmatism has been selected in the present study because it facilitates the use of quantitative survey data along with the qualitative thematic evidence, which fits the purpose of the mixed-method intention of the study. Pragmatism is suitable due to the fact that customer satisfaction and loyalty are multidimensional measures that demand trends to be measured, as well as a contextual explanation. The philosophy also gives the flexibility of selecting the tools that better respond to the research questions. Positivism was not chosen as it narrows down the research to the strictly quantitative appraisal of the research, which enables comprehension of the contextual effects. Interpretivism could not be used due to the fact that it does not allow quantification, which is necessary to statistically test the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty. Therefore, Pragmatism can be a good option in this study.

3.4 Research Approach

A research approach establishes the interaction between theory and empirical data (Saharan et al., 2024). It has three major types, namely deductive, inductive, and abductive. Deductive reasoning is an approach to test an established theory with the help of hypotheses; inductive reasoning establishes theories based on qualitative knowledge; and abductive reasoning is a process that

proceeds between theory and data to create the most possible explanations (Okoli, 2023). The method of the research was an abductive approach, because it enables the research to start with the already known theories like Expectation-Confirmation Theory (ECT) and Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), and at the same time incorporate the results of the research to narrow down the contextual knowledge on M&S customer behaviour. The appropriateness of the abductive approach is that the study has been testing a hypothesised relationship, besides uncovering practical strategies that cannot be encompassed within the existing theories. Deductive reasoning was also not accepted, as it could only verify the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty without going into the contextual determinants that formed the relationship. The use of inductive reasoning was not appropriate since the purpose of the study was not to construct a new theory but to use and revise the existing ones. So that the choice of the abductive approach for this mixed-method study is justified.

3.5 Research Design

Research design simply means the general scheme that connects philosophical assumptions to methods (Mbanaso, Abrahams, and Okafor, 2023). The three common designs include descriptive, exploratory, and explanatory designs. Descriptive designs are designs where the present conditions are reported without considering causal relationships, but exploratory designs are designs where a poorly understood phenomenon is studied (Skinner, Dancis, and The, 2025). The current research paper took an explanatory design that looks at causal relationships among variables. Since the study seeks to establish the connection between customer satisfaction and brand loyalty within M&S, a causal model would be required to statistically test the hypotheses with the help of regression and correlation analysis. This design is also able to support qualitative thematic revelations to justify the existence of some relationships. It was not chosen to be designed descriptively as the study does not merely describe the levels of satisfaction but aims at testing how much it affects the level of loyalty. The exploratory design was not suitable due to the fact that existing literature gives a solid background on customer satisfaction and loyalty, yet the study aims to elucidate the relationship more than to find completely new trends. Thus, an explanatory research design is in line with the purpose of the study.

3.6 Research Choice

Research choice defines the type of study to be used, that is, a mono-method, multi-method, or mixed-method study (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2019). Mono method designs use a single kind of data, whereas multi-method designs use multiple techniques of the same nature (Vivek and Nanthagopan, 2021). The research took a mixed-method approach, whereby quantitative survey data were used alongside qualitative secondary data. The mixed methods offer a more detailed insight into customer satisfaction and loyalty by integrating statistical data with contextual meaning. Mono-method methodologies were not adopted since quantitative or qualitative data would not be capable of strengthening the process of triangulating the results. Quantitative or qualitative solutions involving multi-methods could not be considered either, since the methods do not permit the incorporation of numerical trends with thematic knowledge.

3.7 Research Strategy

The research strategy describes how data will be gathered to address research questions. Surveys, case studies, experiments, interviews, and ethnography are some of the common strategies (Johannesson and Perjons, 2021). The current work has used a survey approach, since it will be possible to elicit quantitative and structured answers regarding many M&S consumers with the help of Likert-scale questions. To test the satisfaction, loyalty, and intention to behave statistically reliably, the surveys are suitable. Strategies like interviews or ethnography were ruled out because they are time-consuming and yield only qualitative data, and hence will not facilitate statistical testing of the hypothesized relationship. The experiments could not be used because of ethical and practical limitations in controlling consumer behaviour.

3.8 Time Horizon

Time horizon determines the point at which data are estimated or over an extended time. There are two alternatives (cross-sectional and longitudinal) (Hunziker and Blankenagel, 2024). The research was cross-sectional, conducted over a fixed time frame to gather data from participants at a specific point in time. A cross-sectional design is appropriate due to the aim of measuring the existing satisfaction and loyalty behaviours and not the long-term behaviours. It is also compatible with the real-life limitations, like the time that is available when developing a dissertation. The longitudinal approach was avoided as it is more enriched but requires following customer

behaviour on a monthly or yearly basis, and this is beyond the scope and time frame of the current study.

3.9 Data Collection Method

Some of the ways of collecting data are primary, secondary, and mixed methods (Dawadi, Shrestha, and Giri, 2021). Primary data are collected through the participants themselves, secondary data are collected through the existing sources, and mixed methods are the combination of the two (Costa, 2024). The present study was developed based on a mixed-method data collection design that will use both primary quantitative survey and secondary qualitative literature. The questionnaires included demographic questions and Likert-type questions covering customer experience, perceived quality, price satisfaction, customer service, customer repeat purchase desire, and loyalty. All the participants are recruited through online sources such as Facebook and LinkedIn. The mixed methods selection is explained by the fact that the correlation between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty cannot be measured by the numbers alone, and it needs interpretative insights to determine the strategies to be improved.

No amount of primary data would give enough contextual insight regarding the reasons behind satisfaction being a determinant of loyalty, whereas no amount of secondary data would enable empirical validation of the hypothesis proposed. This is because mixed methods guarantee methodological triangulation, which increases validity. The sources of secondary data will be peer-reviewed journal articles, industry reports, M&S corporate publications, and market analysis. These sources are useful to supplement the quantitative data in showing general tendencies, predictors of satisfaction, and strategic models embraced by retailers. From Google Scholar, the Company website, and ProQuest, all sources have been collected. The mixed-method data collection is thus able to add to a very strong, multi-dimensional insight into customer satisfaction and loyalty dynamics of M&S.

3.10 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion and exclusion criteria are used in order to make sure that the data that have been selected conform to the research objective (Baig and Yadegaridehkordi, 2023). In the case of the primary data, the inclusion criteria were up-to-date or recent customers of Marks and Spencer who are above 18 years of age and have the ability to complete the survey without any assistance. The

exclusion criteria will eliminate those who have not interacted with M&S since they will not give informed responses on satisfaction and loyalty. In the case of secondary data, the inclusion criteria should be peer-reviewed articles, industry reports, and credible organisational published materials within the last five years. Sources that had been older than five years were eliminated to retain relevance, credibility, and methodological rigour. Non-academic opinion pieces were also omitted.

3.11 Sampling Strategy

Probability-based approaches can be given as an example in the form of simple random sampling, and non-probability approaches can be given as examples in the form of convenience, snowball, and purposive approaches (Almusaed, Almssad, and Yitmen, 2025). The sampling approach of this study is convenience because it will only pick respondents who are readily available and willing to respond. 100 participants have been selected, and a survey was conducted on them with 10 questions. This approach is in line with both time and the requirement to collect data effectively among the M&S customers. The use of snowball sampling was not the right sampling method since a hidden or inaccessible group was not being studied. Convenience sampling is therefore, the viable and contextual solution.

3.12 Data Analysis Technique

Quantitative tools used in data analysis are regression, descriptive statistics, factor analysis, and qualitative tools such as thematic analysis. The quantitative analysis of this study uses SPSS, and the thematic analysis of qualitative data developed by Braun and Clarke, which consists of 6 stages (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Descriptive statistics are calculated using SPSS so that the level of customer satisfaction is summarised and responses are analysed. Correlation analysis determines the strength and direction of the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty, whereas regression analysis determines the predictive power of satisfaction on loyalty. The methods are appropriate since they offer statistical data to test the hypothesis of the research.

In the case of qualitative secondary data, thematic analysis would include familiarisation with the literature, coding of key concepts, establishing initial themes, reviewing and refining themes, and defining and creating a narrative explanation. This method of analysis can be used to place quantitative results in the context of the available academic and industry views. SPSS and thematic

analysis provide a better use of the numbers and conceptual interpretation, and thus make the combination of the two stronger.

3.13 Ethical Considerations

Compliance with ethical standards is necessary to safeguard the rights of the participants and support academic integrity (Marius-Costel Eşi, 2025). In the present work, ethical considerations are based on the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The participants will be informed concerning the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of the study, the use of the data, and confidentiality. No individual identifiers were taken (only demographic data - age group and gender), and the level of anonymity was maintained. The participants were guaranteed that there would be no adverse effect of taking the option to exit at any point. Data were also processed with a lot of security and were stored in password-protected university systems with access to authorised persons.

No psychological, social, or financial harm was inflicted on the respondents during the data collection. Open-ended questions were created in such a way that they did not touch on sensitive issues and ensured the privacy of the participants. Prior to the commencement of the survey, informed consent was taken. In the case of secondary data, the ethical application was to reference all referenced sources to prevent plagiarism and intellectual honesty. There were no misrepresentations or manipulation of the findings. It only used academic and industry sources that were credible to ensure reliability.

Other ethical systems like utilitarianism and deontology were not directly embraced since the implementation of GDPR and institutional ethical rules already offer an all-encompassing system of operations. However, the study implicitly concurs with deontological ethics by giving particular importance to the right of the participants and the responsibility of the researcher. The ethical safeguards are, hence, assurances that the study remains upright, transparent, and respectful during the research process.

3.14 Limitations

Although it is well-planned, there are a number of methodological limitations. The method of convenience sampling limits the generalisability since the sample might not be entirely representative of all M&S customers. The cross-sectional time horizon is only used to capture the

perceptions at a single point in time and thus provides restricted information on the long-term loyalty behaviours. There might be a bias in self-reported survey data because it is possible that respondents will be giving socially desirable answers. Qualitative analysis based on secondary sources implies that the results are based on the quality and availability of available literature. Although extensive, mixed-methods analysis can cause difficulties in combining quantitative and qualitative results. Such limitations do not nullify the research but are to be taken into consideration when interpreting the results.

3.15 Chapter Summary

The chapter provided a description of the methodological framework that will be used in the study. It was what led to the embrace of pragmatism, abductive reasoning, explanatory design, mixed-method choice, cross-sectional time horizon, and survey strategy. It outlined a primary and secondary collection of data, sampling, inclusion criteria, and the analytical techniques, which included SPSS and thematic analysis. Ethics: GDPR was fully observed, ensuring that there was confidentiality of the participants and academic integrity. In spite of a number of methodological shortcomings, the selected methodologies offer a logical and stringent basis for the analysis of the correlation between customer satisfaction and brand loyalty in M&S.

Chapter 4: Findings and Analysis

4.1 Introduction

The chapter contains the research results and discussion of the customer satisfaction and brand loyalty study at Marks and Spencer (M&S). It analyses profiles of respondents, satisfaction trends, and loyalty results using the SPSS results and the thematic framework proposed by Braun and Clarke and how experience-based factors determine the outcome in terms of repeat purchase intentions.

4.2 Primary Findings

4.2.1 Frequency Analysis

What is your age group?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18-25	24	24.0	24.0	24.0
	26-35	27	27.0	27.0	51.0
	36-45	19	19.0	19.0	70.0
	46-55	19	19.0	19.0	89.0
	56 and above	11	11.0	11.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.1: Age Distribution of Respondents

(Source: SPSS)

The age breakdown is evenly distributed, with the highest percentage of the respondents being 26-35 (27%) and the second respondent 18-25 (24%) (Refer to Appendix 2). It shows that younger and early-career consumers are highly involved, which is also critical to customer satisfaction and the changing brand loyalty at Marks and Spencer.

		What is your gender?			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	43	43.0	43.0	43.0
	Female	51	51.0	51.0	94.0
	Prefer not to say	6	6.0	6.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.2: Gender Distribution of Respondents

(Source: SPSS)

The gender balance shows that there is a slight female majority (51%), with males representing 43%, and a small percentage not specifying (Refer to Appendix 2). Such an equal combination indicates that customer satisfaction and brand loyalty information at Marks and Spencer are based on different gender views, thereby enhancing the credibility of the results.

		How often do you shop at Marks & Spencer?			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Weekly	22	22.0	22.0	22.0
	Monthly	43	43.0	43.0	65.0
	Occasionally	22	22.0	22.0	87.0
	Rarely	13	13.0	13.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.3: Shopping Distribution of Respondents

(Source: SPSS)

The highest percentage of shoppers is monthly (43%), followed by weekly and occasional (22% each), and a minor part of shoppers shop rarely (13%) (Refer to Appendix 2). Saini and Singh (2020) state that attitudinal and behavioural loyalty increase because of repeated satisfactory interaction, which is why regular shoppers tend to be more loyal to a brand like M&S. This can be justified by the evidence provided by Kwiatek *et al.* (2020), who suggest that satisfaction does not always lead to loyalty but rather the intensity of recurring interactions and commitment.

4.2.2 Descriptive Analysis

	Descriptive Statistics					
	N Statistic	Minimum Statistic	Maximum Statistic	Mean Statistic	Std. Deviation Statistic	Skewness Statistic
What is your age group?	100	1	5	2.66	1.327	.308
What is your gender?	100	1	3	1.63	.597	.351
How often do you shop at Marks & Spencer?	100	1	4	2.26	.949	.393
Valid N (listwise)	100					

	Descriptive Statistics			
	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error	
What is your age group?	.241	-1.093	.478	
What is your gender?	.241	-.658	.478	
How often do you shop at Marks & Spencer?	.241	-.697	.478	
Valid N (listwise)				

Figure 4.4: Descriptive Results

(Source: SPSS)

The descriptive statistics provide valuable differences in the way the demographic features and the frequency of shopping can influence customer satisfaction and brand loyalty in Marks and Spencer. The average age group (M= 2.66, SD= 1.327) represents a relatively young-to-middle-aged sample, whereas the standard deviation is higher than that of gender (M = 1.63, SD = 0.597). According to Frąckiewicz (2021), younger customers tend to be more concerned with convenience and value, and older consumers are more concerned with quality and trust, which affects the loyalty formation in different ways.

The shopping frequency has a mean of 2.26 (SD = 0.949), which means that people shop at M&S moderately, with a significant level of variation. Vahdat *et al.* (2020) argue that frequency is a better predictor of brand commitment as opposed to a fixed demographic characteristic because frequency is a fundamental indicator of loyalty.

The values of skewness are not very high and are positive (varying between 0.308 and 0.393), meaning that the skewness is a little to the right, and the distribution of respondents is quite

reasonable. Iacobucci *et al.* (2025) state that negative use of kurtosis at the level of the variables implies the existence of flatter distributions, indicating that there is not one group of customers. This diversity is superior to very peaked data as it increases the generalisability of the analysis of satisfaction and loyalty. In line with Singh *et al.* (2023), this variation demonstrates that loyalty is formed as a result of a combination of satisfaction, customer attributes, and repetition, but not because of one predominant factor.

4.2.3 Correlation Analysis

Correlations										
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10
Q1	1	-0.071	0.095	-0.053	-0.040	-0.031	-0.011	-0.034	0.029	-0.012
Q2	-0.071	1	-0.042	0.153	-0.004	0.076	0.113	0.072	0.166	0.097
Q3	0.095	-0.042	1	-0.082	-0.120	-0.058	-0.106	-0.088	-.227*	-0.109
Q4	-0.053	0.153	-0.082	1	.778**	.784**	.732**	.691**	.643**	.684**
Q5	-0.040	-0.004	-0.120	.778**	1	.717**	.727**	.707**	.639**	.693**
Q6	-0.031	0.076	-0.058	.784**	.717**	1	.780**	.774**	.794**	.766**
Q7	-0.011	0.113	-0.106	.732**	.727**	.780**	1	.758**	.808**	.676**
Q8	-0.034	0.072	-0.088	.691**	.707**	.774**	.758**	1	.826**	.832**
Q9	0.029	0.166	-.227*	.643**	.639**	.794**	.808**	.826**	1	.766**
Q10	-0.012	0.097	-0.109	.684**	.693**	.766**	.676**	.832**	.766**	1

Figure 4.5: Correlation Results

(Source: SPSS)

The correlation table gives an important understanding of the relationship between various dimensions of customer satisfaction and the results of brand loyalty at Marks and Spencer (M&S). There is a sharp difference between the variables of demographics (Q1 -Q3) and those of perceptual or attitudinal (Q4-Q10). The correlation between age, gender, and shopping frequency and most indicators of satisfaction and loyalty is weak or not significant, indicating that the loyalty at M&S is not highly influenced by the customer, but the experiences he/she has. In this context, Urdea *et al.* (2021) highlight that the modern relationship marketing theory that focuses on experiential value as opposed to geographical segmentation. Conversely, the interrelationships between the variables of satisfaction-related (Q4–Q7) and loyalty outcomes (Q8-10) are always strong and positive. General customer experience (Q4) has a strong correlation with product quality (Q5), pricing satisfaction (Q6), and customer service (Q7), which suggests that the

operational elements are overall influencing the overall customer experience of shopping. This contrast is especially high when comparing constructs of satisfaction and behavioural and attitudinal loyalty indicators. The relationship between repeat purchase intention (Q8) and the variables related to the level of satisfaction is very strong, including customer service and pricing perceptions, which proves that the behavioural loyalty will be linked closely to the perceived value and service consistency. Higher correlations are also found in relation to repeat purchase (Q8), brand loyalty (Q9), and recommendation intention (Q10). This is in line with the loyalty model by Sweeney et al. (2020) that suggests that satisfaction results in first repeat behaviour and then further into attitudinal and word-of-mouth advocacy loyalty.

In comparison, product quality (Q5) and customer service (Q7) seem to be more closely linked with the loyalty results compared to the general experience. This opposition implies that although the general experience is significant, select touchpoints of the experience, including staff interactions and perceived quality, are more determinant to turning satisfaction into loyalty. This observation is in line with the arguments presented by Närvänen et al. (2020) that assert that the strength of loyalty is determined by the degree to which the attitude is formed and reinforced by recurring positive experiences. The other significant contrast is made between the pricing satisfaction (Q6) and other variables of satisfaction. This suggests that clients of M&S can be willing to pay a relatively more expensive price provided that their quality and service expectations are met, which supports the premium positioning strategy of the brand. The same is concluded by Pandey et al. (2020), who observe that it is perceived value and not low price that attracts long-term loyalty in retail brands.

4.2.4 Regression Analysis

Model Summary

Model Summary ^b				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.823 ^a	.678	.664	.794

a. Predictors: (Constant), [What do you rate as the customer service of Marks and Spencer employees?], [What is your opinion of the quality of products provided by Marks and Spencer?], [To what extent are you satisfied with the price of Marks and Spencer products as compared to the competition?], [What is your general customer experience in Marks and Spencer in terms of shopping?]

b. Dependent Variable: [What are the chances of making repeat purchases of Marks and Spencer again?]

Figure 4.6: Model Summary

(Source: SPSS)

The correlation coefficient ($R = 0.823$) is much higher than the average consumer behaviour model whereby loyalty is perceived to be weakly determined by satisfaction variables, which means that there is a very strong association between experience quality and loyalty in M&S. According to Kumar et al. (2024), this implies that the perception of the customer about service, product quality, satisfaction with pricing and general experience during shopping are all decisive factors in determining repeat purchase behaviour. The value of R-squared of 0.678 indicates that the predictors of satisfaction chosen accounted 67.8% of the variance in the intention to repurchase. This model suggests a more combined satisfaction-loyalty link when compared to studies which report loyalty variance explanations of closer proximity to 40-50, which acts as a strength of experience-based positioning of M&S. The adjusted R-squared (0.664) is also high, and this confirms that the model is still of strong predictive ability even after it has been adjusted to the possibility of overfitting, as compared to weaker models where adjusted values would nosedive. Conversely, the standard error of the estimate (0.794) implies that there is still some variation, hence, emotional attachment, brand trust, or social influence is also a possibility of causing loyalty other than the functional factors of satisfaction. This is consistent with the commitment-trust theory stated by Singh *et al.* (2023), which states that loyalty is not merely based on satisfaction.

ANOVA

		ANOVA ^a				
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	125.929	4	31.482	49.988	.000 ^b
	Residual	59.831	95	.630		
	Total	185.760	99			

a. Dependent Variable: [What are the chances of making repeat purchases of Marks and Spencer again?]

b. Predictors: (Constant), [What do you rate as the customer service of Marks and Spencer employees?], [What is your opinion of the quality of products provided by Marks and Spencer?], [To what extent are you satisfied with the price of Marks and Spencer products as compared to the competition?], [What is your general customer experience in Marks and Spencer in terms of shopping?]

Figure 4.7: ANOVA

(Source: SPSS)

The customer satisfaction dimensions, as indicated by the ANOVA results, statistically show that customer satisfaction significantly contributes to repeat purchase intention, which is a fundamental behavioural variable of brand loyalty at Marks and Spencer. The F-value ($F = 49.988$) of the regression model is significant ($p = 0.001$), signifying the fact that a significant amount of shopping behaviour variance is explained by the joint predictors, which are the quality of customer service, product quality, price satisfaction, and overall shopping experience. These results are empirical evidence to H1: customer satisfaction is a significant positive influence on brand loyalty among Marks and Spencer customers, as the statistically significant ANOVA value ($F = 49.988$, $p = 0.001$) and the significantly greater regression sum of squares than the residual variance values prove.

The regression sum of squares (125.929) is relatively very large compared to the residual sum of squares (59.831) in that the model accounts for much more of the variation in loyalty than remains unaccounted for by random error. The explanatory power of the dimensions of service quality over behavioural outcomes is found to be high when the same are highly correlated with customer expectations, as noted by Dam and Dam (2021), which is conspicuous in this model.

Histogram

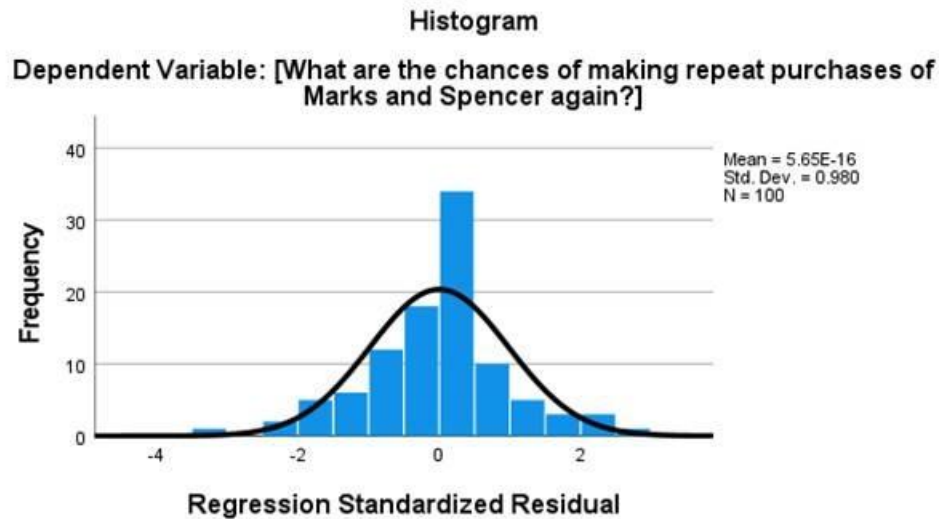


Figure 4.8: Histogram

(Source: SPSS)

The standardised residuals histogram has significant diagnostic value for the strength of the regression model used to test the relationship between customer satisfaction and repeat purchase intention at Marks and Spencer. The residuals are nearly normally distributed with a mean that is close to zero and a bell-shaped curve that follows the normal distribution line closely. This is in contrast to poorly specified models, where residuals are usually skewed or concentrated at either end, which is a sign of bias or missing variables. Van Bork et al. (2024) state that normally distributed residuals imply that the errors of the model are not systematic but random, which increases the validity of causal interpretation.

The comparative moderate dispersion of residuals also contrasts with models having a wide dispersion, where the residual variability becomes weak in predicting results. In the given case, the majority of residuals are within a range of ± 2 standard deviations, which means that no extreme prediction error can occur. This contributes to the idea that satisfaction variables are the reason behind the consistent explanation of loyalty intentions in the sample of respondents and not the reason behind the explanation of loyalty intentions in particular groups. Sureiman and Mangera (2020) highlight that this residual behaviour indicates that there is a stable relationship between independent and dependent variables.

Normal P-P Plot

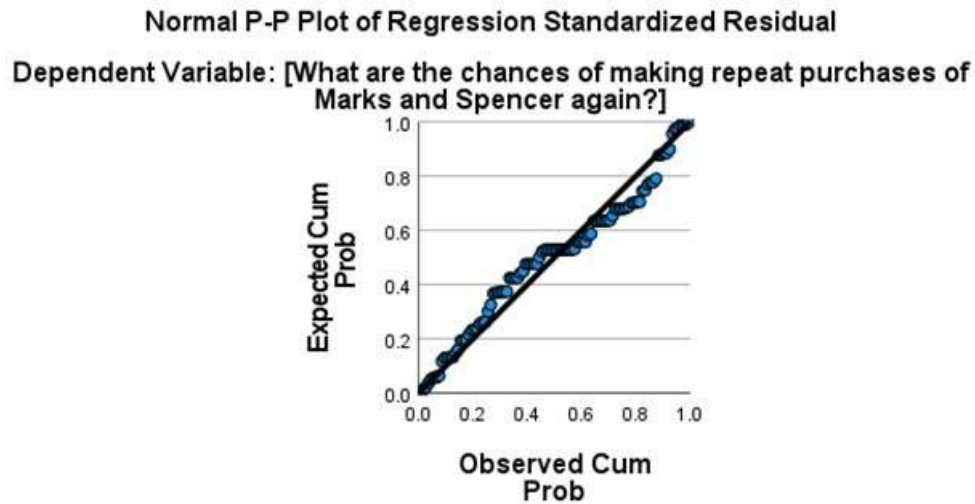


Figure 4.9: Normal P-P Plot Test

(Source: SPSS)

Normal P–P Plot gives additional evidence on the validity of the regression model used to examine the relationship between customer satisfaction and repeat purchase intention at Marks and Spencer. The plotted points are very close to the diagonal reference line, meaning that the cumulative probabilities are good in accordance with the expected normal distribution. The P–P plot provides a more accurate graphical evaluation of the normality of the full distribution of the residuals as compared to the analysis using a histogram. Here, the smaller deviations of only a small scale can be observed at the upper and lower tails, which indicate that the extreme values are restricted and do not show the systematic distortion of the model. Dam and Dam (2021) note that this alignment establishes that the conditions of the regression are satisfied and the associations between the dimensions of satisfaction and the outcomes of loyalty can be interpreted with a high degree of reliability.

Costa et al. (2021) claim that this trend is indicative of a highly-specified behavioural model, which is appropriate to understand customer intentions. Nonetheless, the little variations in tail also indicate that a small fraction of customers can exhibit loyalty because of the affective or symbolic brand values on top of the satisfaction. This is in line with the framework of loyalty proposed by Oliver (1999), which identifies the loyalty stages based on satisfaction and those based on emotion.

4.3 Secondary Findings

Research objectives	Sub-themes	Themes	Codes	Authors
To evaluate the level of customer satisfaction among Marks & Spencer customers.	Perceived Value of the Shopping Experience Emotional Response to the Brand Experience	Level of customer satisfaction among Marks & Spencer customers	'Store ambience and layout' 'Ease of navigation and accessibility' 'Convenience of shopping process' 'Perceived value relative to effort' 'Consistency across visits' 'Feelings of trust and reassurance' 'Comfort and familiarity with the brand' 'Enjoyment during shopping' 'Brand prestige perception' 'Emotional satisfaction after purchase'	Florea et al. (2025) Naeem (2025) Lee and Trim (2022), Lee (2022)

To identify key determinants of customer satisfaction, such as product quality, pricing, and service experience.	Perceived Product Quality and Standards Efficiency of Service Processes	Key determinants of customer satisfaction, such as product quality, pricing, and service experience	'Product durability and longevity' 'Quality consistency' 'Freshness (food products)' 'Design and craftsmanship' 'Trust in M&S quality standards' 'Speed of checkout' 'Queue management efficiency' 'Ease of returns and exchanges' 'Online service efficiency' 'Smoothness of service processes'	Alzoubi et al. (2024), Dokcen et al. (2021), Souza et al. (2023), Hipólito et al. (2024)
To assess the degree of brand loyalty demonstrated by M&S customers.	Repeat Purchase Behaviour	Degree of brand loyalty demonstrated by M&S customers	'Frequency of repeat visits' 'Preference for M&S over alternatives'	Xu et al. (2025), Gielens et al. (2021), Dawes et al. (2020), Lu et al. (2022)

	Resistance to Switching Brands		'Habitual purchasing behaviour' 'Consistency of purchase patterns' 'Long-term shopping continuity' 'Low price sensitivity to competitors' 'Brand switching reluctance' 'Perceived risk of alternatives' 'Emotional attachment preventing switching' 'Trust-based commitment'	
To examine the relationship between customer satisfaction and brand loyalty.	Satisfaction Influencing Brand Commitment Functional Satisfaction vs	Relationship between customer satisfaction and brand loyalty	'Long-term relationship intention' 'Commitment built through satisfaction'	Ghorbanzadeh (2021), Mahdiah et al. (2022), Lu et al. (2021), Ahmed et al. (2023)

	Loyalty Outcomes		'Trust reinforcement' 'Reduced churn intention' 'Loyalty strengthening over time' 'Product quality impact on loyalty' 'Service experience influence on loyalty' 'Price tolerance due to satisfaction' 'Relative importance of satisfaction dimensions' 'Functional value contribution to loyalty'	
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Table 4.1: Thematic coding table

(Source: Self-developed)

4.3.1 Theme 1: Level of customer satisfaction among Marks & Spencer customers

The perceived value of the shopping experience indicates the cognitive appraisal of how effectively and conveniently the customer can transact their purchases in both in-store and online platforms. Florea et al. (2025) state that store atmosphere and design are important elements that add perceived value by lowering the cognitive load and raising the shopping efficiency, especially in luxury retail settings. M&S has positive, visible merchandise and well-organised layouts, allowing customers to navigate with ease and accessibility compared to cluttered or price-aligned retailers. Naeem (2025) indicates that the greater the customers are made to feel increased convenience of shopping and checkout processes, as well as the customer-friendly online interfaces, the more value will be perceived compared to the efforts put in. This is contrary to retailers, where continuity is seen as disrupted or unstable more often. In addition, Lee (2022) argues that continuity between visits reinforces the value perceptions, since foreseeable service and store quality lessen uncertainty and amplify satisfaction in the long term.

Comparatively, emotional response to brand experience attracts affective responses that are not limited to functional assessment. The customers who deal with M&S commonly complain that they feel a sense of trust and reassurance, which is mostly fueled by the long-term image of quality and ethical standards that the brand has had. In contrast to the fast-fashion competitors, Lee and Trim (2022) found that M&S creates a feeling of comfort and familiarity with the brand, which increases the emotional security of the buyers in the decision-making process. It has been indicated that pleasure when shopping in the brands that offer both high-end ambience and trusted service strengthens the brand prestige perception. This emotional aspect is opposite to non-emotional types of retailers, where the satisfaction is received at the moment of the purchase.

4.3.2 Theme 2: Key determinants of customer satisfaction, such as product quality, pricing, and service experience

Perceived product quality and standards come out as a supreme contributor to positive ratings of customers in the Marks and Spencer (M&S) case, especially as compared to the process associated with service efficiency. Alzoubi et al. (2024) demonstrated that durability and longevity of products and consistency of quality are core determinants of satisfaction within the high-end retailers because the customers perceive that in the case of stable quality, the risk of purchase is minimal and that the long-term value is high. In the case of M&S, design and craftsmanship drive

this perception and help the brand stand out over the value-oriented competitors and help it hold a premium positioning. In contrast, Dokcen et al. (2021) state that freshness (food products) is a key factor in the food segment, and recent research suggests that perceptions of freshness are a strong determinant of trust and re-patronage in grocery retailing. All these factors reinforce trust in the quality of M&S standards, and the satisfaction with the products would be more lasting and not dependent on the fluctuations in service on a short-term basis.

Conversely, Souza et al. (2023) argue that satisfaction is influenced by efficiency of service processes in the form of immediacy and convenience, and not long-term value. It has been found that the speed of checkout and the efficiency of queue management contribute to the level of momentary satisfaction in particular retail stores with high traffic. Nevertheless, service efficiency, in contrast to the quality of a product, has a situational effect on satisfaction. Although E-commerce can increase the perception of fairness and convenience, Hipólito et al. (2024) note that ease of returns and exchanges tends to have a minor effect depending on the occurrence of a problem, as opposed to regular shopping. The quality-based satisfaction is thus complementary to the smoothness of service processes and is not substitutive.

4.3.3 Theme 3: Degree of brand loyalty demonstrated by M&S customers

Repeat purchase behaviour is a definite behavioural expression of cumulative satisfaction in the analysis of brand loyalty among Marks and Spencer (M&S) customers. Loyalty research leans toward indicating that frequent visitation is an indicator that is not only of satisfaction with previous experiences but also of habit-based loyalty (Xu et al., 2025). In the case of M&S, clients tend to favour M&S over alternatives, especially when they have their way when purchasing food and clothing products, where quality and reliability are considered important. This taste turns into a habitual buying behaviour, and repetitive positive experience minimises the cognitive effort of making a choice. Dawes et al. (2020) highlight that consistency of purchase patterns and long-term shopping persistence, compared with infrequent purchasing, show that this is a constant satisfaction-loyalty relationship, since customers make repeated selections of M&S and engage in extensive comparison, which is not essential.

Conversely, brand loyalty is attitudinal and more psychological, as indicated by resistance to switching brands. Gielens et al. (2021) illustrated that loyal customers tend to be less price-sensitive to the competition, particularly when the quality and trustworthiness are perceived as

greater than any cost-saving opportunities. In M&S, this is supported by brand switching reluctance since the customers feel little incremental value in the competitors' retailers. Notably, Lu et al. (2022) argue that the perceived threat of substitutes, including the uncertainty of quality or inconsistency of services, puts off the use of rival brands. In addition to functional factors to consider, emotional attachment that does not allow switching is a determining factor since customers relate M&S to reliability and reassurance. Trust-based commitment also supports this attachment and turns the level of satisfaction into long-lasting loyalty in extremely competitive retail stores.

4.3.4 Theme 4: Relationship between customer satisfaction and brand loyalty

Within the Marks and Spencer (M&S) context, satisfaction that dictates brand commitment is how the accumulation of constantly positive experiences can lead to long-term loyalty, can be achieved as opposed to momentary repurchase. Ghorbanzadeh (2021) indicates that repeat satisfaction creates the intention to remain in the relationship in the long term, with customers eventually making the transition toward the relational relationship with the brand instead of the transactional one. This process facilitates commitment, which is achieved by means of satisfaction, in which a consistent delivery of products and services strengthens faith in future dealings at M&S. In the long run, satisfaction is also a factor that promotes the strengthening of trust, which eliminates the perceived risk and uncertainty in the purchase process. As compared to their customers who had fluctuating satisfaction, Mahdiah et al. (2022) argue that customers with sustained positive ratings have a lower churn intention, since the switching costs are psychologically and cognitively expensive. Loyalty is therefore not instantaneous but is an indication of the build-up of satisfaction episodes that can lead to loyalty building up.

By contrast, the dimension of functional satisfaction as opposed to the outcome of loyalty indicates that not every dimension of satisfaction leads to commitment to the same degree. Lu et al. (2021) show that product quality influence on loyalty is especially strong in the sphere of premium retailing when the quality becomes a sign of trust and warrants long-term devotion. The effect on loyalty of service experience, however, is generally accelerating, in the sense that it provides emotional reassurance and strengthens belief, particularly in overcoming a problem. Price tolerance because of satisfaction exists among M&S customers, but Ahmed et al. (2023) indicates that the price satisfaction is unlikely to help maintain loyalty without any reinforcement by high

quality and service. This comparison reveals the comparative significance of the dimensions of satisfaction, as the functional value is required but not enough alone.

4.4 Analysis

The primary and secondary results, which are analysed together, prove the presence of a stable yet multifaceted correlation between brand loyalty and customer satisfaction in Marks and Spencer (M&S). Based on the primary (SPSS) evidence, it was evident that demographic variables had a minimum impact as age and gender did not have significant effects on satisfaction and loyalty results, but the perceptual variables (experience, quality, price and service) were highly connected to the repeat purchase intention. It is an alternative to the explanation of who the customer is and why they are loyal, which is based on the idea that loyalty is better explained in terms of experiential performance rather than profile characteristics (Urdea et al., 2021). This conclusion is further reinforced in the regression model with a high R and R-squared indicating that dimensions of satisfaction explain a significant percentage of the variation in the repeat purchase intention and hence a statistically significant satisfaction-loyalty relationship. This is supplemented by the secondary thematic analysis, which explains why those statistical patterns take place. Florea et al. (2025) argue that the perceived value (structure, convenience, repeatability) functions as a cognitive influence on satisfaction and emotional reactions (trust, comfort, prestige) enrich the bond, which becomes stronger in the long term. Alzoubi et al. (2024) found that product quality and standards mark-off more long-lasting satisfaction in terms of reliability and perceived risk reduction compared to service-process efficiency that is more likely to impact on short-term satisfaction (e.g., speed and queues).

4.5 Chapter Summary

The results indicate that demographic factors do not have much impact on loyalty, and satisfaction factors, including service, quality, and pricing perceptions and experience, are significant predictors of repeat purchase intention. The thematic analysis reinforces the quantitative findings because it demonstrates that perceived value and trust-based commitment enhance loyalty over the timespan, which proves that there is a significant relationship between satisfaction and loyalty.

5. Discussion

5.1 Introduction

The findings provided in Chapter 4 are critically interpreted in this discussion chapter by correlating the empirical data with the theoretical concepts, managerial implications, and literature available. However, it seeks to clarify the effect of customer satisfaction on brand loyalty at Marks and Spencer (M&S) by contrasting the quantitative findings with qualitative findings and relating them to previous empirical studies.

5.2 Discussion of Key Findings

The results reported in Chapter 4 indicate that customer satisfaction and brand loyalty at Marks and Spencer (M&S) has strong but conditional relationship, which is consistent with the previous research on retail loyalty. The quantitative findings show the prevalence of experiential and perceptual variables in the power of loyalty and not demographics. This is opposite to the old segmentation-based perspectives of loyalty formation and is in line with the experiential marketing perspective emphasised by Urdea et al. (2021).

Based on the initial SPSS results, demographic factors (age and gender) did not have strong or significant relationships with the result of loyalty, whereas satisfaction factor variables (customer experience, product quality, pricing satisfaction and service quality) demonstrated strong positive correlations with repeat purchase intention. This result contradicts the previous demographically focused assumptions on the loyalty but confirms the suggestion by Sweeney et al. (2020) that loyalty is a resultant development of satisfaction to repeat behaviour and advocacy. Specifically, the regression model ($R^2 = 0.678$) confirms that satisfaction accounts a significant percentage of the loyalty variance which is significantly higher than 40-50 percent usually found in retail research (Kumar et al., 2024). This implies that the experience-based positioning of M&S increases the satisfaction-loyalty relationship.

Yet the thematic analysis offers a more subtle and contrasting explanation of the way loyalty is developed. Although it is the cognitive satisfaction that is fueled by perceived value and convenience, emotional reactions, including trust, comfort, and brand prestige, support the long-term commitment (Florea et al., 2025; Lee and Trim, 2022). This is unlike the transactional retailers wherein satisfaction is more like temporary and price sensitive. The results thus

demonstrate that M&S loyalty is relational as opposed to being a behavioural one in favour of the commitment-trust logic as explained by Ghorbanzadeh (2021). One of the major contradictions arises in the quality of the product and service efficiency. In contrast, Alzoubi et al. (2024) state that the quality of the products, their durability, and freshness result in long-term satisfaction and perceived risk reduction, which is more predictive of the loyalty. Comparatively, the service efficiency (e.g., the speed of checkout and managing queues) affects the short-term satisfaction but has a lesser effect on the long-term loyalty (Souza et al., 2023). However, Pandey et al. (2020) argue that such difference is why M&S customers can afford higher prices in cases where the quality expectations are fulfilled, which supports the premium positioning of the brand. Lastly, the results demonstrate the fact that satisfaction is not always equally converted into loyalty in all dimensions. Product and service satisfaction can be a highly effective predictor of repeat purchase, whereas price satisfaction cannot ensure the maintenance of loyalty without other perceived value reinforcement (Ahmed et al., 2023). This comparison shows that loyalty at M&S is cumulative and multi-dimensional instead of automatic thereby confirming that satisfaction alone is not enough but a requirement to brand loyalty on the long term.

5.3 Integration with theoretical frameworks

The results of the research combine well with the Expectation-Confirmation Theory (ECT) and the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) developed in the above chapters, as well as expands classical models of loyalty. Regarding ECT, the empirical findings indicate that Marks & Spencer (M&S) customer satisfaction is largely influenced by expectations confirmation regarding quality of products, consistency of services and perceived value. The high correlations and regression findings between the dimensions of satisfaction and repeat purchase intention show that as M&S meets or surpasses pre-purchase expectations, confirmation is achieved. This results in increased satisfaction and repeat loyalty behaviours which were directly supported by the assumptions of ECT. The results however differ with the traditional uses of ECT since Seth et al. (2023) indicate that confirmation is not enough to ensure loyalty in a price sensitive retail setting, suggesting a conditional and not a linear satisfaction-loyalty relation.

The results also explain more when construed through TPB on how satisfaction is translated into loyalty intentions. Trust and perceived quality are attitudinal elements that have a significant effect on the repeat purchase intention, which is consistent with the focus of TPB as an attitude predictor

of behaviour. Conversely, demographic variables displayed a poor relationship with the outcome of loyalty. This supports the argument presented by Ajzen (2020) who states that perceptions and control are more influential in behavioural intentions than personal characteristics. The perceived behavioural control is specifically noticeable in the role of service efficiency and convenience, where convenience of shopping and returns makes the process less frictional and more loyalty intentions strong.

Relatively, Alkhurshan and Rjoub (2020) found that the loyalty structure assists in understanding why the satisfaction does not always lead to deep loyalty. The results indicate that a significant portion of M&S customers are functioning at the behavioural or attitudinal stage of loyalty that is induced by the functional satisfaction but not to the affective or conative stage of loyalty. Although quality of products leads to commitment based on trust, Lin et al. (2022) argue that pricing sensitivity restricts the emotional attachment. This is opposed to the traditional loyalty models that seek to develop loyalty progressively. Overall, the combination of these frameworks shows that a hybrid theoretical approach is the most appropriate to explain loyalty at M&S because expectation confirmation and planned behaviour are viewed as influencing the contextual market pressures to construct the outcome of loyalty.

5.4 Practical / Managerial / Policy Implications

The results offer various valuable practical, managerial and policy-based recommendations to the Marks and Spencer (M&S) in reinforcing the relationship between customer satisfaction and brand loyalty in the long term. In practical terms, the findings also show that experiential and perceptual factors are the main factors influencing customer loyalty as opposed to demographic factors. This indicates that M&S should not work so much on the demographic segmentation but experience-based value creation. The practical steps involve the increase of the consistency between store layout, the enhancement of the omnichannel integration, and the maintenance of the in-store and online journeys as intuitive, convenient, and reliable. Habibi and Rasoolimanesh (2020) note that given that perceived value and emotional reassurance were observed to support satisfaction, a small discrepancy in the delivery of experience may undermine the results of loyalty.

The high impact of the quality and standards of the products on the loyalty, in the managerial perspective, underlines the necessity of further investment in quality assurance, sourcing transparency, and product novelty. Baumert and de Obesso (2021) suggest that the managers ought

to consider coherency in quality of both clothing and food categories, which will decrease the risk perception and will help the customers to be willing to accept higher prices. Conversely, service-process efficiency, e.g. check out speed and queue control, ought to be considered a hygiene factor, and not a key loyalty factor. In the context of inefficiencies, they can destroy satisfaction, but without a reinforcement of quality and trust, excellence in service processes is not likely to produce long-term loyalty. In its turn, Farooq et al. (2024) state that the managerial performance metrics are to be such that they strike the balance between the targets of operational efficiency and the indicators of quality and customer trust.

An implication of the findings is that the relationship management strategies and the loyalty programmes should be recalibrated. Instead of paying a transactional bonus or price bonus, M&S ought to implement loyalty programs that reward frequency, experience, and involvement with time. Alayli (2023) notes that emotional attachment and lessening switching intentions could come by through programmes that acknowledge repeat purchasing, brand advocacy and long-term commitment. Some of the communication practices that should be focused on include brand heritage, ethical conduct, and reliability, since they were identified to strengthen trust-based commitment and emotional loyalty.

By the policy and governance perspective, the findings emphasise the need to incorporate customer-focused values in organisational policies. The internal policies must balance the staff training, service standards and performance appraisal systems with customer satisfaction. Albtosh et al. (2022) highlight that the employees are very important in influencing the emotional reactions like reassurance, comfort, hence the significance of the investment in the staff development and empowerment. Moreover, the corporate policies concerning quality control, ethical sourcing and sustainability must be communicated on a regular basis because these issues are the contributing factors to satisfaction and loyalty in terms of reinforcing trust. On a larger strategic scale, the study indicates that M&S ought to implement a data-driven approach to satisfaction and loyalty monitoring in the form of a policy. The analysis of the satisfaction levels, repeat purchase behaviour and customer feedback can be done continuously to facilitate proactive decision making and detect the loyalty risks early (Singh et al., 2023). Generally, the implications point to the idea that long-term brand loyalty in M&S should be established in the form of an integrated strategy that is based on the functional excellence, emotional reassurance, and the long-term policy alignment, as opposed to schemes of price competition or demographic focus.

5.5 Comparison with Previous Empirical Studies

I believe that the results of this research are in many ways consistent with the previous empirical studies, and in some cases, they go well beyond them, especially in the light of the conditional nature of the satisfaction-loyalty relationship in modern retail. In line with the findings of Khan et al. (2020) and Gerou (2022), the findings affirm that customer satisfaction at Marks and Spencer (M&S) is a critical antecedent of repeat purchase intention and advocacy which supports the perception that satisfaction is a consistent antecedent of loyalty. The positive correlations and the regression results are corroborated by previous researchers who suggest that cumulative satisfaction positively contributes to behavioural loyalty in case the experiences are predominantly positive.

Nevertheless, unlike more linear satisfaction-loyalty models described by Mishra et al. (2021), the current results show that satisfaction is not enough to ensure the long-term loyalty in the UK retail environment. This also confirms the thoughts of Ebrahim et al. (2024) and Walls (2023) who note that increased price sensitivity and competitive value propositions undermine automatic translation of satisfaction into loyalty. Although other studies tend to assume homogeneity in the retail offers, this study demonstrates that the loyalty of the customers in M&S is category-specific and hence is abided by Edirisinghe et al. (2020), who interpreted that the customer loyalty might be category-specific, i.e., loyal to food and defective to clothing category. Relatively, the high role of perceived product quality and trust in the results are in line with Devi and Yasa (2021) and Ismail (2022) who present quality as one of the stabilising factors in loyalty development. However, the less strong effect of the efficiency of service on the long-term loyalty is in opposition to Vu (2021), and it is probable that the service quality at M&S is rather a hygiene factor than a differentiator.

5.6 Summary

Overall, the discussion has confirmed that brand loyalty at M&S is determined by a complex relationship of functional satisfaction, emotional reassurance and trust-based commitment as opposed to demographic factors or price on its own. This creates satisfaction as a condition but not a sufficient factor in the loyalty and underscores the need to adopt experience-based and quality-based approaches in maintaining long term customer relationships.

Chapter 6: Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Conclusion

This dissertation focused on the correlation between customer satisfaction and brand loyalty in the environment of Marks and Spencer (M&S), a relatively old multi-category UK retailer that is entering a more and more competitive and price-conscious market. The rationale behind the study was the identified paradox in the UK retail industry, in which the levels of reported customer satisfaction fail to always lead to continued brand loyalty. The study was conducted with a mixed-method methodology that included quantitative survey data in SPSS and qualitative data based on thematic analysis of second-hand literature.

The results confirm that customer satisfaction has a strong positive impact on brand loyalty at M&S, but this does not imply that this relationship is automatic or linear in nature. Although satisfaction is a condition that can ensure loyalty, it cannot be enough to ensure repeat purchase behaviour or long-term commitment. Rather, satisfaction translated into loyalty will be conditional on the concept of perceived value, fairness in pricing, convenience, and commitment (based on trust). Combining the Expectation-Confirmation Theory (ECT) and the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), the research paper shows that both the factors of expectation fulfilment and behavioural control influence the process of loyalty formation at M&S. On the whole, the study offers both applied and theoretical understanding of the mechanisms of enhancing loyalty based on satisfaction in the contemporary retail conditions.

6.2 Summary of Key Findings

The results of the empirical studies shed some light on the significant information about customer satisfaction and brand loyalty at Marks and Spencer. First, the research revealed that the general level of customer satisfaction with M&S customers is rather high, especially when it comes to the quality of products, the credibility of the services provided, and the confidence in the brand. The outcomes are in line with the long-term premium positioning and reputation in quality of M&S (Alzoubi et al., 2024; Mogire, 2024).

Second, perceived product quality, pricing satisfaction, service experience, and overall shopping convenience were identified to be the key determinants of customer satisfaction. Among them, the quality of the products and the reliability of the service were the most influential elements of

satisfaction, and the satisfaction regarding prices was more variable, which could be explained by the high price sensitivity in the UK retail market (Ahmed et al., 2022).

Third, it was observed that brand loyalty was more of a behavioural type, i.e., a repeat purchase intention, and not an emotional or affective type. In spite of the enthusiasm of a large number of customers to repurchase and suggest M&S, loyalty was conditional and susceptible to competitive prices and convenience-based options.

Lastly, correlation and regression analysis showed that there was a statistically significant positive correlation between customer satisfaction and brand loyalty, and the alternative hypothesis (H1) was accepted. Nonetheless, qualitative evidence also revealed that perceived value and perceived trust can only reinforce the notion of satisfaction to turn it into loyalty, which aligns with the previous research that underlines the concept of the multidimensionality of loyalty (Ghorbanzadeh, 2021).

6.3 Linking with research Objectives

The results of the study directly respond to and answer the objectives of the research identified in Chapter 1. The first objective aimed at establishing the extent of customer satisfaction to Marks and Spencer customers. The quantitative analysis indicated that customers are generally positive in their report about and especially with respect to the quality of the product, the store atmosphere, and the customer service. This is in line with Expectation-Confirmation Theory, which states that satisfaction is achieved when performance is perceived to match or exceed expectation in the past (Wu, 2025). Nonetheless, the qualitative evidence indicates that the level of satisfaction is not evenly spread in all value-related aspects, especially the pricing aspect, as the consumer priorities in the UK retail market change.

The second objective was to determine the most important decision factors of customer satisfaction, such as the quality of products, prices, and service experience. Quantitative and qualitative results prove that the most consistent predictors of satisfaction in M&S are product quality and consistency of services. These factors add to the trust and perceived reliability, which are the key to long-term satisfaction in high-end retail environments (Alzoubi et al., 2024). Although it is important, it was revealed that pricing satisfaction is more prone to economic conditions and competitive benchmarking, and the previous report by Ahmed et al. (2022) confirms the use of perceived value as a very critical mediator.

The third objective explored the level of brand loyalty of the M&S customers. The findings show that loyalty exists, but it is mostly behavioural and not emotional. The customers experience repeat purchase intentions and moderate switching resistance, but become less loyal when the competitors are cheaper or more convenient. This observation confirms TPB, which highlights that not only attitudes but also perceived behavioural control, like ease of access and financial limitation, influence behaviour intentions (Ajzen, 2020).

The final objective was an evaluation of the correlation between customer satisfaction and brand loyalty. Regression analysis indicated that the percentage of explanatory satisfaction is high in loyalty intentions, and hence, a strong positive association exists. However, the thematic analysis reveals that contentment is not a sufficient factor in ensuring long-term loyalty. This proves that the satisfaction-loyalty relationship at M&S is conditional, cumulative, and context-based as opposed to linear.

6.4 Practical Recommendations for Marks & Spencer

The research draws numerous practical suggestions, which are summarised in the findings as per the empirical evidence, to convert customer satisfaction into sustainable brand loyalty in Marks and Spencer.

To begin with, Marks and Spencer needs to strengthen value communication strategies but maintain the premium positioning. Clarity in messages that clearly justify price differentials through quality, longevity, and ethical sourcing can improve perceived value, especially in price-sensitive customers (Awaad, Kortam, and Ayad, 2024).

Secondly, Sparks loyalty programme should be enriched with increased personalisation. Introducing category-based rewards, discount plans that depend on the purchasing behaviour, and actual financial encouragement would bridge the gap between satisfaction and behavioural encouragement (Charles and Dewi Mustikasari Immanuel, 2025).

Thirdly, Marks and Spencer ought to invest more in omnichannel convenience. Increased digital personalisation, faster checkout processes, and better click-and-collect and returns would also increase perceived behavioural control, which is a vital antecedent of loyalty intentions in the Theory of Planned Behaviour.

Fourthly, sustainability storytelling, in-store experiences, and emotional branding programmes should be extended to produce experiential differentiation. This trust-based commitment might be

stabilised by such strategies as emotional attachment, establishing loyalty in times when the economy experiences pressure (Wang et al., 2023).

6.5 Academic Contributions of the Study

The current research is a substantial addition to the academic literature on customer satisfaction and brand loyalty in a number of ways. Firstly, it is an extension of the earlier satisfaction-loyalty models as it demonstrates a conditional and not a linear relationship, and in the multi-category retail environment. Secondly, the study predicts the mediating nature of the perceived value, which empirically validates the inclusion of the value-based consumption orientations into the existing loyalty models.

Thirdly, the synthesis of Expectation-Confirmation Theory and the Theory of Planned Behaviour provides the study with a hybrid theoretical lens, which captures both cognitive and behavioural aspects of the formation of loyalty. Lastly, the study fills a gap in the literature given its concentration on a multi-category retailer based in the UK, thus providing an insight into the category fragmentation and omnichannel impact on loyalty, which provides a greater conceptual and practical applicability to modern retail settings.

6.6 Limitations of the Study

Though these were contributions, the study has a number of limitations. The application of convenience sampling limits the applicability of the results because the sample size might not be sufficient to reflect the overall customers of M&S. In addition, the cross-sectional design measures the perceptions at one time and thus makes it impossible to infer any temporal dynamics of satisfaction or loyalty. Also, there is a risk of bias in responses using self-reported survey information. The results should be interpreted with consideration of these limitations, which do not significantly lower the overall validity of the results.

6.7 Recommendations for Future Research

The research should be conducted in the future using longitudinal designs to find out how customer satisfaction transforms into customer loyalty with time, especially when the economic circumstances change. Further cross-retailer and product category studies would be useful in deepening insights into category-specific loyalty processes. The perceived value, price sensitivity,

and convenience should also be included as central variables by the researchers instead of considering them as secondary variables. The broader use of qualitative approaches, such as the use of in-depth interviews, would allow exploring the emotional and psychological motivation behind loyalty further.

6.8 Future Scope

The future direction of research on the topic of customer satisfaction and brand loyalty is focused on reconceptualizing the concept of brand loyalty as a dynamic, multi-dimensional process, but not as a result. With the continually changing consumer behaviour brought about by digitalisation and omnichannel retailing, future research ought to examine how digital experience and personalisation intersect with the establishment of loyalty. Also, the incorporation of macroeconomic variables like inflation, cost-of-living pressures, and income uncertainty would help scholars to put the loyalty behaviour into perspective under real-world conditions. By considering these new dimensions, the new studies can create stronger, context-sensitive frameworks that are in a position to be able to explain loyalty in the fast-changing retail settings.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Survey Questionnaire

1. What is your age group?

- 18–25
- 26–35
- 36–45
- 46–55
- 56 and above

2. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say

3. How often do you shop at Marks & Spencer?

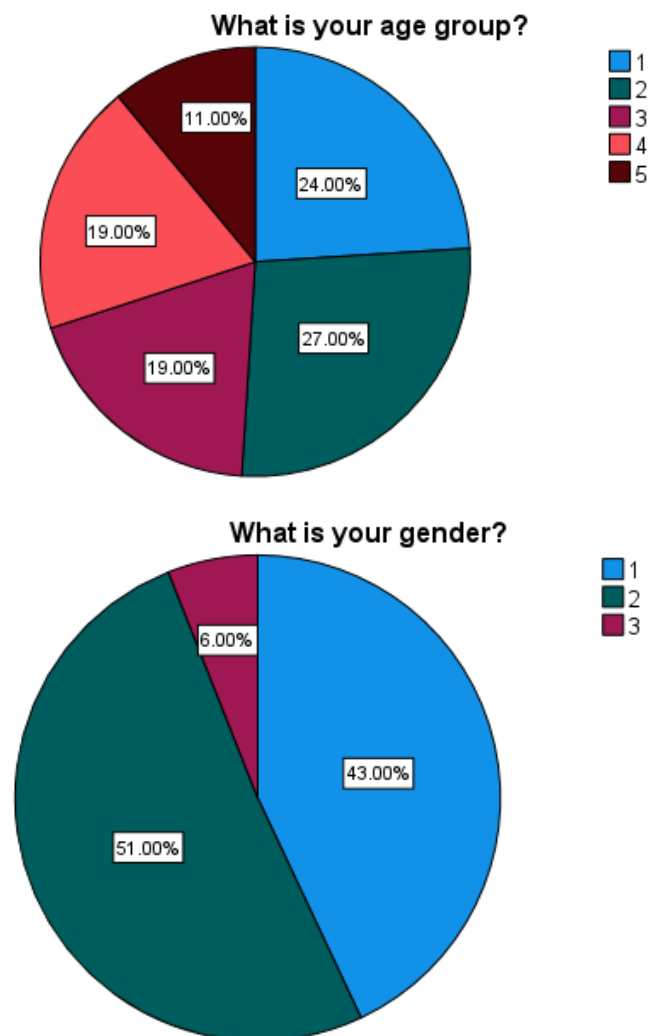
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Occasionally
- Rarely

Variable Questions	Very Dissatisfied (Strongly disagree)	Dissatisfied (Disagree)	Neutral	Satisfied (Agree)	Very Satisfied (Strongly Agree)
4. What is your general customer experience in Marks and Spencer in terms of shopping?					
5. What is your opinion of the quality of					

products provided by Marks and Spencer?					
6. To what extent are you satisfied with the price of Marks and Spencer products as compared to the competition?					
7. What do you rate as the customer service of Marks and Spencer employees?					
8. What are the chances of making repeat purchases of Marks and Spencer again?					
9. How much do you agree with the statement: My satisfaction with Marks and Spencer makes me remain loyal to the brand?					

10. To what extent are you likely to recommend Marks and Spencer to your friends or family members with regards to satisfaction?					
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Appendix 2: SPSS Frequency Results



How often do you shop at Marks & Spencer?

