

STUDENT'S CONFERENCE BUSINESS MANAGEMENT & INNOVATION



30TH JULY, 2024



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From the dean's desk



Dr. Mrs. Vandana Lulla

At Podar World College, we firmly believe that the cornerstone of progress lies in the exchange of ideas, the exploration of new frontiers, and the collaboration among bright minds. This seminar serves as an embodiment of these ideals, offering a platform for researchers, scholars, and thinkers from diverse fields to converge and share their insights.

The journey of research is one that demands dedication, resilience, and unwavering curiosity. As you engage in discussions, presentations, and interactions over the course of this seminar, I encourage you to embrace this opportunity to learn from your peers, challenge existing paradigms, and lay the foundation for ground-breaking discoveries.

Our institution takes immense pride in nurturing an environment where ideas are cultivated, and intellect thrives. The papers presented during this seminar are a testament to the rigorous efforts put forth by researchers who strive to unravel the complexities of the world around us. It is heartening to witness the dedication each of you has demonstrated in contributing to the ever-expanding realm of human knowledge.

As we delve into the various sessions, discussions, and presentations, let us remain open to the transformative power of collaborative thinking. The connections forged, and the insights shared during this seminar have the potential to reverberate far beyond these walls.

Together, let us illuminate the path of discovery and chart the course for a future replete with new possibilities!



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KHOJ KONNEKT: A Marketing Plan for a PG Accommodation Platform in India

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ABSTRACT

The PG accommodation market in India's Tier I cities has shown an upward trajectory since the COVID-19 pandemic because the migrant student population has grown tremendously. Students who move to India's key education hubs from Tier II and Tier III areas face issues securing housing due to unreliable brokers, safety concerns, hygiene issues, along with the toils of living away from family. Despite the existing vacancies, these hostel facilities have a limited digital presence, making them inaccessible for prior viewing unless they are seen in person. Further, students cannot choose their roommates, which can affect their living experience, especially if they are incompatible. To solve these issues, we propose a business artefact taking the form of a marketing plan for Khoj Konnekt: a PG accommodation mobile app for Indian students. The plan encompasses the app's marketing strategy through value proposition, competitive advantage, customer acquisition methods and consumer behaviour influences. The artefact will use this strategy to deliver a digital marketing campaign plan leading up to the launch, visualised by a media kit.

Keywords: - PG Accommodation, Student Housing Platform, Marketing Plan, Campaign Media Kit, Marketing Strategy

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Key Definition

PG stands for Paying Guest. In India, the term PG accommodation has become synonymous with hostels and rented living spaces, usually those housing students, with various facilities such as electricity, water, housekeeping and food.

1.2 Project Objectives

- 10 To evaluate the strategic marketing and digital marketing concepts that are used to create a competitive advantage in the existing Hostel & PG accommodation in the Indian Market.
- 11 To formulate appropriate marketing strategies for the launch of 'Khoj Konnekt' within the Indian market, underpinned by SMART objectives.
- 12 To explore key theories of consumer behaviour about the target customer base of students studying in Tier I cities in India.
- 13 To propose an integrated marketing campaign through a campaign media kit for Khoj Konnekt's social media profiles.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Need-Gap Analysis

Solomon outlines that the purpose of marketing is to satisfy consumer needs – but there should be a clear understanding of the types of needs with the purchase intent underpinning them [1]. A need, in the traditional sense, is rational and has a utilitarian motive. In this case, a migrant student finding a place to stay during their study is a basic necessity. However, some consumers may have other motives behind their choice of accommodation, which go beyond functionality. These motives may be backed by hedonic desires like the type of facilities offered by the hostel accommodation.

Since the Khoj Konnekt app exists as a one-stop solution for student housing, it should address the issues faced by Indian students. Being well-informed of the students' unsatisfied needs, both utilitarian and hedonic, is essential towards forming appropriate marketing messages for the campaign.

The following table details the problems faced by students pursuing higher education in India who need a temporary place to stay during their studies.

Table-1: Problems faced by students while finding PG accommodation

Problem	Explanation & Significance for Khoj Konnekt
Higher demand for PG accommodation after the COVID-19 Pandemic	<p>As of 2023, 36 million students have taken up further studies in India, with an expected CAGR of over 9%. Notably, 3 in 4 students live away from home for studies, but only 1 in 5 students are able to find appropriate housing [2].</p> <p>There is a market opportunity for a platform which provides accessible and moderately-priced student housing in India, due to the growth in migrant student population after the lockdown.</p>
Cost effectiveness of PG accommodation	<p>Accommodation costs are extremely high, especially in metropolitan areas, causing financial strain. Because of a lack of knowledge and connectivity, online-hosted hostels charge higher rents than actual offline prices [3].</p> <p>Students must have a transparent medium that connects verified hostel facilities with them at reasonable prices.</p>

Mandatory College Allocation	Unfortunately, private colleges not only make hostel facilities mandatory but also charge exorbitant accommodation fees on top of tuition fees, denying students the freedom to explore. Students are under extreme financial strain because they want the freedom to select their housing arrangements [4].
Roommates Allocation	Indian students prefer to live with roommates to share rent and reduce their financial burden. However, they are usually paired with strangers who are outside of their comfort zone. This can be difficult because conflicts can arise over issues such as cleanliness, noise, and sharing common areas [5].
Safety & Hygiene	When choosing a hostel, safety is of the utmost importance, particularly for female students. The majority of Indian hostels lack proper maintenance, even for necessities, and the government does not care enough to intervene. Safety concerns, such as theft, harassment, and inadequate security measures, can deter students from choosing certain accommodations [6].

2.2 Interview Analysis

The interview, conducted face-to-face with the authors, delves into the experiences of Shubh Kshatri, a student from Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh, who ventured to Mumbai to pursue further studies in physics engineering. Mr Kshatri shares his journey, shedding light on the transition to the bustling urban landscape of Mumbai. He recounts the difficulties he encountered in finding suitable roommates and the lack of basic hostel amenities. Towards the conclusion, he expresses his belief that technological solutions such as the "Khoj Konnekt" app could have alleviated his struggles and expresses hope that future students will benefit from such advancements. This interview serves as an exploration of the hostel landscape in India, spotlighting the challenges faced by students hailing from Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities when navigating the urban sprawl of metropolitan areas.

2.3 Survey Analysis

A survey was carried out through a questionnaire with the aim of acquiring insights into the market's demands and identifying gaps in housing availability. The survey research digs into various customer perspectives towards the hostel housing renting scenario in India, particularly among students and working professionals. The study was performed via digital mediums and received 80+ respondents' answers, with Indian Gen Z students accounting for the majority (70%) of the votes.

The results drawn from this survey confirm the difficulties students encounter in finding housing, with more than 85% reporting that it was difficult for them to locate suitable hostel lodging. It emphasises the need for cost-effective, convenient, and student-friendly housing options. Recognising these demands allows Khoj Konnekt to efficiently adapt its offerings to meet market gaps. Finally, the research study emphasises the need to match the services offered on housing platforms with customer preferences, preparing Khoj Konnekt to meet the changing demands of the PG accommodation market.

3. KHOJ KONNEKT: AN OVERVIEW

3.1 Key Value Proposition

“The quest for greater differentiation in an overcrowded marketplace has seen value creation move from a focus on the product or firm to personalised consumer experiences” [7].

Khoj Konnekt will be a hostel accommodation app with strong points for connecting students to their perfect hostel in India. Here are the app’s front-end features:

- **Advanced Search and Filtering:** Khoi Konnekt will implement AI-driven search and filtering algorithms to allow students/ professionals to find hostels based on their preferences such as location, price range, facilities, and distance from educational institutions. Khoi Konnekt's Advanced filtration will ensure students to find the most suitable accommodation quickly.
- **Recommendation System:** Khoi Konnet will have an AI-driven recommendation system that suggests hostels based customers past preferences, reviews, and similar users* choices. This can help students discover accommodations that align with their preferences even if they're unsure about specific criteria.
- **Chatbots and Virtual Assistants:** Khoj Konnekt will use AI-powered chatbots and virtual assistants to give users immediate support. In addition to helping with booking procedures, they can respond to frequently asked questions and provide tailored recommendations based on user preferences.
- **Police Verified Hostels:** Khoj Konnekt will prominently display legitimately verified hostels a 'blue tick*' icon to inform customers of the establishment's safety and security. The app's internal team will carry out the verification process to confirm that the hostel's basic amenities and pictures are accurate to prevent fraudulent activities.

3.2 Introduction to Revenue Model

Khoj Konnekt will earn its primary stream of revenue through a freemium subscription-based business model (SBBM). In this, customers will have free access to a limited number of functionalities and are given the option to unlock advanced app features by incurring an periodic subscription fee. Further, the app will contain in-app advertising to ensure that free customers still contribute to the revenue.

As for the back-end operations, the app will levy compulsory commission fees for property owners who showcase their accommodations on the app. There will also be an optional listing fee to partner as a “Khoj-Certified” listing which will have a boosted visibility in the app and will offer verifiable quality services.

The freemium model is characterised by 3 stages [8]:

- Free product with limited functionality
- Subscription payment to unlock unlimited features
- Renewal after a specified period

As mentioned above, there are 4 key front-end features available to all customers on a free basis. However, to ensure that customers gain a sense of the app and its offerings, these features will be functionally limited by certain constraints.



Figure-1: Front-end features with the Freemium model

Once a user has exhausted these front-end features, they will be prompted towards subscribing to the app.

3.3 SMART Objectives

Having established the business's unique value proposition, it is time to form the basis for Khoj Konnekt's marketing strategy. Thus, a set of SMART objectives have been formulated for Khoj Konnekt to work towards during the 6-month lead up to the app's launch. SMART objectives allow for progress tracking as they can be used as benchmarks for project timelines. These objectives underpin the steps towards executing a plan, as they are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound.

Table-2: SMART Objectives for Khoj Konnekt

SMART Objective	Area of Focus
To raise Rs. 20,000 through the launch event of Khoj Konnekt slated for November 2024	Financial
To reach 100 prospects who will take part in a customer survey about the development of KhojKonnekt to bring brand awareness and give real time feedback about the app's features, and retain 80% of the prospects as app downloads.	Marketing
To execute a digital marketing strategy through social media marketing across Instagram and Facebook to gain an average follower base of 1k and a 5% engagement rate within the next 6 months.	Marketing
To partner with at least 10 hostels across Tier I cities and obtain a verifiable certification from National Accreditation Board for Hospitals & Healthcare Providers (NABH) for the safe and trustworthy operations of the app.	Societal

4. STRATEGIC REVIEW

Table-3: STEEPLE Summary

Factor	Implication
Social	Location: Proximity to the campus can save time on transport while also ensuring your connection to the academic community.

	<p>Cultural Diversity: According to a Knight Frank survey, a significant 70% of international students say that having access to familiar food options is a deciding factor when it comes to housing.</p> <p>Customised living arrangements: Internal students follow the cultural norms that are unique to each nation. According to Amber's Student Housing Report, almost half of international students in India choose studio apartments over other accommodations in order to value their privacy and space.</p> <p>Language and Comfort: A home that considers linguistic and cultural quirks turns into a haven where students can interact informally and honestly.</p> <p>Safety and Security: A secure living environment is enhanced by elements like police verification, surveillance systems, well-lit areas, and controlled access, offering resident wardens or round-the-clock security guards for emergencies.</p>
Technological	<p>Market Insights: AI can provide precise information about current market trends, which is helpful when negotiating rent amounts with landlords and looking through nearby properties that are comparable.</p> <p>Preventing Scams: AI can effectively evaluate the comments and evaluations a rental property has gotten from prior occupants, assisting students in determining which property managers are reliable.</p> <p>Tailored Suggestions: Every student seeking accommodation has different requirements and tastes. AI predicts a lead's preferred housing option based on online behaviour data, including property viewings and search queries. This allows agents to customise their marketing and increase conversion rates.</p>
Economical	<p>Key cities for Student Housing location: In FY 2022-23, the National Capital Region emerged as a hotspot for PG accommodations, accounting for 24% of both the demand and supply of PG rental spaces. In the Mumbai Metropolitan Region, PG accommodations comprised 16% of both the demand and supply segments.</p> <p>Expectation for budget-friendly housing options” 52% of India's total population is millennials, & the demand for affordable and convenient accommodations such as PGs is expected to continue its momentum in the medium to long term.</p>

	<p>High monetary returns from student housing: Compared to the conventional housing market, where rental returns have remained stagnant at 2-3%, PG accommodations have offered significantly higher returns, ranging from 50% to 75%.</p>
Environmental	<p>Environmental Consciousness: A staggering 80% of students, according to the National Union of Students (NUS), voice concerns about environmental issues. They anticipate that the educational institutions they attend will share their values, with a particular focus on sustainability in every facet of campus life. (Amber, 2023)</p> <p>Professional Aspirations: According to Universum's survey results, 45% of students want to work for companies that place a high priority on sustainability, which increases demand for environmentally friendly options in student housing. (Amber, 2023)</p>
Political	<p>Maharashtra Eyes Mumbai Real Estate Boost via Fee Cuts: The Maharashtra government is looking into ways to boost the Mumbai real estate market, including reducing the fees that different authorities charge for construction projects, according to the Maharashtra Chamber of Housing Industry (MCHI) and the Confederation of Real Estate Developers' Associations of India (CREDAI).</p>
Legal	<p>The Model Tenancy Act: The government's 100-day plan includes promoting rental housing as a key element. Currently, up to 11 lakh houses are unoccupied nationwide. In order to close the housing gap in the nation, this act suggests revising the laws governing rental housing and encouraging private investment in the market, particularly through co-living and student housing. (Ramnani, 2019)</p> <p>Lucrative taxation from housing sector: In addition to the Prohibition of Benami Property Transactions Act of 2016 and the Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act of 2016, there is also the real estate sectoral alignment with the Goods and Services Tax. In 2018, \$100 million was invested in the Indian student housing market (Knight Frank, 2019).</p>

4.2 Competitor Analysis

Khoj Konnekt has established its value proposition with the functionalities of the app catered towards Indian students finding PG accommodation. However, to ensure market success, a thorough review of the competitors has been conducted. To offer productive and insightful analysis, 3 key competitors with similar product offerings to those of Khoj Konnekt have been selected from the housing rental industry in India.

To provide some background to the industry, there has been a 5% hike in rentals for PG student housing in India to accommodate for new demands following the onset of the pandemic. Furthermore, there is to be a slated 92 million students expected to be pursuing further studies by the 2036, paving the way for the expansion of the sector, especially

with PBSA i.e Purpose Built Student Accommodation options being considered for market entry in India, supported by foreign investment [9].

Table -4: Competitor Analysis

	Zolo	Amberstudent	Stanza
Strengths	<p>User-Friendly Interface: It boasts an intuitive interface, simplifying the process of finding suitable housing accommodations for users. Its easy navigation enhances user experience and encourages engagement.</p> <p>Tech-Driven Solutions: It offers innovative solutions for various aspects of housing accommodations, including online booking, and secure payment gateways. This streamline the renting process and enhance convenience for both landlords and tenants.</p>	<p>Wide Range: It has a variety in selection of accommodations, such as suite rooms, studios, and apartments. Well-equipped game rooms, gyms, and study spaces are available at many properties.</p> <p>Extra Services: It offers round-the-clock free customer service to its users through the website to clear out any issues. The safe online search speed traces the process of booking accommodation by negating the need for negotiations, credit scores and other legal paperwork which students cannot access.</p>	<p>Localised Expertise: Stanza leverages its deep understanding of the Indian housing market, catering to the unique needs and preferences of its users. This allows the platform to offer tailored solutions, enhancing user experience and satisfaction.</p> <p>Community Building: It fosters a sense of community among its users through facilitating interactions and connections between tenants and landlords, Stanza creates a supportive ecosystem that promotes trust and collaboration within the platform.</p>
Weaknesses	<p>Subpar Marketing Efforts:</p> <p>Its marketing campaigns lack creativity and fail to resonate with their audience. Insufficient investment in digital advertising limits their ability to compete effectively in the market.</p> <p>Digital Infrastructure: It heavily relies on digital platforms for its operations, making it vulnerable to disruptions in internet connectivity or technical</p>	<p>Pricing Transparency Issues: Some users have expressed concerns regarding unclear pricing structures or hidden fees, suggesting a need for greater transparency in pricing policies.</p> <p>Limited Online Presence: It lacks a robust online presence, which may hinder its visibility and reach to potential users. The absence of an active online engagement strategy could result in missed opportunities for connecting</p>	<p>Limited Geographic Coverage: Its services may be limited to specific regions or cities within India. This restricted geographic coverage could potentially exclude users from areas where the platform has yet to establish a presence, limiting its overall reach and impact.</p> <p>Lack of Customization Options: It may lack sufficient options for users to customise their housing preferences or filter search results according to specific criteria, diminishing user satisfaction and the</p>

	glitches. Downtime in these systems might lead to consumer dissatisfaction and revenue loss.	with students seeking housing accommodations.	likelihood of finding suitable accommodations
Opportunities	<p>Corporate Partnerships: Forge strategic alliances with companies to provide exclusive housing solutions for their employees, offering cost-effective packages and value-added services to enhance employee satisfaction and retention.</p> <p>Integration of Virtual Reality Tours: Incorporate VR technology to provide immersive virtual tours of properties, enabling students to explore accommodations remotely and make informed decisions.</p>	<p>Diversification of Services: Introduce value-added services such as student insurance, housekeeping, and meal plans to enhance the student living experience and capture additional revenue streams.</p> <p>Strategic Partnerships with Digital Influencers: Collaborate with popular student influencers and bloggers to amplify brand visibility and attract a younger demographic through engaging digital content.</p>	<p>Expansion into Tier-II and Tier-III Cities: Capitalise on the growing demand for organised housing solutions in smaller cities by strategically expanding Stanza's presence beyond metropolitan areas.</p> <p>Enhanced Personalization through AI: Implement AI algorithms to analyse user preferences and suggest tailored accommodation options, improving user experience and satisfaction.</p>
Threats	<p>Built-to-Rent Limitations: Due to the up-and-coming PBSA sector, where buildings are developed for specific rental purposes, the laws for properties available for student housing are shifting. This means the availability of housing may reduce in the future.</p> <p>Police verification: Zolo's lack of security regarding the verified safety of their hostel listings could prove to be an issue if complaints are raised by people residing in their hostels who used Zolo to book them.</p>	<p>Rent Hikes in Metro Cities: Due to the exorbitant costs of living in India's education hubs, only exacerbated by inflation this may discourage students from moving to these cities in the first place.</p> <p>Low amount of students rebooking: After the course of their study, the likelihood of students coming back to stay in the same rental accommodation is very low, which makes customer retention for AmberStudent more difficult as compared to competitors.</p>	<p>Institutionalisation of Housing Sector: Due to the skyrocketing government involvement in student housing, there are now stringent regulations on student housing which makes it harder for Stanza to find viable property options to display.</p> <p>Poor Relations with Property Managers: Due to fraying relationships with property managers, Stanza faces the risk of limited display of housing</p>

4.3 Segmentation

“Market segmentation involves grouping consumers or business customers within a market into smaller segments based on similarities in needs, attitudes or behaviour that marketing can address” [10].

The following tables provide overviews of different approaches to segmentation variables that are to be considered when selecting the target segment for Khoj Konnekt. These segments have been considered keeping in mind that Khoj Konnekt will primarily focus on student housing, but has scope to expand into other types of rentals, including semi-permanent stay, holiday lodging and more.

Table-5: Segmentation Approach for Millennials

Year 1981-1996 (Millennials)	
<u>Geographical</u>	Region: South Asia Country: India Density Population: 481 per sq. km
<u>Demographics</u>	Age: 42 to 27 years Generation: Millennial Gender: Male & Female Education: higher studies to graduate MBA Masters Graduates Socio-Economic Class: Medium-level role, businessman, low manager role. Income Status: Moderate Income, 20 lakhs-35 lakhs. Disposable Income Status: Moderate
<u>Behavioural & Psychographic</u>	User Status: Regular or Ex-User Buyer Readiness stage: Informed, interested and aware Attitude towards online purchase: Mostly positive, branded shopping Benefit sought: Value, Fast, Quality Buying Preference: Online and offline are both, more comfortable online. Vals framework: Innovator

Table-6: Segmentation Approach for Gen Z

Year 1997 - 2012 (Gen Z)	
<u>Geographical</u>	Region: South Asia Country: India Density Population: 481 per sq. km
<u>Demographics</u>	Age: 26-11 years Generation: Gen Z Gender: Male & Female Education: graduate studies Graduates Secondary Graduation Socio-Economic Class: low-level role, fresher, team leader, intern Income Status: Moderate Income, 5 lakh- 15 lakhs Disposable Income Status: low moderate
<u>Behavioural & Psychographic</u>	User Status: Interested Potential User Buyer Readiness stage: Aware and Informed Attitude towards online purchase: Highly positive, fast fashion shopping Benefit sought: Fast, Cost-effective Buying Preference: Online e-commerce platforms Vals framework: Strivers

Main Targeted Segment: **Gen Z & Millennials**

Selected segment justification

As previously stated, Khoj Konnket's primary target audience is between the ages of 18 and 27: Gen Z & Millennials, as they are more likely to relocate in search of higher education and job opportunities. This is because higher education in India “requires more than 75% of students to live outside of their primary residence” [2]. As mentioned in the survey conducted as primary research, wherein 70% of the respondents were Gen Z, they represent the ideal demographic for the Khoj Konnket audience. This is because students have low disposable income, with hostels and PGs being more affordable options for students than renting, with a purchasing power of only INR 10,000, representing them as the ideal audience [11]. In fact, 52% of the survey’s respondents said affordability is the most important factor affecting the decision to select a hostel.

4.4 Psychographics

Table-7: AIO Model for Typical profile of Khoj Konnekt Customers

Activities	Interests	Opinions
<p>Study/Work: Both put in a good deal of time either studying or working. They are looking for a hostel atmosphere that encourages focus and efficiency.</p> <p>Socialising: Residents at hostels frequently participate in social events like movie nights and game nights, as well as networking gatherings and group study sessions.</p> <p>Discovering: A lot of locals enjoy discovering new things to eat, travelling to popular destinations, and going to cultural events.</p> <p>Fitness: More and more locals are drawn to physical activities like going to the gym, taking yoga classes, or playing outdoor sports like cricket or football.</p> <p>Hobbies: People have a variety of interests, such as writing, painting, music, and photography. They may look for other people in the hostel community who share these interests to share and work together.</p>	<p>Community Engagement: The hostel's residents are eager to build strong bonds with one another and support one another.</p> <p>Affordability: It is a critical consideration for both working professionals and students, which makes affordable housing options extremely appealing.</p> <p>Convenience: To save time and enable simple commuting, a location's proximity to places of employment, educational institutions, and transit hubs is crucial.</p> <p>Safety and Security: To allay worries about personal safety, it is crucial to create a safe and secure atmosphere, particularly for female residents.</p> <p>Facilities and Amenities: It is very important to have access to basic amenities like clean, cosy living quarters, fast internet, laundry rooms, and communal spaces for entertainment and socialising.</p>	<p>Flexibility: Tenants value rental agreements that allow for easy relocation in response to changing academic or professional needs or for short-term stays.</p> <p>Maintenance: To address any issues with infrastructure, utilities, or cleanliness, swift repairs and responsive management are essential.</p> <p>Environmentally Aware: Among hostel tenants, there is a growing demand for eco-friendly policies like energy conservation, waste segregation, and sustainable living programs.</p> <p>Technology Integration: It is thought to be practical and effective to use technology for online reservations, payments, correspondence, and community involvement.</p> <p>Feedback Mechanism: To promote openness and ongoing service improvement in hostels, residents appreciate platforms that allow them to offer management comments and suggestions.</p>

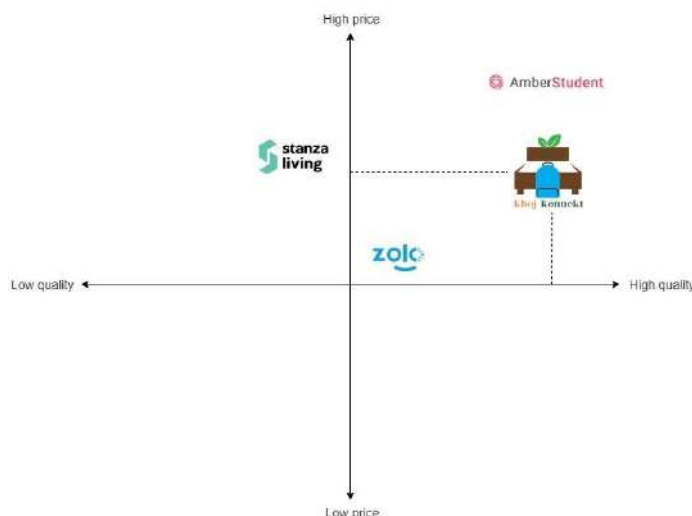
Having identified the market segment, the authors recommend targeting the Generation Z segment. These customers are in their bachelor stage and are either first-time users or non-users looking for a comfortable swift hostel booking procedure from their homes.

4.5 Targeting

The DAMP model demonstrates that there are viable marketing channels to communicate with the targeted audience to maximise profit & increase brand discovery showcasing that the Gen Z segment will not overlap with any other segment. The authors use Kotler's DAMP Model to ensure that the targeted segment is suitable for marketing strategies.

Table-8: DAMP Model for Targeting Gen-Z

DAMP Factors	Implementation of Gen-Z with Khoj Konnekt
Distinctive	The target demographic includes males and females aged 18-26 from tier 2 & tier 3 cities in India. Customers in this segment are not well-informed and don't have the right means to get full knowledge. Khoj Konnekt can fill this need gap and create a competitive advantage in the Indian accommodation hostel industry. Khoj Konnekt can focus on SEO optimization and improve its Google ranking while employing digital marketing tools & educational content about hostels to engage potential customers more. This showcases that the market does not overlap with any other segment.
Accessible	As a high demand low supply market segment, Khoj Konnekt can communicate with customers through both offline and online channels. Gen Z is the smart customer who has the most confidence in their research. To foster an emotional bond with the segment, Khoj Konnekt needs to concentrate on being more transparent about its narrative. Investing in micro and macro influencer marketing, and sharing student personal narratives and educational content will positively nudge the Gen Z demographic in the brand's direction, as approximately 70% of them would trust an influencer's recommendation over that of a celebrity (Fanbytes, 2023). Khoj Konnekt can conduct promotional events and campaigns in universities and colleges to spread awareness among students to increase their offline reach.
Measurable	Over 40 million students are enrolled in higher education, according to Statista. It is expected to reach 92 million students by 2035 showcasing the huge future market opportunities in this segment. Khoj Konnekt must assess the effectiveness of targeting the Generation Z variable. For analysing their monthly growth, they can make use of Ubersuggest, Google Analytics, and Oracle SCM tools. Oracle SCM offers a platform for analysing website traffic, customer repurchases through ads, top-selling products, and overall platform sales. Ubersuggest and Google Analytics will be used to gauge the success of their social media campaigns, as well as the amount of engagements they receive. These tools will help Khoj Konnekt measure its success in the new market segment.
Profitable	Khoj Konnekt's primary goal is launching the business in an already existing industry and increasing awareness about the services. Its 6-month goal will be profitability and brand discovery, which leads to an increase in conversion, which leads to an increase in revenue. It is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 7.2% over the next several years. Gen Z's spending power grows as they get older and have more disposable income. Khoj Konnekt must approach the segment and cultivate loyal customers, as this is a very promising industry segment with high returns.



4.6 Positioning

Figure-2: Perceptual Map

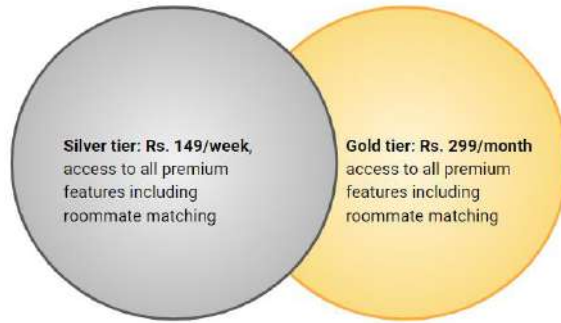
Table-9: Customer Value Proposition

Customer Value Proposition for Khoj Konnekt's potential customers
Roommate Matching: Khoj Konnekt will use sophisticated algorithms to find compatible roommates based on its customers' preferences, guaranteeing a peaceful living situation. From the comfort of their device, students can take an immersive virtual tour to discover possible accommodations. Knowing everything there is to know about each living area will help students make choices that fit their tastes and way of life.
Chatbot Assistant: Khoj Konnekt's friendly chatbot assistant is available to assist students. Our chatbot can assist customers with scheduling a viewing, answering inquiries regarding the rental process, and providing maintenance support. It is a dependable resource. It is seamlessly integrated into the app and offers personalised recommendations and immediate responses, making experience more efficient and free of needless hassles.
Recommendation System: Khoj Konnekt's intelligent recommendation system to quickly and easily find their dream living area. Our algorithm evaluates customers' preferences, financial constraints, and past exchanges to provide customised lodging recommendations that are specific to their needs. Whether students are looking for a place close to the campus, amenities, or certain features, Khoj Konnekt's recommendation system makes sure that every option meets their requirements to the letter, saving time and effort in their quest for the ideal retreat.

5. REVENUE MODEL

The subscription will offer two types, on varying tiers:

Figure-3: Breakdown of Subscription Tiers for Khoj Konnekt Premium



The payment nature of subscription-based models is a recurring billing on a predetermined periodic basis [8]. Acting primarily as a housing application, prospects might perceive that this application will not be useful after fulfilling its primary purpose, that is, to find a place to stay. That is why the premium services offered are built in such a way that they will be utilised on a more frequent basis, encouraging renewed subscriptions.

Furthermore, by pricing the plans at Rs. 149 and Rs. 299 instead of a rounded 150 and 300, Khoj Konnekt can take advantage of psychological pricing techniques. Customers compare the 149 and 299 price point to the closest round number, which causes them to believe they are getting a better deal. This is known as the anchoring effect. This "charm pricing" strategy takes advantage of the fact that prices with a 9 tend to look much lower [12]. Rs. 149 and Rs. 299 appear significantly less expensive psychologically, even though there is only a single unit of difference. The target audience will be inclined towards believing that the plans are more affordable, thus they may purchase it on impulse, increasing its appeal and possibly increasing sales.

Table-10: Payment Mode Segmentation

Targeted Customer Groups	Impact Level	Why Would They Come	Mode Of Payment
College Students	Primary	They are the key target demographic since they require affordable and accessible housing alternatives close to their educational institutions. Khoj Konnekt offers a simple booking procedure, amenities adapted to their requirements, and a welcoming community environment for learning and socialising.	They prefer payment alternatives that are convenient, secure, and flexible, such as digital wallets or mobile payment apps, which align with their tech-savvy lifestyle and provide easy access and transaction tracking.
Working Professionals	Primary/ Secondary	In the initial stages of their careers, they move to Tier 1 cities for better job opportunities. These individuals often	They choose payment methods that are secure, convenient, and provide refund opportunities.

		prioritise convenience, affordability, and social interaction, similar to college students. Khoj Konnekt will also provide networking possibilities and a feeling of community, attracting professionals in a fresh context.	Direct bank transfers and credit/debit cards are well-suited to their financial management and expense tracking needs.
Tourists/Travelers	Secondary	Tier 1 cities have popular tourist attractions, thus visitors look for practical lodging options throughout their stay. By targeting this demographic, Khoj Konnekt will capitalise on the rising trend of experiential tourism and the need for authentic local encounters. It will provide a unique chance for travellers to meet locals and other explorers, boosting their entire trip experience.	They prefer widely accepted, secure payment methods with currency conversion options. International payment cards and online booking systems are popular because of their simplicity and accessibility across several locations.
Remote Digital Workers	Secondary	With the increase of remote work, Khoj Konnekt can attract digital nomads searching for temporary housing options with flexible terms and shared utilities. These people prioritise affordability, flexibility, and opportunity for social engagement while preserving a healthy work-life balance. Khoj Konnekt will provide a vibrant atmosphere suitable for both business and relaxation, making it an appealing alternative for remote workers.	They prefer payment options that accommodate their nomadic lifestyle and provide frictionless transactions regardless of location. This demographic prefers cryptocurrency payments, digital wallets with worldwide capabilities, and prepaid cards due to their flexibility and security.

6. KEY INFLUENCES ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

There are certain issues which influence purchase and consumption behaviour of the selected target segments which can make or break Khoj Konnekt's success as a brand. These issues would influence the potential purchasing decisions at individual, group and cultural levels. They have been critically examined in the following section.

6.1 Income & Spending Patterns

When addressing Khoj's Konnekt's target segment of Gen Z, aged 18-27 with some level of purchasing power, their access to disposable income must be accounted for. Especially coming from Tier II and Tier III regions of the country, where India's saving culture is prominent [13], the target audience would feel hesitant towards spending exorbitant amounts of money on brokers to look for housing in metropolitan areas. India's per capita income is approximately US\$2500 wherein 60% of all consumer spending is on food and energy [14].

This makes it important for Khoj Konnekt to showcase budget-friendly hostels on their app, to appeal to customers who place price and value-for-money at the forefront of their purchasing decisions. According to the primary research survey results, 52% people said affordability is the most important factor affecting the decision to select a hostel. With this in mind, through the Khoj Konnekt app's freemium paywall model, the large segment population of Gen Z from Tier II and Tier III cities can access the app and contribute to the revenue even without directly paying for a subscription. Further, within the app, there will be special filters to access low-cost rental services, appealing to the budgetary requirements of all income groups.

In addition, India as a country is seeing an overall growth in financial confidence. According to the Consumer Confidence Index for India [15], the average Indian consumer has increasing reassurance in India's economic stability. Thus, they are overall more willing and likely to pay for non-essential services. Considering the nuances of India's spending culture across various demographics, Khoj Konnekt offers the 'free' version of the app with basic features and the 'premium' version of the app with extended features and functionalities.

6.2 Social Identity

The main target segment, Gen Z, is known to be one of the most "online" yet "isolated" parts of modern society. Whilst youngsters yearn to meet people and feel a sense of belongingness, there is also an increasing level of social media consumption which makes people more self-conscious in group situations [16]. Considering how the chosen segment of students are travelling to metro cities for studies and living away from family, the act of finding hostel roommates who have common lifestyles and values is important towards satisfying the needs of social interaction.

Forming strong bonds and building well-rounded social identities is what led to the inclusion of Khoj Konnekt's roommate-matching feature. This combines both the convenience of Gen Z's social media consumption with the use of AI to help link users with the most compatible roommates for registered premium users. This feature allows users to curate their profiles according to their gender, lifestyle choices, interests, languages spoken and more. This will allow users to benefit from their social needs being met at the same time as finding accommodation.

6.3 Cultural Digitization

Digital consumers have been looking towards virtual marketplaces to find goods and services out of convenience. This is instrumental towards pursuing Khoj Konnekt's primary target segment from Tier II and Tier III cities, who do not have physical access to visit hostels and student accommodations before booking them. Hence, Khoj Konnekt has made it mandatory for property holders to provide 360-degree photographs of their listings to be posted on the app's search directory. This gives Khoj Konnekt app users the opportunity to look around the place of their choice before deciding whether to proceed further with the residence legalities.

Moreover, the digital experience is strongly tied with the growing base of online communities who connect over shared interests. This gives more space for consumers of the same brands to interact, forming a brand community [16]. It is essential to work towards harnessing the power of Indian digital consumers through a personalised customer experience which makes use of modern day technologies. Thus, various AI tools have been included at levels of the Khoj Konnekt app experience.

"In digital brand storytelling, the brand is no longer the protagonist. Its role is ambivalent: it is the spectator and the orchestrator of the experience." [17]. Social media can help to spread awareness and improve brand loyalty. The brand community for Khoj Konnekt would be formed through an appropriate marketing campaign, which has been outlined in the following section. Further, the Engel-Blackwell-Miniard Model [18] has been applied to Khoj Konnekt's tactics towards building brand loyalty after acquiring new customers.

Table-11: EBM Decision-Making Model

Steps of the EBM Model	Consumer's perspective
Need Recognition	Since students who move to India's key education hubs from Tier II and Tier III areas face issues securing housing. The lack of convenient and affordable student housing options, coupled with difficulty in finding suitable accommodations that meet students' preferences and budget, highlights the limited awareness of available accommodations and booking platforms.
Information Search	Students and Professionals will actively seek information on personalised accommodation, hygiene, security and testimonials. It will help them understand how beneficial a student accommodation app in terms of providing students with a solution to their basic problems and other amenities will be and what it has to offer them. Khoj Konnekt can use SEO strategies to improve its visibility in online searches.
Evaluation of Alternatives	Students and professionals will compare the various accommodation platforms available in the market, as well as the monetary price and customer value that each platform provides. Comparing this will assist the students and professionals in determining the best platform for the problem they are experiencing.

	Khoj Konnekt can benefit from offering competitive pricing when compared to its main competitors.
Purchase Decision	Students and professionals will determine which plan is most effective for them based on their personal needs and purchasing power. They can rely on the brand that makes them feel like they're making a worthwhile investment by becoming their customer [19]. Khoj Konnekt will provide free guiding sessions to the smallest need in customisation to rooms in order to increase the interest of students and professionals.
Purchase	Students and professionals will complete the purchase and the payment transaction. They will pay with the plan that is most suitable and convenient for them, based on their customisations. Khoj Konnekt will have a subscription-based model & offer a variety of payment options, including a free trial for customer convenience.
Post Purchase evaluation	Students and professionals will evaluate the effectiveness of personalised room choice and their overall satisfaction with them. They will recognize the usefulness of the app and the value of the entire experience. This will determine whether they will remain a loyal customer in the future. Khoj Konnekt will collect regular feedback and implement continuous improvement based on data insights.
Post Purchase Behaviour	Students and professionals will share with others about their overall experience, including friends and family members. Sharing their journey and testimonials, they will become advocates for the brand. Khoj Konnekt will encourage customers to share their success stories on social media platforms, to boost brand credibility.

The following figure uses the Elaboration Likelihood Model [20][21] to outline how a prospective customer would be exposed to Khoj Konnekt's influencer marketing efforts and the stages of perception they would experience, leading ultimately to persuasion.

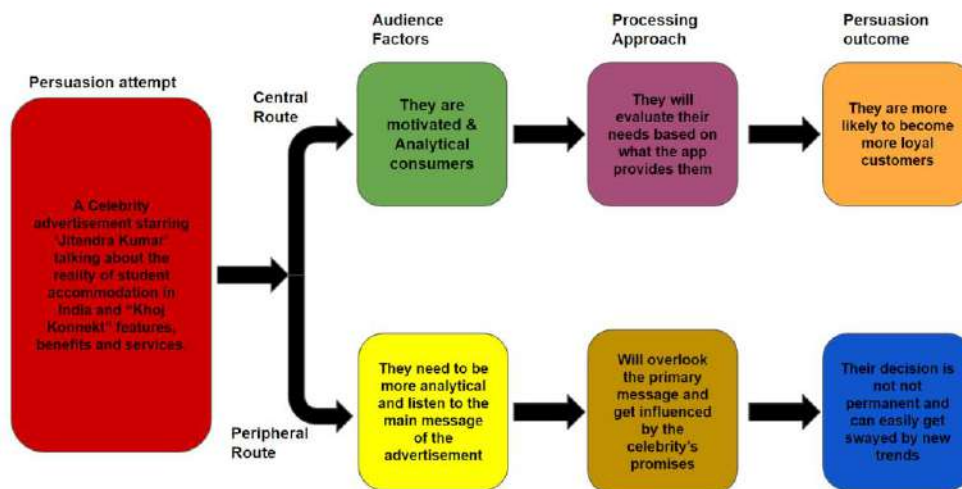


Figure-4: Elaboration Likelihood Model for Khoj Konnekt's App Launch

7. DIGITAL MARKETING CAMPAIGN

7.1 Campaign objectives and metrics

Table-12: REAN Objective Framework for Khoj Konnekt

Reach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the app's visibility and user base by increasing app downloads by 20% within the first six months. • Expand the app's presence to new markets, aim to gain an organic reach of 1 Million to 3 Million users through social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram.
Engage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aim to an overall engagement rate of 2% on social media platforms by posting informational videos, user-generated content and helpful tips. • It will also aim for another 4% engagement rate through it's app, by posting blogs and newsletters. • Increase daily active users (DAU) by 25% with push notifications and improved user experience by using tailored content and recommendations to increase session duration by 30%.
Activate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aim to convert visitors into subscribers or paying clients. • By using targeted promo codes and discounts to increase premium subscription sign-ups by 15%. • Streamline the booking process to increase the number of accommodation booking transactions by 10% by Q4.
Nurture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase repeat customers by 40% with the help of loyalty programs, reward points, and acquaintance referrals which can maintain premium users. • Aim to raise the user satisfaction rating to 4.5 out of 5 by consistently enhancing the app's features in response to user input and customer surveys.

Khoj Konnekt will be able to evaluate the different stages in the buyer journey and how best to target them with the aid of the See Think Do Framework. The See-Think-Do-Care framework can be used to establish and optimise a successful digital marketing plan. This helps organisations understand their customers' requirements, preferences, and habits.

Table-13: STDC Framework

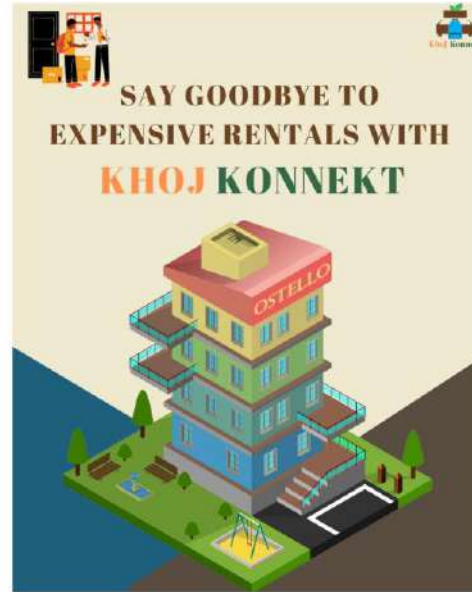
Intent Cluster	Who is in the Cluster	The Mindset	Content Strategy at each of the customer buying journey
See	Largest Addressable Qualified Audience (LAQA)	Customers who are looking for housing or renting options in tier 1 cities.	<p>Intent: Online Scrolling Brief eye-catching through reels and posts.</p> <p>Channels: SEO & SEM Optimization Display Ads Social Media</p> <p>Strategy: To make them aware of the brand and increase brand discovery within browsing customer</p>
Think	LAQA With Mild Commercial Intent	Customers who are looking to relocate to tier 1 cities and are thinking they might book their hostel/house accommodation.	<p>Intent: Gathering information about the brand and what it offers.</p> <p>Channels: Facebook Ads Social Media Google Reviews User-generated content YouTube</p> <p>Strategy: To generate trust and willingness, eventually generating cold leads into hot leads.</p>
Do	LAQA that's ready to transact	Customers who need to relocate to tier 1 cities and want to purchase and book their hostel/house accommodation "NOW."	<p>Intent: Final purchase information, comparing price & deciding product.</p> <p>Channels: Brand's Website Email Marketing Affiliate marketing Retargeting Ads</p> <p>Strategy: Increasing conversion rate and turning hot leads into customers.</p>
Care	Repeat Customers	Existing customers who are regularly purchasing	<p>Intent: Loyalty customer programs / Customer discounts and offers</p> <p>Channels: Email Marketing Newsletter Marketing SMS Marketing Feedback Surveys</p> <p>Strategy: Converting new customers into loyal customers with high CRM practices.</p>

7.2 Campaign Media Kit

Figure-5: Media Kit Samples for Khoj Konnekt social media pages



Motive:	To emphasise the sense of community fostered by Khoj Konnekt's housing accommodations.
Caption:	"Join our vibrant community of students and young professionals! 🌟 At Khoj Konnekt, it's not just about finding a place to stay – it's about finding your tribe. Discover the joy of community living today! #CommunityLiving #StudentCommunity #KhojKonnekt"



Motive:	To highlight Khoj Konnekt's commitment to providing affordable housing solutions for students.
Caption:	"Say goodbye to accommodation woes! 🏠 With Khoj Konnekt, finding affordable housing in tier 1 cities is now a breeze. Say hello to convenience and affordability! #StudentHousing #AffordableLiving #KhojKonnekt"



Motive:	To provide valuable tips and advice to students on finding the perfect accommodation.
Caption:	"Navigating the maze of student housing? Let us be your guide! Stay tuned for expert tips and tricks to secure your dream accommodation. #StudentHousing #KhojKonnekt #HousingTips"

8. CONCLUSION

Overall, through the creation of this business artefact, the authors successfully proposed a comprehensive study of the Indian student housing industry to produce the marketing and digital strategy to enter it with the app 'Khoj Konnekt'.

The authors conducted a literature review to first understand the available research surrounding the business-need gap. This underpinned Khoj Konnekt's key value propositions, alongside an outline of SMART objectives to be followed leading up to the app's launch. Further, a strategic review was undertaken to fully flesh out the business's competitive positioning, first by understanding the external environment, then through a competitor SWOT and finally the STP analysis. This gave the basis to a detailed revenue model, which was prepared to showcase the different subscription plan options appealing to different segments and their specific needs, the factors for which were analysed in detail within the consumer behaviour issues.

This artefact finally concluded with the production of a media kit for its social media campaign, outlined by motives and KPIs to track the effectiveness of its implementation.

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Establishment of Community Co-op Garages in the Indian Market

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ABSTRACT

The proposed business aims to establish a unique DIY garage in India, promoting self-sufficiency in vehicle upkeep and repairs among car enthusiasts. This innovative venture offers essential parts, professional guidance, and monthly classes for all skill levels, fostering a community of knowledgeable car owners. By providing subscription services, assembling project cars, and collaborating with local mechanical engineering schools, the business not only enhances practical skills but also strengthens community ties. Free weekend workshops and "Cars and Coffee" events further encourage continuous learning and social interaction among car fans.

India's burgeoning car ownership and growing interest in automotive culture highlight the need for dependable and efficient auto repair services. Traditional garages often lack professionalism, modern vehicle repairs are complex, and authorized service centers can be costly. DIY garages address these challenges by offering comprehensive services, empowering car owners to take an active role in their vehicle maintenance, and providing access to essential knowledge and equipment. The DIY & Hardware Store market in India is projected to reach INR 222.60 billion by 2024, with the India Garage Equipment Market also experiencing significant growth. This underscores the market potential for DIY garages, making them a promising solution for the evolving needs of Indian car enthusiasts.

Keywords: Community Co-op Garages, DIY Auto Repair, Automotive Maintenance, Car Enthusiasts, Subscription Services, Vehicle Upkeep, Auto Repair Workshops, Skill Development, Community Engagement, Indian Automotive Market

1. Introduction

The main goal of our suggested business is to open a garage with unique features that will allow customers to do their own car upkeep and repairs, supporting the do-it-yourself (DIY) movement. As part of our Unique Selling Proposition (USP), we offer the necessary parts and professional advice to create a setting that encourages people to be self-sufficient in their car needs. In addition to this main service, our business will hold monthly classes for people of all skill levels that will cover important car topics. By letting people subscribe to our services, we hope to make our tools and knowledge more accessible to a wider range of people. We also want to expand our range of services by putting together project cars using original or homemade parts to guarantee quality and individuality. Collaborations with nearby mechanical engineering schools are planned to not only help young people get better at

their jobs, but also get more people involved in their communities. As part of our dedication to sharing information, we also offer free classes on the weekends. These workshops encourage people to keep learning and improve their skills. Finally, we want to build a strong community of car fans by holding "Cars and Coffee" events every Sunday morning. These events will be a relaxed way for people to meet each other and enjoy car culture.

2. Literature Review

Recent economic growth and increased affluence in India have significantly boosted the interest and involvement of vehicle enthusiasts. This cultural shift is evident both offline, at events like underground drift meets and car fairs, and online, through a robust aftermarket sector serving modified vehicles. Market trends show a rise in customized vehicles, reflecting enthusiasts' desire for personal expression. However, legal and regulatory barriers limit unrestricted car customization. Despite these challenges, the industry shows resilience and potential for steady growth, supported by a network of magazines, blogs, and social media platforms targeting Indian car enthusiasts.

Key businesses have emerged, offering a range of products and services from vintage car customizations to electric vehicle conversions, fostering innovation in India's automotive customization landscape. Understanding the diverse needs of car, bike, student, and DIY groups is crucial for companies aiming to cater to this expanding market. By tailoring offerings to specific preferences, businesses can foster community and belonging among enthusiasts.

Strategically located community garages in residential areas can provide convenient access while addressing safety concerns. Customized support and flexible subscription plans can enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty, positioning businesses for long-term success in this dynamic market.

3. Research Objective

Research Onion Diagram For The Community Garage

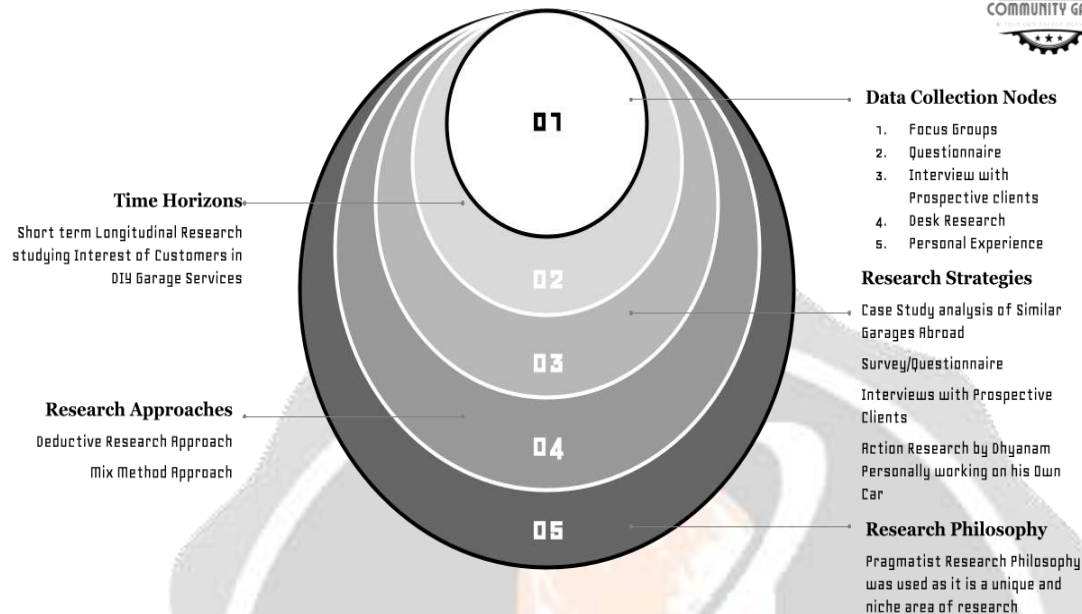


Fig 1- Research Onion Diagram

3.1 Secondary Research

In 2024, India's car enthusiast market experienced a significant surge due to rising incomes and overall economic growth. Enthusiasts gathered both offline and online, sharing knowledge and experiences. The culture of modified cars rapidly expanded, with enthusiasts personalizing their vehicles to reflect their styles. Popular events such as car shows, drag races, and parades provided platforms for showcasing cars and skills, while a vibrant underground car culture flourished through highway runs and drift meets.

The rise of automotive magazines and websites dedicated to Indian car enthusiasts facilitated information sharing and community building. Despite challenges like limited performance parts and inadequate infrastructure, the market demonstrated signs of lasting growth. Recent trends indicate a greater acceptance of extensive modifications, including body kits, engine enhancements, and performance parts. However, this growth has also led to increased intervention by traffic and regional police in metropolitan areas, as these modifications are often deemed illegal.

Overall, the Indian car enthusiast market in 2024 showed resilience and potential for sustained expansion, driven by a passionate community and a growing aftermarket sector. The market's evolution highlights the dynamic interplay between cultural enthusiasm and regulatory constraints.

3.2 Primary Research

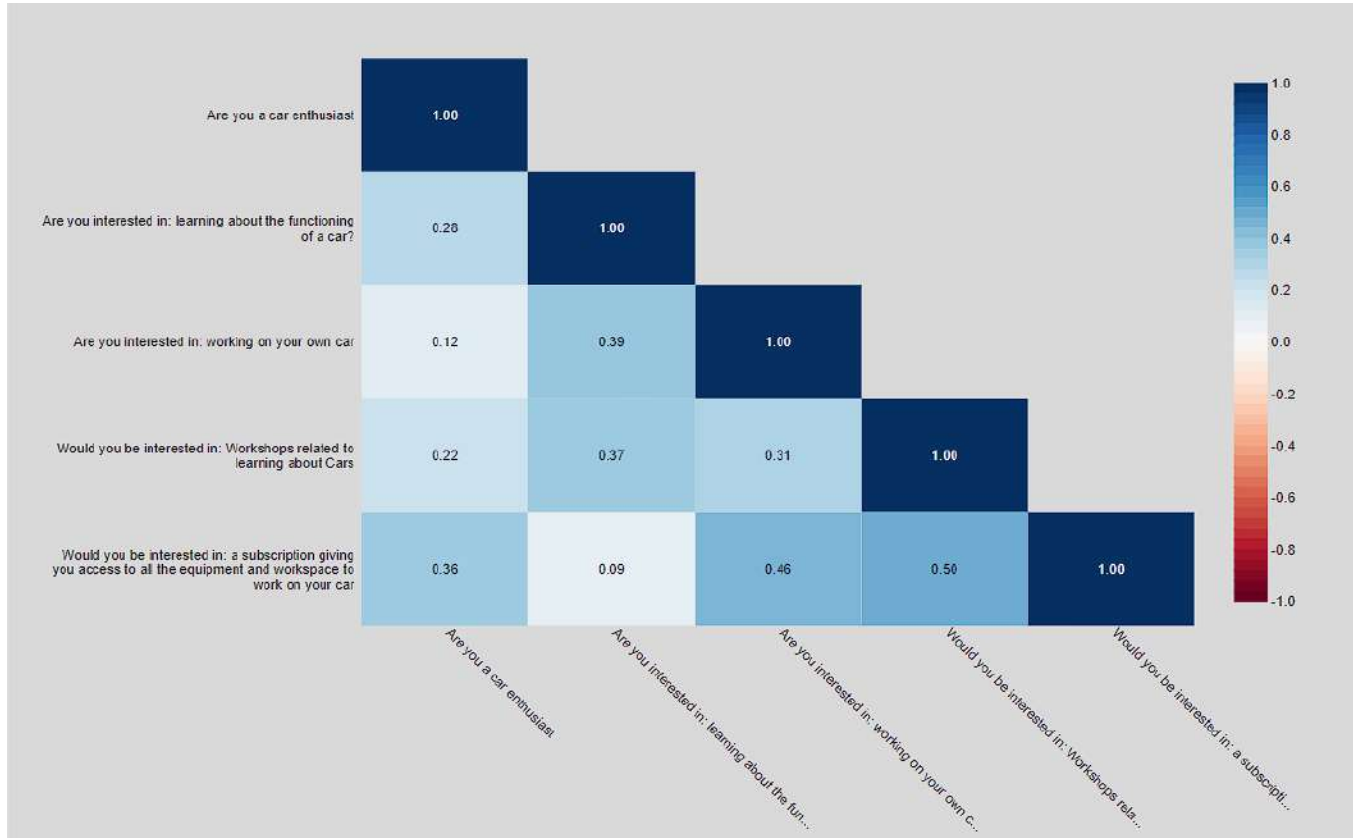


Fig 2- Co-relation Matrix

On April 16, 2024, we conducted a focus group session with participants aged 17-22, our primary customer segment. The open discussion about our startup's services revealed significant interest in the community garage's offerings. Participants expressed a strong preference for flexible payment structures tailored to project timelines, indicating a need for short-term subscription models in addition to traditional yearly options. There was also a notable interest in assistance with sourcing performance parts, highlighting the value of providing comprehensive support beyond equipment access. These findings underscore the importance of adaptability and a customer-centric approach in shaping the garage's subscription models and overall business strategy.

4. Financial Summary

Launching a community co-op garage requires diverse funding sources to ensure financial stability and growth. One primary option is applying for a conventional business loan from a bank or credit union, providing an initial cash influx. Personal investments or savings offer another avenue for financial independence. Crowdfunding platforms present a modern approach to garner support from the community, potentially attracting investors aligned with our vision. Additionally, government subsidies and small business incentives, especially those promoting skill development and community engagement, could provide crucial financial backing. By diversifying our funding sources, we aim to bring our innovative garage concept to life and nurture a vibrant automotive community.

The 2024 sales forecast for the community co-op garage projects consistent revenue growth throughout the year. Subscription services for small and medium cars, sedans, and large cars are expected to generate a steady income stream, with significant monthly growth anticipated. Additional revenue streams include bike subscriptions, workshops, live events, and various add-on services. With this diverse range of offerings, the garage anticipates total sales of INR 8,373,500 for the year, reflecting strong market performance and customer demand.

The projected income statement for 2024 highlights substantial sales revenue of INR 8,373,500 for the garage. After accounting for material and service expenses of INR 219,240 and wages totaling INR 1,764,000, the gross profit is expected to be INR 6,390,260. Operating costs include marketing expenses (INR 250,000), miscellaneous costs (INR 20,000), depreciation expenses (INR 30,000), equipment costs (INR 1,837,100), rent expenses (INR 960,000), and other additional expenses (INR 20,000). Consequently, the projected operating income or net profit stands at INR 3,273,160, indicating a healthy profit margin and efficient cost management.

Significant investments in essential equipment are crucial for the garage's operations. These include six car lifts priced at INR 750,000, three air compressors totaling INR 210,000, and four arc welding machines costing INR 34,000. Additionally, the garage will procure eight tool kits for INR 60,000. Other necessary equipment, such as car scanners, 3D printers, and CNC machines, will also be acquired. These investments ensure that the garage is well-equipped to deliver high-quality services and maintain operational efficiency.

The garage employs a dedicated team of ten staff members in various roles, each receiving monthly salaries. The manager, Peter, earns a monthly salary of INR 30,000, resulting in an annual income of INR 360,000. Three experienced mechanics collectively earn INR 75,000 monthly, contributing to an annual salary of INR 900,000. Additionally, six junior mechanics working as interns each earn INR 7,000 monthly, totaling an annual income of INR 504,000. In total, the annual salary expenditure for all employees amounts to INR 1,764,000, reflecting the garage's commitment to fair compensation and skilled labor.

Establishing a community co-op garage in the Indian market requires strategic financial planning and diversified funding sources. With a robust sales forecast and efficient cost management, the garage is poised for success. Significant investments in essential equipment and fair employee compensation further enhance the garage's operational capabilities, ensuring it meets the needs of the automotive community.

5. Expansion Strategy

In the first two years, our community co-op garage will focus on establishing a solid foundation and gaining local recognition. This includes setting up the garage, selecting and funding premium equipment, and hiring experienced mechanics who provide professional guidance to DIY enthusiasts. Monthly workshops on basic to advanced auto repair will offer hands-on learning experiences, while a subscription-based model will give clients access to tools and expertise, ensuring a steady income stream. Free weekend seminars will foster a sense of community among car enthusiasts. In years three to five, we will diversify and expand by funding specialized tools and training for complex repairs and custom projects, attracting more customers and increasing revenue. Project cars will showcase our expertise and inspire custom projects. Partnerships with local mechanical engineering schools will offer internships and apprenticeships, fostering community ties and nurturing new talent. Marketing efforts will focus on outreach through local events, auto shows, and social media. Collaborations with local businesses will enhance customer value, while community engagement through regular events and workshops will strengthen brand visibility. In years six to eight, we will expand into new markets with new garages in nearby towns, based on demographic and market research. An online virtual classroom will extend our reach, offering educational content on various auto repair topics. Continued emphasis on project vehicles and partnerships with local auto clubs will highlight our expertise and foster community engagement. Investment in automation and technology will streamline operations, enhancing efficiency and customer service. In years nine to ten, we will focus on consolidating our market position while continuing to innovate, evaluating existing locations for further expansion or consolidation, and exploring partnerships with automakers or aftermarket providers. Funding for research and development will keep us ahead of market trends and technological advancements, ensuring ongoing community engagement and long-term success.

6. Conclusion

The establishment of community co-op garages in the Indian market represents a groundbreaking approach to vehicle maintenance and repair. By promoting self-sufficiency among car enthusiasts, providing essential parts, professional guidance, and hands-on learning opportunities, this business model not only meets a growing demand but also fosters a sense of community. Strategic financial planning, including diverse funding sources and efficient cost management, lays a solid foundation for the garage's success. The projected sales forecast and income statement indicate strong market performance and profitability, while significant investments in essential equipment and fair employee compensation ensure high-quality services and operational efficiency.

Our expansion strategy, which includes diversifying services, building partnerships, and embracing technology, positions the garage for sustained growth and market presence. From initial setup and community engagement in the early years to market diversification and technological integration in later stages, the plan is designed to adapt to evolving market needs and customer preferences. Partnerships with educational institutions and local businesses will enhance our value proposition, foster community ties, and nurture new talent, ensuring a continuous flow of expertise and innovation.

By maintaining a strong focus on community engagement through workshops, events, and social media, the garage will build a loyal customer base and foster a vibrant automotive community. Continuous adaptation to market trends and technological advancements will keep the business at the forefront of the automotive repair industry. Ultimately, the community co-op garage is poised to revolutionize the automotive maintenance sector in India, offering a sustainable, community-centric solution that meets the diverse needs of car enthusiasts while driving long-term success and growth.

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TECH PET HAVEN- A BUSINESS PLAN FOR CREATING TECH BASED PRODUCTS FOR SMALL PETS

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ABSTRACT

Pet ownership is a growing trend among urban and technologically proficient persons, as they perceive their pets as essential constituents of their households. The primary objective of TechPet Haven is to strengthen the connection between pets and their owners through the provision of cutting-edge, technology-based products and services that prioritise the physical and mental health, security, and overall welfare of pets. In addition, the study examines expansion options to take advantage of new development prospects, such as expanding into new geographical markets and forming strategic alliances with pet stores, e-commerce platforms, and pet care providers. Based on the psychographic analysis of the target sector, it was found that pet owners place significant importance on innovation, convenience, quality, and sustainability when it comes to pet care. The study indicates that by implementing effective methods such as product innovation, customer involvement, and education, TechPet Haven can establish itself as a reliable and favoured option for pet owners in search of inventive and customised pet care solutions by prioritising the delivery of superior, user-friendly, and environmentally-friendly products/services that align with the values and lifestyle of their target audience.

Keyword: - Pet care, Business Plan, Technology, Market Research, Market Mix, Primary Research.

1. INTRODUCTION

The pet sector in India has seen a significant shift in recent years due to evolving lifestyles, urbanisation, and a growing awareness of pet well-being. The Indian Pet Industry Joint Advisory Committee (IPICA)[1] reports a consistent increase in pet populations, with around 20 million pets across the country. This has led to a need for products and services that cater to the unique needs of pets and their owners. Pet ownership has evolved from a mere companionship to a lifestyle preference, with urban millennials and Gen Z cohorts viewing pets as integral family members. This has led to increased spending on pet-related goods and services, including high-quality pet food, accessories, grooming, and healthcare.

Technological advancements in the pet industry are also influencing the progress of the sector. A growing trend among pet owners is to possess higher levels of technological proficiency and embrace novel approaches to improve the physical and mental welfare of their pets. Smart pet products, such as GPS trackers, automatic feeding, and health monitors, have emerged, providing convenience and security for pet owners[2].

1.1 Business Need

There has been a shortage of complete solutions due to the rising demand for pet technology goods and services. Traditional pet care providers frequently lack technological know-how, and independent IT firms might not be aware of the particular needs of the pet industry. In order to solve this, TechPet Haven provides a complete strategy that combines cutting-edge technology with specialised services. Their mission is to develop smart pet products and offer technology-enabled pet sitting, grooming, and training services, making sure that creative solutions satisfy the evolving demands of modern pet owners.

1.2 Goals & Services of the Business

TechPet Haven's main goal is to establish itself as a leader in the Indian pet industry by offering innovative, technologically advanced goods and services. The business aims to create new standards of excellence and uniqueness in the pet care industry by continuously modifying its procedures to meet the ever-evolving needs of pet owners and their cherished animals. (Singh and others, 2023)

TechnoPet Haven is dedicated to giving domesticated animals' general care, safety, and well-being the highest priority. The company promises to deliver exceptional results in all area of its business, including customer service and product development. TechnoPet Haven exhibits a dedication to fostering a strong bond between owners and their pets by giving them the resources and skills they need to provide the best care possible. In 2023, Mora and Vila

1.2.1 Services provided by the Company

The business TechPet Haven offers a wide range of smart pet goods, including health monitors, automatic feeding, and GPS trackers. These gadgets are designed with the express purpose of maximising canine wellbeing and providing comfort to their owners.

The company uses state-of-the-art tools and techniques to ensure dogs are happy and healthy while providing technology-based pet sitting, grooming, and training services.

TechPet Haven's pet care services are tailored to each creature's unique needs and those of its owners, ensuring that each pet receives personalised attention and care. (Mora, 2023)

The main goal of TechPet Haven is to create a link between traditional methods of pet care and modern technological developments. The organisation is dedicated to enhancing the general physical and mental well-being of animals by bringing cutting-edge technologies into the pet care industry. Providing creative solutions that are tailored to meet the unique needs of pets and their owners is our main goal in order to improve convenience and guarantee the welfare of pet owners. Ward and colleagues, 2023)

The dedication to the general care, safety, and well-being of pets is at the core of TechPet Haven's objectives. The company promises to deliver exceptional results in all areas of its business, including customer service and product development. TechPet Haven is dedicated to fostering a strong relationship between owners and their pets by providing them with the tools and resources they need to provide all-encompassing care and strengthen their relationship. (Xiao, 2023)

From a strategic perspective, TechPet Haven places a high priority on continuous innovation to offer new and improved products and services that meet the changing needs of pet owners and their animals. In order to better understand its customers' needs and improve its offerings, the organisation values customer involvement and feedback. In order to expand its scope and enhance the services it offers, TechPet Haven also hopes to work with veterinarians, IT businesses, and specialists in pet care. Additionally, the organisation devotes resources to educating pet owners about the benefits of technology-enabled pet care and the importance of prioritising their dogs' well-being. Finally, TechPet Haven uses strict quality control procedures to ensure that its products and services meet the highest standards of excellence and reliability. (Wang and others, 2023)

2. BUSINESS CANVAS MODEL

Customer segments:

The principal objective of TechPet Haven is to serve pet owners, specifically targeting Millennials and Gen Z living in urban areas. In addition, the business serves veterinarians, pet supply stores, and specialists in pet care, positioning them to benefit from its state-of-the-art goods and services.

Value Proposition:

TechPet Haven aims to offer reward programs like GPS trackers and automatic feeding in order to combine traditional pet care methods with modern technology. The group places a high priority on enhancing the general well-being of animals, providing owners with convenience, and strengthening the bond between animals and their human companions by providing specialised services.

Channels:

The organisation proficiently interacts with its clientele using an array of communication modalities, which includes its mobile application, web store, and tactical partnerships with pet supply vendors. TechPet Haven uses a variety of tactics, including social media, partnerships with veterinarian offices, and sponsorship of pet-related events, to reach their audience. (Chaturvedi & associates, 2023)

Customer relations:

Pet owners can benefit from TechPet Haven's emphasis on personalised customer care, which includes online training and guidance. In order to cultivate strong customer relationships, companies have instituted loyalty initiatives and feedback mechanisms. In addition, the business regularly engages with its environment through social media channels and distributes educational resources regarding pet care and technology innovations.

Revenue streams:

The sales of TechPet Haven's intelligent pet products and technology-based pet services are the company's main sources of income. Furthermore, the business offers subscription-based services for software upgrades and new features, as well as customised pet care solutions. The company's relationships with doctors and pet care experts further increase its revenue.

Key Sources:

Supply chain management, technical infrastructure, and research and development personnel are just a few of TechPet Haven's many valuable resources. Its operations cannot run well without cooperative partnerships with veterinary professionals, customer service teams, and pet care experts. In order to effectively promote the company's goods and services, the marketing and sales divisions are essential.

Key activities:

The company's main focus is on developing items, coming up with marketing plans, and interacting with customers. TechPet Haven regularly innovates its products, uses a variety of advertising platforms, and actively works to better understand customer needs by interacting with them. Developing partnerships, ensuring quality, and creating instructional content are also essential. (Bustinza, F. 2023)

Key partnerships:

TechPet Haven collaborates with pet care professionals, tech businesses, and pet supply retailers to enhance its offerings. Partnerships with veterinary clinics, hospitals, and pet care groups help the company expand its market reach and credibility.

Cost structure:

The main costs that TechPet Haven faces are those related to marketing, R&D, and maintaining its technology infrastructure. Its supply chain management, employee compensation, and partnership collaboration expenses all significantly contribute to its overall cost structure. Moreover, it is critical to recognise the importance of the costs linked to quality assurance and control in ensuring the reliability of the company's services.

2.1 Primary Research

The survey specifically focused on those who own pets. The survey participant was first questioned about their preferred kind of pet. 47% of respondents expressed a preference for dogs, while 36% indicated a preference for cats. In the next question, 52% of the participants indicated a high level of technical skill, 21% indicated an advanced level, and 11% indicated a novice level.

The subsequent inquiry enquired about the preferred product or service among the responders. 31% of respondents picked smart technology, while 26% opted for specialised pet care.

31% of respondents said that they would seek pet care information online on a daily basis, while another 31% reported doing so on a weekly basis. This indicates a significant level of demand.

42% of respondents expressed a need for a user-friendly interface, while 21% indicated a preference for real-time monitoring in smart pet items.

The subsequent inquiry enquired about participants' preferred method of acquiring knowledge on new advancements in pet care technology and their associated advantages. 36% of respondents expressed a preference for product demonstrations, while 31% favoured online evaluations and courses.

When questioned about their difficulties in incorporating technology into their pet care regimen, 36% reported difficulties in finding dependable solutions, while 31% struggled with comprehending technological items.

When surveyed about their likelihood of recommending this service and business to a friend or family member, 47% responded with "extremely likely" and 31% responded with "probable".

When asked about further business products or services, 52% expressed a want for virtual pet training, while 26% expressed a desire for pet health monitoring.

The third inquiry pertained to the need for businesses engaged in service production to prioritise sustainability and ecological benefits. 47% of the participants said that the matter was significant, whilst 31% displayed indifference.

The survey indicated a significant need for TechPet Heaven's commercial and production services. In addition, some emergency responders and consumers want to use technology for the purpose of monitoring and locating their dogs. It would also be compatible with their busy schedules.

2.2 Segmentation

2.2.1 Demographic Segmentation

a. Age

Young individuals and teenagers, typically aged 25-34, are frequently knowledgeable about technology and quick to embrace new items.

Middle-aged folks (35-54 years) are typical individuals with consistent incomes who prioritise convenience when it comes to pet care.

Elderly individuals (aged 55 and over) may desire technological solutions to aid in pet care and health monitoring. (Kumcu and Woolverton, 2023)

b. Income Level

Wealthy individuals - Willing to allocate funds towards high-end pet care products and services that are powered by advanced technology.

Middle-income earners prioritise cost-effectiveness and the acquisition of high-quality products.

Individuals with low incomes who are seeking cost-effective solutions while maintaining high quality standards. (Viana, 2022)

2.2.2. Psychographic Segmentation

a. Technology enthusiasts

Promote the principles of innovation, connectedness, and ease.

The user expresses a keen interest in contemporary technological devices and pet care solutions.

b. Healthy conscious consumers

Emphasise the use of natural and organic pet care products as a priority.

Explore technological solutions to monitor and enhance the health and overall welfare of their pet.

c. Urban pet owners

Residing in metropolitan regions with restricted outdoor places.

Seeking technology-based ways to effectively handle pet care in urban settings.

d. Community engagement

One should engage in active involvement within pet communities, forums, and events.

Utilise technology to establish connections with pet owners who share similar interests and exchange their experiences. (Moon Taeg Jeong et al., 2024)

2.2.3. Behavioural Segmentation

- a. Frequent online shoppers
- b. Occasional shoppers
- c. Early adapters
- d. Loyal consumers

2.2.4. Geographic Segmentation

- a. Urban areas
- b. Suburban areas

TechPet Haven can enhance its market reach, engagement, and success in the competitive pet care market by employing market segmentation techniques that consider demographic, psychographic, behavioural, and geographic factors. This approach enables the company to customise its marketing strategies, product offerings, and customer experiences to effectively cater to the distinct needs and preferences of each segment. (Hepola, Leppäniemi and Karjaluo, 2020)

2.3 Targeting

Understanding the target market is a crucial aspect for TechPet Haven as it enables the customisation of its products, services, and marketing approaches to effectively cater to the distinct requirements and preferences of its prospective clientele.

a. Urban Areas

The majority of TechPet Haven's target market comprises urban pet owners, often ranging in age from 25 to 45 years. The aforementioned folks reside in urban regions, maintain hectic schedules, and frequently possess elevated levels of disposable cash. Given the increasing prevalence of pet ownership in metropolitan areas, pet owners are actively seeking easy and technology-driven solutions for their pets. As a result, TechPet Haven has made these pet owners a primary target audience for its products and services. (Mamun et al., 2020)

b. Millennials

Another noteworthy demographic comprises individuals belonging to the millennial and Gen Z cohorts who keep pets, falling between the age range of 18 to 34 years. The younger generation, being digital natives, places a high importance on experiential aspects and places emphasis on the physical and mental welfare of their pets. They have a strong interest in groundbreaking and technologically advanced pet items, customised pet care solutions, and instructional materials to assist them in providing optimal care for their beloved animals. (Osatuyi et al., 2020)

c. Working Professionals

Professionals in the workforce constitute a vital segment of TechPet Haven's intended demographic. Many individuals in this group frequently hold full-time employment and maintain demanding schedules, resulting in a restricted

availability for the care of pets. Individuals are in search of dependable and easy options for pet care, encompassing services such as pet sitting, grooming, and training. Additionally, they are interested in automated and intelligent pet goods that can offer time and energy-saving benefits in the maintenance of their dogs. (Banton et al., 2021)

d. Pet care Professionals

Another component of TechPet Haven's target market comprises pet care professionals, such as veterinarians, pet groomers, and trainers. These specialists possess specialised knowledge and are constantly seeking dependable and cutting-edge products and services to provide to their clientele. The technologies and high-quality solutions provided by TechPet Haven might be considered useful offerings for professionals in this field.

e. Pet Communities

Finally, TechPet Haven's target demographic includes pet aficionados and persons who are actively engaged in pet communities, internet forums, and social media organisations. Individuals who are constantly in search of information, guidance, and suggestions about pet care can derive advantages from TechPet Haven's instructional materials, active involvement in the community, and availability of cutting-edge pet products and services.

To efficiently target its wide-ranging demographic, TechPet Haven will implement a customised marketing approach that capitalises on digital platforms, including social media and online advertising, to actively involve urban and technologically proficient pet owners. The company aims to reach out to working professionals by utilising professional networking platforms and establishing exclusive employer collaborations. This strategy emphasises the convenience of the company's products for those with busy lifestyles. The company will actively involve pet care professionals and veterinarians in industry events and partnerships to demonstrate the high quality and dependability of its products and services. The expansion of retail presence in the pet supply industry will be achieved through a combination of direct outreach and distributor agreements. Finally, the implementation of community engagement efforts, such as workshops and online forums, will be employed to establish connections with pet aficionados and communities, thereby fostering trust and enhancing credibility. (Rita, Oliveira and Farisa, 2019)

2.4 Positioning

TechPet Haven sets itself apart in the pet industry by employing an innovative strategy that combines state-of-the-art technology with pet care, establishing itself as a frontrunner in the field of innovation. The company positions itself as a full provider of solutions for pet owners by offering a wide array of intelligent pet products and technology-driven services. These include GPS trackers, automatic feeding, health monitors, as well as grooming and training services. TechPet Haven's dedication to customisation and personalisation guarantees that every pet is provided with individualised care to address its distinct requirements, hence cultivating a more profound connection between pets and their guardians. (Tan and Chen, 2021)

Furthermore, TechPet Haven's commitment to innovation extends beyond its range of products to embrace its strategy for engaging with customers and managing relationships. The organisation endeavours to empower pet owners by actively engaging in online forums, conducting instructional workshops, and disseminating useful content. This approach aims to equip pet owners with knowledge and tools that can enhance their pet care experience. Through the cultivation of a feeling of community and collaboration, TechPet Haven effectively enhances its brand visibility and establishes enduring customer connections founded on trust and mutual comprehension. Furthermore, the company's dedication to ongoing enhancement and adjustment in response to changing client demands guarantees its position as a leader in the pet care sector, continually providing value and innovation to pet owners around the country. (Chen and Dubinsky, 2022)



Positioning Aspect		Description
Innovation and Technology	and	Pioneering integration of cutting-edge technology with pet care, leading in innovation within the industry
Comprehensive Pet Care Solutions		Offering a diverse range of intelligent pet products and technology-driven services for comprehensive pet care
Customization and Personalization	and	Tailoring care to meet the unique needs of each pet, strengthening the bond between pets and owners
Convenience and Peace of Mind		Providing features such as remote monitoring and automated devices for convenience and peace of mind
Commitment to Quality and Trust		Upholding reliability, quality, and customer satisfaction, fostering trust and credibility among pet owners
Engagement and Relationship Management	and	Actively engaging with customers through online communities, workshops, and informative content, fostering long-lasting relationships built on trust

Continuous Improvement and Adaptation	Committed to continuous innovation and adaptation to evolving customer needs, ensuring leading-edge solutions for pet owners
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Table -1

3. Competitor Analysis

3.1 Direct Competitors

I. Pet Savvy-

PetSavvy Solutions has established itself as a leading company in the pet technology sector, providing a wide array of intelligent pet toys and cutting-edge services tailored exclusively for pet owners living in metropolitan areas. Their expanded range of products includes GPS trackers, automated feeds, and health monitors. Additionally, the establishment offers pet sitting and grooming services to accommodate the full requirements of pet owners. (Dasaj, 2023)

PetSavvy Solutions provides GPS trackers that allow pet owners to follow the position of their dogs in real time. The sales of these trackers have experienced a 30% increase compared to the previous year. Their automated feeders, which efficiently distribute food at predetermined intervals, have experienced a surge in popularity, with a notable 25% surge in sales during the previous year. The adoption of PetSavvy's health monitors, which are specifically designed to monitor animals' activity levels, sleep patterns, and vital signs, has experienced a notable increase of 20% among pet owners. PetSavvy Solutions' pet-sitting services, which provide pet owners with a dependable alternative for pet care in their absence, have witnessed a 15% increase in reservations. (Srinivasa et al., 2022)

Strengths

PetSavvy Solutions has successfully broadened its market reach towards urban pet owners, resulting in a notable 40% growth in its customer base within metropolitan regions. PetSavvy Solutions has attained a brand awareness rate of 35% among pet owners, thereby solidifying its position as a reputable entity within the pet technology sector. With a notable focus on the provision of superior products and services, PetSavvy Solutions has successfully upheld a client

retention rate of 70%, so signifying elevated levels of consumer contentment and allegiance. PetSavvy Solutions is characterised by a commendable average customer rating of 4.5 stars, which indicates a notable degree of client happiness and loyalty.

Weakness

Although PetSavvy Solutions provides a wide array of products and services, its customisation options for personalised pet care are restricted. Although the company's goods are designed to meet the overall needs of pet care, there is a noticeable absence of customised solutions that specifically cater to the distinct requirements of particular dogs. This constraint may dissuade those who own pets and desire customised care programmes and solutions that are specifically designed to meet their pets' individual requirements, preferences, and health circumstances. One further drawback of PetSavvy Solutions is its somewhat elevated pricing concerning certain competitors within the pet technology sector. Although the products and services provided by the company exhibit superior quality and incorporate cutting-edge technologies, the elevated pricing may be a challenge for pet owners who prioritise budget considerations. The presence of more cost-effective options in the market may lead price-conscious consumers to choose products or services offered by competitors, affecting the sales and market share of PetSavvy Solutions. (Buhalis and Chan, 2023)

II. PawsTech Innovation

PawsTech Innovations is a prominent participant in the pet technology industry, renowned for its inventive and high-quality pet goods and services. The company's product portfolio encompasses a diverse range of items, such as intelligent collars, pet activity monitors, and automated pet care gadgets. In addition to their assortment of products, the company also offers online training and healthcare services, thereby developing a comprehensive approach to the care of pets.

The smart collars developed by PawsTech Innovations, which are equipped with GPS tracking and health monitoring capabilities, have experienced a significant increase of 28% in sales compared to the previous year. Pet activity monitors, which are specifically engineered to monitor the daily activities and fitness levels of pets, have witnessed a notable surge of 22% in their adoption rate among pet owners. The sales of automated pet care devices, including as automatic feeders and water dispensers, have experienced a notable increase of 20%. This growth can be attributed to the

rising consumer desire for convenience in the realm of pet care. There has been a notable increase of 15% in subscriptions to PawsTech Innovations' online training programmes, which provide pet owners with access to expert training resources and guidance. (Kuzma and Sehnem, 2022)

Strengths

There has been a notable 12% surge in the utilisation of their online healthcare services, which offer pet owners the opportunity to avail themselves of veterinary consultations and health advice. PawsTech Innovations has successfully extended its market reach to urban regions, resulting in a notable 38% growth in its customer loyalty among pet owners residing in metropolitan areas. Through the implementation of a targeted marketing approach, PawsTech Innovations has successfully attained a brand awareness rating of 33% among pet owners, thereby developing a robust brand presence within the pet technology sector. PawsTech Innovations demonstrates a commendable average customer rating of 4.7 stars, indicating a notable degree of customer happiness and loyalty. PawsTech Innovations has consistently upheld a customer retention percentage of 68%, demonstrating a robust level of client loyalty and satisfaction, through its unwavering dedication to quality and innovation. (Agrawal, Seth and Dixit, 2023)

Weaknesses

PawsTech Innovations encounters a predicament characterised by its restricted physical presence and absence of strategic retail collaborations. Although their e-commerce platforms have achieved notable success, the lack of real retail establishments and collaborations with traditional brick-and-mortar stores limits their accessibility to prospective clients who have a preference for purchasing pet products in physical retail settings. This constraint can affect their ability to enter the market and establish a strong brand presence, particularly among older age groups and individuals who are less inclined to engage in online purchasing. (Bray et al., 2023)

PawsTech Innovations has a little emphasis on community engagement and educational efforts, which is another issue. Although the organisation provides online training and healthcare services, there exists a deficiency in the provision of structured and captivating community-building activities and instructional materials that effectively educate and engage their clientele. Communities can foster trust, loyalty, and brand affinity among customers through various community engagement programmes, including online forums, webinars, and seminars. These

initiatives have the potential to stimulate repeat purchases and generate word-of-mouth referrals. (Toteva, Lutz and Shaw, 2021)

3.2 Indirect Competitors

I.Traditional pet care services

PawsTech Innovations might be regarded as an indirect rival to traditional pet care services, encompassing local pet grooming salons, pet boarding facilities, and veterinary clinics. Although these businesses do not give technical solutions such as smart collars or activity monitors, they do offer crucial pet care services that are necessary for pet owners. Traditional pet care services can appeal to customers who place a high value on hands-on care and personalised attention for their pets, owing to their well-established reputations and tailored services. (Boya, 2023)

II.Online pet Retailers

Indirect competitors to PawsTech Innovations can be observed in the form of online pet merchants, who provide a diverse array of pet products and supplies. These businesses offer pet owners a convenient comprehensive solution for their pet care requirements, encompassing a wide range of necessities such as food, toys, grooming supplies, and healthcare products. Online pet merchants can attract price-sensitive customers and convenience-seeking individuals shopping for pet supplies due to their competitive pricing, expedited shipping choices, and extensive product range. (Andonova, Anaza and Bennett, 2021)

III.Pet care services and applications

PawsTech Innovations can be viewed as indirect competitors to pet care apps and platforms that provide services like pet sitting, dog walking, and vet consultations. These platforms utilise technology to facilitate the connection between pet owners and pet care providers, providing immediate services that meet the changing requirements of pet owners. Pet care applications and platforms can appeal to clients who are looking for flexible and personalised pet care solutions because of their user-friendly interfaces, convenience, and frequently lower rates. (Bischof, 2023)

4. FUTURE GROWTH OF THE BUSINESS

TechPet Haven anticipates significant growth and innovation in the future, driven by deliberate actions taken to increase customer value and market reach. With the introduction of a range of state-of-the-art smart pet products, the company hopes to broaden the scope of products it offers. At the same time, TechPet Haven will place a higher priority on growing its market share outside of its current geographic region. To do this, it will look into new cities or regions in order to reach undiscovered customer segments and boost revenue growth. (Hoummady and others, 2022).

Additionally, TechPet Haven exhibits a strong commitment to expanding the scope of its offerings by incorporating state-of-the-art technology-driven pet services. These services, which aim to provide comprehensive solutions for those who own pets, include telemedicine consultations and customised nutrition regimens. Building technology providers' and industry stakeholders' strategic alliances will be essential to accelerating growth, fostering innovation, and effectively expanding market penetration.

TechPet Haven prioritises research and development spending because it understands how crucial it is to continuous innovation and maintaining a competitive advantage in the face of shifting customer needs and market conditions. Additionally, the business will place a strong emphasis on enhancing the client experience through the implementation of user-friendly interfaces, platform optimisation, and attentive customer service. The goal is to deliver an exceptional and customised experience to pet owners at every engagement. (Alvarez and others, 2020)

Moreover, TechPet Haven plans to integrate environmental governance into its operational strategies in recognition of the importance of sustainability. This includes sourcing products that are less harmful to the environment, reducing carbon emissions during business operations, and promoting ethical pet ownership through educational programs. TechPet Haven is well-positioned to explore international expansion in the near future. It will leverage its wealth of experience, cutting-edge technology, and well-established brand image to serve pet owners worldwide and promote sustainable growth. (Dean and Rombach, 2021).

5. CONCLUSIONS

The goal of the business plan TechPet Haven is to combine cutting-edge technology with customised pet care solutions in order to bridge the gap between traditional and contemporary pet care. The business is positioned as a leader in India's pet technology market, where pet owners value sustainability, innovation, convenience, and high quality in their care. They seek the best possible care for their dogs, establish trusting bonds with them, and interact with other pet owners who share their interests. Pet owners must, however, overcome obstacles including juggling work and pet care obligations, locating trustworthy providers, and figuring out the complexities of technology integration.

The business idea of TechPet Haven has a lot of potential, but it will need to overcome obstacles including competition, customer education regarding the advantages of technology-driven pet care, and industry credibility and trust issues. TechPet Haven may carve out a unique niche for itself in the very competitive pet care market by employing strategies including product innovation, consumer interaction, and education. Pet owners looking for cutting edge, personalised pet care solutions should choose TechPet Haven as their go-to source when it comes to high-quality, eco-friendly, and easy-to-use products and services.

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WELL FED-Revolutionizing Healthy Eating in Mumbai

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ABSTRACT

In the fast-paced metropolis of Mumbai, maintaining a healthy diet is a significant challenge. "WellFed" seeks to address this issue by offering personalized, nutritious meals that cater to individual dietary needs and preferences. By utilizing a quick survey to gather comprehensive data on clients' lifestyles, body types, eating habits, and food preferences, WellFed's team of nutritionists and culinary experts crafts customized meal plans designed to support specific health goals and overall well-being. WellFed emphasizes the provision of high-quality, protein-rich meals prepared with premium local ingredients. The service's seamless ordering and reliable delivery system ensure convenience, enabling clients to easily receive their personalized meals through online, phone, or mobile platforms. WellFed's commitment extends beyond meal delivery, aiming to be a partner in health and wellness through exceptional customer service and continuous improvement based on client feedback. Operating from a state-of-the-art cloud kitchen, WellFed upholds stringent standards of quality, efficiency, and hygiene. The overarching vision of WellFed is to transform healthy eating in Mumbai by making it accessible, personalized, and enjoyable, thus allowing individuals to prioritize their health despite the demands of their busy lives.

Keywords- Meal plan, Marketing, Health, Seamless Delivery, Nutrition, high protein, PESTLE, Business Canvas Model, Value Proposition, Healthy Eating, Mumbai, Balance, Wellness, Personalized

1. Introducing "WellFed": Revolutionizing Healthy Eating in Mumbai

Mumbaikars' busy and fast-paced lifestyle frequently makes them underestimate the importance of eating a well-balanced diet. We are happy to provide "Well Fed," an advanced meal plan service, in response to this widespread problem. We recognize that balancing a healthy diet with a hectic schedule may be challenging for city people.

1.1 Understanding Your Needs:

At Well Fed, we believe that no one can adhere to a diet that is uniquely beneficial to them. As a result, we have created a unique approach that begins with getting to know each and every one of our clients. We examine topics like physical attributes, lifestyle, eating habits, and even food preferences using a short, personalized questionnaire. We can make meal plans that meet dietary needs and take into consideration the individual tastes and preferences of each person by using this crucial information.

1.2 Crafting Personalized Meal Plans:

Based on the survey findings, our team of nutritionists and culinary specialists crafts customized meal programs that are as distinctive as our customers. Our thoughtfully designed meal plans are intended to support your goals and enhance your general wellbeing, whether you're a health-conscious person trying to shed a few pounds, a busy professional trying to maintain energy levels throughout the day, or an enthusiastic fitness fanatic looking to gain muscle.

2. A Culinary Journey of Health and Flavor:

Its commitment to using high-quality ingredients and having a high protein content are two of its core principles. Our large menu has a variety of delicious dishes that are all expertly prepared using the best ingredients in the region. Everything, from vibrant veggie snacks to substantial power meals, is thoughtfully crafted to nourish the body and the soul.

2.1 Seamless Ordering and Delivery:

We are aware of how crucial usability is to our discriminating clientele. We have thus made every effort to facilitate ordering. With our convenient ordering options by phone, smartphone, and the internet, creating your own meal plan is now simpler than ever. You can also relax knowing that your wholesome meals will be brought right to your door, saving you a ton of time and effort, because of our trustworthy and effective delivery service.

2.2 Your Partner in Health and Wellness:

We are aware of how crucial usability is to our discriminating clientele. We have thus made every effort to facilitate ordering. With our convenient ordering options by phone, smartphone, and the internet, creating your own meal plan is now simpler than ever. You can also relax knowing that your wholesome meals will be brought right to your door, saving you a ton of time and effort, because of our trustworthy and effective delivery service.

3. Join the Well Fed Revolution:

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3.1 Location:

WellFed is positioned strategically to best serve you. Our company is built on our state-of-the-art cloud kitchen, where our amazing chefs produce culinary delights. The exacting attention to detail, the perfect setting, and the stringent compliance of efficiency and hygiene rules testifies to the exceptional quality and freshness of every meal prepared in our cloud kitchen.

3.2 Behind the Scenes: Where Innovation Meets Administration:

Other than the kitchen, our dedicated office area is the center of activity at WellFed. This intricate dance of planning, organizing, and management is executed by a talented and productive group of experts. Behind the scenes, our hardworking team works very hard to ensure that every part of our valued customers' experience—from meal preparation and order processing to delivery management and customer service—is smooth and pleasurable.

4. Vision:

To transform healthy eating in Mumbai by offering individualized, delicious, and substantial meal plans that enable people to put their health first while juggling their hectic lives in the city.

5. Mission:

At WellFed, we're committed to getting to know your needs and developing personalized meal plans that include each person's preferences, goals, and way of life. Since our staff exclusively buys the freshest, locally sourced products to nourish the body and the mind, every meal will be of the highest culinary level and purest nutritional quality. Our objective is to become your reliable partner in health and wellness, thus we prioritize your convenience by offering a straightforward online buying process and reliable delivery options. Our aim is to take you all on an adventure where you may learn about the state-of-the-art potential of customized nutrition, where flavor and health go hand in hand, and where our top focus is your welfare.

6. Problem and Solution:

6.1 Problem:

Food-related problems have become more complex in India due to a combination of changing dietary habits, cultural customs, and economic disparities. Due to the prevalence of both undernutrition and overnutrition, which lead to an imbalance in eating habits, the country faces a dual burden of malnutrition. Traditional diets are low in essential

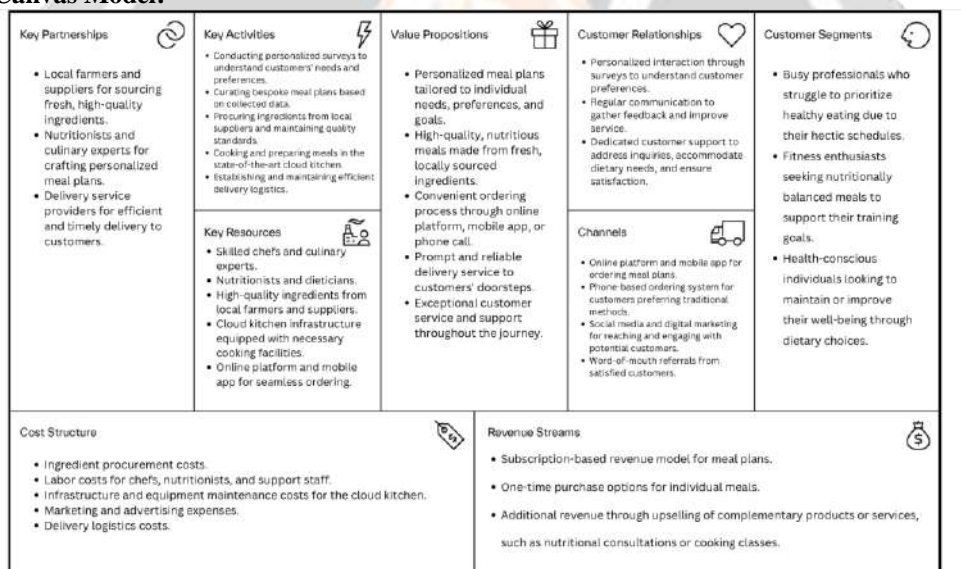
elements including vitamins, fats, and protein and heavy in carbohydrates. Numerous health issues have been related to this. The rise in processed foods brought about by urbanization and Western influences has exacerbated non-communicable diseases including obesity and diabetes. Another effect of urbanization is the change in eating patterns toward fast food and sedentary lifestyles. One's health may suffer if food safety and cleanliness regulations are not followed.

6.2 Solution:

Mumbai's fast-paced lifestyle means that Well Fed is able to address all of the city's nutritional needs, particularly with regard to maintaining a balanced diet. It takes a lot of work at Well Fed to design meal plans that are tailored to each person's specific requirements and preferences while satisfying dietary requirements and being simple to follow. They have a distinctive cooking technique and provide fresh, locally made food, so patrons may be sure to depart happy and pleased. There are even more possibilities for wholesome meals with their user-friendly ordering and delivery system. Well Fed is more than just a food company; it is a dedicated partner in its clients' health journeys, providing outstanding support and service. Mumbai's dietary needs are well met by Well Fed's innovative method.

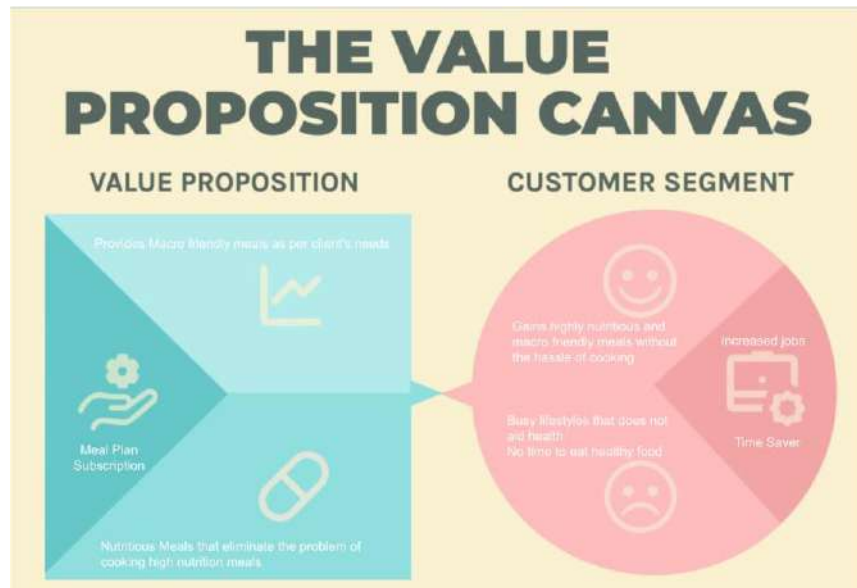
7. Business Canvas Model:

7.1 Business Canvas Model:



Innovative collaborations with nearby farmers to provide fresh food, dietitians to create customized meal plans, and delivery services to guarantee on-time delivery are the cornerstones of WellFed's success. Surveys, meal preparation, sourcing food, cooking in a cutting-edge kitchen, and effective delivery logistics are some of the most crucial tasks. WellFed provides cloud kitchens, online ordering, nutritionists, experienced chefs, and rapid, customized, high-quality meals. Individualized meal planning, healthful cuisine, simple ordering, reliable delivery, and top-notch Customer service is all part of its value offer. WellFed maintains relationships with its target audience, which is made up of busy professionals, fitness enthusiasts, and health-conscious individuals, via surveys, comments, and continuous assistance. It minimizes human expenses while maintaining income streams from one-time purchases, subscriptions, and additional revenue.

7.2 Value Proposition:



Meal plans made to fit the unique needs of each and every person living in hectic Mumbai. This ensures a simple, enjoyable, and health-conscious process without compromising on quality or taste. Eating healthfully may be easy and enjoyable when satisfying and delicious meals are prepared. Understanding the unique preferences and goals of every customer makes this possible. Well Fed touts its extensive local food choices, top-notch customer service, easy ordering and delivery options, and convenient travel companion for anybody trying to live a healthy lifestyle.

8. Industry Overview (Literature Review):

India's fast urbanization, growing awareness of nutrition and public health, and changes in lifestyle have all had a big influence on the meal plan services market. This study of the literature looks at the nuances of the Indian meal plan service industry and is based on a variety of previously published studies, corporate papers, and academic publications.

8.1 Market Overview and Trends:

For several reasons, such as changing dietary habits, more disposable income, and convenience, the meal plan services industry in India has grown quickly. Industry analysts projected that the meal plan services market in India will keep expanding based on data from KPMG (2020). Some of the factors behind this expansion include the fast-paced nature of modern living, the relentless advancement of urbanization, and the growing emphasis on holistic health and wellness. Ironically, the disruptive effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are pushing consumers to use meal plan services more often, even while individuals still demand more easily available, secure, and nutrient-dense food choices to meet their needs.

8.2 Consumer Preferences and Behavior:

Numerous factors impact consumer decisions in the Indian meal plan service sector. Research such as Nielsen's (2019) has shown the significance of price, usability, and customization in shaping customers' decision to use meal plan services. Additionally, a growing percentage of clients want meal plans that are tailored to specific dietary requirements, such as ketogenic, gluten-free, or vegan diets. This suggests that the market for healthful, environmentally friendly food options are expanding.

8.3 Challenges and Opportunities:

Although the Indian meal plan service business is growing swiftly, there are still several obstacles in its way. They

include intense competition, the need to guarantee components are always of the best quality and freshness, complex dynamics, and supply chain activities (Deloitte, 2021). Moreover, the market's natural fragmentation presents opportunities as well as problems, as seen by the rise of niche markets that cater to certain dietary needs and demographics

8.4 Regulatory Environment:

The legal foundation for meal plan services is currently being developed in India. There is still a critical need for precise recommendations in crucial areas including labeling, packaging, and nutritional needs, even if the majority of food safety and sanitation-related concerns are covered by current regulations (FSSAI, 2020). Moreover, the advent of innovative business models such as virtual restaurants and cloud kitchens highlights the need for improved regulatory oversight and adherence (ICRIER, 2021). Strict and thorough law is needed to guarantee long-term industrial success, encourage innovation, preserve customer trust, and assure safety.

9.Future Outlook

There is still a lot of room for expansion and innovation in the Indian meal plan service sector, even if it seems to be moving in the right direction. Meal plan services may someday become indispensable to their customers' daily lives given the growth of digital media and rising consumer awareness of health and wellbeing (Mordor Intelligence, 2022). Furthermore, developing strategic partnerships with chefs, dietitians, and food enthusiasts may pave the way for expertly crafted experiences that effectively meet the requirements and preferences of a wide spectrum of customers (PwC, 2021). Massive investments in infrastructure and technology were undertaken to maintain growth and gain a competitive advantage in the fast-paced Indian industry, which led to stronger supply chains and infrastructure overall. The meal plan service sector today offers a wide range of services to consumers because of evolving consumer preferences, Indian law reforms, and advancements in technology. By effectively determining and satisfying consumer needs, using technology, and overcoming logistical problems, meal plan providers are well-positioned to benefit from this expanding sector and dramatically alter India's culinary landscape. Further empirical research is required to identify novel trends, evaluate the nuances of consumer behavior, and comprehend the ways in which regulatory actions are influencing the evolving Indian meal plan services industry.

10. PESTLE

PESTLE stands for Political, Economic, Socio-Cultural, Legal, and Environmental. The six groups of macroeconomic factors serve as a representation of the model. Political factors have a big influence on meal kit enterprises like ours in their daily operations. For laws pertaining to food handling, packaging, labeling, and distribution to be put into practice without losing their efficacy, they must be pliable. Maintaining consistency in processes and managing jurisdictional variances may provide challenges, especially for bigger enterprises. Since the regulatory processes and lobbying efforts of conventional grocery sector corporations also affect our operations, we must be vigilant. Monitoring inclusion and exclusion is essential because changes to government food assistance programs may affect market share.

Factor	Description	Impact on WellFed
Political	- Government regulations on food safety and hygiene: Compliance with regulations ensures the quality and safety of Well Fed's products. Any changes in regulations may require adjustments to operational processes and may affect costs.	High impact: Non-compliance can lead to legal issues and damage to reputation. Adapting to new regulations might incur additional costs or operational changes.
	- Taxation policies on food businesses: Tax rates and policies directly influence profitability. Higher taxes may increase operational costs and affect pricing strategies.	Moderate impact: Higher taxes could reduce profit margins unless offset by increased revenue or cost-saving measures.
	- Political stability in Mumbai: Stability in the political environment ensures continuity of operations and a conducive business environment for growth and expansion.	Moderate impact: Political instability could lead to uncertainty and affect consumer confidence and investment decisions.
Economic	- Economic fluctuations affecting consumer spending: Changes in GDP growth, inflation rates, and disposable income levels influence consumer purchasing power and spending habits.	High impact: Economic downturns may lead to decreased consumer spending on premium meal delivery services like Well Fed.
	- Income levels of Mumbai residents: Higher income levels increase the affordability of Well Fed's meal plans for its target market.	High impact: Higher income levels in Mumbai increase the potential market size and willingness to spend on premium meal delivery services.

	- Inflation rates and currency exchange rates: Fluctuations in inflation rates affect procurement costs for ingredients and operational expenses. Currency exchange rates impact costs of imported ingredients.	Moderate impact: Inflation may lead to increased ingredient costs, affecting profit margins. Currency exchange fluctuations could impact import costs and pricing strategies.
Social	- Increasing health consciousness and awareness of nutrition: Growing awareness of the importance of healthy eating creates a favorable market for Well Fed's healthy meal delivery service.	High impact: Well Fed can capitalize on the trend of health-conscious consumers seeking convenient and nutritious food options.
	- Mumbai's diverse population with various dietary preferences: Well Fed can offer a wide range of meal options to cater to diverse tastes and preferences.	High impact: Well Fed can tailor its meal plans to meet the needs of a diverse customer base, enhancing its appeal and market penetration.
	- Changing lifestyle patterns: Busy schedules and a desire for convenience drive the demand for services like Well Fed.	High impact: Well Fed meets the needs of busy urban dwellers seeking convenient and nutritious meal options, driving demand for its services.
Technological	- Advancements in online platforms and mobile applications for ordering: Well Fed can streamline its ordering process and enhance customer convenience through user-friendly platforms.	High impact: Well Fed's seamless ordering process through online platforms and mobile apps improves customer experience and increases accessibility.
	- Integration of data analytics for personalized meal plans: Data analytics enable Well Fed to understand customer preferences and behavior, leading to more personalized meal plans.	High impact: Personalized meal plans based on data analytics enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty, increasing retention rates and revenue.

Legal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliance with food safety regulations and hygiene standards. Ensuring compliance with regulations is essential to maintain the quality and safety of their menu products. 	High impact: Non-compliance can lead to legal repercussions and damage to reputation. Well Fed must adhere to strict food safety standards to maintain customer trust.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adherence to labor laws and employment regulations: Well Fed must comply with labor laws to ensure fair treatment of employees and maintain a positive work environment. 	Moderate impact: Violations of labor laws can result in legal penalties and damage to reputation. Well Fed must prioritize employee welfare and comply with employment regulations.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contractual agreements: Well Fed must establish and adhere to contracts with suppliers and delivery partners to ensure smooth operations and maintain quality standards. 	Moderate impact: Breach of contract can lead to disruptions in the supply chain and affect product quality and delivery timelines. Well Fed must carefully manage supplier relationships and fulfill contractual obligations.
Environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable sourcing practices and eco-friendly packaging options: Well Fed can enhance its environmental sustainability and appeal to eco-conscious consumers by adopting sustainable practices. 	Moderate impact: Well Fed's commitment to sustainability can attract environmentally conscious consumers and enhance brand reputation.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate change and natural disasters affecting the supply chain: Disruptions in the supply chain due to climate-related events can impact ingredient availability and operational efficiency. 	Moderate impact: Well Fed must have contingency plans in place to mitigate supply chain disruptions caused by climate change and natural disasters.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local sourcing of ingredients: Well Fed's use of locally sourced ingredients reduces carbon emissions associated with transportation and supports the local economy. 	High impact: Local sourcing enhances sustainability and supports the local community, aligning with consumer preferences for ethically sourced products.
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11.Porter's 5 Forces:

Factors	Description
Competitive Rivalry	WellFed faces competition from subscription-based meal plan services, traditional food delivery services, and grocery stores offering meal kits. Competitive intensity depends on pricing, quality, variety, and brand reputation. WellFed can maintain an edge by innovating, expanding menu offerings, and enhancing customer experience with technology and personalized recommendations.
Supplier Power	WellFed relies on suppliers for ingredients. Supplier power varies with ingredient availability and alternative suppliers. Strong relationships with multiple suppliers or vertical integration can mitigate risk, but fluctuations in ingredient prices or quality could impact profitability.

Buyer Power	Customers can easily switch to competitors or opt out if dissatisfied. WellFed can mitigate this by providing high-quality meals, excellent customer service, and personalized offerings tailored to different dietary preferences and needs.
Threat of Substitution	Substitutes include home cooking, takeout, and pre-packaged meals from supermarkets. WellFed can reduce the attractiveness of substitutes by offering convenience, healthy options, and customizable meal plans tailored to individual preferences.
Threat of New Entry	The subscription-based meal plan service industry has low barriers to entry. However, establishing a strong brand, sourcing quality ingredients, and building a reliable delivery network require significant investment and expertise. New entrants may struggle to compete with WellFed's established presence and resources.

The Five Forces model developed by Michael E. Porter is a popular tool for corporate planning. His research in 1979 gave rise to this framework, which gives businesses a systematic approach to assess their competitive landscape and make long-term strategic decisions that have an effect on performance (Danao, 2024).

12. Competitor Analysis:

To gain a strategic edge in the ever-evolving food market, we conducted a comprehensive analysis of our key competitors. This included industry leaders like ACTIVeat, who cater to health-conscious individuals with active lifestyles through chef-prepared meals. We also looked at Bee Good Meals, whose focus on sustainable practices and organic, locally-sourced ingredients resonates with environmentally conscious consumers. Additionally, Calorie Care stood out for their personalized meal plans designed for weight management, addressing a specific need within the broader health and wellness market.

By dissecting these competitors' approaches, we've identified valuable insights. Each company has carved a distinct niche, highlighting the diverse needs within the food industry. This analysis empowers us to differentiate ourselves and develop a unique brand identity. By understanding these market segments and consumer preferences, we can craft a compelling offering that resonates with discerning customers and sets us apart from the competition.

13. Primary Research:

Consumer research has uncovered a significant gap in the meal planning market. While a healthy portion (28.6%) of people enjoy cooking at home and crave variety in their meals (over half at 50%), their efforts are hampered by two key challenges: time constraints (42.9%) and a lack of suitable meal plan options (a staggering 64.3% report this). This is further emphasized by the fact that 35.7% of respondents resort to eating out at least once a week, highlighting the difficulty of maintaining healthy eating habits amidst busy schedules.

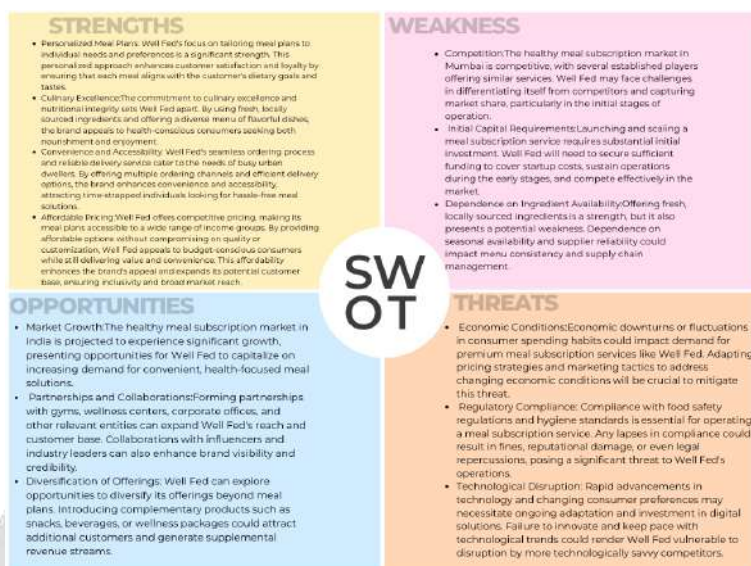
The research also reveals a strong consumer preference for customization. A majority of 85.7% of respondents expressed a desire for meal plans that can be tailored to their individual needs and tastes. This aligns perfectly with the growing interest in wellness and healthy eating (as evidenced by 35.7% prioritizing a balanced diet).

In essence, consumers are looking for a solution that bridges the gap between convenience, healthy eating, and personal preferences. This presents a golden opportunity for innovative meal planning services that offer customizable options, cater to busy lifestyles, and prioritize health and well-being. By addressing these unmet needs, a new player could disrupt the current market and become a go-to resource for home cooks struggling to find the time and inspiration for healthy, delicious meals.

14. SWOT:

SWOT analysis, created at Stanford University in the 1960s and 1970s, helps evaluate a business or project to support impactful decisions (Sarsby, 2021). Well Fed, based on its SWOT analysis, boasts several competitive advantages, including customized meal programmes that boost client satisfaction and loyalty, a commitment to culinary excellence with fresh, local ingredients that attract health-conscious customers, and a focus on accessibility, affordability, and convenience that strengthens its market position. However, Well Fed also faces challenges such as high competition, the need for startup funding, and dependence on ingredient supply. Opportunities for growth include partnerships, diversification, and market expansion. Nonetheless, threats like economic conditions,

regulatory compliance, and technological disruption necessitate strategic planning and adaptation to maintain success in a competitive landscape.



15. WellFed's Marketing:

15.1 TAM & SAM For WellFed:

With the goal of revolutionizing healthy eating in the booming Indian meal delivery business, "WellFed" offers customized meal kits. With an anticipated CAGR of 7.23% from 2024 to 2029, the estimated total addressable market (TAM) for food delivery services in India is roughly INR US\$13.13 billion by 2024. This would translate into a market volume of about INR US\$18.61 billion. The SAM particularly targets busy Mumbai metropolitan people looking for quick and wholesome meal options inside this sizable market. By personalizing its offerings to cater to each customer's preferences and dietary requirements, "WellFed" has the chance to take a sizable chunk of the eating market as platforms like Zomato and Swiggy take off, (Statista, 2024).

15.2 Online Marketing strategy:

WellFed isn't just delivering delicious meals, they're building a loyal community. Their social media strategy, focusing on platforms like Facebook and Instagram, uses mouthwatering food photography, behind-the-scenes kitchen tours, and genuine customer testimonials to spark conversation and build brand trust. But it doesn't stop there.

WellFed complements their social media presence with targeted email marketing campaigns to keep customers informed about new offerings and promotions. Additionally, a user-friendly mobile app allows for seamless ordering, customization, and account management – all contributing to a frictionless customer experience. This multi-pronged approach is proving successful, propelling WellFed's growth in customer base, sales, and overall brand awareness.

15.3 Offline Marketing Strategy:

WellFed leverages community events (food booths, catering) to boost local awareness and engagement. They participate in festivals, charities, and sports events to directly connect with potential customers and distribute branded materials (flyers, coupons) to drive sales and build customer loyalty.

15.4 4 P's Marketing Mix For WellFed:



16. Operations

16.1 Ordering and Delivery:

Orders can be placed quickly via our mobile app, online, or over the phone. Our user-friendly interfaces simplify scheduling and customization. We use a single distribution strategy to optimize supply networks, reducing costs and lead times. Our delivery personnel use insulated bags to ensure meals arrive intact and on time. Customers can track their deliveries in real-time to predict arrival times.

16.2 Customer Support and Engagement:

Orders can be placed quickly via our app, online, or phone. Our interfaces simplify scheduling and customization. A single distribution strategy optimizes supply networks, reducing costs and lead times. Insulated bags ensure meals arrive intact and on time. Customers can track deliveries in real-time.

16.3 Quality Assurance and Hygiene Standards:

We uphold high standards of quality and cleanliness in all operations. Routine audits and inspections ensure our kitchens comply with food safety laws. We prioritize purchasing from reliable vendors with ethical and environmental standards and routinely inspect ingredients for freshness. Our team undergoes thorough training on food handling and sanitary procedures to minimize contamination risk and ensure meal safety.

16.4 Staff and Training:

We maintain high standards of quality and cleanliness. Routine audits ensure kitchen compliance with food safety laws. We prioritize ethical, reliable vendors and inspect ingredients for freshness. Our team receives thorough training on food handling and sanitation to minimize contamination risks and ensure meal safety.

16.5 Growth and Expansion:

We monitor consumer trends, industry developments, and competitors to identify growth opportunities. This knowledge helps us achieve growth goals and make strategic decisions. Partnerships with fitness centers, corporate offices, wellness centers, and related businesses can expand our clientele and market presence. Targeted marketing campaigns will engage specific demographics and regions to boost brand awareness.

16.6 Technology Integration:

We use data analytics to examine customer behavior, order trends, and feedback, providing recommendations to improve satisfaction and streamline operations. Automation enhances efficiency in inventory management, order processing, and delivery logistics, helping us meet growing demand (Yatzus, 2023).

16.7 SMART (Scott, 2014)



17. Finance

17.1 Finance Insight:

A comprehensive analysis by Apollo Research indicates that meal subscription services are rapidly gaining traction in India. Valued at \$3,732.8 million in 2022, the Indian healthy meal subscription market is projected to grow at a 14% CAGR, potentially reaching over \$13,757.7 million by 2032.

17.2 Costing:

Meal subscription platforms differentiate themselves through pricing optimization techniques. They offer reasonable prices by managing costs innovatively, such as using a shared delivery model to reduce expenses and a streamlined set menu to save on supplies and preparation time. Emphasizing personalization, these services cater to diverse dietary needs with health-conscious options. For instance, FoodDarzee offers balanced, vegan, low-carb, or keto diets, while Calorie Care provides calorie-counted meals prepared by experienced chefs and dieticians.

A strong pricing strategy is crucial in this competitive market, balancing service value with costs like products, packaging, shipping, and overhead. Acquiring new clients while retaining existing ones ensures long-term financial success. WellFed's weekly prices range from Rs. 2000 to Rs. 3000, depending on the plan, with no fixed price for fully personalized plans due to varying menus and ingredient availability.

17.3 Start Up Cost:

Start-up Costing for WellFed - 2024

START-UP COSTS	Cost (₹)
Web site design	₹ 15,000.00
Licences	₹ 40,000.00
Trade marks/designs/patents	₹ 20,000.00
Accountant fees	₹ 1,80,000.00
Rental lease cost (12 months)	₹ 3,60,000.00
Utility connections & mothly fee (Electricity, gas, water)	₹ 1,20,000.00
Phone connection monthly fee	₹ 6,000.00
Internet connection	₹ 6,000.00
Computer software	₹ 2,000.00
Web hosting fees	₹ 4,000.00
Wages	₹ 7,20,000.00
Stock/raw materials	₹ 1,80,000.00
Insurance	₹ 60,000.00
Building & contents	₹ -
Printing costs	₹ 50,000.00
Marketing expenses	₹ 1,00,000.00
Stationery & office supplies	₹ 20,000.00
Other	
Total start-up costs	₹ 18,83,000.00

The data outlines various start-up costs for launching a business, including web design, licenses, trademarks, accountant fees, rental lease, utility connections, phone and internet fees, computer software, web hosting, wages, stock/raw materials, insurance, printing, marketing, and office supplies. The total start-up costs amount to ₹18,83,000.00, providing a comprehensive view of the initial financial investment needed to establish and operate the business effectively.

17.4 Sales Forecast:

Sales Forecasts						
Forecast Sales	Customers	Average Spend	Sales Turnover	Meal Menu (₹)	Sales Turnover (Dinner Menu) ₹	Total Sales turnover
Month 1	200	Rs. 2000	₹ 1,00,000.00	₹ 2,500.00	₹ 5,00,000.00	₹ 6,00,000.00
Month 2	200	Rs. 2000	₹ 1,00,000.00	₹ 2,500.00	₹ 5,00,000.00	₹ 6,00,000.00
Month 3	180	Rs. 1800	₹ 90,000.00	₹ 2,500.00	₹ 4,50,000.00	₹ 5,40,000.00
Month 4	150	Rs. 1500	₹ 75,000.00	₹ 2,500.00	₹ 3,75,000.00	₹ 4,50,000.00
Month 5	130	Rs. 1300	₹ 65,000.00	₹ 2,500.00	₹ 3,25,000.00	₹ 3,90,000.00
Month 6	90	Rs. 900	₹ 45,000.00	₹ 2,500.00	₹ 2,25,000.00	₹ 2,70,000.00
Month 7	95	Rs. 950	₹ 47,500.00	₹ 2,500.00	₹ 2,37,500.00	₹ 2,85,000.00
Month 8	100	Rs. 1000	₹ 50,000.00	₹ 2,500.00	₹ 2,50,000.00	₹ 3,00,000.00
Month 9	120	Rs. 1200	₹ 60,000.00	₹ 2,500.00	₹ 3,00,000.00	₹ 3,60,000.00
Month 10	130	Rs. 1300	₹ 65,000.00	₹ 2,500.00	₹ 3,25,000.00	₹ 3,90,000.00
Month 11	170	Rs. 1700	₹ 85,000.00	₹ 2,500.00	₹ 4,25,000.00	₹ 5,10,000.00
Month 12	200	Rs. 2000	₹ 1,00,000.00	₹ 2,500.00	₹ 5,00,000.00	₹ 6,00,000.00
Total Turnover			₹ 8,82,500.00		₹ 44,12,500.00	₹ 52,95,000.00

The data forecasts twelve months of restaurant sales, detailing projected customer numbers, average spend, and resulting turnover. For example, the first two months anticipate 200 customers with an average spend of Rs. 2000

per meal, leading to a turnover of Rs. 6,00,000. Fluctuations occur in later months with changes in customer numbers and spend, affecting sales turnover. Despite these variations, the total projected annual turnover is Rs. 52,95,000, aiding in strategic planning and resource allocation to optimize performance throughout the year.

17.5 Sources of Fund:

Sources of Finance		
Sources of funds	(INR)	When
Personal Savings	₹ 1,00,000.00	Month 1
Family and friends	₹ 5,00,000.00	Month 2
Bank Loan	₹ 5,00,000.00	Month 4
Angel Investors	₹ -	
Govt Grant	₹ -	

The data outlines the sources and timing of financing for a business venture. Initially, the entrepreneur injects Rs. 1,00,000 in personal savings in the first month. In the second month, Rs. 5,00,000 is obtained from family and friends. In the fourth month, a bank loan of Rs. 5,00,000 is secured. There is no funding from angel investors or government grants, indicating reliance on personal resources, social networks, and traditional financial institutions. This breakdown provides insight into the venture's capital structure and funding strategy at various stages.

17.6 Cash Flow:

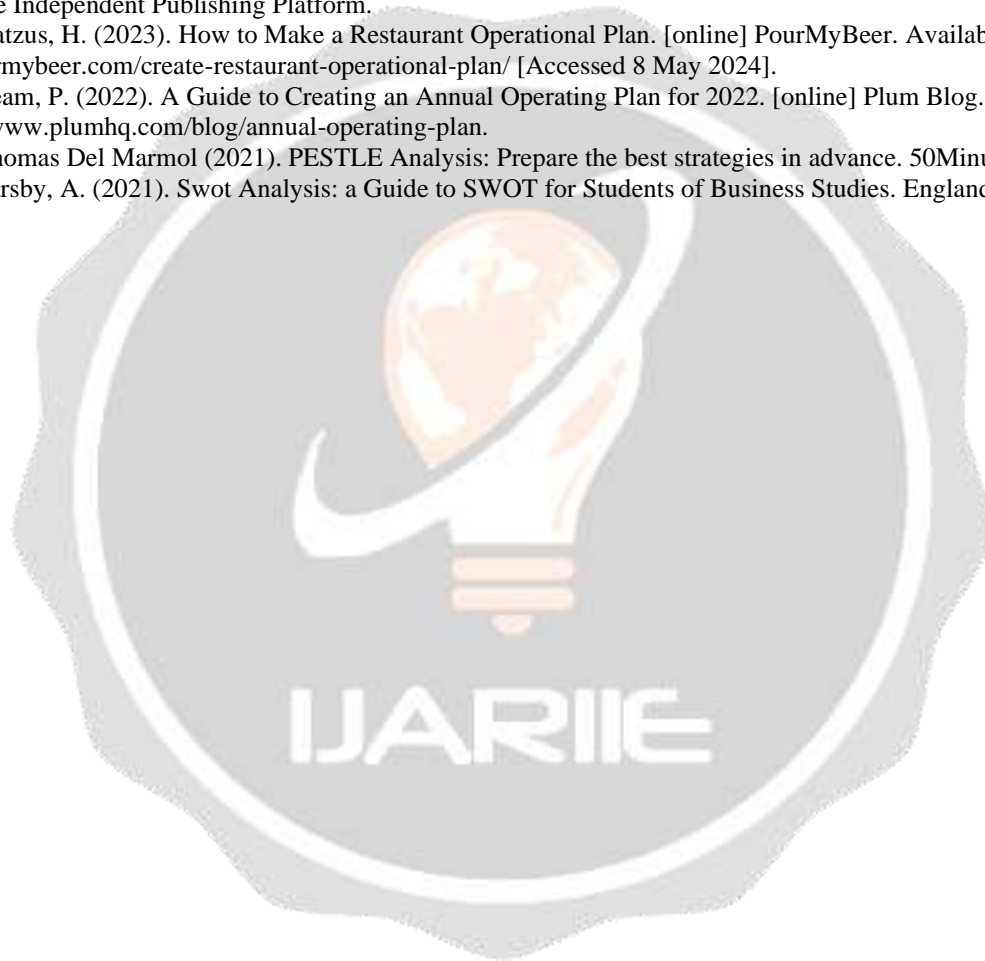
Cash Flow Forecast	
Expenses	(INR)
Fixed Cost	
Rent	₹ 3,60,000.00
Equipment Rent	₹ 84,000.00
Furniture Rent	₹ -
Salary	₹ 7,20,000.00
	₹ 11,64,000.00
Variable Cost	
Electricity/Wifi/ Water/ Gas	₹ 1,20,000.00
Raw Materials	₹ 1,80,000.00
Marketing	₹ 1,00,000.00
	₹ 4,00,000.00
Total expenses	₹ 15,64,000.00

The cash flow forecast outlines anticipated business expenses, divided into fixed and variable costs. Fixed costs, including rent, equipment rent, and salaries, total Rs. 11,64,000. Variable costs, such as electricity, Wi-Fi, water, gas, utilities, raw materials, and marketing, amount to Rs. 4,00,000. Overall, total expenses are estimated at Rs. 15,64,000. This breakdown aids in budgeting and financial planning by providing insights into expected financial obligations.

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Meal.fit- By Cult.fit a Consumer behaviour & Responsible Marketer Study

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ABSTRACT

This report examines the feasibility and strategic requirements for introducing a new product line, Meal.fit, into the B2C market by Cult.fit, originally known as Curefit. The author employs comprehensive research techniques and data collection methods to identify the target market and gain a deeper understanding of consumer behaviour. Cult.fit, a prominent health and fitness company in India, provides both online and offline services focusing on mental health, nutrition, and physical fitness. Cult.fit operates on a subscription-based model, boasting over 230 locations and more than 100,000 active members. Its mission is to "make health easy." The proposal for launching Meal.fit aims to further penetrate the nutrition market by leveraging Cult.fit's existing infrastructure and brand reputation. The author suggests a strategic merger between Eat.fit and Meal.fit to create a comprehensive nutrition service under the Cult.fit umbrella. This merger would streamline operations, expand service offerings, and provide a cohesive experience for consumers seeking personalized nutrition solutions. The COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted the personalized nutrition market, increasing consumer demand for health and wellness products. The pandemic highlighted the importance of tailored nutritional solutions, creating a substantial need gap that Cult.fit is well-positioned to fill. By entering this market with Meal.fit, Cult.fit can address the rising demand for personalized nutrition, capitalize on emerging market trends, and reinforce its position as a leading health and wellness provider in India. This strategic move is expected to enhance Cult.fit's market presence and drive long-term growth in the evolving health and nutrition sector.

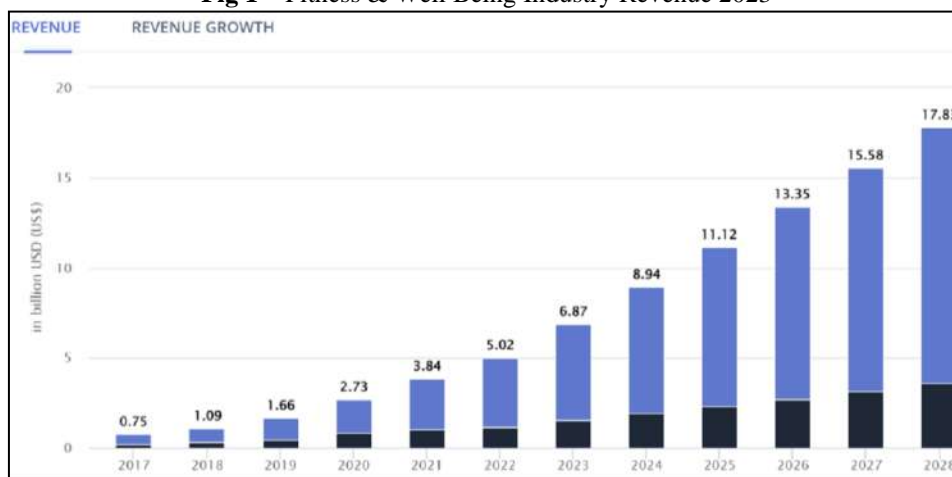
Keyword: - Consumer Behavior, Segmentation, Customer Journey, Customer Influences, Ethical Marketing

1. Industry Market Analysis

Cult.fit operates within India's rapidly expanding digital fitness and well-being sector, providing both online and offline services. In 2023, the industry generated an estimated revenue of US\$6.87 billion (₹56,000 Crore), positioning it as a significant contributor to the Indian economy and one of the fastest-growing sectors [1].

Projections indicate that the industry's revenue will rise to US\$8.16 billion (₹71,000 Crore) in 2024, driven largely by an increasing number of health-conscious consumers in the post-pandemic era. By 2028, the market volume is expected to reach US\$15.11 billion (₹1,25,000 Crore), reflecting a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 16.65% [1].

The user penetration rate for digital fitness services is forecasted to reach 11.22% by 2028, highlighting substantial growth opportunities for businesses within this industry. Cult.fit is well-positioned to capitalize on these trends, leveraging its established brand and comprehensive service offerings to capture a larger share of this burgeoning market.

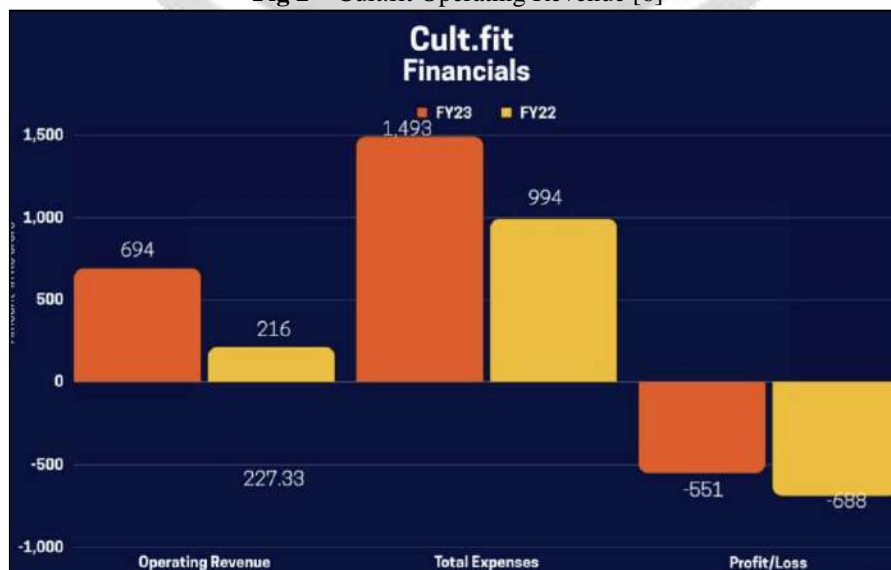
Fig 1 – Fitness & Well Being Industry Revenue 2023

1.1 Consumer Analysis

Post Pandemic Consumer Behaviour; The perception that "exercise comes first in the health journey" is reportedly shifting. 70% of respondents are now more inclined to improve their health through dietary changes rather than exercise [2]. This trend is particularly notable in India, which is the fastest-growing health food market, expanding at a CAGR of 20%. The number of health-conscious consumers in India is expected to rise significantly, from 108 million in 2020 to 176 million by 2026 [3]. Moreover, there is a substantial market for fitness solutions, with at least 6 million active users willing to pay for such services. On average, each of these users is prepared to spend between \$350 and \$400 (₹29,000 to ₹33,000) annually on fitness services [4]. This indicates a robust and growing demand for health and fitness solutions, driven by a shift in consumer behaviour towards prioritising dietary changes alongside physical activity.

1.2 Cult.fit Overview

Cult.fit, co-founded in 2016 by Ankit Nagori and Mukesh Bansal, is headquartered in Bangalore, Karnataka, India. The company has demonstrated significant financial growth, with operational revenue tripling to Rs 694 crore in FY23 from Rs 216 crore in FY22 [5]. The fitness vertical contributes approximately 62.4% of this revenue, while the food services under Eat.fit account for 34.5%. Other services contribute around 3.06% to the overall revenue [6]. Despite the overall revenue growth, Cult.fit's sportswear sales experienced a notable decline, dropping by 60% to Rs 12 crore in FY22. This indicates a slower growth rate in the apparel sector, contrasting with the robust performance of the fitness and food service verticals.

Fig 2 – Cult.fit Operating Revenue [6]

Cult.fit's strategic growth and controlled expense management resulted in a 20% reduction in losses, which fell to Rs 551 crore in FY23 from Rs 688 crore in FY22. Furthermore, the startup's Return on Capital Employed (ROCE) and EBITDA margins have improved to -17% and -18%, respectively.

Table-1: Cult.fit Profit & Loss FY22-23 [6].

Cashify Financials	FY23	FY22
Operating Revenue	₹694 Crore	₹216 Crore
Total Revenue	₹1,493 Crore	₹994 Crore
Profit/Loss	Loss Of ₹551 Crore	Loss Of ₹688 Crore

Cult.fit's expansion in India is driven by its focus on younger consumers and digital innovations. Millennials, who constitute about 70% of fitness club members, are the primary demographic propelling growth in India's fitness market. According to the Times of India, over 60% of Indians now value traditional gyms less than before, instead seeking digital fitness solutions. Cult.fit caters to this health-conscious segment by integrating fitness services with digital platforms. As a fitness-tech company, Cult.fit has significantly increased the consumption of fitness services among India's millennial population [8].

Cult.fit Ancillary Offerings:

- **Eat.fit-** Cult. fit bought 'Kristy's Kitchen,' a food delivery startup, and began operations in 2020. It is well-known for focusing on providing healthy and nutritious food options to people who are conscious of their dietary habits.
- **Mind.fit-** Cult. fit acquired "1000 Yoga" in 2017 and rebranded it as Mind.fit. It is a project that promotes and provides a scientific approach to mental fitness through therapy sessions, yoga classes, and other mental fitness activities.
- **Cult.sport-** Founded in 2019, It specialises in athletic wear and accessories. It's meant to enhance the whole fitness experience that Cult.fit provides. It sells a variety of activewear, workout gear, and accessories, as well as treadmills, spin bikes, cycles, and smartwatches.
- **Cult Transform-** It is a Cult.fit's fitness program. It offers a habit-based scientific coaching program that tailors a personalised fitness plan for each user's specific fitness goals and schedule.

1.3 Market Need Gap

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly accelerated the growth of the personalised nutrition market. Standard meals no longer suffice to meet the diverse and evolving dietary needs of consumers. In India, this market has seen substantial growth with a CAGR of 11.5%. A key area of expansion is Nutrigenomics, which integrates genetics, nutrition, and disease, representing the future of the industry. This segment is expected to grow at a CAGR of 15.5%, the fastest rate among Asia-Pacific countries, including India [8].

Consumers have increasingly embraced personalised products and services, along with real-time access to personal health data beyond traditional medical settings. This shift creates an ideal environment for personalised nutrition meals to flourish, as the one-size-fits-all approach no longer meets specific individual needs.

2. Product Introduction

In response to the identified market need gap, it is recommended that Cult.fit introduces "Meal.fit," a personalized meal plan targeting the younger demographic. To enhance market penetration, a merger between Eat.fit and Meal.fit is proposed. Eat.fit's current "one meal plan fits all" approach is outdated and falls short of current market standards. Competitors like HealthifyMe and Food Darzee offer similar base products, highlighting the necessity for

differentiation. Meal.fit aims to stand out by integrating Neurogenetics and AI technology, providing a significant competitive advantage. These advanced technologies will enable the creation of personalized dietary meal plans tailored to individual dietary requirements and preferences. This approach not only meets the growing demand for personalized nutrition but also positions Cult.fit at the forefront of innovation in the nutrition market.

2.1 Product Attribute of Hyper-Personalised Meal Plans:

Meal.fit operates on the principle that everyone is unique and therefore requires a customized meal plan. The service designs personalized meal plans considering a variety of factors, including genetics, environment, lifestyle, personal behaviours, preferences, and goals. This hyper-personalized approach ensures that every meal plan is tailored to meet the specific nutritional needs and objectives of each user. By addressing these diverse and individualized factors, Meal.fit aims to provide optimal nutrition and enhance overall well-being for its customers.

Table-2: Meal.fit Product Attributes

Product Attributes	Meal.fit Implementation of mentioned product attribute
Individual Tailored Nutrition:	Machine learning algorithms will analyse user preferences, behaviour, and feedback to allow meals to be portioned based on individual calorie needs, thereby assisting with personal goals.
Personalised Health Assessment:	AI adaptation for health assessments, predicting health trends, and suggesting dietary adjustments for everyone will enable customised plans for customers with specific medical conditions and allergies
Individual Behavioural Insights:	Employing predictive analytics to understand user behaviour and identify patterns to provide feedback with meal plans that are tailored to their changing lifestyle.
Intelligent Packaging:	Including QR codes at each meal allows for instant access to detailed product information such as ingredients, nutritional content, allergens, and meal benefits. This will allow users' automation habits to improve regularly
Individual Culinary Preferences:	Applying natural language processing algorithms to interpret and analyse culinary preferences based on user input. This is significant because 66% of respondents, according to TOI, reported poor taste in healthy foods

2.2 Segmentation for Meal.fit

Market segmentation is the process of splitting customers or potential customers in a market into different groups or segments. Observing that the market is not homogeneous and that not all customers within the market segmentation are the same [9].

Table -3: Segmentation for Cult.fit Consumer Base for the product line of "Meal.fit."

Segmentations	Analysing Cult.fit's Consumer Base with the proposed new product line "Meal.fit"
Demographic Segmentation	<p>Age: According to the primary research, the target customers for Meal fit would be Generation Z (Aged 16 to 25) & Millennials (Aged 25 to 40).</p> <p>Gender: The target gender is split 70-30 between Males and Females.</p> <p>Income Class: People who belong to the elite/upper class and live in urban metropolitan cities with an aspirational lifestyle, regardless of religion or education, are more likely to use Meal.fit.</p> <p>Profession: The primary research indicates that, Meal. fit's target audience will consist of working professionals and entrepreneurs.</p>

Geographical Segmentation	<p>Population: Approximately 350 million people in the 1.4 billion populated country, India are thought to be obese or suffering from other health issues [10]. This demonstrates an instantaneous shift in the direction of better eating choices.</p> <p>Urban Neighbourhood: In 2022, urban areas were home to 35.39% of the population. Meal.fit can target these densely populated urban areas with a demographic that values health and has high disposable income. Bangalore, Chennai, Delhi, Kolkata, and Mumbai + Tier 2 & tier 3 cities.</p>
Behavioural Segmentation:	<p>Purchasing Reason: Every body type has different needs, and consumers prefer these personalised solutions because they appear to be the modern approach to maintaining a healthy body and mind by developing healthier eating habits.</p> <p>Product Benefits: Personalised meal plans would assist consumers in selecting the appropriate foods based on their preferences, allowing them to incorporate personalised nutrition into their daily lives. Consumers will view the product as a personal investment in their wellness.</p> <p>Purchasing Habits: Meal.fits' primary target market will be affluent consumers who fall into the elite class or aspirational middle class.</p> <p>Brand Loyalty: Meal.fit will leverage Cult fit's existing customer base to build on existing customer trust and loyalty and use it to expand to new customers in the nutritional health market.</p>
Psychographic segmentation	<p>Attitude: Consumers have a positive attitude towards their well-being as 92% of respondents had genuine concerns about their health. Out of which 88% of them wanted to eat healthily every day, according to the primary research.</p> <p>Social Status: These customers are called "fitness freaks" or "health-conscious consumers."</p> <p>Values & Lifestyle: Meal.fits should focus on four consumer categories Innovators, Achievers, Thinkers, and Experiencers.</p> <p>Activities: Increased physical activity, measure calories & monitor daily protein intake regularly.</p> <p>Interest: High passion for sports and fitness & learning new healthy meal recipes.</p> <p>Opinion: Positive attitude toward health-conscious Indian consumer behaviour that encourages body positivity and healthy eating habits.</p>

Typical Profile of Proposed Meal.fit Consumer:

The author utilises AIO Model. The model analyses customers and develops market segments by studying how consumers act and think.

Table -4: AIO Model Of Meal.fit Consumers

Activities	Interest	Opinions
<p>Morning Yoga: Practice morning yoga and go for a walk every day to get a fresh start.</p> <p>Meals: To reach daily calorie targets, measure healthy, high-fibre foods with high protein content.</p> <p>Work: Regular desk job from 9 to 5.</p> <p>Exercise: To maintain the body's elasticity, perform high-intensity exercises and stretching.</p> <p>Meditation: Taking care of one's mental health and inner peace.</p> <p>Recovery: For the body and mind to heal, get the recommended 8 hours of sleep.</p>	<p>Sports: Boxing, football, and other cardiovascular sports Gym: Regularly perform powerlifting and weight training</p> <p>Social media: Posting daily challenges and workouts to their networks</p> <p>Reading: Acquiring Knowledge about diverse nutritional food facts</p> <p>TV: Keeping up with major sports events like the FIFA, ICC World Championships, NBA Championship and F1 car racing.</p>	<p>-Consumer preferences and behaviour among health-conscious consumers.</p> <p>-Does not believe in the concept of "one meal plan fits all" and feels that individual needs are more important.</p> <p>-Adopts a prearranged meal plan or subscription to maintain a consistent nutritional intake.</p> <p>-Prefers low-fat and sugar-free food products and counts calories with macronutrient tracking.</p> <p>-Performs Regular health checkups for self-satisfaction.</p>

Market Segment Limitations & Advantages in Application with Cult.fit proposed for the new product "Meal.fit"

Table -5: Limitations & Advantages of Meal.fit

Limitations	Advantages
<p>→ Individual Differences: It divides consumers into groups, but Meal fit may overlook individual differences within those groups. Certain consumers might possess distinct inclinations or requirements that don't precisely match the attributes of their market niche.</p> <p>→ Nature of Markets: Consumer preferences can shift quickly. Meal.fit market strategies that are not regularly updated may become obsolete, resulting in ineffective marketing efforts and missed opportunities</p> <p>→ Stereotyping: Cult. fit's Demographic or psychographic factors may result in stereotyping, if all individuals within a segment share the same characteristics. As a result, diversity within any segment may be overlooked, which could lead to misunderstandings [10].</p>	<p>→ Targeted Marketing: It allowed the author to tailor the "need gap" to specific groups/individuals with similar needs and preferences. This targeted approach assisted the author in determining which Cult.fit product will be required for an appropriate segment.</p> <p>→ Product & Services: It enabled the author to launch "Meal.fit," a new product line of Cult.fit, that is tailored to the needs of various market niches. Customers who feel that their unique needs are being met will be more satisfied and devoted because of this customization.</p> <p>→ Competitive Advantage: By enabling Cult.fit to stand out in the marketplace, gave them a competitive advantage. By comprehending and catering to the unique needs of segments, the brand can establish itself as the primary choice in those markets, thus acquiring a competitive edge.</p>

3. Consumer Targeting & Offerings

The process of targeting is "Evaluating the market segment's attractiveness and selecting one or more segments to serve". A company must target and sustain the segment in which it can profitably generate the most customer value [11]. The author had previously identified the "need gap" in the health and fitness sector and proposed Cult.fit a new product line, Meal.fit to capitalise on the market opportunity.

The author recommends that Meal.fit adopt a Concentrated Marketing Strategy to effectively target aspirational health-conscious customers and pre-existing Cult.fit members. This strategic focus is deemed a logical initial step to minimise potential losses and maximise resource utilisation. By concentrating on a specific market segment, Meal.fit can better understand and cater to different consumer preferences and needs, ensuring a solid foundation before expanding its target audience on a larger scale. This approach will facilitate more efficient planning and resource allocation, enhancing the potential for successful market penetration and growth.

Table -6: DAMP Model Application for Meal.fit

DAMP	Application of DAMP with Targeted Segment for Meal.fit
Distinctive	The analysis of market segmentation has identified the target demographic for Meal.fit as health-conscious consumers within India's urban cities. This group comprises both males and females aged 16 to 48 years who belong to the elite and aspirational social classes. These individuals have high disposable incomes and subscribe to the belief that personalised meal plans are necessary due to genetic differences. This segment is well-educated and open to new ideas, making them receptive to the benefits of Meal.fit. They perceive personalised nutritional plans as a valuable investment in health rather than a mere expense, aligning with their health-conscious lifestyle and financial capacity. This makes them an ideal target for Meal.fit's offerings.
Accessible	The primary market segment comprises Gen Z and Millennials, who are highly tech-savvy and active on social media. To effectively reach this audience, Meal.fit should focus on optimising SEO for organic traffic and keyword search to achieve high rankings in Google Search Results, thereby attracting a substantial base of personalised nutrition consumers. Additionally, establishing an emotional connection with engaged customers will be crucial for building long-term loyalty. Given that

	approximately 70% of this demographic trusts influencers more than celebrities, investing in both micro and macro influencer marketing will be an effective strategy to guide consumer preferences and drive brand engagement.
Measurable	India's population of 1.4 billion includes over 910 million Millennials and Generation Z, with a median age of 28 and approximately 65% under the age of 35. To effectively target this demographic, Meal.fit must assess and leverage its focus on these established customer bases. To evaluate its market performance, Meal.fit should utilise Oracle SCM tools, Uber suggest, and Google Analytics. Oracle SCM will facilitate comprehensive analysis of sales data, including top-selling products and customer repurchase trends via ads and website traffic. Uber suggest and Google Analytics will be employed to measure social media engagement and the effectiveness of digital marketing campaigns. By leveraging these tools, Meal.fit can accurately gauge its progress and effectiveness in penetrating the new market niche, ensuring targeted and informed strategic decisions.
Profitable	Meal.fit aims to achieve profitability and enhance brand discovery as it enters new markets. Higher conversion rates are expected to result in increased revenue. A key opportunity lies within Cult.fit's existing base of over 100,000 active members, predominantly from Gen Z and Millennial demographics. By highlighting the nutritional benefits and advantages of its meal plans, Meal.fit can effectively capture a significant segment of the Indian market. Research indicates that 70% of respondents are now more inclined to make dietary changes to improve their health, underscoring a substantial emerging market. To succeed, Meal.fit must cultivate a dedicated customer base, given the lucrative potential of this industry.

3.1 Market Positioning

A direct Customer Value Proposition can shape customer's perceptions of a product or service, fostering positive perceptions and increasing customer loyalty and trust [12]. Meal.fit's potential customer value can be identified with the help of this tool.

- **Personalized Meal Plans:** It provides each individual with a unique and personalised culinary experience. Machine Learning Algorithms will meticulously craft user-specific dietary references, health goals, and cultural considerations to ensure a personalised approach to nutrition that fits each customer's lifestyle.
- **Holistic Health Integration:** Personalised nutrition is greatly aided by diagnostic tools, which offer important information about a person's health and dietary requirements. Conducting DNA testing on an individual to find specific genetic variations that may affect how they respond to nutrients and dietary factors and determine what would be best for their health.
- **Personalized Meal Scheduling:** Recognizing the importance of flexibility in today's fast-paced world, Meal.fit will allow users to create personalised meal schedules based on their routines. This will benefit the target audience because the primary barrier for 72% of respondents, according to the TOI report, is a lack of time

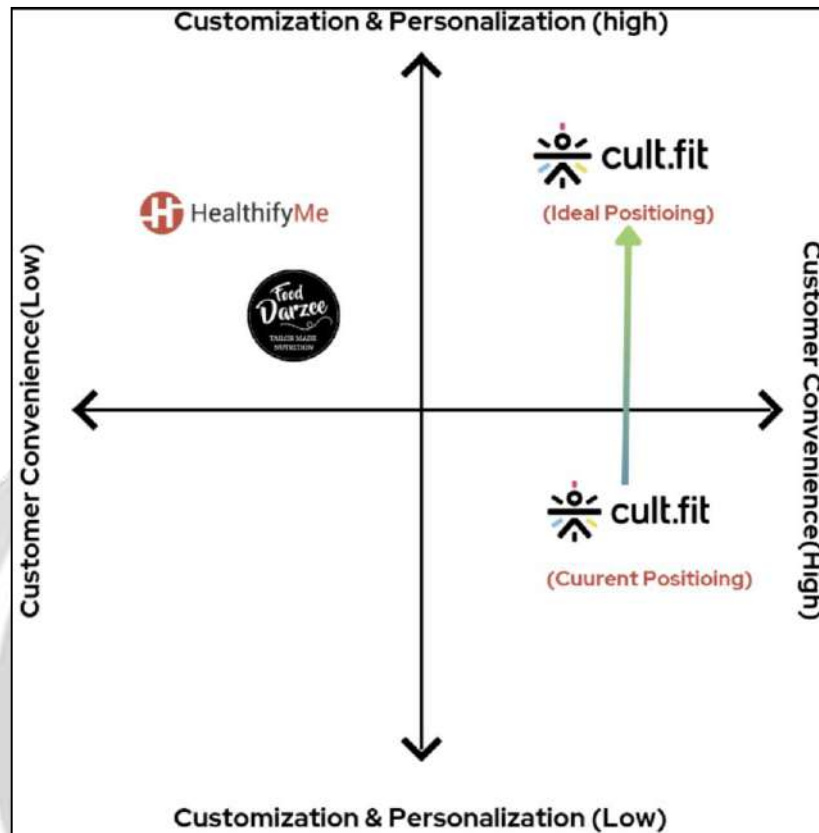
Understanding Cult.fit's position within the overall health and fitness industry is crucial to identifying the most receptive segment for the proposed Meal.fit product line. Perceptual mapping is an effective tool for assessing how Cult.fit's market position will expand with the introduction of Meal.fit.

In the aftermath of the pandemic, consumer preferences in India have shifted towards more personalized dietary solutions and organic food options, despite their higher costs. This shift highlights a growing demand for tailored nutritional products. The perceptual map below illustrates the relative positions of Cult.fit and its primary competitors in the nutritious meals market, emphasizing Cult.fit's strategic advantage and potential growth with Meal.fit.

Cult.fit's current market competitors include HealthifyMe and Food Darzee, which focus on two primary parameters: customization and personalization, and customer convenience. Both competitors occupy a mid-market position. This positioning presents an opportunity for Cult.fit to leverage its strengths in customer convenience and personalization to further develop and offer Meal.fit, a supplemental product in the industry. By capitalizing on these strengths, Cult.fit

can distinguish itself and gain a competitive advantage in the personalized nutrition market. Cult.fit will gain ideal positioning in the market with the proposed new product Meal.fit.

Fig 3- Perceptual Mapping of Cult.fit



3.2 Competitive Advantage

Meal.fit Competitive Advantages Over Competitors in The Market:

- **Nutrigenetics Integration:** Meal fit's use of nutrigenetics distinguishes it by incorporating genetic information to personalise meal plans. Compared to the more generic individual meal plans provided by HealthifyMe & Food Darzee, this method, which is based on each person's genetic characteristics and responses to various nutrients, can offer a more accurate and successful nutrition strategy.
- **AI-Powered Personalization:** Meal fit's integration of artificial intelligence (AI) enables it to continuously evaluate and modify meal plans in response to user input, personal preferences, and evolving medical criteria. In contrast to static meal plans, this dynamic personalization offers a more adaptable and dynamic experience.
- **Brand Synergy:** Existing Cult.fit users may find the Meal. fit integration more seamlessly and conveniently, promoting loyalty and cross-platform engagement. The ability to access both fitness and nutrition solutions within the same brand ecosystem may appeal to consumers looking for a more unified and integrated wellness experience.

With this competitive edge, HealthifyMe & Food Darzee won't be able to compete with the proposed product Meal.fit as they lack modernisation and technology implementation in their product & service. Meal.fit will assist Cult.fit to position as the most ideally situated to take advantage of the need gap in the nutrition meal industry.

4. Customer Journey & Influences

The author investigates and analyses the consumer purchasing process, identifying the key factors that influence purchasing decisions. Through this analysis, Meal.fit can develop targeted marketing methods that effectively engage consumers throughout their decision-making journey. Customers pass through various stages of contemplation and research before they make their final decision to purchase [13].

The author employs EBM Model to thoroughly understand the consumer purchasing journey for the proposed product, Meal.fit. The EBM Model is structured around a seven-step decision process [14]. The author applies the EBM Model to the proposed Product Meal.fit to gain a thorough understanding of the consumer purchasing journey:

Table -7: EMB Model for Meal.fit Customers

Steps Of EBM Model	Consumer Perspective
Need Recognition	Consumer preferences are shifting towards healthier diets and organic options. However, health-conscious customers are unable to maintain a consistent eating plan due to the fast-paced urban lifestyle, time constraints, and insufficient knowledge of food. This highlights the need for a healthier and more personalised meal plan.
Information Search	Customers will actively seek information on personalised meal plans, nutritional benefits, customer success stories, and testimonials. It will help them understand how beneficial a personalised meal will be and what it has to offer them. Meal.fit can use SEO strategies to improve its visibility in online searches.
Evaluation of Alternatives	Customers will compare the various meal plans available on the market, as well as the monetary price and customer value that each product provides. Comparing this will assist the customer in determining the best brand for the problem they are experiencing. Meal fit can benefit from offering competitive pricing when compared to its main competitors.
Purchase Decision	Customers will determine which meal plan is most effective for them based on their personal health goals and purchasing power. They can rely on the brand that makes them feel like they're making a worthwhile investment by becoming their customer. Meal.fit can provide free consultations with nutrition experts to increase customers' interest.
Purchase	Customers will complete the product purchase and the payment transaction. They will pay with the brand that is most suitable and convenient for them, based on their characteristics. Meal.fit can work on a subscription-based model & offer a variety of payment options, including a free trial, and EMI subscription-based payments, for customer convenience.
Post-Purchase Evaluation	Customers will evaluate the effectiveness of personalised meal plans and their overall satisfaction with them. They will recognize the usefulness of the product and the value of the entire experience. This will determine whether they will remain a loyal customer in the future. Meal fit should collect regular feedback and implement continuous improvement based on data insights.
Post Purchase Behaviour	Customers will share with others about their overall experience, including friends and family members. Sharing their transformational journey and testimonials, they will become advocates for the brand. Meal.fit should encourage customers to share their success stories on social media platforms to boost brand credibility.

To generate a buying response, Meal.fit's marketing activities should engage target customers throughout their journey. The campaign must be classy and unique to capture the audience's attention and generate buzz. A catchy slogan like "Meal.fit: Crafted for You, guided by AI Brilliance" can effectively promote the product and increase retention. All marketing materials should direct traffic to the Cult.fit or Meal.fit website, boosting organic traffic and conversions.

4.1 Key Influences Impact on Customers

Consumer preferences are increasingly shifting toward individualized diet plans. However, consumers are becoming more selective about the foods they eat and the sustainability of their diet plans. Several factors, including cultural, social, group, and individual influences, significantly impact their purchasing behaviour.

4.1.1 Cultural Influences

Cultural factors are the fundamental values, needs, wants, preferences, perceptions, and behaviours that a consumer observes and learns from their close family members and other important people around them.

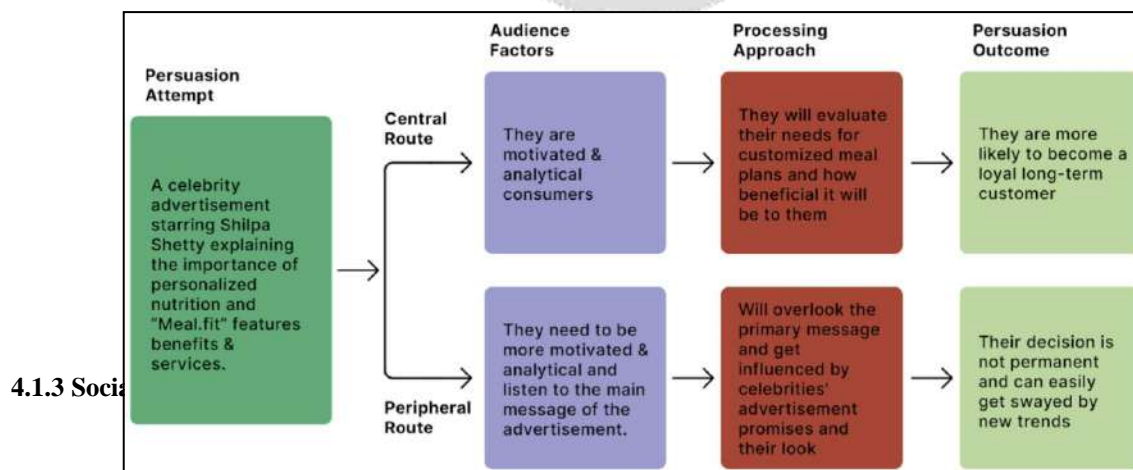
- **Diverse Dietary Preferences:** India's cultural diversity manifests in a variety of culinary traditions and dietary preferences. A 2021 survey indicated that 24% of Indians are vegetarians, and 18% are selective meat eaters [15]. Consumers often seek personalized meal plans that cater to their regional dietary habits, considering factors like vegetarianism, spice levels, and staple foods. To address this, Meal.fit can offer customized meal plans tailored to a wide range of dietary requirements and cultural preferences nationwide.
- **Festivals and Celebrations:** India's numerous festivals and events are closely associated with specific traditional foods and culinary rituals. During festivals like Diwali, sugar consumption increases by 38% in males and 25% in females. Consumers may seek healthier versions of traditional dishes to enjoy festive meals without compromising their health goals. Meal.fit can develop custom meal plans for festivals, offering healthier twists on traditional dishes to help customers maintain their health objectives while enjoying celebrations.
- **Ayurvedic Influences:** Ayurveda, an ancient medical system, plays a significant role in Indian culture, promoting a holistic approach to health through balanced lifestyles and natural remedies. Approximately 77% of the population uses Ayurvedic products. Meal.fit can integrate Ayurvedic principles into its personalized meal plans, highlighting the brand's commitment to holistic well-being and reflecting the cultural emphasis on natural and balanced living.

4.1.2 Celebrity Influences

Celebrity influencers are crucial for promoting products in the health and fitness industry, significantly enhancing brand visibility and credibility. Connecting Meal.fit with relevant celebrity influencers can elevate its market presence. Currently, Bollywood actor Ranveer Singh is Cult.fit's brand ambassador. However, Eat.fit lacks a brand ambassador. Endorsements from celebrities can significantly impact consumer trust and perception, especially in personalized health meal plans. Appointing Shilpa Shetty as the brand ambassador for Meal.fit can present the product positively to the audience. She is known for her focus on wellness and healthy living, can effectively promote Meal.fit as an excellent solution for personalized nutrition.

The Elaboration likelihood model states there are two ways that the target audience of 'Meal.fit' can be persuaded:

Fig 4- Elaboration Likelihood Model



- **Cultural and Social Norms:** Cultural and social expectations about body image and health significantly influence individual choices. Societal expectations dictate certain appearances for different age groups, leading to widespread issues of body dysmorphia and insecurity. Cultural pressures to maintain specific body weights can exacerbate these issues. Meal.fit can collaborate with Mind.fit to promote personalized health meal plans that not only benefit physical well-being but also encourage mindfulness and self-love.
- **Social media & Peer Influence:** Social media platforms play a crucial role in shaping opinions and trends, with many individuals sharing their "body goals" and transformational journeys online. User-generated content and testimonials on these platforms significantly influence consumer decisions. Meal.fit can leverage this by encouraging customers to share their success stories, testimonials, and meal plan experiences on social media. This strategy will create a positive community and foster peer influence, attracting new customers to the platform.

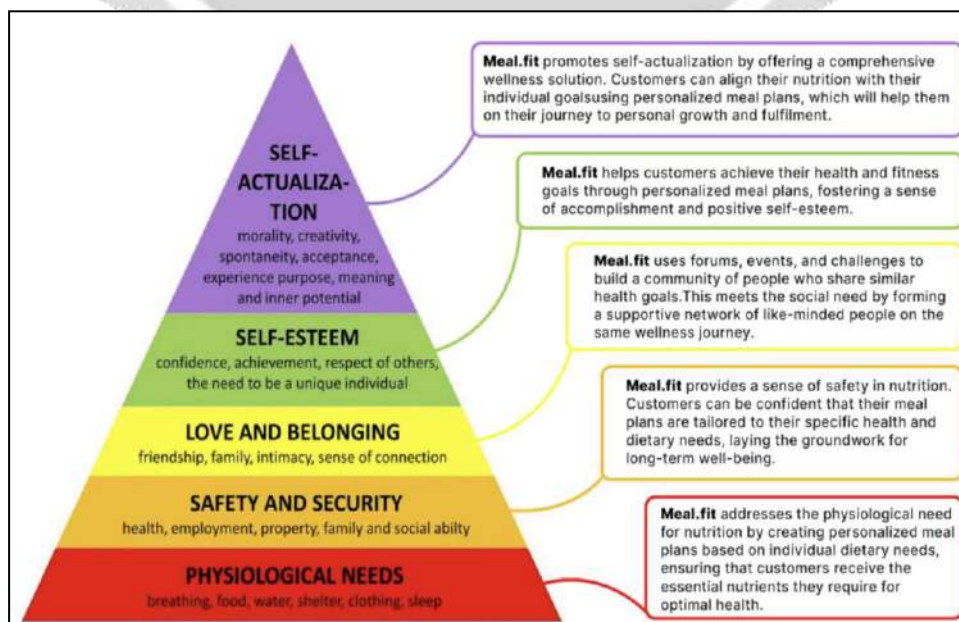
4.1.4 Individual Influences

- **Health Goals and Preferences:** Indian consumers are increasingly interested in dietary changes and healthy eating habits. Individuals with specific health and wellness goals, as well as those addressing dietary concerns, are motivated to use Meal.fit for its personalized meal plans that align with their health objectives.
- **Nutritional Preferences and Allergies:** Customers with specific nutritional preferences, such as vegetarianism, veganism, or allergy-related dietary restrictions, are attracted to Meal.fit's personalized meal recommendations. The inclusion of nutrigenetics ensures that diet plans are tailored to everyone's specific needs.
- **Lifestyle and Time Constraints:** Time constraints and hectic schedules pose significant obstacles to meal planning and preparation. According to a 2021 survey by the Times of India, 57% of Indian workers feel overworked and 32% are exhausted, indicating a preference for ordering takeout over cooking at home [2]. Meal.fit addresses these time constraints by offering convenient and tailored meal solutions.

4.1.5 Psychological Influences

According to Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs, individuals progress through various levels of satisfaction. Some needs will be more urgent than others based on the situation and context. Certain products can meet multiple needs in Maslow's hierarchy. Marketers should avoid if people must meet all five levels of needs to feel satisfied.

Fig 5- Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



Consumer priorities vary, with some focusing on physiological needs while others prioritize achieving goals and enhancing self-esteem. The primary need to address is self-actualization, which demands hyper-personalized meal plans tailored to individual preferences. These factors significantly influence consumer behaviour.

Although changing cultural and social influences requires time and effort, "Meal.fit" can effectively increase its visibility and appeal through a targeted marketing campaign. This campaign should emphasize Meal.fit's unique approach to personalized nutrition, moving beyond generic solutions. It should focus on the target audience's intelligence, identity, and growing awareness of customized meal plans. By highlighting these aspects, Meal.fit can attract and engage consumers seeking in-depth, personalized nutrition solutions.

Sensory marketing relates to psychological Influences based on the concept of embodied cognition, which suggests that our bodily sensations influence our decisions without conscious awareness [17]. Meal.fit can strengthen emotional connections with customers and improve overall perception of their products or services by appealing to their senses.

Table -8: Sensory Marketing for Meal.fit

Visual Appeal	"People eat with their eyes first, then their mouths". They will judge it first on its aesthetic appeal, followed by the flavour. Using visually appealing imagery in Meal.fit marketing materials, highlighting vibrant, fresh ingredients and beautifully presented meals. This will improve the perception of health and quality associated with Meal.fit.
Aromas & Flavours	Aromas play an important role in our perception of food. Before we even taste the food, the whiff and aroma enter our brains via our olfactory nerves, causing a sense of hunger and craving. Emphasising the delicious flavours and aromas of Meal.fit dishes using descriptive language such as "mouthwatering, appetising & savoury" to evoke the sensory experience of enjoying a delicious and personalised meal.
Tactile Experience	Emphasising the tactile experience of eating by describing the textures and mouthfeel of Meal.fit's carefully crafted dishes will have a positive impact on consumers because touching food can elicit a stronger sensory response. This can make food appear more appealing and desirable.
Sounds	Meal fit should use sounds from the meal experience in their marketing material, like the satisfying crunch of fresh vegetables or the sizzle of a grill. This can improve the auditory dimension of the brand and can influence customers towards the brand.

5. Ethical & Responsible Marketing

Business ethics are moral codes of conduct based on the values of honesty, dependability, respect, integrity, responsibility, and loyalty. Responsible marketing is a strategy that seeks to meet customer needs while also benefiting them and the community. It's about establishing trust. Marketing ethics are moral values that lay the groundwork for marketing behaviour in terms of stakeholder management, product pricing, safety, interpersonal relationships, and taking actions to create positive changes in the environment and society [18].

Ethical consumerism, where purchasing decisions are influenced by the ethical and moral values of businesses, is a growing trend. A 2022 survey revealed that 94% of Indian consumers are willing to pay more for ethically sourced or manufactured products. Additionally, 29% of consumers would permanently stop buying from a brand if it were accused of unethical practices. The survey also highlighted that 79% of Indian consumers believe businesses must ensure their suppliers adhere to an ethical code. With evolving expectations for ethical activities and transparency, businesses are increasingly compelled to adjust their practices to align with these consumer values.

FSSAI reports that 30-40% of food in India is wasted daily, amounting to approximately 50 kg per person annually or 70 million tonnes. This significant waste contributes 8-10% to global carbon emissions, with a carbon footprint estimated at 3.3 billion tonnes of greenhouse gases annually. Meal kits offer a viable solution to this issue by providing precise quantities of ingredients, thereby minimising spoilage and leftovers. Studies indicate that meal kits can reduce food waste by over two-thirds compared to non-tailored meals, presenting a substantial opportunity to mitigate food waste and its environmental impact.

Table -9: Meal.fit Proposed Activities to Help Reduce Food Wastage:

Precise Portion Control	Meal.fit's personalised meal plans are tailored to everyone's nutritional requirements, ensuring that each portion is accurately calculated. Meal.fit reduces food waste by giving customers the exact amount of food they need.
Smart Inventory Management	Meal.fit's personalised meal plans generated through the platform prevent unnecessary purchases and reduce the likelihood of food items going unused due to efficient inventory management.
Seasonal & Local Sourcing	Meal.fit's meal plans emphasise the use of seasonal and locally sourced ingredients. By aligning with regional produce availability, Meal.fit reduces the carbon footprint of long-distance transportation while also supporting local farmers. This strategic approach promotes sustainability while minimising food waste.
Reducing Expiry & Spoilage	Meal fit considers the shelf life of ingredients when creating meal plans, reducing the risk of items expiring before being used. By strategically incorporating perishable items, the risk of food spoilage is reduced.

Marketing Ethics Issue in the Fitness and Health Industry: The fitness and health industry, particularly in terms of weight loss, is unfortunately vulnerable to ethical issues caused by weight loss guarantee programs and false promises.

- **Unrealistic Weight Loss Guarantees:** Bold claims about rapid and fast weight loss can lead to disappointment, frustration, and even health risks, as people may take extreme measures to achieve quick results.
- **Misleading Before-and-After Photos:** The use of manipulated or deceptive before-and-after photos to demonstrate the efficacy of a diet plan to pique customers' interest and trust. However, consumers may be misled into believing that these transformations are easily accomplished with the promoted product or program, resulting in false expectations.
- **Lack of personalization in diet plans:** Offering generic, one-size-fits-all diet plans that ignore individual health conditions, preferences, and dietary requirements. Personalized care is essential for optimal health, and failing to consider individual differences may have negative health consequences.

Proposed product Meal.fit, ethical marketing practices:

- **Transparency in Communication:** Meal.fit should clearly communicate how artificial intelligence and nutrigenetics are used to create personalised meal plans. Providing detailed information about the data collection process will help consumers understand how their genetic information is used and protected. This transparency will build customer trust and loyalty.
- **Data Security and Privacy Measures:** It is crucial to emphasise the implementation of robust data security and privacy protocols. User data should be anonymized before access by engineers and data scientists, ensuring compliance with applicable data protection regulations. Assuring consumers that their genetic data is handled with care will reinforce their confidence in the brand.
- **Educational Content:** Developing educational content is essential to help consumers understand the science behind nutrigenetics and its impact on personalised meal plans. By educating consumers on the technology's benefits and limitations, Meal.fit can empower them to make informed decisions.

6. Conclusion

This report advocates for Cult.fit to integrate its Eat.fit business with a new product line, Meal.fit, which offers personalized meal plans for health-conscious consumers with various dietary restrictions. The proposed strategy aims to assist customers in achieving their nutritional goals through daily tailored meal solutions. Utilizing the DAMP model, the report segments and targets the market effectively, considering different cultural, social, and personal factors influencing consumer choices in meal planning.

To ensure successful market penetration, the report emphasizes understanding decision-making processes using the EBM framework. This includes implementing sensory marketing and psychological tactics that address consumer needs and resonate with the target audience. Through competitor analysis, Meal.fit can identify its closest rivals and strategically position itself within the market. Moreover, Meal.fit is advised to focus on mitigating ethical and sustainability issues prevalent in the market. This approach is particularly crucial for engaging younger consumers who prioritize these values and can form a strong emotional bond with a brand that aligns with their ethical standards.

In summary, the integration of Eat.fit with Meal.fit represents a strategic opportunity for Cult.fit to expand its footprint in the personalized nutrition market. By leveraging insights from market segmentation, decision-making frameworks, and competitor analysis, Meal.fit can effectively meet consumer demands and differentiate itself in a competitive landscape. Addressing ethical and sustainability concerns will further enhance brand loyalty among younger demographics, driving long-term success. The proposed combination of Eat.fit and Meal.fit aligns with Cult.fit's mission to "make health easy," positioning the company for continued growth and leadership in the health and wellness industry.

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GIVA: A Study on Marketing & Digital Strategies

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ABSTRACT

GIVA, Bangalore-based D2C silver jewellery startup established in 2019, draws inspiration from renowned fine jewellery brands like US-based Mejuri and Denmark-based Pandora. As an omnichannel brand, GIVA has successfully collaborated with major retailers and is present in over 40 retail outlets across more than 7 cities in India. Originally focused on being the best choice for silver jewellery, GIVA has since shifted its mission towards providing affordable luxury. In its expansion, it has leveraged digital marketing and social media to effectively promote the notion that "silver is the new gold." To maintain a sustainable competitive advantage in the fast-paced Indian jewellery industry, it must comprehensively understand the factors affecting profitability and adapt its strategy accordingly. This research analyses and examines GIVA Jewellery's marketing and digital initiatives, aiming to recommend further expansion and innovation for the brand. The report serves as both an industry analysis and a marketing plan for GIVA, scrutinising its top competitors, identifying their weaknesses and opportunities, determining GIVA's industry position, and establishing distinct consumer segments and target audiences. By employing various industry theories and frameworks, the study positions GIVA within its competitive landscape and demonstrates how the company's positioning will evolve once the proposed marketing and digital strategies are implemented. Moreover, the report details the execution of the marketing plan with media examples, offering ongoing recommendations to enhance brand discoverability, customer loyalty, and foster an innovative marketing approach. Implementing and discussing these strategies is crucial for GIVA to achieve a higher market share in the Indian jewellery industry.

Keyword: - Digital Marketing, Industry Structure, Competitor Analysis, Marketing Strategies, Media Kit

1. Industry Structure

India is the leading revenue generator in the Jewellery market, it accounts for 7% of the country's GDP and 16% of total merchandise exports in India, making it one of the fastest-growing industries. The industry is vital to the Indian economy, with a projected revenue of US\$77 billion in 2023. This market is expected to grow at a CAGR of 5% from 2023 to 2026 [1]. In FY23, Giva recorded a total revenue of US \$20 Million (INR. 167 Cr.) This represents a 98% increase over the previous year's figure of US \$10.1 Million (INR 84.5 Cr.) However, the startup's net loss jumped to US \$5.7 million (INR 45.2 Cr), up 138% from the previous year [2].

Fig 1 – Jewellery Industry Projected Revenue Till 2023 [3]



1.1 Silver Jewellery Industry

98% of jewellery sales are expected to come from the non-luxury category. Cultural and regional preferences can influence how luxury and non-luxury jewellery are perceived. In India, the perception of silver jewellery varies, and it is considered both a luxury and a non-luxury item. Since 925 silver is GIVA's main product, the author concentrates on the market for the affordable luxury jewellery segment. In 2022, the demand for silver exceeded 3.4 thousand metric tons. This represented a 90% increase over the previous year [4].

High Luxury Jewellery	Affordable Luxury Jewellery	Non Luxury Jewellery
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gold • Platinum • Palladium • Natural Diamond • Titanium 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 925 Silver • Lab Grown Diamond 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ceramic • Stainless Steel • Rhodium

Figure 3 | Luxury & Non Luxury Jewellery in India | (Student Work, 2023)

Fig 2 – Luxury & Non-Luxury Jewellery in India

Showing that silver is no longer considered poor man's gold. Since 2020, consumers' perceptions of 925 silver have shifted, and it is now in high demand due to its affordability. This demonstrates a positive indicator for GIVA's future as consumers gain more access to Fast Fashion Jewellery products, which is where GIVA's 925 silver products are primarily sold.

1.2 Industry Consumer

The post-COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically altered the Indian economic landscape and consumer behaviour, resulting in rapidly evolving preferences. This shift is evident in the growing price sensitivity among consumers, with 45% prioritising products with attractive offers and 38% diligently comparing prices across e-commerce platforms [5]. Moreover, a pronounced inclination towards sustainability is observed, as 66% of Gen Z consumers express a willingness to pay a premium for environmentally friendly products, while 73% prioritise ethical sourcing [6]. To thrive in this dynamic market, GIVA must adapt to these evolving consumer expectations by offering value-driven and sustainable products.

1.3 GIVA's SWOT Framework

Table -1: GIVA SWOT Framework

SWOT	GIVA SWOT Framework Application
Strength	<p>1. Trust and Loyalty: GIVA Jewellery has an overall rating of 4.5 /5. Over half of 50% of customers place repeat orders. All Products have a BIS hallmark and an authenticity mark made of 925 silvers.</p> <p>2. D2C Model Advantage: GIVA oversees the entire product lifecycle. They do not have to share a first-party database of over 1.2 million users with any retailers.</p> <p>3. Innovative Designs: GIVA offers over 6,000 fine silver jewellery designs, Every week, the internal design team creates over 50 new designs to provide new trendy products to its customers.</p>
Weakness	<p>1. Weak Offline Presence: Only 15% of its revenue comes from offline retail stores, and 8% of Indian consumers feel comfortable purchasing jewellery online, this may cause future restrictions.</p> <p>2. Unsustainable Product Packaging: They should work on developing a sustainable form of luxury packaging using paper and cotton to improve the brand's overall perception.</p> <p>3. Less Valuable: 925 silver jewellery, is not as valuable as gold and diamond. Concerns about the brand's 925 silver jewellery's inferior durability compared to gold and diamond pieces have been raised.</p>
Opportunity	<p>1. Men's/ Couple's Jewellery Market: The stereotype that only women wear jewellery has been disproved by the rise of men's jewellery. This is a huge opportunity for GIVA to grow their male customer base and better understand changing customer trends and behaviour.</p>

	<p>2. AI booming and integration: GIVA can expand its customer base and improve operations by utilising AI in CRM, design and logistics software. They can be the pioneer in the industry by integrating AI with Jewellery.</p> <p>3. Sustainable Customer Market: With the global trend towards sustainability. GIVA can focus on their already-established lab-grown diamond by promoting it as an affordable and sustainable solution for the future.</p>
Threats	<p>1. High Competition: In India, the jewellery market is extremely competitive, with chain stores accounting for 35% of the retail jewellery market. Caratlane and Tanishq are the market's major competitors for GIVA.</p> <p>2. Slower & Lower Conversion Rates: The conversion rate of brick-and-mortar precious jewellery stores is over 50%, while online precious jewellery stores have a conversion rate of less than 1%.</p>

2. Competitor Analysis

To enhance GIVA's long-term profitability, the author employs Porter's Five Forces framework as a tool to gain a comprehensive understanding of industry competition. Recognizing that an organization's strategic direction must navigate both opportunities and threats within its external environment, Porter's framework isolates five key competitive forces that can impact an organization's profitability [7]. Since the jewellery market is not monopolistic, there is a fierce rivalry and constant focus on detail as brands strive to improve and innovate. Two significant rivals of GIVA that have been in the market for more than 15 years are Caratlane and Tanishq. Titan Company Limited, the parent company of Caratlane, owns Tanishq. Caratlane and Tanishq, on the other hand, are separate brands with separate operations. Each brand's designs are only available at their respective stores [8].

Table -2: Porter's 5 Forces of Indian Jewellery Industry

Porter's 5 Forces	Industry Impact	Implications to the Industry
Threats Of New Entrants	Low To Moderate	Tanishq, Caratlane, and Malabar Gold, as established unicorn companies, have created significant barriers to entry in India's jewellery industry. Their extensive financial resources and over 15 years of industry experience enable them to offer highly competitive prices compared to newer entrants, compounded by the industry's stringent legal requirements.
Bargaining Power of Suppliers	Moderate to High	India's position as the world's largest jewellery supplier grants its producers moderate to high bargaining power. However, a limited pool of authentic, ethical suppliers within the country can significantly elevate this bargaining power, especially for those offering unique, high-quality products.
Bargaining Power of Buyers	Moderate	Buyers possess a degree of bargaining power due to the availability of diverse brands, designs, and price points. This power is influenced by factors such as price sensitivity, evolving customer preferences, and the presence of alternative options. Nevertheless, the supplier retains primary pricing authority given the robust demand for jewellery in both domestic and international markets.
Threats Of Substitutes	Low	Imitation, artificial, and fully sustainable jewellery present viable alternatives within the market, yet the intrinsic significance of jewellery in Indian culture and history remains unparalleled. Given the irreplaceability of their authenticity and value, the threat of substitute power is minimal.
Intensity Of Competitive Rivalry	High	India's jewellery market is fiercely competitive, with over 90,000 domestic players vying for market share. This intense competition is driven by factors such as pricing, innovative designs, effective marketing strategies, and cultivating strong customer loyalty.

2.1 Website Analysis

GIVA's website is well-designed, using pastel colours to convey a minimalist luxury brand atmosphere. The website's image-to-product ratio is appropriate to suggest a call to action. GIVA can roll out an AI recommendation feature that will assist users in customising their searches, thereby increasing conversion rates. GIVA's User Interface (UI) is on par with competitors Caratlane and Tanishq, displaying the brand's clean aesthetic. The Adaptive User Experience (UX) of the three brands makes online shopping more accessible. GIVA, on the other hand, has the highest SEO score, giving it an advantage in technical SEO, content, UX, and mobile usability.

Table -3: SEO Comparison Table Between Competitors

Website Tools	GIVA	Caratlane	Tanishq
On-Page SEO Score	83	61	79
Organic Monthly Traffic	456,840	17,451,997	28,575,481
Backlinks	16,975	452,706	281,643
Organic Keywords	162,535	358,419	390,617
Domain Authority	31	55	53

Areas of Improvement: GIVA can enhance its online presence through several SEO strategies. Firstly, improving on-page SEO is essential. This involves increasing the number of backlinks and incorporating more organic content keywords on their website. Such improvements will boost the site's relevance and reliability, thereby increasing its domain authority and improving its ranking on search engine result pages.

Additionally, focusing on off-page SEO is crucial for GIVA to build trustworthiness. This can be achieved through strategies like content marketing and guest link building, which also contribute to a higher domain authority. Furthermore, GIVA should analyse their keyword gap and research low-competitive keywords. Implementing quarterly SEM campaigns will allow them to analyse and compare their progress, observe different campaign responses, and track various SEO metrics. This comprehensive approach will ultimately enhance GIVA's search engine ranking and overall effectiveness [9].

Table -4: Site Speed Table Between Competitors

Site Speed	GIVA	Caratlane	Tanishq
DESKTOP			
Load Time	2.06 secs	2.48 secs	2.37 secs
Interactivity	4 milli secs	4 milli secs	3 milli secs
Visual Stability	0.25	0.16	0.006
MOBILE			
Load Time	2.49 secs	5.22 secs	3.05 secs
Interactivity	24 milli secs	242 milli secs	97 milli secs
Visual Stability	0.25	0.03	0.38

Green- Impressive performance | Yellow- Average performance | Red- Poor performance.

Tanishq's organic approach to website optimization and content creation is exemplary, generating organic traffic that is seventy times greater than GIVA. Conversely, GIVA's superior website speed on both desktop and mobile platforms enhances user experience and positively impacts SEO [10]. However, the company's website suffers from poor visual stability due to the use of lazy loading for images and videos. Implementing size attributes could significantly improve this aspect, thereby optimising overall website performance.

2.2 Social Media Analysis

GIVA primarily leverages Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube as its social media platforms due to their expressive and interactive nature. These channels facilitate direct engagement with customers, enabling businesses to gather valuable insights into preferences and receive constructive feedback. Ultimately, this enhances customer relationship management and cultivates a loyal customer base.

Table 5- GIVA's Competitor Social Media Comparison

Business	Instagram	Facebook	YouTube	Twitter	LinkedIn
GIVA	557,000	66,000	8,770	193	80,000
Caratlane	952,000	2,100,000	102,000	4,992	89,000
Tanishq	981,000	1,500,000	147,000	41,000	2,000

Instagram Analysis: GIVA's Instagram performance is satisfactory; they have gradually improved their visual appeal with high-quality content and a diverse range of product displays. However, when compared to its competitors, GIVA needs to increase customer engagement because a more interactive consumer base leads to a higher conversion rate.

Table 6- GIVA's Competitor Instagram Comparison

Instagram Metrics	Last 30 days Followers	Total Media Uploads	Average engagement	Average comments	Average likes	Average reel views
GIVA	9,210	4,639	0.04%	11.31	212.63	50-100k
Caratlane	10,620	4,325	0.11%	18.88	1033.19	100k-150k
Tanishq	6,840	3,055	0.41%	22.06	4038.56	150k-200k

Facebook Analysis: GIVA's Facebook performance is below average, with inconsistent media upload and a low interactive customer base. They have an exceptionally low engagement rate with the level of interaction. A concrete media plan to increase their interaction level can significantly increase GIVA's customer base.

Table 7- GIVA's Competitor Facebook Comparison

Facebook Metrics	Total Page likes	Media Uploads (last 30 days)	Total Interactions (last 30 days)	Engagement rate
GIVA	44,640	8	128	0.04%
Caratlane	2,137,783	29	4522	0.01%
Tanishq	1,476,950	31	13374	0.03%

YouTube Analysis: Recently, GIVA has begun focusing on their YouTube channel to raise brand awareness and boost brand discovery. Their video viewership and interactivity are at an all-time high. However, they are still considered a small YouTube channel and need to increase their subscriber count to change that perspective.

Table 8- GIVA's Competitor YouTube Comparison

YouTube Metrics	Total Video Uploaded	Total Video Views	Subscribers (last 30 days)	Video Views (last 30 days)	Upload Rate
GIVA	843	177.5 Million	190	12.5 Million	HIGH
Caratlane	276	352.2 Million	5,200	5.27 Million	LOW
Tanishq	641	526.4 Million	4,000	13.5 Million	MODERATE

3. Marketing Strategies

The author suggests realistic and attainable strategies for GIVA to achieve their goals using the SMART objective. Writing effective management goals is made easier with the help of the SMART method: specific, measurable, assignable, realistic, and time related [11].

Table -9: SMART Goals Implemented for GIVA

Marketing	Society	Finance
To significantly expand brand reach and customer acquisition, GIVA must execute a multi-pronged strategy. Initially, they must elevate social media engagement by 1.5% by March 31st, 2024, through strategic partnerships with emerging influencers and a concentrated focus on younger Gen Z and Millennial demographics. Simultaneously, launching an interactive marketing campaign centred around a new, gender-neutral jewellery line, such as couples' jewellery, will effectively target the lucrative Gen Z market. Moreover, increasing organic website traffic by 10% will further enhance brand discovery. Finally, to optimise omni channel presence, they should establish a minimum of 100 retail locations in Tier II and Tier III cities by the end of FY 23-24.	To align with sustainability goals, GIVA will replace plastic wraps and boxes with recyclable paper boxes and cotton wool. Their primary objective should be a complete transition to recyclable and sustainable packaging by the end of the fiscal year 2024. To achieve this, they must aim to offer 10,000 products in eco-friendly packaging options to cater to their growing eco-conscious customer base. Additionally, they should target a 5% sales increase for sustainable and recyclable metal jewellery by March 2024. To bolster brand awareness and transparency, they should publish weekly blogs and news updates featuring GIVA data on sustainable development initiatives.	By imposing a supplementary 1% charge on total order value for environmentally friendly packaging, the business can sustain its operations without compromising production levels throughout FY24. This strategic move will enable the company to uphold its commitment to sustainability while maintaining operational efficiency. Furthermore, GIVA should establish a target to increase revenue streams and conversion rates by 10% through enhanced marketing efforts by March 2024.

After the SMART Objectives, the author developed a comprehensive framework guide for each dimension of the SPACE matrix, a strategic tool that identifies a company's strategic position and pinpoints critical factors influencing development processes. Building upon the BCG matrix, the SPACE model offers a more advanced approach to evaluating strategic options [12].

Table -10: Space Analysis Implemented for GIVA

Internal Strategic Position	External Strategic Position
<p><u>Financial Strength (FS):</u> Giva's FY23 revenue surged 98% to US\$20 million, though its net loss escalated 138% to US\$5.7 million. Consequently, the EBITA margin deteriorated to -25.3% from -22.2% in FY22. Expenses ballooned to US\$25 million from US\$12.5 million, driven by a 64% increase in selling and marketing costs to US\$9.2 million and a 114% rise in procurement costs to US\$8.9 million [13]. The latter indicates robust demand for Giva's jewellery. Moreover, employee benefit costs skyrocketed 306% to US\$2.5 million due to increased staffing to support new retail outlets.</p>	<p><u>Environmental Strength (ES)-</u> Bangalore-based D2C silver jewellery startup GIVA experienced a tenfold sales increase during the COVID-19 pandemic, fuelled by shifting consumer preferences towards online shopping [14]. GIVA's success is influenced by numerous factors within the jewellery industry, including high income and price elasticity, elevated inflation, intense competition, seasonal demand fluctuations, and heightened market uncertainty. Moreover, the younger generation's preference for environmentally friendly products and ethical brands aligns with GIVA's sustainable business model, which utilises lab-grown diamonds instead of mined ones.</p>
<p><u>Competitive Advantage (CA):</u> GIVA is a vertically integrated business controlling product design, marketing, manufacturing, and packaging, granting it higher profit margins. Despite this advantage, its market share within India's jewellery sector remains relatively small. The company offers a vast, over 6,000-strong collection of fine silver jewellery with gold and rose gold plating, emphasising premium materials like gold and sterling silver. Each piece is certified 925 sterling silver, and the company introduces over 50 new designs weekly to align with evolving trends. GIVA primarily operates online, generating 85% of sales digitally, with over 50% of customers making repeat purchases, indicating strong customer loyalty. All GIVA jewellery is stamped with a 925-silver authenticity mark, carries the mandatory BIS hallmark, and includes a six-month plating warranty for online purchases.</p>	<p><u>Industry Strength (IS):</u> India is the global leader in jewellery revenue, generating a projected US\$77 billion in 2023 and anticipating a 5% CAGR through 2026. This rapid growth, contributing 7% to India's GDP and 16% of merchandise exports (Somani, 2023), positions the sector as a key economic driver. India's annual jewellery consumption surged 52% in 2021 (World Gold Council, 2022), underpinned by government incentives reducing import duties on precious metals, thereby lowering domestic prices (Somani, 2023). Moreover, Digital India's expansion has connected over 790 million people, facilitating seamless product comparison and purchase (Joshy, 2023), a boon for e-commerce jewellery leaders like GIVA.</p>

Scoring of SPACE Matrix:

Dimensions	Score	Strategic Posture- Competitive
Financial Strength (FS)	2	Weak
Environmental Strength (ES)	-5	Unstable
Competitive Advantage (CA)	2	Moderate
Industry Strength (IS)	5	High

GIVA's position in the competitive quadrant highlights a market advantage, though financial instability due to environmental factors poses a challenge. While its affordable luxury proposition differentiates it from competitors, securing additional funding is crucial to compete with established players like Tanishq, Caratlane, and Malabar Gold. To drive revenue growth and expand brand awareness, GIVA must cultivate a strong connection with the

sustainability-focused Generation Z demographic through robust social media engagement, a channel where it already boasts a strong presence.

3.1 Segmentation & Targeting

According to Philip Kotler, the idea of market segmentation originates in economic theory, in which a business creates a total addressable market by dividing the market into homogeneous segments based on one or more characteristics such as age, income, geography, lifestyle, or behaviour [15].

The author was able to evaluate the characteristics of different customer bases that interact with GIVA and identify a prospective segment to develop specialised marketing strategies through segmentation. GIVA's primary target audience comprises 24- to 35-year-old women, primarily Millennials. This demographic exhibits a higher level of trust in e-commerce platforms compared to other generations. While receptive to product innovation, they tend to exhibit strong brand loyalty, demonstrating a reluctance to switch brands. Given these characteristics, this analysis concludes that this demographic may not constitute the optimal target audience for GIVA's marketing campaign. Consequently, a new target segment is proposed in the following section.

Given the consumer data analysed, Generation Z should be the primary target audience for GIVA's marketing campaign. As GIVA primarily operates in e-commerce, their heavy online presence aligns perfectly with this demographic's consumer behaviour. Gen Z's inclination towards image and trends makes them ideal consumers for GIVA's affordable, fast-fashion jewellery, especially considering the brand's average selling price of less than \$60 aligns with their purchasing power [16]. GIVA's established e-commerce presence and the fact that 72% of Gen Z are more likely to purchase from brands they follow on social media offer significant opportunities for engagement with this target market.

The author suggests using the DAMP Model as Kotler proposed that the chosen target segment needs to be Distinct, Accessible, Measurable, and Profitable for market segmentation to be effective.

Table -11: DAMP Model Implemented for GIVA

DAMP Factors	Implementation of Generation Z with GIVA
Distinctive	The target demographic comprises urban Indian males and females aged 18 to 26 who are well-informed consumers conducting thorough research before purchasing. GIVA, as an e-commerce platform, holds a competitive advantage within this market due to its capacity to enhance SEO rankings and leverage digital marketing tools for effective customer engagement. Consequently, this segment does not intersect with any other demographic.
Accessible	Given their status as a highly active market segment, GIVA can effectively reach Gen Z through both online and offline channels. As discerning consumers with a strong reliance on research, these demographic demands transparency and authenticity. To foster emotional connections, GIVA should prioritise open communication about its brand story. Leveraging micro and macro influencer marketing can significantly impact Gen Z, considering that approximately 70% prioritise influencer recommendations over celebrity endorsements. For offline engagement, participating in flea markets provides an opportunity to showcase product quality and build consumer trust.
Measurable	Composing 48% of India's consumer base, Generation Z, numbering over 116 million, represents a substantial market segment. Given its size, GIVA must evaluate the efficacy of targeting this demographic. To assess monthly growth within this segment, the company can leverage Uber suggest, Google Analytics, and Oracle SCM tools. Oracle SCM provides insights into website traffic, customer repurchases driven by advertising, top-selling products, and overall platform sales. Concurrently, Uber suggest, and Google Analytics will measure social media campaign performance and engagement metrics. Collectively, these tools will enable GIVA to gauge its success in penetrating this new market.

Profitable	GIVA's strategic entry into a new segment aims to enhance profitability and bolster brand recognition, thereby driving increased conversions and revenue growth. As Gen Z matures and disposable income rises, the jewellery sector is poised for substantial expansion, with a projected CAGR exceeding 5%. Recognizing this lucrative opportunity, GIVA must cultivate a loyal customer base within this demographic to capitalize on the segment's high-return potential.
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Customers' perceptions of a product or service can be shaped by a concise Customer Value Proposition, which can foster a positive perception and enhance customer loyalty and trust [17]. This tool will assist in determining the value that GIVA will provide to their potential customer.

Customer Value Proposition for GIVA's Potential Customer:

- **Sentimental Value:** GIVA's customization services enable customers to create personalised jewellery, fostering a unique and emotional connection to their pieces. By allowing customers to transform specific events or memories into tangible items, the company enhances the sentimental value of its products while catering to individual preferences and creating a sense of exclusivity.
- **Sustainable Value:** Giva recognizes the contemporary emphasis on ethical conduct and sustainability, aligning its operations accordingly. By prioritising sustainable production methods and ethically sourced materials, the company enhances its brand reputation and appeals to the values of socially conscious consumers.
- **Unique Expression:** Giva recognizes that jewellery is a personal expression, and thus offers a diverse range of 6000+ inclusive designs to cater to various customer preferences and body types. By promoting inclusivity, Giva empowers customers to find jewellery that uniquely reflects their individuality.

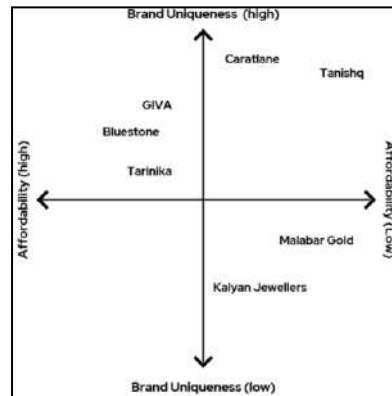
3.2 Positioning Strategies & New Market Segment

Positioning is the strategic process of shaping consumer perception of a brand relative to competitors. To flourish within its target market, GIVA Jewellery must effectively position itself. This involves crafting a distinct brand image that resonates with Indian consumers. By executing a Brand Uniqueness Position and an Accessible Luxury Position, GIVA can optimize its marketing efforts to connect with the desired demographic.

- **Brand Uniqueness Positioning:** To differentiate itself in a market dominated by traditional designs, GIVA must position itself as an innovative, distinctive brand that empowers customers to express their individuality. By introducing a fresh, accessible luxury aesthetic and a rapid-fire design cycle of over 50 new pieces weekly, GIVA can create a dynamic brand image that caters to diverse consumer preferences, ultimately enhancing its market reputation.
- **Accessible Luxury Positioning Strategy:** GIVA should position itself as the premier brand delivering premium jewellery experience accessible to a wide audience. By offering fashionable, high-quality pieces at an average selling price below 4,000 RS, GIVA can effectively communicate its value proposition of affordability without compromising on style or quality, thereby expanding its market reach within the Indian population.

The Perceptual Mapping that is displayed below will give GIVA a more thorough positioning with the positioning strategies of affordability and Brand Uniqueness presence in the Indian jewellery market.

Fig 3- Perceptual Mapping for Brand Uniqueness & Affordability

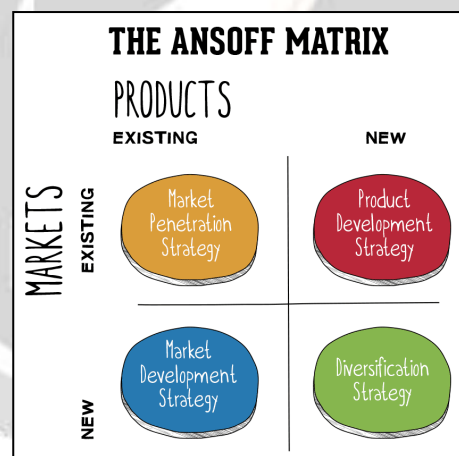


While GIVA and Bluestone offer other market players, Tanishq and presence across both online and industry leaders, GIVA must enhance its brand visibility through increased marketing efforts, expanding its online and offline reach, and fostering greater brand awareness. By implementing a robust digital marketing strategy like Caratlane's, GIVA can effectively generate a substantial volume of high-quality leads, subsequently converting them into loyal customers through its retail network.

more competitive pricing compared to Caratlane maintain a dominant offline channels. To challenge the

The author has implemented a market development strategy targeting Gen Z as a new segment, by leveraging the Ansoff Growth Portfolio Framework, this strategic move aims to identify fresh avenues for revenue growth by introducing novel products and services, ultimately fostering customer loyalty and long-term stability [18]. Given its position in the Market Development quadrant, GIVA must aggressively pursue this strategy to outmanoeuvre competitors. Success hinges on increasing output without compromising financial health or distribution channels. While the Gen Z market presents new challenges, GIVA's distinctive product offerings position the company favourably for expansion beyond its established Millennial customer base.

Fig 4- Ansoff Matrix Framework



To achieve a competitive advantage, GIVA should introduce a new product line specifically targeting the Gen Z demographic and implement a product differentiation strategy. By consistently innovating new collections and offering luxury at accessible price points, GIVA can solidify its position in the market. The company's distinctive approach, characterized by visually striking Jewellery designs, innovative packaging, and the use of premium metals, sets it apart from competitors. This strategic focus will enable GIVA to excel in the market development quadrant.

3.3 Green Marketing Strategies

Sustainable marketing can bolster a company's reputation by enhancing stakeholder relationships and strengthening its brand image. By cultivating a positive perception of environmental responsibility, businesses can increase consumer trust, loyalty, and, customer acquisition. Given the growing public concern for social and environmental issues, green marketing has become a crucial component of corporate public relations. While GIVA Jewellery has

adopted sustainable practices and avoids misleading consumers through greenwashing, its primary focus has been on market survival amidst intense competition.

The triple bottom line is a business concept that states that companies should commit to measuring their social and environmental impact in addition to their financial performance rather than focusing solely on profit generation.

GIVA implementation of triple bottom line framework:

- **Profit:** A company's financial health is paramount to its overall success. GIVA's strategic planning is meticulously designed to maximise profits while effectively managing costs and risks. The company's online platform is the primary revenue generator, contributing to 85% of total income. By investing in local artisans for jewellery creation and manufacturing, GIVA demonstrates a commitment to community development while adhering to a strict code of conduct emphasising effectiveness, transparency, accountability, and equity.
- **People:** GIVA has evolved its business philosophy, prioritised sustainability and creating value for all stakeholders, including customers, employees, and the community. The company is committed to upholding workers' rights, ensuring fair and equitable treatment, and preventing child labour. Demonstrating its dedication to social responsibility, GIVA has partnered with NGOs like Kritagyata and the SMILE foundation, allocating 20% of sales revenue to support children's well-being [20].
- **Planet:** GIVA has implemented initiatives to reduce its carbon footprint. This commitment is evident in the company's emphasis on ethically sourced materials and sustainable production techniques. Furthermore, GIVA has launched a line of nature-inspired recycled jewellery to raise community awareness and has adopted the use of lab-grown diamonds as an alternative to mined diamonds to mitigate mining pollution.

The author recommends that GIVA expand its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives to not only enhance profitability but also contribute positively to society. As CSR is inherently linked to corporate accountability, GIVA's focus on an ethical and environmentally friendly supply chain, incorporating sustainable practices and ethically sourced materials, is commendable. To further bolster the company's growth and reputation, it is advised to intensify CSR efforts.

- **Community Empowerment:** To empower local communities involved in GIVA's supply chain, the company should establish comprehensive community engagement programs. These initiatives could encompass skill-building training programs to enhance local capabilities, educational opportunities to broaden horizons, and cultural enrichment programs to foster a deeper connection with the community.
- **Sustainable Packaging:** GIVA should explore opportunities to minimise packaging waste by reducing unnecessary materials and incorporating recycled or biodegradable alternatives. Optimising packaging materials in this manner will further contribute to reducing the company's environmental impact.
- **Philanthropy and Charitable Initiatives:** GIVA should establish and promote charitable initiatives aligned with the company's core values. Potential areas of focus include funding employee healthcare, supporting the education of artists' families, and contributing to broader community development programs.
- **Collaborations with NGOs:** GIVA can enhance its CSR initiatives by partnering with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) such as "Jewellery for Hope" that specialise in community development, sustainability, or ethical practices. This collaboration leverages the NGO's subject-matter expertise to amplify the impact of GIVA's CSR efforts.

4. Marketing Plan & Execution

A comprehensive analysis of the SPACE Matrix, Ansoff Model, and positioning strategies indicates that a marketing development and product differentiation approach would optimally position GIVA to surpass competitors. Segmentation and targeting efforts effectively identified the Gen Z customer segment as a key market. To broaden the

reach of its new luxury offerings, the author recommends implementing a competitive pricing strategy. The synergistic combination of these strategies is expected to enhance GIVA's e-commerce platform through increased organic traffic and improved offline store conversion rates, driving overall revenue growth.

Table -12: Marketing Campaign Plan Suggested By Author

Marketing Campaign Plan for New Target Segment	
Campaign Title	Timeless Elegance with Timeless Love
Campaign Date	15th January to 31st March 2024
Campaign Theme	Valentine's day Love-themed products
Targeted Segment	Generation Z, (18 years to 25 years)
Campaign Objective	To establish GIVA as the epitome of timeless elegance and quality craftsmanship, and to increase brand awareness, engagement, and sales within the younger generations.
Product Collection	His & Her Couples Product Range
Product cost	Between 35\$ to 60\$ (3,000 INR to 5,000 INR)

This season of love would be enhanced by luxurious 925 Silver GIVA jewellery. The marketing for these goods should focus on providing "luxury with affordability" and highlight eco-friendly features like lab-grown diamonds, recyclable jewellery, and sustainable packaging.

REAN goals are a useful tool for GIVA to develop and significantly expand its target market as well as achieve new goals. To achieve the most effective outcome, the author advises Giva to regularly review their marketing campaign and adjust throughout the event. All these goals are set for January 15th, 2024, to March 31st, 2024.

Table-13: REAN Objective defined for GIVA Jewellery

REAN	Objectives
Reach	GIVA should increase their brand discovery rate from 5% to 10% and reach 20,000 organic hot leads through strategic social media campaigns, influencer partnerships, and content marketing
Engage	To Increase overall engagement Levels from 0.4% to 1.5% rate on Instagram and Facebook through interactive content, quizzes, polls, and behind-the-scenes glimpses.
Act	With high brand discovery, GIVA should activate a new conversion rate from 10% to 12.5% rate per month on their website through a combination of targeted promotions, email marketing, and partnerships with e-commerce platforms
Nurture	GIVA should Implement a loyalty program to reward repeat customers and encourage long-term engagement. To nurture and increase repeat customers from 50% to 55%

By leveraging the See-Think-Do framework, GIVA can effectively analyse the various stages of the buyer journey and tailor its marketing efforts accordingly. This framework facilitates the creation and optimization of a robust digital marketing strategy, providing valuable insights into customer needs, preferences, and behaviours.

Table-14: STDC Framework for GIVA Jewellery

Intent Cluster	Who is in the cluster	The Mindset	Content Strategy at each stage of the customer buying journey
See	Largest addressable qualified audience (LAQA)	Customers who like to wear/gift affordable daily-wear jewellery	Intent: Window shopping Brief eye-catching through reels and posts. Channels: SEO & SEM Optimization Display Ads Social Media Strategy: To make them aware of the brand and increase brand discovery within browsing customer
Think	LAQA with mild commercial intent	Customer who enjoys gifting/wearing affordable jewellery and thinking they might purchase some.	Intent: Gathering information about the brand and what it offers. Channels: Facebook Ads social media Google Reviews User-generated content YouTube Strategy: To generate trust and willingness, eventually generating cold leads into hot leads.
Do	LAQA that's ready to transact	Customer who enjoys gifting /wearing affordable daily wear jewellery and wants to purchase product "NOW".	Intent: Final purchase information, comparing price & deciding product. Channels: Brand's Website Email Marketing Affiliate marketing Retargeting Ads Strategy: Increase conversion rate and turn hot leads into customers.
Care	Repeat customers	Existing customers who buy regularly.	Intent: Loyalty customer programs / Customer discounts and offers Channels: Email Marketing Newsletter Marketing SMS Marketing Feedback Surveys Strategy: Converting new customers into loyal customers with high CRM practices.

4.1 Media Kit

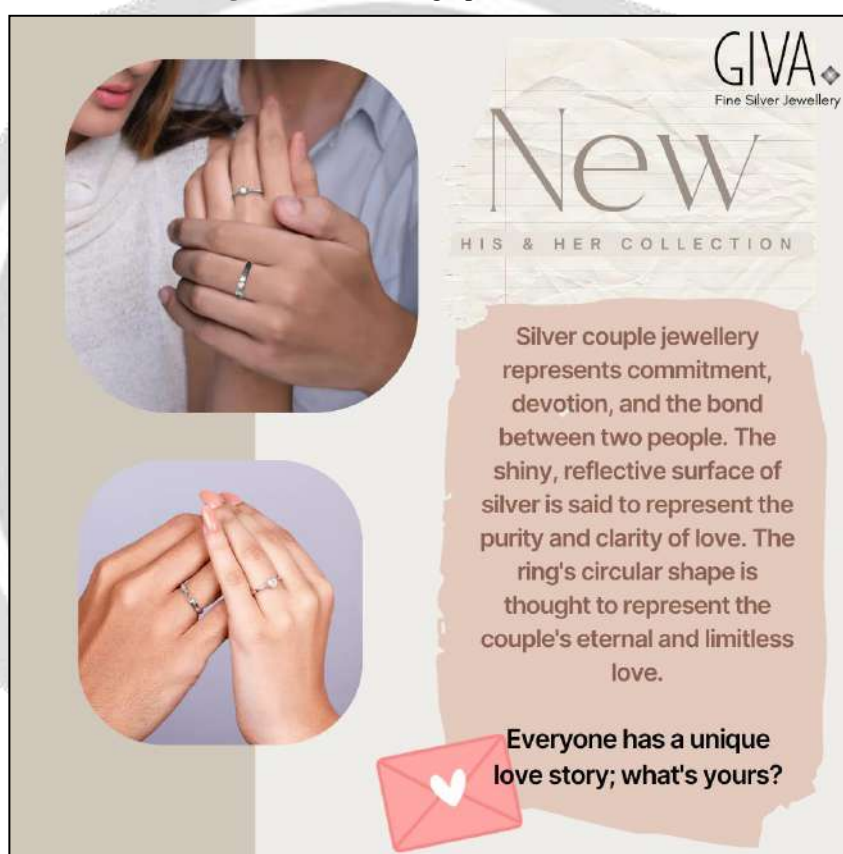
This section presents a compilation of media assets created to bolster GIVA's brand image and promote its jewellery collection. By providing a comprehensive overview of the company, these materials are designed to contribute to the realization of GIVA's stated business objectives, including brand awareness, driving sales, and enhancing customer satisfaction, and driving sales.

Below are two social media posts from the Valentine's Special Campaign for Valentine's Special. The posts were created by GIVA's Social Media & Her Marketing team and have been posted online and



Table 15- Instagram Sales Post Caption & Motive

Why Instagram?	It would be a good platform for this post because Generation Z is known to use Instagram as their primary social media handle. Because of this, younger audiences are typically more image-conscious and open to trying out new things.
Caption:	"Ignite the spark of love this Valentine's with our exquisite His & Her Jewellery Collection. Timeless designs for timeless love. Prices starting from \$35. Order now to make this Valentine's unforgettable! #GIVAVDayLove"
Motive:	Increase direct sales by presenting the Valentine's collection's elegance and affordability in the most sophisticated and upscale manner possible.

Fig 7- Facebook Infographic Post**Table 16-** Facebook Infographic Post Caption & Motive

Why Facebook?	This is an infographic post about knowledge that resembles couples who are young in love and who have grown old in love together. This post will help increase a lot of engagement as people will share their love stories in their way.
Caption:	Every piece in our His & Her Jewellery Collection tells a unique love story. Read to discover the hidden meanings behind silver jewellery. Tell us your unique love story. Share with us, we would love to listen! #GIVASymbolicLove"
Motive:	Inform and involve the audience by highlighting silver's emotional significance and its thoughtful design elements.

The author has created a blog post for GIVA, this will be the first blog post about GIVAs that will be promoted on Facebook and Instagram for the Valentine's Day campaign. Links to the blogs will be posted on both social media platforms and the blogs themselves will be accessible on Giva platforms.

Fig 7- Blog Post

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO CHOOSING THE PERFECT VALENTINE'S DAY GIFT FOR YOUR LOVED ONE

Valentine's Day is just around the corner, and the pressure is on to find that perfect gift for your special someone. But let's face it – chocolates and flowers are so last year. In this controversial guide, we're breaking all the rules to help you choose a Valentine's Day gift that will leave a lasting impression on your significant other. Get ready to think outside the heart-shaped box!

1. Ditching Tradition: Why Not Diamonds?
Challenge the conventional notion that diamonds are a must. Discuss unique alternatives like sterling silver jewellery that's not only trendy but also more wallet-friendly for the younger generation.

2. Matching His & Her Jewellery: A Fashion Faux Pas or a Power Move?
Dive into the controversy of matching jewellery for couples. Discuss the pros and cons and showcase trendy His & Her pieces that break the stereotype, making it a bold and fashionable choice.


3. DIY: From Craft to Gift - A Bold Move or a Recipe for Disaster?
Suggest the controversial idea of making your silver jewellery gift. Provide tips for creating personalized pieces that convey thoughtfulness and effort.

4. The Anti-Romantic Movement: Unconventional Gifts for the Nonconformists
Explore the idea of choosing gifts that go against traditional romantic norms. From quirky charms to unconventional shapes, offer suggestions for those who want to embrace the anti-romantic sentiment.

5. Occasion Matters: Tailoring Your Gift to the Moment
Break down the myth that one-size-fits-all when it comes to Valentine's Day gifts. Explore how different occasions (anniversaries, first dates, or just because) call for unique silver jewellery pieces – from minimalist designs to bold statements.

6. Mixing Metals: Gold, Silver, and Everything in Between
Challenge the age-old rule that metals should never be mixed. Share styling tips on how to flawlessly mix gold and silver jewellery for a modern, eclectic look.

Conclusion:
Choosing the perfect Valentine's Day gift doesn't have to conform to tradition. Embrace controversy, break the rules, and let your gift speak volumes about your unique relationship. Whether it's silver jewellery that defies norms or a DIY creation straight from the heart, this guide is your ticket to making this Valentine's Day unforgettable. Remember, the best gifts challenge expectations and celebrate the extraordinary love you share!



www.giva.co

Table 17- Blog Post Motive & Need

Why is the blog animated?	Since the younger generation is the blog's intended audience, it has been created in an animated style for them. Customers, particularly those in Generation Z, truly value it when companies go above and beyond to make their products relatable to the public. The author has attempted to share the same humorous message with its audience through its blogs. GIVA ought to try to engage its younger audience on a personal, light-hearted, and informative level.
How will this blog profit GIVA?	Through this blog, GIVA will be able to interact more personally with its audience and provide a platform for feedback and responses from users. "Ultimate Guide to Choosing the Perfect Valentine's Day Gift for Your Partner" is the title of the first blog post. It covers everything from what Gifts to give on special occasions to different unique ideas to make your valentines special. Due to the controversy surrounding this subject, GIVA will be able to profit from the increased traffic by using retargeting ads and backlinks.

5. Author's Recommendations

An analysis of GIVA's current digital and strategic marketing identifies opportunities for improvement. To enhance user experience and retention, the website's visual stability on both desktop and mobile platforms should be prioritized. Given the increasing reliance on mobile devices in India, GIVA should prioritize mobile user experience by implementing a global search function within the app. Currently limited to the homepage, this feature should be expanded for improved usability and accessibility.

GIVA should implement an AI chatbot to provide personalized assistance and recommendations, potentially positioning the company as an industry leader in AI-powered jewellery suggestions. By analysing website behaviour, AI can offer tailored product recommendations and address customer inquiries, enhancing the overall shopping experience [21].

GIVA aims to enhance its omnichannel strategy and expand its physical footprint to 100 locations by the end of fiscal year 2024. To optimize customer conversion, GIVA should adopt Caratlane's 3D virtual reality AI automated system, as outlined by. This technology can transform at-home browsing into hot leads, encouraging purchases that might otherwise be delayed or abandoned.

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Metamodern Philosophy in the Human Condition

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ABSTRACT

For a fundamental understanding of metamodernism, consider it as the mentality, sensibility, or societal code that follows postmodernism. It is the most direct method of defining metamodernism. It lays a heavy focus on reason and logic, the capacity of science to decipher fundamental aspects of the universe, capitalism, and the notion of human development. Furthermore, it emphasizes individualism in conjunction with universal human rights. In the bulk of "modern" industrial cultures, these values and norms serve as the basic organizing force. The definition of metamodernism has been long varied among different forms of users; artists, writers, philosophers and scientists all over the world have different definitions for Metamodernism. This paper will talk about the mentality, sensibility, and societal codes that follow along with metamodernity. This paper will focus on Mumbai, the financial capital of India. This paper questions and examines the different developments around the city and links them to postmodernization based psychology, and then examining and evaluating the ecological impacts. (Freinacht, 2022)

Keyword: - Metamodern philosophy, Human condition, Ecological inequality, Social and economic inequality, Paradox of inequality, Mumbai city, Hanzi Freinacht

1. Introduction

Once the Internet and social media have established themselves as rather dominating aspects of people's lives, and once a significant number of us are no longer actively involved in the manufacturing and distribution of industrial commodities, then, and only then, does metamodern philosophy emerge onto the scene. It is a viewpoint on the cosmos that combines two ideas that are diametrically opposed to one another, namely the modern faith in progress and the postmodern critique. What you end up with is a vision of reality in which individuals are making their way along a lengthy and difficult developmental path that ultimately leads to greater existential depth and complexity. This is what you get when you follow this line of reasoning to its logical conclusion. People who belong to modern and postmodern schools of thought will discover that many of the concepts and suppositions that make up metamodern philosophy are paradoxical. However, in view of the fact that both modernism and postmodernism are becoming increasingly out of date, it appears inevitable that these postmodern ideas will grow, gain traction, and expand.

This paper is concerned with Hanzi Freinacht's philosophy. As a writer, Hanzi blends in-depth knowledge from a variety of fields of science and studies, and his usually accessible, lyrical, and hilarious writing style enables him to create diagrams of our time and the human mind. These maps challenge the reader's self- and world-perspective. Hanzi Freinacht can be seen as the embodiment of metamodern philosophy because he embodies a substantial chunk of this school of thought. He is responsible for the creation of a large number of original concepts that are relevant to several areas and helpful to their practitioners. Implementing these ideas may provide an edge in the shifting political, economic, and cultural landscape of a digital and postindustrial society. (Freinacht, 2022)

Despite the seeming turmoil created by reoccurring pandemics, climatic disasters, and geopolitical slides toward what amounts to nothing less than a new Cold War, the world has been steadily and discreetly embracing a new political philosophy. Indeed, the global economic human system has evolved according to its own logic, and as a result, a great number of individuals have profited enormously from this growth. However, the structural difficulties we face are not just the result of Facebook phobia. The system cannot continue on its current trajectory and with its existing dynamics: It will become increasingly disorganized. And there is nothing exceptional about it either: things grow, they prosper, fissures arise after a while, the fissures widen till everything decay, and at some point in space-time, everything disintegrates. When things expire, the feedback processes that were being carried out through them become inactive. And when things evolve really quickly, as our global system has, they typically come apart in a more spectacular fashion, or at the very least, the likelihood of this occurring greatly increases.(Freinacht, 2022) Alternatively, biological systems may "survive" in the sense that they may give rise to something new, which is another way of stating they can reproduce. They are capable of shapeshifting. Every facet of existence is based on change and flux, including communities and civilizations. The majority of the time, to survive, it is sufficient to "keep the flow going," but there are times when you must morph, shape-shift, or even burn the bridge behind you! This barrier appears to have been passed, as there are more indications of it than I can list here. Unquestionably, new technology, new decision-making processes, and new production and distribution systems will all be a part of the upcoming global shape-shift. However, a "mind-shift" is also necessary for this to function. The transformation that is occurring is not only technical, political, or psychological; it is a combination of all three. This cannot occur unless we launch a public conversation that is both serious and scientifically informed about how such inner growth may be supported in society and what such inner development may be understood to entail in the first place. Hanzi has given this notion the label "the listening society." The phrase "listening society" refers to a societal culture of awareness that listens To and reacts to the needs of its residents in a deeper and more holistic manner than the existing materialistic one, including the deeper yearnings of body, mind, and soul. This is due to the fact that it would require institutional and cultural frameworks that are considerably more sensitive to the nuances of human wants, preferences, and ways of functioning.(Freinacht, 2017)

2. Ecological Inequality

Access to sunlight, clean air, pure water, lush vegetation, beautiful landscape, healthy and non-toxic food, clean living spaces, etc., are seen as instances of ecological inequality. Air pollution is responsible for the deaths of millions of people each year in many of China's major cities, where residents seldom see the sun. Numerous occupations across the world are noisy, physically hazardous, unclean, and contaminated with poisonous chemicals. Children in West Africa, for instance, sift through large amounts of technological debris to recover precious metals and minerals, despite the fact that they are slowly poisoning themselves in the process. The most severe impacts of environmental deterioration are borne by populations in a very uneven fashion. This is seen in everything from individuals escaping poverty due to climate change to subsistence farming being harmed by global warming to cognitive development being hampered by polluted rivers. Unquestionably, the existing economic system has a substantial part in promoting this type of inequality. The rich have the ability to choose to live in nicer and cleaner places, to purchase healthier products, to go hiking or to health resorts, etc. Obviously, this relates to various stratifications, including race and ethnicity. In the United States, in the state of California, it has been demonstrated that blacks and Latinos inhale 40 percent more air pollution than whites. Obviously, this impacts physiological equality and, by extension, everything else. In general, the economically developed countries of the world transfer the most environmentally damaging

industrial practices and industries to the economically developing regions. In urban India, residents of low-income neighborhoods have less alternatives when it comes to healthy food and environments. This has repercussions for the economic, social, physiological, and emotional components of inequality. Even though increasing people's "rights" is not always the greatest and most practical method to defend people's interests, we should at least consider creating ecological rights for citizens and/or communities. This is true despite the fact that extending people's "rights" is not necessarily the most efficient or effective means to accomplish so. Cost-benefit analysis may be difficult to apply to rights, which can lead to highly restricted types of government. Nonetheless, anything along these lines may provide helpful venues for the formulation of future global policy (Freinacht, 2020).

The Deonar dumping ground in Mumbai is the prime example of Ecological Inequality, it is located far away from the wealthy residents of Mumbai while affecting the majority poor population of Mumbai. The oldest and largest landfill in India, it was constructed in 1927. It is situated in the city's eastern suburb of Shivaji Nagar. The city's municipal corporation, Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (also known as Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai), is responsible for maintaining the dumpsite. The organization is also responsible for maintaining two more landfills in the city; one is located in the Mulund neighborhood, while the other was recently established near Kanjurmarg. The landfill has a daily throughput capacity of 5,500 metric tonnes of rubbish, 600 metric tonnes of silt, and 25 metric tonnes of medical waste and occupies a total area of 132 hectares. Due to the cleaning of drains before to the monsoon season, the average daily quantity of silt climbs to about 9,000 metric tonnes between March and June. The height of the landfill is around 114 feet. In contrast, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation made a proposal to the Airport Authority of India in 2012 seeking permission to extend this to about 164 feet. As of December 2014, the rubbish had accumulated to the height of an 18-story structure. Residents of the Mumbai neighborhoods of Chembur, Govandi, and Mankhurd have reported enduring health issues as a result of the Deonar dumpsite. Due to the circumstances created by the numerous fires at the dump, residents in the neighborhood adjacent to the dump are no longer permitted to reside there.

Chembur and Govandi have the highest incidence of TB due to the presence of Deonar gasses, which contain carcinogenic methane, carbon dioxide, and hydrogen sulfide, as well as fine particulate matter. Due to the excessive levels of pollution in the region, BEST personnel have rejected for the last seven years to accept ownership of two residential structures that were built very close to the ground. The 3,300 employees of the Shivaji Nagar bus station, which is close to the dumping site, avoid the "stinky" Shivaji Nagar bus station canteen at all costs. However, the BMC has not taken many measures to mitigate the toxicity of Deonar's emissions. It had vowed to construct a compound wall and a police chowky throughout the preceding decade. In addition to providing security 24 hours a day, seven days a week, the objective was to station fire trucks and construct an air-monitoring system. The pledges were reiterated once again in 2001. When the British found the 127 hectares of land along the creek, it was separated from the rest of civilization, with the exception of a few dispersed hamlets. As a result of the growth of urbanization, Deonar is now situated right in the midst of the city, and it releases hazardous gasses into the Ghatkopar, Chembur, and Vashi neighborhoods every minute. (BMC in the dock over toxic gasses at Deonar dump, 2008)

Infant mortality has also been an issue in the neighboring districts; the current rate is between 60 and 80 per 1000 live births, which is more than double the citywide average of 35.2%. In contemporary nations, social inequality manifests itself in two related but separate forms: socioeconomic status, which dominates adult life, and microsocial status, sometimes known as "coolness" or "popularity," which dominates teenage life and youth culture. In various age groups, these two kinds of social disparity are governed by distinct reasons. The first relates to one's professional position, achievements, and successes, while the second relates to one's personal expression, taste, fashion, and lifestyle, and remains a significant aspect in one's social and mating success throughout one's lifetime. Obviously, the long-term purpose of the egalitarian movement must be to diminish the influence of criteria such as fashion and taste in terms of social respect and human dignity. In light of this, our purpose is not just to heal the "hidden wounds of class" (to use a phrase popularized by sociologist Richard Sennett), but also "to end the rule of cool."

3. Social and Economical inequality

People are harmed by socioeconomic inequality. When it gets more prevalent, we may anticipate various distortions in the games that comprise our daily life. People are more likely to become tense and less relaxed, more plotting and strategic in their friendship formations, less likely to challenge norms and habits, more socially competitive, more likely to slander and mock one another, and more likely to take anti-social measures to check or reverse the social prestige of rivals. People will evaluate one another's opinions and perspectives less on the basis of merit and more on the basis of status, which will weaken the foundation for democratic principles and broad unity. How scared are we

of being ridiculed and looked down upon, as well as being cut off from our social circles? People are anxious about their social standing, and there is a reasonable explanation for this demand.

Obviously, addressing the issue of social inequality is far more difficult than addressing the issue of economic imbalance. Friendships, trust, respect, and acceptance are not "given," but must be earned via a range of behaviors and encounters. Although money and other material resources may be transferred, these intangible traits cannot.

On the other hand, despite how contradictory it may appear at first, there are typically more things that can be done to combat social inequality than economic disparity, and our efforts may often be more meaningful and successful. We will not be able to modify the underlying premises of the present global economic system overnight, but we will be able to shape and develop organizations and institutions that increase the likelihood of social equality. In schools, we can have meditation training (which elicits more pro-social behaviours on a daily basis), collaborative learning games in which all children are given the opportunity to contribute to the greater whole, carefully designed (and non-sexual) massage sessions in which children touch one another in a friendly manner across the hierarchies, playgrounds designed for inclusive games, training in social and emotional intelligence, extended sexual education, and a focus on empathy.

We are able to apply more broad and equivalent measures to society as a whole, such as the construction of a social support layer (supplied by qualified experts) for people who are actually excluded from society. Then, these persons can be trained and encouraged to increase their social competence. If the ordinary individual grows more socially and emotionally functioning, sexual games may shift. Additionally, norms can shift toward less materialistic values, and superfluous taboos and stigma can be eliminated to make individuals more tolerant of one another's differences.

4. Paradox of inequality

Human equality is a paradox, given that individuals are not equal. Some individuals have reached more advanced phases of adult psychological development than others: they have more complicated thought processes, more universal ideals, and more developed interactions with life and existence. There are substantial developmental disparities among humans, with some individuals reaching more advanced stages of adult psychological development than others.

The same can be said for a number of other characteristics: some people are healthier and stronger than others, some people have personalities that are more well-rounded, some people are more diligent and have greater endurance and tolerance for stress, some people have higher IQs, some people are friendlier; and some people are more attractive, while others have characteristics that are diametrically opposed to these. This may lead us to conclude, superficially, that equality in a more deep sense is impossible, given that gaps and differences in endowments will always exist in our lives and relationships. However, this is merely one possible interpretation of what this may cause. However, such a negative outlook will not serve us well; it is evident that different cultures have diverse degrees of equality, and as a result, equality may grow with time. In order to discover a solution to this problem, we must instead go even deeper into our concept of equality.

5. Conclusion

Unfortunately, we are in a universe where equality is a more difficult and complex objective than liberty. Equality is, by its own nature, riddled with larger inherent contradictions and more complex paradoxes. Negative rights ("freedom from") are simpler than positive rights ("freedom to"). It is easier to establish clear boundaries for what individuals may not do to one another (physical abuse, theft, incarceration, etc.) than for what we must do for one another (help in times of need, secure basic subsistence, provide education, healthcare, and so forth). But we have also noted that any true measure of freedom must be viewed through the lens of the lived experience of humans and non-human animals, and hence cannot be reduced to a libertarian justification of negative liberties. My freedom is dependent on the inner workings of your ideas and feelings, and vice versa.

To build better cities, we first need to learn to adapt and overcome the paradoxes of equality to make ecological equality and Socio-economic equality accessible to all.

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TITLE: IMPACT OF THE REAL ESTATE REGULATORY AUTHORITY [RERA] ON BUYERS IN INDIA 2023

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ABSTRACT

The primary objective of this comprehensive research study is to thoroughly investigate and analyse the profound effects of the Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act (RERA) on consumer behaviour within the real estate sector. The research aims to shed light on the notable shift observed in consumer preferences, which increasingly favour RERA-registered projects over non-RERA ones. This shift signals a growing trust and confidence among consumers, largely attributed to the greater transparency and financial security offered by RERA-registered projects in contrast to their non-registered counterparts. Furthermore, the paper aims to delve into the empowerment experienced by buyers as a result of RERA regulations. This includes the improved access to crucial information and the existence of more effective grievance redressal mechanisms, ultimately leading to a greater sense of consumer empowerment in the real estate market. By closely examining the impact of RERA on consumer behaviour, this study aims to provide valuable insights into the evolving dynamics of the real estate market in India and the far-reaching implications for both consumers and businesses. Beyond an analysis of comprehensive primary and secondary data, the research also seeks to shed light on the state of the real estate industry both prior to and following the implementation of RERA. Additionally, it aims to present thought-provoking perspectives on the potential future enhancements of RERA and its effects on the real estate sector, thus contributing to a deeper understanding of the regulatory landscape and its impact on industry stakeholders.

Keyword: - RERA, real estate regulation, consumer behaviour, consumer preferences, RERA-registered projects, transparency, financial security.

1. Introduction

The real estate industry holds the position of being the second most significant sector in terms of employment generation, following closely behind the agriculture sector. By 2023, it is expected that the value of India's real estate industry will surge to an estimated USD 265.18 billion, and the forecast for 2028 indicates the potential for it to reach an impressive USD 828.75 billion, exhibiting a remarkable compound annual growth rate of 25.60%. Over the period from 2023 to 2028, the Indian property market is projected to experience a substantial compound annual growth rate of 9.2%. Industry experts think 2023 will signify a pivotal moment for businesses in this sector (Sobha, 2023). The vast real estate sector encompasses numerous sections, creating diverse business opportunities across various phases of property transactions including selling, leasing, buying, development, and other management processes for industrial, residential, hospitality, retail, and office properties (Mordorintelligence, 2023).

A few key market trends that are currently showing growth and high demand are the increasing popularity of affordable housing and the significant economic and development potential of India, which is expected to drive substantial demand for office and commercial space in Tier 1 and Tier 2 cities (Livemint, 2023).

2. Brief Overview of RERA and its Purpose

In response to the various challenges and opportunities in the real estate sector, numerous countries have devised policies and regulations aimed at promoting transparency, accountability, and equity. A notable development is the inception of Real Estate Regulatory Authorities (RERAs) in 2016, which has had a significant impact on the real estate market by ensuring the protection of homebuyers and fostering increased investment in the industry (Bankbazaar, 2016). RERA's primary objectives entail attracting local and international investments, fostering harmonious development through efficient project management and standardization, and establishing a centralized clearance framework with a single point of contact for real estate projects (India Infoline, 2021).

3. Research Objectives

This research study delves into the far-reaching impact of RERA on one of the key stakeholders in the real estate sector: the buyers, in 2023. The paper aims to comprehensively elucidate the influence of RERA on the real estate market and the associated challenges and opportunities, by examining the intricate dynamics of buyers' quest for transparency and security. To achieve this, the paper is segmented into sections that include a detailed exploration of RERA and its objectives, a thorough analysis of its implications for buyers, an examination of the underlying legal and regulatory hurdles, case studies demonstrating practical applications, and a forward-looking assessment of the future trajectory of the real estate industry under the influence of RERA.

4. Research Design and Methodology

1. The author conducted an in-depth online survey aimed at understanding the experiences and knowledge of homebuyers in Mumbai regarding the Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act (RERA) and its impact on their decision-making when purchasing a home.
2. The gathered data has been meticulously organized into charts to facilitate comprehensive analysis.
3. Furthermore, the author conducted an interview with a homebuyers who had encountered disputes during the home purchasing process to ascertain the role of RERA in resolving such issues.
4. The author conducted an in-depth online survey aimed at understanding the experiences and knowledge of homebuyers in Mumbai regarding the Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act (RERA) and its impact on their decision-making when purchasing a home.
5. In addition to the survey and interview, the author extensively analyzed various scholarly materials, including research papers and journals, to enrich our understanding of the subject matter.

6. Brief Review of Studies Based on Real World Scenarios

A comprehensive study by Knight Frank, a leading real estate research organization, analyzed 60 legal decisions made between September 1 and December 6, 2017. The findings revealed that 47 rulings, or 79%, favoured buyers in Maharashtra, while 11 (18%) favoured developers, and the remaining two (3%) were neutral.

Nibodh Shetty, a research consultant at Knight Frank India, emphasized the transformative impact of MahaRERA on the real estate landscape, stating, "For the first time, builders are being held accountable for delivering on their promises."

Additionally, a report by MS Maya M from MoneyLife Foundation offers an insightful analysis from the customers' perspective, documenting the implementation status of RERA in various states and addressing the role of the government and strategies to enhance its effectiveness (M, M., 2020).

7. Detailed Overview of the RERA Act

6.1 - Crucial Features

1. The regulations stipulate that developers must undergo the process of registering their properties, including both residential and commercial spaces, with the Regulatory Authority prior to selling or offering flats for sale. It is important to note that projects constructed in segmented phases are treated as separate entities, thus necessitating independent registration for each segment.
Furthermore, for ongoing projects that did not possess a certification of completion at the time when the Act came into effect, it is mandatory for developers to submit an application for registration within three months (Godge, A. and Kumar, A., 2021).
2. Some specific types of projects are granted an exemption from the requirement for registration. These exemptions apply to projects that involve a total land area of less than 500 square meters or encompass no more than eight flats.
Additionally, projects that possess pre-Act completion certificates, as well as rehabilitation, restoration, or reconstruction undertakings that are not associated with the sale or marketing of property or new allotments, are also eligible for exemption (Ramani, K. and Jain, N., 2020).
3. In order to complete the registration process for developer applications, developers are required to furnish a comprehensive set of information. This includes providing details about the promoter, outlining the project's history, submitting property data, disclosing permissions, presenting proposals, and detailing financial arrangements.
One crucial aspect of the contract is the commitment to allocate 70% of the project's revenues into an independent bank account reserved for covering building and site expenditures. This measure ensures that the necessary funds are set aside and designated for specific project-related costs, thereby contributing to the responsible and transparent management of financial resources.
4. Builders have the responsibility of selling units based on the carpet area. The carpet area is defined as the total usable floor space of an apartment, excluding the area occupied by exterior walls, service shafts, balconies, and terraces. This measurement provides an accurate representation of the actual living space within the apartment.
5. Upon receipt of an application for registration, the Legal Authority is mandated to undertake a review process, with the requirement to either grant or deny authorization within a period of 30 days. Failure to elicit a response within this timeframe results in the automatic approval of the operation. The certificate of registration retains its validity until the project attains its agreed-upon completion date. Furthermore, in the event of force majeure, the certificate can be extended or renewed at an additional cost (Godge, Gandai, and Kumar (2023).

6. The Regulatory Authority holds the power to invalidate certification in the event of the promoter's default on payments, engagement in infractions, or involvement in unethical practices. Under such circumstances, the Authority possesses the right to restrict the developer from accessing the project's website, resuming pending development work, and overseeing project revenue accounts, as mentioned by (Mullick, S. and Wadhwani, A. (2016).

6.2 - Advantages

The protection of customers is a key focus of the measures implemented, as the company aims to provide extensive project documentation and address any imperfections in the structure.

Transparency is significantly enhanced through the implementation of mandated project authorization, the declaration of the carpet area, and the maintenance of separate financial accounts for funds.

These measures are designed to foster trustworthiness among buyers and ensure a secure and reliable environment for all stakeholders (IThum World, 2021).

The Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act (RERA) plays a crucial role in enforcing accountability among builders by implementing penalties for project delays and overseeing the transfer of property rights.

This regulatory framework aims to not only level the playing field in the real estate sector but also to foster the development of competitive markets.

By doing so, it seeks to enhance investor confidence and attract greater investment by creating a secure and transparent environment (TimesProperty, 2022). According to (Bayaweaver (2017), the improvement of construction standards and adherence to quality practices play a significant role in driving economic growth and expanding infrastructure.

6.3 - Disadvantages/Challenges

According to (Arora (2023), developers are required to allocate 70% of the revenues obtained from consumers into a dedicated bank account earmarked for financing building and property expenses. This restriction curtails the developer's autonomy in utilizing these funds for other purposes, potentially leading to cash flow challenges.

Moreover, it is important to acknowledge that the substantial financial impacts associated with construction delays can potentially incentivize builders to extend project schedules beyond reasonable estimates, ultimately leading to an increase in overall costs (Social Laws Today, 2023).

Furthermore, it is worth noting that the intricate process of formally registering concerns and navigating the resolution procedures under the Real Estate Regulation and Development Act (RERA) may prove to be time-consuming, particularly for individuals who have limited familiarity with the complex rules and regulations governing the real estate sector (Bhadauria, S., 2017).

7. Rights of Homebuyers

- ❖ The RERA Authority plays a critical role as a functional body, aiming to safeguard the interests of various stakeholder groups involved in real estate transactions. One of its key functions is to establish a robust framework for addressing and resolving complaints from homebuyers, ensuring their voices are heard and their concerns are appropriately addressed (Kamath, N, 2017).
- ❖ Builders are mandated to register their projects in accordance with the provisions of the RERA Act, providing detailed information that helps identifying any potential fraudulent practices within the real estate sector.
- ❖ Furthermore, promoters are required to submit regular reports on the progress and status of their projects. This measure helps prevent intentional project delays and ensures transparency and accountability in the real estate development process (Agrawal, S., 2022).
- ❖ A typical selling agreement includes a standardized framework established by the Act that governs the contract of sale agreement. This framework dictates that builders must strictly adhere to the specified structure and are prohibited from incorporating any punitive clauses that could potentially subject the homebuyer to penalties.
- ❖ In addition, builders are now mandated by RERA to establish a Reserve Account, with the requirement to deposit 70% of all project revenues into this exclusive reserve bank account. This measure aims to prevent the diversion of cash to other projects, addressing a common issue where funds from one project were redirected to finance new initiatives, leading to delays in project completion.
- ❖ Moreover, the funds in these designated reserve accounts must be earmarked exclusively for the development and construction costs of the specific building project for which the funds were originally obtained. This ensures that the allocated funds are utilized solely for the intended purpose, enhancing transparency and accountability in the construction and real estate development sector.
- ❖ According to the regulations of the RERA Act, any violation will lead to a penalty of 10% of the project cost for the promoter. This penalty serves as a deterrent for developers, encouraging them to adhere to the regulations to avoid financial consequences. This provision emphasizes the seriousness with which the RERA Act treats infractions and aims to promote transparency and accountability in the real estate sector (Bajpai, S., 2020).

8. Recommendations

1. Subsidised Regulatory Assistance: Ensure that low-income individuals have access to financial assistance that will enable them to receive the necessary legal advice and support in addressing their concerns related to the Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA).
2. Establish interactive and user-friendly online platforms equipped with professional legal resources, expert advice, and personalized guidance to assist individuals navigating complex issues related to the Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA).
3. Establish uniform Stamp Duty Calculation for Carpet Space: In order to gain a deeper understanding of the RERA procedures, it would be beneficial for states such as Maharashtra to explore the possibility of recalculating and enforcing stamp duty based on the carpet area rather than the built-up space. By adopting this approach, the valuation of property sales could be more accurately determined, creating a fairer and more transparent real estate market for all stakeholders involved.
4. Enhance Order Implementation: It is widely recognized that there have been numerous instances in which RERA-related governing bodies have failed to implement the orders of the adjudicating executive, leading to a lack of enforcement. As a solution to this issue, it is being proposed that the RERA Authority be granted the requisite authority to enforce its directives without the necessity of instituting new legal proceedings in civil court.

9. Impact on Buyers – Primary Findings and Discussions

An in-depth interview session was carried out with a 53-year-old gentleman who had made a property purchase in Mumbai back in 2008, which notably preceded the enactment of the RERA (Real Estate Regulatory Authority) Act in 2016. During the interview, the individual was asked about various aspects related to his property purchase experience.

Q1. What was the specified timeline for the project and was it ever fulfilled?

- Upon its initial acquisition, the project was anticipated to require a time frame of approximately 3 to 4 years for completion. However, despite the passage of time, the project remains unfulfilled, and the original estimated timeline has not been met.

Q2. What was the amount of money taken in advance? Was it ever recovered?

- An initial payment of ₹8 lakhs was made in advance for the property. This amount was paid to the builders to facilitate the registration of the sale agreement. However, despite the payment, the construction project was never completed, and the amount paid was never recovered.

Q3. Were there any other issues?

- Upon thorough investigation, it was shockingly discovered that the builders were involved in an egregious act of fraud by deceitfully selling the same property to multiple individuals and absconding with the funds. This unethical practice not only deceived innocent buyers but also caused substantial financial losses and emotional distress.

Q4. How were these complaints addressed?

- The developers are currently embroiled in a legal battle, with a court case that has been dragging on without making much headway. The legal proceedings against the construction company have been ongoing for quite some time now, and it appears that the case is caught in a protracted state of limbo. Despite the serious nature of the matter, it seems to be progressing slowly and is not attracting the level of attention and resolution that it truly deserves.

9.1 - Discussions

This shows how a buyer struggled with the unfair practices in the real estate market before the implementation of RERA. The period before the implementation of the Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act (RERA) was marked by significant challenges for homebuyers in the real estate market.

During this time, buyers often found themselves struggling with unfair practices due to the lack of a proper mechanism for resolving complaints, inadequate disclosure of project details, unregulated advanced payments, and a general absence of protection for their rights. As a result, buyers faced low confidence, financial strain, and uncertainty. However, the advent of RERA brought about substantial changes. With the introduction of RERA, the process of dispute resolution became faster, and consumers were provided with greater protection. Additionally, there was a significant increase in transparency regarding project details, as highlighted by (Patil, S. and Bagul, T. (2019). These improvements have simplified legal regulations, ensured the timely completion of projects, and reduced the financial burden on buyers. Importantly, the enforcement of RERA regulations has had a deterrent effect on unethical or unfair procedures, compelling developers to comply with the set rules to avoid severe penalties, as noted by (Singh, P. (2022).

10. Online Survey

In an online survey executed by the author, a comprehensive examination was conducted to assess the public's perception and understanding of the Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act (RERA).

The survey encompassed a group of 32 individuals residing in Mumbai, India, within the age bracket of 25 to 64. This diverse group consisted of individuals who currently own property, have plans to purchase or rent property, or are preparing for a future property acquisition. The survey delved into various aspects such as the participants' confidence in the real estate market, their satisfaction with existing property regulations, their perceptions of transparency in real estate transactions, and the overall availability of resources for property-related information and assistance. In order to gain a comprehensive understanding, the participants were presented with a total of 9 detailed questions covering these pertinent areas. (Appendix)

11. Survey Findings

4. In a survey involving 32 individuals, it was evident that 75% of the participants were familiar with the Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act (RERA). This awareness signifies that these individuals are better equipped to navigate the intricacies of real estate transactions, thereby reducing their vulnerability to potential exploitation or fraudulent practices by unscrupulous builders.
5. The implementation of the Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act (RERA) has had a significant impact on 31.3% of respondents and somewhat influenced 50% out of 32 people surveyed. This indicates that improved compliance with RERA guidelines by builders has led to increased transparency in project-related information, timelines, and transactions. As a result, there has been a noticeable improvement in investment performance, with customers showing a stronger preference for properties developed by builders who strictly adhere to the regulations outlined in the RERA Act.
6. The Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA) has been instrumental in upholding legal and ethical standards within the real estate industry, with a primary focus on enhancing customers' trust in their investments. Through the enforcement of consumer protection measures and the cultivation of higher levels of trust, RERA has played a significant role in stimulating growth within the real estate sector.
7. According to the survey data, RERA has succeeded in increasing the trust of 62.5% of individuals, while 37.5% have reported no change. Nevertheless, there remains ample opportunity for continued improvement in fostering elevated ethical and professional standards. By doing so, we can raise the level of trust that buyers place in both brokers and builders, further solidifying the integrity of the industry.
8. According to the data, when asked to rate their satisfaction on a scale from one to five, with one indicating high satisfaction and five indicating dissatisfaction, 28.1% of the respondents reported feeling very satisfied, while 46.9% expressed a neutral stance, and 9.4% indicated being very dissatisfied with the efficacy of RERA in resolving their legal conflicts and issues. Furthermore, the analysis of dispute resolution revealed that some individuals experienced a heightened level of transparency, legal protection, and an improved mechanism for addressing their grievances. This process ensured that their voices were heard, and they received precisely specified agreements along with robust protection against corrupt developers.
9. With the implementation of the Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act (RERA), developers are now required to provide comprehensive project disclosures, including details about carpet area pricing, project plans, approvals, layouts, and more. This transparency has incentivized developers to set fair prices, as they can now be held accountable for any unscrupulous practices. As a result, around 65.7% of people have noticed a difference in the transparency of property prices. RERA's rules and regulations aim to protect the interests and rights of buyers, ensuring that they are more empowered and informed when making real estate transactions.
10. Following the enforcement of the Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act (RERA), 25% of individuals have noticed a significant positive impact on the transparency of information provided to prospective buyers. Additionally, 50% of respondents have indicated that the availability of information under RERA is moderately good. The implementation of RERA has empowered buyers to make more informed decisions, alleviated ambiguity in real estate transactions, and contributed to a reduction in the occurrence of delays and unethical practices within the industry.

12. Case Study

The case study mentioned above focuses on the impact of the Maharashtra Real Estate Regulatory Authority (MahaRERA) as analyzed by Frank Knight in the year 2017. (Frank, K., 2017).

It delves into the comprehensive effects of this regulatory change on the various stakeholders involved in the real estate sector.

Specifically, it highlights the unprecedented price reductions witnessed in the Mumbai housing market, which had a profound impact on the industry.

Consequently, during the second half of 2017, residential property sales in the Mumbai metropolitan area surged by an impressive 19% as compared to the same period in 2016.

This surge in sales is a direct result of the regulatory changes brought about by MahaRERA. Prior to these changes, consumers were subjected to excruciatingly long waiting periods of 5 to 7 years for the legal system to adjudicate their grievances and administer justice. Since the previously mentioned circumstances, there have been notable developments.

Consumers now experience shorter resolution times for their complaints, typically taking only a couple of weeks or up to a month. This improvement has significantly bolstered consumer confidence in purchasing properties that are still under construction (Babar, K., 2017).

The implementation of RERA has led to developers channelling more time and effort into completing existing projects, which, in turn, has led to a decrease in the number of new projects being launched. In the MMR area, property launches in 2017 decreased by a staggering 83% from the peak levels observed in 2010, and there was a 32% year-on-year decline as well.

13. Future Outlook

The real estate industry is anticipated to experience a surge in adherence as the Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA) becomes further integrated. This integration is expected to lead to a heightened level of compliance among builders with regard to project authorization and disclosure guidelines, thereby reducing the occurrence of project-related delays and disputes (Abrol, S., 2022).

Notably, RERA has already had a positive impact on consumer confidence, and this positive trend is forecasted to continue to grow in the foreseeable future. The implementation of essential project registration and stringent laws is expected to lead to greater customer knowledge and security, ultimately boosting property investments.

As a result, it is anticipated that real estate-related litigation, which has historically hindered businesses, will be significantly reduced (Yadav, A., 2023).

The integration of additional technology is becoming increasingly essential for Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA) representatives as they seek to enhance their operations. This trend is projected to continue expanding, leading to enhanced efficiency in the validation, surveillance, and resolution of disputes (Kamath, N., 2023).

14. CONCLUSION

Since the implementation of the Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act (RERA), all parties involved in the real estate sector, including buyers, sellers, and developers, have experienced significant changes.

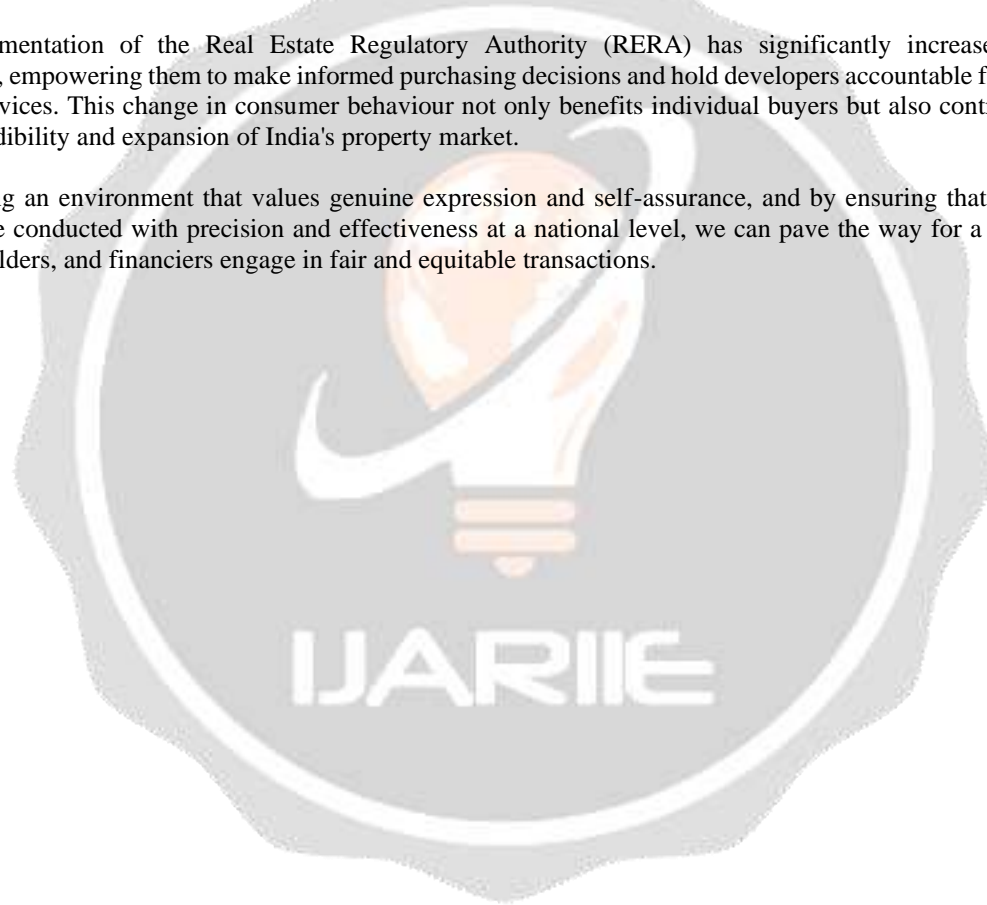
The impact of RERA has been substantial, not only on individual stakeholders but also on the overall economy. Looking ahead, its influence is expected to further improve the real estate industry.

Before the advent of RERA, buyers often found themselves in precarious situations due to opaque deals, stalled projects, and unethical business practices. However, with RERA in effect, buyers now approach real estate transactions with greater knowledge, caution, and responsibility. This has led to a more informed and empowered consumer base, fostering a healthier and more transparent real estate market.

The real estate industry greatly benefits from providing customers with access to detailed project information, transparent pricing structures, and the assurance of timely project delivery.

The implementation of the Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA) has significantly increased consumer confidence, empowering them to make informed purchasing decisions and hold developers accountable for the quality of their services. This change in consumer behaviour not only benefits individual buyers but also contributes to the overall credibility and expansion of India's property market.

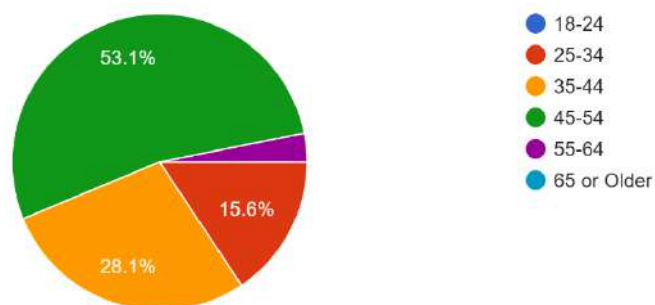
By fostering an environment that values genuine expression and self-assurance, and by ensuring that construction projects are conducted with precision and effectiveness at a national level, we can pave the way for a future where buyers, builders, and financiers engage in fair and equitable transactions.



15. Appendix for the Online Survey

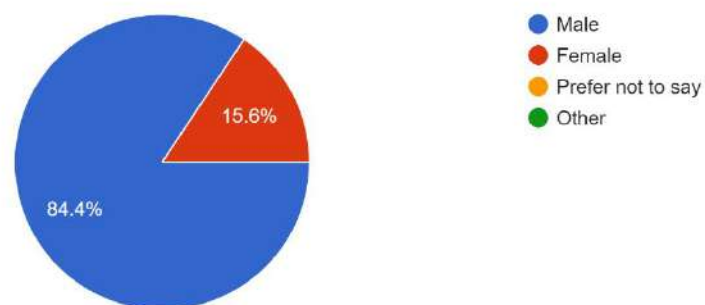
1. Please provide your age range

32 responses



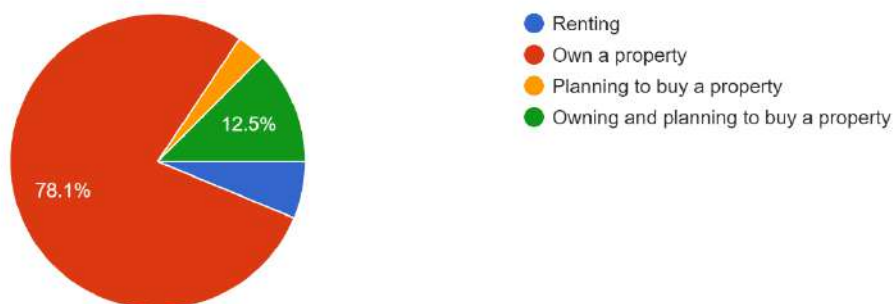
2. What is your gender?

32 responses



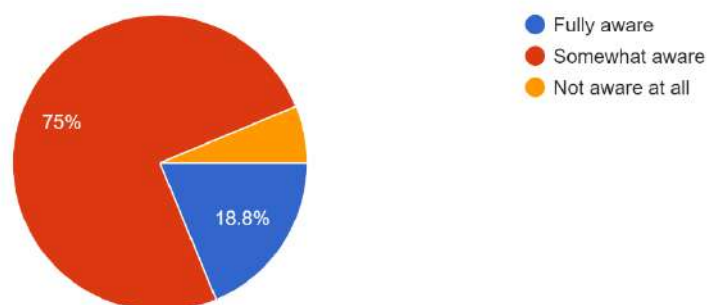
3. How would you describe your current housing situation?

32 responses



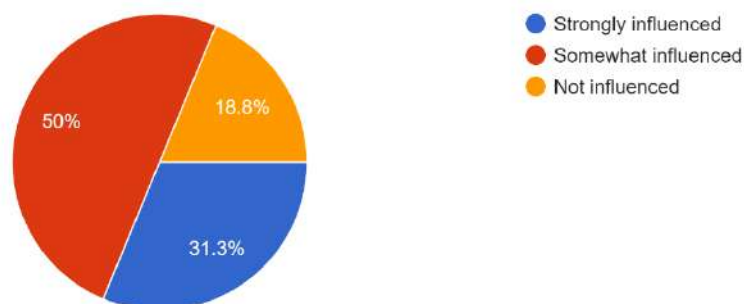
4. Are you aware of the rights and protections provided to buyers under RERA?

32 responses



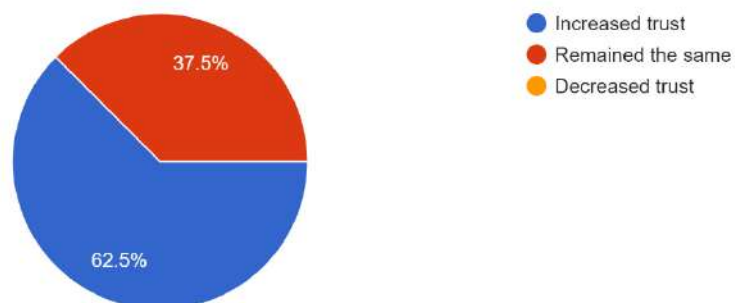
5. Has RERA influenced your decision to purchase a property?

32 responses



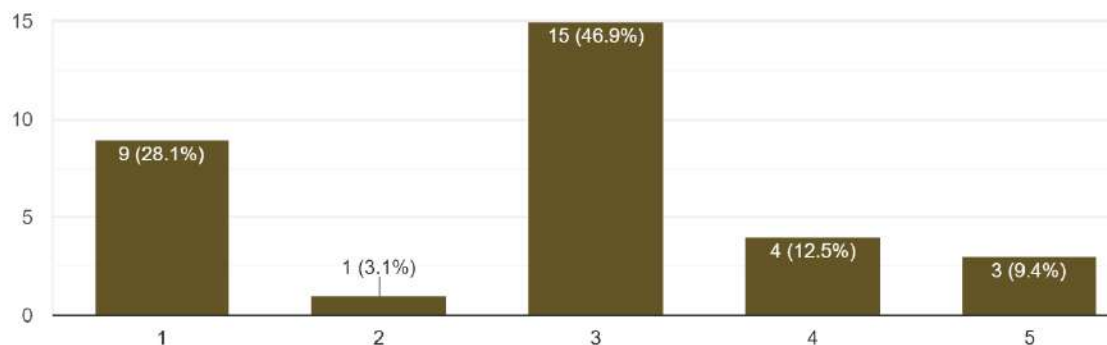
6. Has RERA influenced your trust in real estate brokers and builders?

32 responses



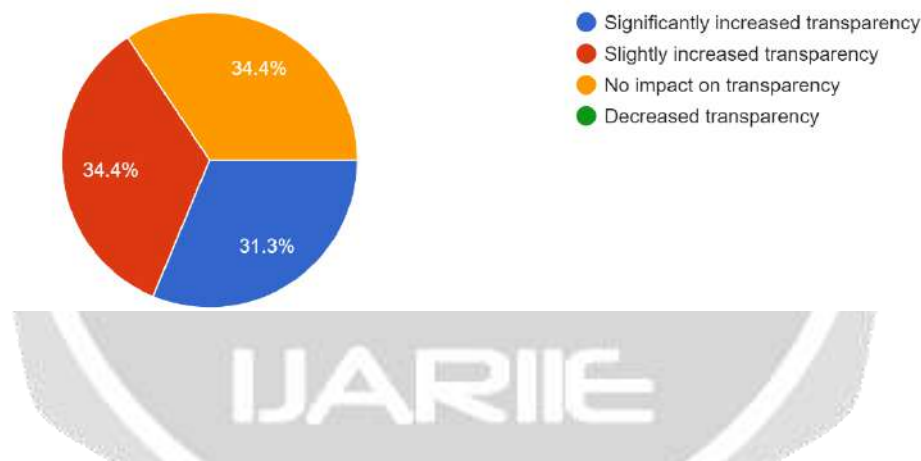
7. How satisfied are you with the dispute resolution mechanisms provided by RERA, if applicable?

32 responses



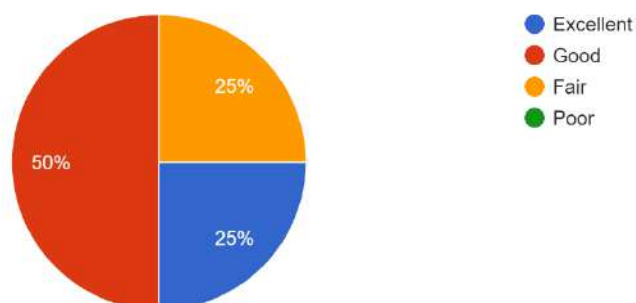
8. Do you believe that RERA has made property prices more transparent?

32 responses



9. How do you rate the availability of information about properties (e.g., project details, pricing, approvals) since the implementation of RERA?

32 responses



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TITLE: “Revolutionizing Retail: A Comprehensive Study on the Viability and Market Potential of a Sustainable E-Commerce Platform–EcoHarmony Marketplace”

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ABSTRACT

Through my research paper focused on the problem of accessing the viability and market potential of a proposed sustainable e-commerce platform namely EcoHarmony Marketplace, I primarily aim to access the current landscape of the retail industry, including trends, challenges, and opportunities, posing a solution to the retail industry through examining the concept and principle of sustainability within the context of e-commerce and its potential impact on consumer behavior. Alongside analyzing existing sustainable e-commerce platforms and identifying key success factors and challenges, I plan to develop a comprehensive understanding of EcoHarmony Marketplace's business model, including its features, business strategy, and sustainability initiatives. In order to evaluate the market potential of EcoHarmony Marketplace in terms of customer adoption, revenue generation, and competitive positioning, I would then provide recommendations for the implementation and enhancement of EcoHarmony Marketplace to maximize its viability and impact. The objectives of this research paper follow as conducting a literature review to understand the retail industry and the concepts of sustainability and e-commerce, collecting data through surveys to gather insights into consumer preferences, attitudes towards sustainability, and existing sustainable e-commerce platforms, utilizing market research techniques to access the demand for sustainable products and the willingness of consumers to engage with a sustainable e-commerce platform, employing financial analysis methods to evaluate the revenue potential and cost structure of EcoHarmony Marketplace, comparing EcoHarmony Marketplace with existing competitors and identify potential opportunities for differentiation and competitive advantage, developing recommendations for EcoHarmony Marketplace based on research findings and industry best practices, addressing areas such as marketing strategy, product assortment, user experience, and sustainability initiatives, to conclude with presenting research findings and recommendations in a comprehensive report, highlighting the potential of EcoHarmony Marketplace to revolutionize the retail industry through sustainability-driven e-commerce.

Keywords : - Research methods [1], Revolutionizing retail [2], E-commerce marketplace [3], Sustainability [4], Online shopping [5]

1. Introduction and Background to the Organisation

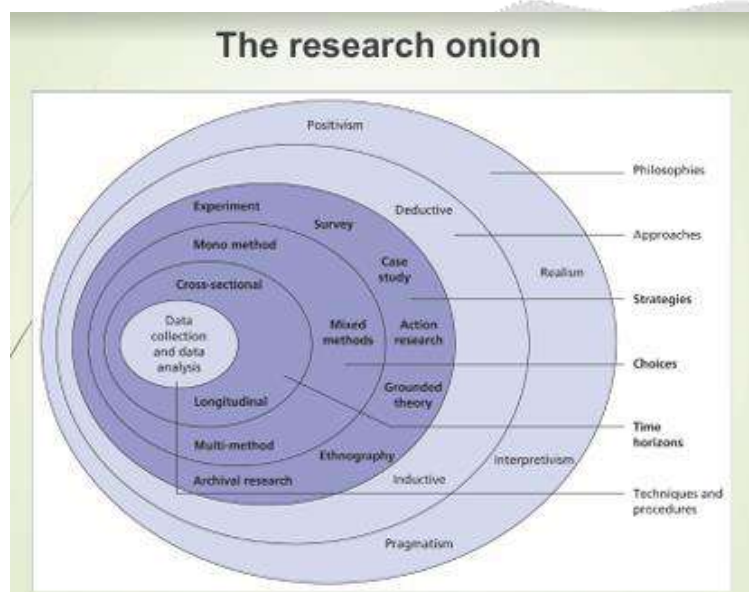
Being at the leading edge of the transformation in retail via environmental and ethical business operations is EcoHarmony Marketplace, an innovative e-commerce platform. The platform encourages ethical and sustainable product choices, which in turn supports ecologically friendly practices and responsible consumption. It presents an assortment of carefully chosen ecologically friendly products, such as equipment for charging electric vehicles and other items that are considerate of the environment. To expand its reach and increase its impact, the platform partners

with other companies and corporations holding similar beliefs. Through these alliances, EcoHarmony Marketplace is able to grow its customer base, providing a greater selection of sustainable goods, and serve as a hub for ethical shopping. The platform guarantees that customers can make educated decisions that are consistent with their values by emphasizing openness regarding product sourcing, offering comprehensive details on the background of each product, and doing impact reviews. The feasibility and consumer appeal of EcoHarmony Marketplace are examined in detail in this thorough analysis, which also highlights the platform's creative integration of business and social consciousness. EcoHarmony Marketplace is based on a deep vision to redesign the retail experience by providing an environmentally friendly choice that puts an emphasis on responsible purchase and conserving the environment. The goal of the company is to create a community of environmentally concerned customers who are dedicated to improving the environment via their purchase decisions, in addition to offering an avenue for eco-friendly products; wherein our product and service portfolio as part of our revenue streams would be such as eco-friendly and sustainable shoes, clothing, bags, accessories, and additionally customisation and personalisation for and of the same. One of the unique selling points (USP) of EcoHarmony Marketplace is the careful selection of products that meet strict ethical standards. The company enables customers to make purchases with no reservations by endorsing goods that are produced ethically, without using cruelty, and with minimal environmental impact. All products on the marketplace, including recycled products and organic textiles, go through a thorough screening process to guarantee they adhere to the strictest environmental regulations. Researching about the market and exploring the enormous prospective market of sustainable online shopping emphasizes the rising demand from customers for environmentally friendly goods. With people becoming more conscious of sustainability concerns and adopting more environmentally friendly habits, EcoHarmony Marketplace is well-positioned to benefit from this growing market niche. In addition to meeting a critical demand for sustainable purchasing options, the platform takes advantage of a profitable market opportunity by capitalizing on the growing trend of conscious consumerism. Modern technology is used by EcoHarmony Marketplace to boost the customer service and expedite the purchasing process. Customers are guaranteed a hassle-free purchasing experience via the platform's user-friendly interfaces, tailored recommendations, and easy payment choices. Additionally, the company is able to better manage its inventory and customize its products to match changing customer demands, given the successful combination of analytical data and artificial intelligence insights. In addition to serving as an online store, EcoHarmony encourages communication, teamwork, and the exchange of knowledge among its users regarding environmentalism. EcoHarmony Marketplace creates a thriving community of people who share their passion for changing the world by partnering with environmental organizations, offering educational resources, and hosting interactive forums. In summary, EcoHarmony Marketplace shows that companies and the environment can thrive peacefully and serves as a symbol of optimism for businesses. It opens the door for a more ethical and sustainable way of doing business online by supporting ethical standards, welcoming innovation, and interacting with an array of conscientious customers. One of EcoHarmony's main business competitors in India is Amazon. Although it is one of the biggest e-commerce companies in the country, it yet does not entirely disclose the sourcing of its products. For example, it should reveal more details on the effects its products have on society and the environment to increase supply chain clarity. Whereas, when it comes to product sourcing and production procedures, EcoHarmony Marketplace places a strong emphasis on openness, empowering users to make knowledgeable decisions. Amazon also does not still strongly believe in recycling and second hand buying, whereas EcoHarmony encourages their buyers to fix, recycle and find new uses for the products sold by them.

1.1 Research Methodology

The research technique is an important part of research. It is a broad research plan outlining how research should be conducted. Dawson defines it as the "philosophy or general principles that guide and justify the research." The research methodology consists of a set of beliefs and philosophical assumptions that form the interpretation of research topics and influence the selection of research methodologies [1]. Saunders et al.'s 'Research Onion Model' is a methodical technique to developing research methods for a research dissertation or thesis. It is a valuable framework to employ when deciding on a suitable research philosophy and establishing a plan. Saunders' research onion model is divided into six levels, with each layer representing a certain research method. The association of Saunders' research onion to research technique is related to the structure of the study, which is explained by peeling each layer of the onion, beginning with the outermost layer and progressing to the core. The retail landscape is undergoing a significant transformation, with sustainability emerging as a key focus area. In this context, EcoHarmony Marketplace, an envisioned Indian brand offering eco-friendly products and customisation services, presents an intriguing opportunity to explore the feasibility and market potential of sustainable e-commerce platforms. This research aims to conduct a thorough investigation into EcoHarmony Marketplace using the research onion framework proposed by

Saunders, alongside other pertinent methodologies and data sources. By delving into various layers of research methodology, including research paradigm and method, research strategies, time horizons, and sampling frame, this study seeks to provide comprehensive insights into the viability and market acceptance of EcoHarmony Marketplace in the Indian retail sector. Surveys, as the chosen research strategy for this study, offer a structured and efficient method for collecting data from a large sample of participants. Surveys involve asking a series of questions to participants about their opinions, attitudes, and behaviors related to the research topic. In the context of this study on the viability and market potential of EcoHarmony Marketplace, surveys will serve as the primary tool for gathering insights from Indian consumers regarding their preferences for eco-friendly products and their online shopping habits. Our survey will be tailored to include questions about specific aspects of EcoHarmony Marketplace, such as product preferences, pricing perceptions, and perceptions of sustainability initiatives. By analyzing survey responses, we can gain valuable insights into the factors influencing consumer acceptance and adoption of sustainable e-commerce platforms, thereby informing strategic decisions for EcoHarmony Marketplace's development and growth.

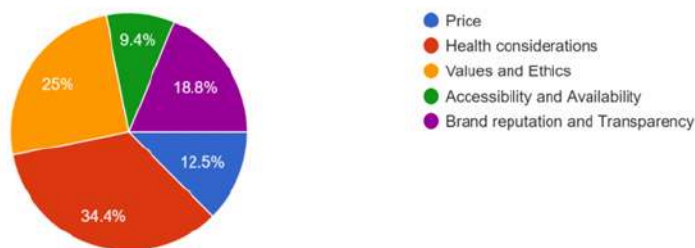


1.2 Data Analysis

Our Primary Research Findings were carried out by means of responses on a customer survey, in the form of a questionnaire sent to each of our respondents. Our results demonstrated that my target audience for “EcoHarmony Marketplace” would be between the ages of 21-25, as highlighted through a 50% response rate. The male to female ratio according to research would potentially be 15 to 17 respectively, of a total of 32 respondents. As our business is ought to be primarily a sustainable e-commerce platform, and the graph curated of our responses depicts that 59.4% majority of individuals actively seek out eco-friendly or sustainable products, it would be ideal to setup our business online, favoring a larger number of visitors and a higher conversion rate for “EcoHarmony Marketplace”.

What factors influence your decision to purchase eco-friendly products?

32 responses



India has seen a surge in internet usage in recent years. Due in a large part to the “Digital India” initiative, there were 830 million internet connections in 2021. Approximately 55% of all internet connections were made in metropolitan

areas, and 97% of those connections were wireless. India's e-commerce industry has revolutionized the country's business practices and opened up new markets for consumer-to-business (C2B), consumer-to-consumer (C2C), direct-to-consumer (D2C), and business-to-business (B2B) transactions (Shuey, 2024). Significant markets like D2C along with B2B have grown enormously in the last few years. By FY27, the D2C market in India is anticipated to grow to US \$ 60 billion. It is anticipated that the e-commerce market as a whole will expand by 21.5% in 2022 to reach US \$ 74.8 billion, and that it will reach US \$ 350 billion by 2030. With 150 million online shoppers in FY21 and projected to reach 350 million by FY26, India ranked third in the world, behind the US and China. Micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSME) in India have benefited greatly from the e-commerce sector, which also has a positive knock-on effect on other industries by offering funding, advancements in technology and training opportunities. By 2034, the Indian e-commerce market is predicted to have surpassed the US to take the second place in the globe, continuing its upward trajectory of growth. Innovations powered by technology, such as electronic payments, hyper-local transportation, analytics-driven consumer participation, and online advertisements, are expected to bolster the industry's expansion [2].

2. Marketing Mix (7 P's) of EcoHarmony Marketplace

The 7P's of marketing are a collection of well-known marketing strategies that could be employed in any arrangement in order to appeal to consumers in the target demographic. A 'strategic marketing mix' is the process of combining several marketing approaches to fulfill the demands and desires of clients. This marketing mix is a well-known promotional tool that was formerly confined to the fundamental 4P's: Product, Price, Place, and Promotion. People, Process, and Physical Evidence are the latest modifications to the 7P's [3]. By meticulously integrating these elements into its marketing mix, EcoHarmony Marketplace not only positions itself as a leading destination for sustainable shopping but also fosters a community of environmentally conscious consumers committed to making a positive impact on the planet. Through continuous innovation, collaboration, and customer-centricity, EcoHarmony aims to drive positive change in the retail industry and beyond.



Chart -1 : Marketing Mix

2.1 Risk Analysis

A Risk Analysis assesses the likelihood of an unanticipated detrimental occurrence that might have a significant impact on key company activities and projects. Organizations undertake risk assessments to determine when an adverse result is likely, the impact of the risk on a certain business sector, and the manner in which the risk may be mitigated. A business analysis creates a control plan to return the company's operations to normal in the event of an unexpected unfavorable consequence [4].

Each key step of the risk analysis process as illustrated above, can be linked to EcoHarmony Marketplace as follows:

01. Identification of Risk—This step involves identifying potential risks that could impact the success of EcoHarmony Marketplace. Risks in this context could include competition from existing e-commerce giants, supply chain disruptions for sustainable products, regulatory hurdles for eco-friendly certifications, or consumer reluctance to adopt sustainable practices in online shopping.

02.Analyzing the Risk–After identifying potential risks,the research would delve into analyzing each risk in detail.This would involve examining the probability of each risk occurring and the potential impact it could have on the viability and market potential of EcoHarmony Marketplace.For example,the analysis might reveal that supply chain disruptions pose a moderate risk due to the unpredictability of sourcing sustainable products.

03.Evaluating the Risk–Once risks are analyzed,the research would evaluate their significance to the overall success of EcoHarmony Marketplace.Risks with high probability and high impact,such as intense competition,might be deemed more critical and require proactive mitigation strategies.Conversely,risks with low probability and low impact may be considered less urgent.

04.Treat the Risk–This step involves developing strategies to mitigate or manage identified risks.For instance,to address the risk of supply chain disruptions,EcoHarmony Marketplace could establish multiple supplier partnerships,invest in inventory management systems,or diversify it's product offerings to reduce reliance on a single source.

05.Review the Risk–Finally,the research would emphasize the importance of regularly reviewing and reassessing risks as market conditions evolve.Continuous monitoring allows EcoHarmony Marketplace to adapt it's risk management strategies accordingly.Additionally,it enables the identification of new risks that may emerge over time,such as shifts in consumer preference or changes in regulatory framework impacting sustainable e-commerce.

2.2 Financial Plan and Projections

A Financial plan is a procedure that a corporation puts out,usually in a step-by-step fashion,for using existing money and other assets to reach growth or profit goals based on a plausible financial projection.EcoHarmony Marketplace uses clever pricing strategies to attract environmentally conscious customers while maintaining financial stability.Use value-based pricing,where prices are based on expected environmental and social impacts.This is backed up by research showing that customers are willing to pay 20% more for ethically sourced raw materials.Dynamic pricing remains competitive by responding to changing market demands for environmentally friendly products.Bundling and rebates encourage environmentally conscious behavior by leveraging data demonstrating their cost-effectiveness and positive environmental impact.Subscription models can increase customer loyalty and provide a stable revenue stream.These technologies increase sales and further EcoHarmony's goal of revolutionizing retail in a sustainable manner,supported by prudent financial management and environmental responsibility.The Cost Card for the research project titled “Revolutionizing Retail:A Comprehensive Study on the Viability and Market Potential of a Sustainable E-Commerce Platform EcoHarmony Marketplace” outlines the anticipated expenses across various categories.Research expenses include 10,000 INR for accessing academic literature,20,000 INR for data collection methods,and 15,000 INR for research software.Personnel costs encompass a 50,000 INR salary for the lead researcher,30,000 INR for a research assistant,and 25,000 INR for travel expenses.Technology and equipment expenses comprise 40,000 INR for computer upgrades,10,000 INR for software licenses,and 5,000 INR for internet subscriptions.Marketing and promotion efforts involve 20,000 INR for website development and 15,000 INR for advertising.Administrative expenses include 5,000 INR for office supplies,7,000 INR for utilities,and 30,000 INR for office space rental.A contingency fund of 10,000 INR and 15,000 INR for training programs are allocated for unforeseen circumstances and skill enhancement,respectively.In total,the estimated cost for the research project amounts to 3,07,000 INR.This detailed breakdown provides insights into the financial requirements for conducting the study effectively [5].

3. Launch Event

We will develop a comprehensive approach for the digital launch of EcoHarmony Marketplace in order to engage our audience and generate enthusiasm about our sustainable solutions.We would curate interesting content that connects with environmentally aware customers by using the broad reach of social media platforms like Instagram,Facebook,and Twitter.Collaborating with important eco-conscious influencers like Sarah Smith (@sustainable_sarah) and David Green (@eco_advocate_david) will allow us to engage honestly with their followers while also using their platforms to highlight our eco-friendly goods and principles.We will build a thriving online community excitedly awaiting the release of EcoHarmony Marketplace with exclusive sneak peaks,interactive polls,and behind-the-scenes looks.Strategic collaborations with top eco-friendly magazines and online communities

will increase our brand's awareness and reputation in the sustainability space. We would be able to convey our brand narrative and ideals with a larger audience that are concerned about environmental stewardship by engaging with platforms such as Eco Warrior (@ecowarrior_mag) and Sustainable Style. Hosting live virtual events with important personalities like environmental activist Emma Green (@greenforchange) will increase excitement and engagement, bringing traffic to our platform and establishing meaningful relationships with our target audience. EcoHarmony Marketplace will emerge as a leader in the sustainable e-commerce sector as a result of these activities, set to revolutionize retail with its novel approach to eco-friendly buying [2].

In conjunction with our digital efforts, EcoHarmony Marketplace's physical launch approach will immerse customers in an amazing experience that demonstrates our dedication to sustainability. We will present our eco-friendly items in a real context while creating meaningful connections with our audience by hosting a series of pop-up events in eco-conscious metropolitan centers. Visualize a bustling city square turned into an eco-friendly refuge where visitors can interact with our team members, participate in DIY customisation workshops, and learn directly about our sustainable processes. Collaborating with local sustainability organizations and companies will increase the effect of our pop-up events, broadening our community reach and consolidating EcoHarmony Marketplace's position as a catalyst for good change. Guerilla marketing strategies will serve as a dynamic complement to our physical launch plan, attracting passerby's attention and building talk about our pop-up events. Flash mob performances tailored to promote sustainable living will fascinate audiences and inspire discussions about our company and aim [4].

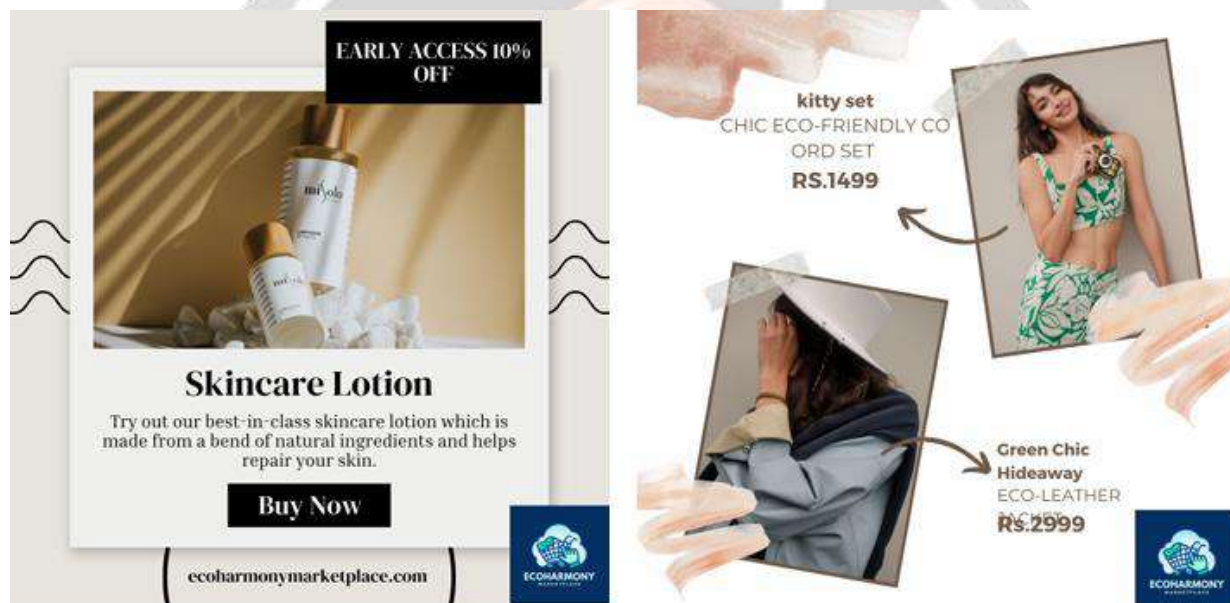


Chart -2 : Promotional Digital Campaigns Designed

3.1 Future Plans of “EcoHarmony Marketplace”

- ★ Extension into Other Markets: In addition to its present links in India, EcoHarmony Marketplace intends to expand into other countries, including Australia. With this expansion, the platform will be able to reach a bigger audience and address the growing global demand for eco-friendly merchandise.
- ★ Improved Product Offerings: In order to appeal to a broader range of environmentally conscious clients, the firm plans to broaden and improve its product offerings. EcoHarmony Marketplace seeks to meet evolving client demands and retain its leading position in sustainable purchasing by introducing new, cutting-edge eco-friendly items.
- ★ Emphasis on Sustainability Education: EcoHarmony Marketplace intends to further its commitment to sustainability education by providing resources, seminars, and guides on the subject. The platform's purpose is to

educate and enlighten users in order to build a network of green-minded individuals dedicated to environmental improvement.

★ **Innovation and Technology Collaboration:** EcoHarmony Marketplace wants to leverage technology and creativity to improve the user experience, optimize operations, and encourage growth. By integrating cutting-edge tools such as NetSuite ERP, the platform aims to boost productivity, grow internationally, and streamline its business processes.



Fig -1: Packaging Suggested to EcoHarmony Marketplace

The Business EcoHarmony Marketplace would want to design their own packaging. Thereby, a tentative package design is as suggested above.

4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this comprehensive study has shed light on the transformative potential of EcoHarmony Marketplace within the retail landscape. Through an amalgamation of environmental consciousness and ethical business practices, EcoHarmony emerges as a pioneering force in sustainable e-commerce. The exploration of literature, grounded in theories such as the Triple Bottom Line and the 3 P's (People, Planet, and Profit), along with alignment with ESG criteria and SDGs 13 and 14, underscores the platform's commitment to holistic sustainability. Employing an interpretivist research paradigm and a quantitative-deductive approach, supported by surveys and secondary research, this study delved into the market viability of EcoHarmony. The analysis, inclusive of competitor assessments with industry giants like Amazon India, Okhai, and Fabindia, elucidated EcoHarmony's unique positioning and strategic advantages. Furthermore, the delineation of the Marketing Mix (7P's), risk analysis, and financial projections revealed a nuanced understanding of EcoHarmony's operational landscape. Leveraging value-based pricing, dynamic pricing strategies, and subscription models, EcoHarmony demonstrates its capacity to attract environmentally conscious consumers while ensuring financial sustainability. The meticulously crafted launch plan, encompassing both digital and physical realms, sets the stage for EcoHarmony's disruptive entry into the market. Looking ahead, recommendations emphasize the importance of continued innovation, strategic partnerships, and community engagement to foster long-term success. In essence, EcoHarmony Marketplace epitomizes the convergence of profitability and planetary stewardship, poised to revolutionize retail through its unwavering commitment to sustainability and social responsibility.

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OPERATIONS AND SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT OF MYNTRA

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ABSTRACT

Operations and Supply Chain Management (OSCM) consists of a broad spectrum which pertain to the both manufacturing and service sectors. This covers activities like sourcing goods, inventory management, scheduling operations, logistics, shipping, demand predictions, fulfilment of orders, and more. In context of Myntra, the largest E-commerce fashion retailer in India, this research paper delves into the analysis of the operations and supply chain management practices carried out by Myntra, covering Upstream supply chain, Downstream supply chain, and Operations management. The upstream supply chain section addresses the inbound logistics procedures, formation of open supplier relationship through their seller portal platform, and to implement more of environmental conscience practices across the organization's supply chain, for that Myntra had cultivated partnerships with Better cotton Initiative for sourcing sustainable cottons and also with LENZING ECOVERO for providing Viscose Clothing that are largely produced from LENZING ECOVERO trademarked specialized viscose fiber. Moving on, the operations management section addresses the 4Vs typology of operations that consist of – Volume, Variety, Variation, and Visibility. It highlights the performance objectives carried out by Myntra - cost, quality, speed, dependability, flexibility. Plus, the process and layout types are analyzed. Myntra's inventory management models, such as Myntra M- Direct, Third-Party API, and Myntra PPMP, are also discussed. The sustainable practices implemented by Myntra are covered as well. Furthermore, the downstream supply chain section addresses the outbound logistics procedures and the Kirana Delivery Programme launched by Myntra for delivering of products

Keyword: *Myntra, Operations Management, Upstream Supply Chain, Downstream Supply Chain*

1. Company Background

Myntra's journey was initiated in 2007 by Mr. Mukesh Bansal, Mr. Ashutosh Lawania, and Mr. Vineet Saxena. The company has its headquarters situated in Bangalore and the parent firm is Flipkart. Back in 2007, Mr. Bansal discovered a turning point, after he visited a deserted commercial sector in Pune wherein, he came across a better idea right after noticing the unsold goods in offline stores: selling off these products online. This recognition resulted in Myntra becoming an **E-commerce company**.

Myntra offers high – quality products like apparels, bags, backpacks, beauty, and self – care items, home category items, branded footwears, and many. As per 2024, Myntra serves as the largest E-commerce fashion retailer in India, with **sixty million average users on its platform**. (Punamiya and Mishra, 2024)

2. Upstream Supply Chain Activities

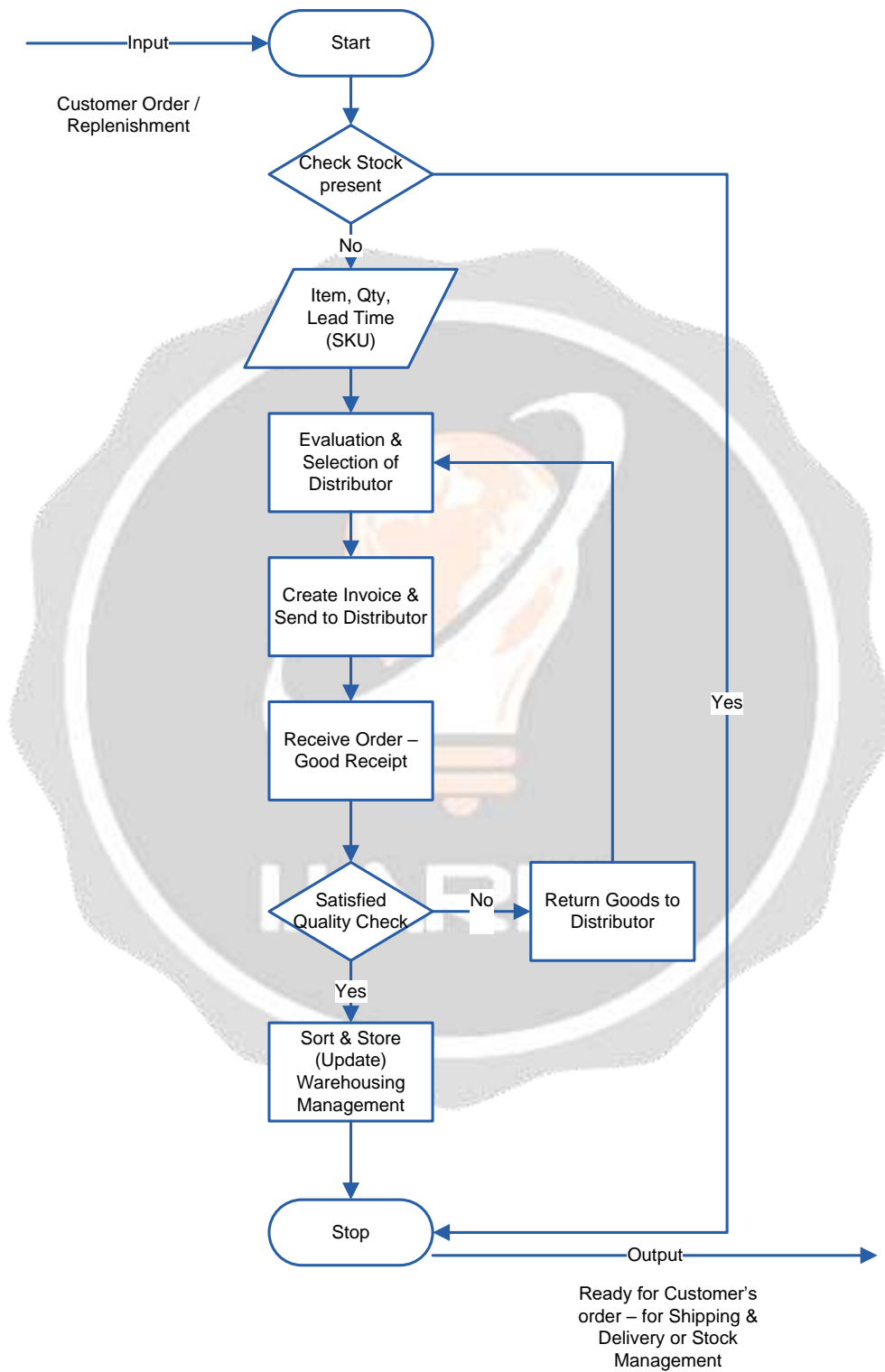


Figure 1: Inbound Logistics Diagram
(Mohapatra and Lokhande, 2014)

As illustrated in the above given diagram, Myntra operates their upstream supply chain activities by focusing on **inbound logistics**. In this case, once the clientele orders are received or the demand for replenishments are occurred, then it serves as the **inputs** for Myntra. Based on this, the company then enacts upon by carrying out the following steps –

- Firstly, the company verifies that whether **the required amount of stock is readily available on hand or not**. If the stock is not available, then Myntra decides upon the products, amount of quantity, and the stock keeping unit parameters of every category.
- Then, Myntra chooses the **supplier**, makes an invoice, and sends to the supplier.
- Lastly, upon receiving the products, the company performs a **quality test** on the items and then proceeds towards warehouse management.

(Mohapatra and Lokhande, 2014)

Moreover, Myntra does not manufacture their own products. Instead, they fully focus on **outsourcing the products** by working with various brands. At the moment, the company supplies more than **twenty – three lakh designs** spanning from **6000 Indian and International styles, cosmetics and also, lifestyle labels**. By December 2023, the company distributed more than **400 foreign labels** like Levis, Mango, Tommy Hilfiger, Nautica, Marks & Spencer etc. Beyond these, Myntra even incorporated more than **50 global brands** in 2023, which involves prominent labels like BoohooMan, Parfois, Next, Oasis, Champion, Anne Klein, Gymshark etc. (Kumar, 2024).

Furthermore, Myntra cultivates an **Open Supplier Relationship** through their **seller portal platform**, in the following ways –

- Firstly, Myntra's seller portal empowers the suppliers to offer their products online. This platform serves as a beneficial means for vendors to manage their inventory, generate postings, and receive customer orders (D'silva, 2022).
- Secondly, Myntra even streamlined the method of selling goods for suppliers. They even offer a detailed online registration manual, assuring an easy onboarding procedure for suppliers.
- Thirdly, Myntra gives full authority to the suppliers for organizing their catalogue and even helps with professional cataloguing. And lastly, through company's partner insights platform, suppliers could obtain valuable data – driven information (Easebuzz, 2023).

Through this, Myntra not only establishes **long – term relationship** with suppliers but also interacts with them in **sourcing goods** on their website.

Additionally, **Neetu Jotwani, VP Product Development & Sourcing at Myntra**, spoke on partnership, by stating that, the company aims towards implementing more **environmental conscience practices** across the organisation's supply chain

For implementing these practices, Myntra partnered up with **Better Cotton Initiative (BCI)** for sourcing of sustainable cotton throughout their business. Through this partnership, the company initially **sourced 10%** of cotton from BCI for their **private labels** and planned to gradually maximize the **sourcing of cotton up to 50%** in the next few years (Myntra, 2021d).

In 2020, Myntra even partnered up with **LENZING ECOVERO**. With this partnership, Myntra's private labels provide "**viscose clothing**" which are largely produced from LENZING ECOVERO trademarked specialized **viscose fibre**, an ecologically – friendly fibre, which is certified by the **EU Ecolabel** and manufactured in an environmentally responsible way. Few of the labels who have incorporated the fibre of LENZING ECOVERO in the clothing involves Roadster, Mast & Harbour, Sztori, DressBerry, Ether etc. Along with this, Myntra even reported a **20% increase** in the adoption of ecological viscose fibres for their women's clothing, western apparels, and traditional wear categories. The company also viewed a **25% growth** in the quantity of items manufactured with LENZING ECOVERO fibre after the partnership was initiated (Myntra, 2022b).

Although, Myntra has established a **vast network of supplier**, it still poses a challenge for the company to sustain strong connections with every one of them. Adding on, **Debashis Bhadra, Senior Director of Sourcing at Myntra**, commented on the **supplier dependability issue** in the supply chain. He states that oftentimes the company does not

get the quantity of products as guaranteed to be provided. Eventually, if the quantity is not obtained from the supplier, it poses a challenge for the company as they face a limited sell period (Fashinza, 2024).

3. Operations Management

3.1: 4Vs of Operations Management

A. Volume

Myntra's 2023 **"Big Fashion Festival,"** recorded the highest amount of volume. The company concluded their fashion festival with nearly **460 million** consumer visits on their platform. They witnessed a **42% of sale** from discerning clients of **tier 2 and tier 3 areas** who liked high – end and popular fashion styles. Few of the top areas included were Patna, Dehradun, Bhubaneswar, Indore, Lucknow etc.

Myntra even witnessed a **growth in sales** for the following categories –

<u>Categories</u>	<u>Rise in Sales</u>
▪ Indian Apparel Section	▪ 2.2 times rise in sales over standard business practices
▪ Myntra's "trend – first fashion proposition," FWD	▪ 2.5 times rise in sales above standard business practices
▪ International Brands	▪ 2 times rise in sales
▪ Home Furnishing Items ▪ Jewellery Items ▪ Travel Bags and accessories ▪ Cosmetics and Self – care Items ▪ Watches and Wearables	▪ 1.6 times rise in sales
▪ Direct to Consumer brands, involving those also who are part of the Myntra's "rising stars programme" which is significantly enhancing "Made in India" clothing sector	▪ 2 times rise in sales

Major highlights of the festive sale are –

- Myntra sold **190** kurtas and kurta pairs each minute
- Myntra sold **75** sets of footwear each minute
- Myntra sold **90** sets of denims each minute

(Myntra, 2023a)

B. Variety

Myntra provides an extensive collection of products, comprising of stylish and trendy apparels, footwears, jewellery, elegant accessories, makeups, self-care products, home products, and more. The company even provides a plethora of choices in various styles, serving to those individuals seeking for classic, modern, and popular opinions in fashion. They work with renowned fashion labels, providing a diversified collection that caters to every style (Virtual Startup Campus, 2023). Myntra currently offers more than twenty – three lakh styles through 6000 Indian and International styles, cosmetics and also, lifestyle labels

(Kumar, 2024). On the contrary, Myntra's competitor Meesho offers a large collection of goods, featuring beauty products, clothing, household goods, kitchen supplies and more. The company currently offers over fifty lakh products and over 650 categories of goods (Anand and Mishra, 2024).

Moving on, in 2023, Myntra introduced "**FWD**" an exclusive fashion experience for Gen – Z on their app. Here, the organisation has launched a variety of **unparalleled features** through which they offer an exclusive app – in – app interactions and even brings the GenZ's popular tendencies nearer to them. Through this proposition, Myntra offers an unrivalled choice of more than **65000 styles** and exposure to a varied mix of over **500 prominent brands** spanning from all over the world (Myntra, 2023b).

C. Variation

Myntra significantly manages the **fluctuations in demand**. For instance, when the company witnessed a **50% year on year spike** in demand for their **home category goods**, they addressed this variation in demand and eventually expanded their home section of product portfolio by launching **50000** fresh products along with more than **20 new labels**. The company states that around the festive time, individuals prefer to refurbish their homes and reform the kitchen by purchasing new equipment, kitchenware, and table ware. So, with Myntra offering around **750 brands** and over **two lakhs aesthetically appealing and trend – first designs** throughout the homeware section on the platform, consumers will have a wide array of options to upgrade their home furnishings (Myntra, 2023c).

Myntra even specified that as individuals frequently stay at home in the post – pandemic time has developed their interest towards aesthetics which drives them for investing more in homeware goods. Along with this, the remote work and work from home system has also let to the growing awareness of styles in home product section, thus prompting customer preferences (The Economic Times, 2023).

Furthermore, Myntra even leverages **data analytics** to enhance their supply chain management. They utilize **predictive analysis** in predicting the demand for goods, assuring that the right goods are readily available at proper time (Shah, 2023). On the contrary, Myntra's competitor **Meesho** leverages **google cloud** for enhancing their artificial intelligences and machine learning abilities across their value chain for increasing their company's operations by augmenting demand prediction and inventory management (Business Standard, 2022).

D. Visibility

Myntra has been working with **LogiNext Solutions**, an innovative company in the area of big data analytics and internet of things for strengthening live tracking, visibility, and notifications. Here, the LogiNext, assists Myntra in decreasing their expenses, minimising distances travelled and enhancing the estimated time of arrival (ETA) or estimated time of departure (ETD) by dynamic route optimization. Through LogiNext's tool **HaulTM**, Myntra was empowered to monitor their huge inter – city deliveries more accurately and provide live tracking alerts to their customers (Indian Retailer Bureau, 2016).

3.2: Performance Objectives

A. Cost

Myntra makes use of "**Data Analytics**" for streamlining the processes and supply chain. With evaluating the data associated with stock management, order preparations, and logistics, Myntra is able to streamline their operations and cut costs. For instance, Myntra leverages data analytics for estimating the demand for certain products and accordingly manages their stock levels. Through this, it helps the company in avoiding stockouts and surplus inventory, that could be costly (Shah, 2023).

B. Quality

Myntra emphasises on taking pleasure in choosing **high – quality global brands**. The company's vice president of business, Jayanti Ganguly, states that, Myntra's accurate process of selection focuses on showcasing only the finest quality products in the market for their high – end fashion forward consumers. This resolute dedication towards quality appears as a cornerstone on how they operate, assuring that the customers have the accessibility to the high – quality items (Ghai, 2024).

C. Flexibility

Myntra developed an "**Omnichannel Network**," whereby they have 350 labels and 5600 outlets accessible on their platform in over 140 cities. The company's initiatives through this omnichannel network intended towards providing

consumers the flexibility of getting their products delivered from the nearby store whilst substantially decreasing the delivery period of time. Thus, the brand employing the omnichannel platform, showcases the collections from their outlets, offering consumers an even wider variety. Few of the well – known brands incorporated in the omnichannel system are Vero Moda, USPA, Fila, Vans, Mango, and even the high – end stores like Collective and Iconic. Additionally, Myntra is also pioneering strategies such as **“beyond borders” and omnichannel support** which is intended towards making foreign labels and trends more available to the consumers by technologically driven approach. (Mathew, 2024)

Furthermore, Myntra leverages **“Data – Driven Information”** for formulating a better clientele experience. Jayanty Ganguly, Myntra’s VP of business, emphasized on Myntra having a deeper understanding of the whole consumer funnel which involves searching behaviours, choices, and buying patterns in curating a layout for managing categories for foreign brands. For example, when there is a spike in a specific type of trends which are presently not accessible, Myntra partners up with the brands for making them available. On the other hand, if a trend gets good responses, the company elevates their focus towards handling that category. Hence, this indicates Myntra is flexible enough to manage and respond as per the needs of customers (Ghai, 2024).

D. Speed and Dependability

Myntra’s **standard delivery period** usually varies between 1 – 7 working days, which is contingent upon the consumer’s and vendor’s location. Yet, the duration of delivery can change on the basis of availability of goods, area of delivery, and courier aspects (Deepika, 2023). However, Myntra in 2022, initiated an express delivering option known as **“M – Express,”** whereby the buyers receive the goods purchased in 24 – 48 hours after the order placement. By this delivery option, customers built a sense of dependability on the company for receiving their products to the earliest. This option provides an accessibility over a broad variety of **3 lakh designs** and more than **1300 pin codes**. It also makes it easy for **“speed – sensitive clients”** to smoothly research for M- express items via delivery timeline filters and even clearly recognise these goods through the expedited delivery tags which would be provided by the newly launched express option. Hence, this indicates that Myntra manages a reliable operation ensuring that the clients receive their products precisely when needed (Myntra, 2022a).

3.3: Process Type

Myntra **JIT (Just in Time)** business strategy regulates through placing **“Back – Orders”** to vendors based upon the consumer’s orders. Therefore, when the company receives the customer orders, they **group them according to the vendors**. For instance, let’s say there are twenty orders for twenty goods belonging to a vendor, now these orders will be batched to formulate a **single purchase order (PO)**, which would be then issued to the vendor. Hence, it demonstrates that Myntra adopts the **batching process**.

Furthermore, the vendor is not required to manage every consumer order single handedly, every item is transported in bulk to **Myntra hub**, whereby they are arranged, packed, and dispatched as per consumer’s location (Browntape, 2024)

3.4: Layout Type

Myntra’s **FBM (Fulfilled by Myntra)** methodology executes a **process layout design** for systematically managing the orders at their distribution centre. Hereby, Myntra sends a **“stock – transfer note”** to the vendor for transferring the items at the warehouse. On the arrival of the goods, Myntra performs a **quality check (QC)** before the items are packed and fulfilled by them.

And plus, the vendor **monitors** the items through a gate pass, thereby making it simple for tracing returns. It employs a **third – party network** during processing ((Browntape, 2024).

3.5: Inventory Management

The below mentioned are the three distinct methodologies in Myntra’s order management system via which they efficiently handle their inventory and executes orders.

Myntra M – Direct

- Myntra M – Direct was company's initial shift towards B2C. This approach comes closer with other E-commerce networks which many vendors are familiar with (Browntape, 2024). It is a free of charge order management system (Myntra, 2024).
- Under this model, a vendor requires to preserve a section of inventory only for Myntra. Therefore, the vendor must process the orders for M – Direct by making use of blocked inventory. Moreover, Myntra possess a significant power on the way of which a vendor's warehouse runs and how they oversee their inventory (Shanbhag, 2021).
- Furthermore, this model incorporates a pull strategy, whereby the vendor receives orders according to the consumer demand and serves them item – wise. For instance, when a client orders for a dress, the vendor of that product is informed immediately by Myntra's OMS. Following that, the vendor picks out, performs a quality check, and packs the item according to the client's name and location (Browntape, 2024), (Shanbhag, 2021).
- Thereafter, the packages are picked up by Myntra's in – house logistics team or via third – party service that Myntra employs, and are shipped to Myntra's centre. There they are categorised according to the area and sent out.
- Lastly, a vendor here is required to put their money into mandated equipment in their warehouse facilities. It involves a packaging table, printer machines, scanners, and Myntra specified packaging supplies. (Browntape, 2024)

Third Party API

- This methodology is a “Seller Financed,” third party order management system, consisting of platforms like Increff, Browntape, Unicommerce etc.
- Through this system, sellers are enabled to have a centralised administration on their inventory and customer orders throughout each platform.
- Hence, with this approach, sellers can integrate on Myntra's system and effectively oversee their inventory and process consumer orders.

(Myntra, 2024)

Myntra PPMP

- Myntra PPMP (Pure Play Marketplace) is a B2C approach whereby the vendors handle every order made by the final consumer directly (Browntape, 2024).
- This model operates on an open inventory method whereby the vendor is not required to block their inventory. Here, the vendor could maintain a shared stock of goods, with inventory backup for Myntra. But the vendor has the authority over the inventory.
- Under this model, the vendor is required to pay fixed charges, commission, logistics costs (forward as well as reverse), and buying of company's branded and specified packaging supplies (Shanbhag, 2021).
- This system is operated via Pretr. It is a flexible system which enables the vendors to integrate it with their own OMS
- Vendors could also select their order management system and integrate with the API's employed by Myntra (Browntape, 2024).

3.6: Sustainable Practices

The below listed points highlights on how Myntra implements sustainable practices –

Solar Panel Installation

For diminishing their ecological footprint, Myntra placed **solar panels in two of their biggest fulfilment facilities** that are based in **Bilaspur and Bhiwandi**. Through this, Myntra was able to substantially decrease their dependence upon energy from the finite resources. Moreover, **John James, Director of Supply Chain Infra and Automation at Myntra**, stated that, with the **installation of 5500 solar panels**, the company had **produced 1.75 megawatts of energy** and decreased their **ecological footprint around 2600 tonnes** (Myntra, 2021b).

Sustainable Packaging

Myntra had implemented the initiative of "**100% free of plastic packaging**," and by November 2021, the company had eliminated the utilization of **plastic or polythene materials** for their outer packages and shifted to paper packaging. Moreover, they had switched the **plastic tapes with paper tapes** and were also utilizing the **reused carton scraps** for their inner wrapping (Myntra, 2021e). Additionally, the company's fulfilment facilities were provided with proper **technology and equipment** for efficiently executing this initiative (Myntra, 2021a)

Partnership with Canopy

Myntra partnered up with Canopy, **a non-profit organisation** who formulates methods for safeguarding the remaining frontier forests. Through this, partnership, Myntra works with Canopy on two of their primary projects, **Pack4Good and CanopyStyle**, which enables the company to advise their vendors and sourcing partners upon **sustainable options for packing materials** and "**Man Made Cellulosic Fibres (MMCF)**," that involves rayon, viscose, modal, and lyocell.

So, through the Pack4Good initiative, Myntra works with canopy to investigate methods for decreasing their paper wrapping footprint via the adoption of **innovative design, reused resources**, and through the **incorporation of growing and circular economy- based developments** which enables a ban on the utilization of old and susceptible forests in the paper packaging and in man made cellulosic materials and other registered labels.

Moreover, Myntra has been emphasizing on the utilization of the sustainably generated man-made cellulosic materials in the goods produced for their private brands. So, along with canopy, the company has a responsible "**Forest - Derived Materials (FDM)**" sourcing alliance which guarantees that none of the man-made cellulosic materials are procured from the world's old and susceptible forests (Myntra, 2021c).

4. Downstream Supply Chain

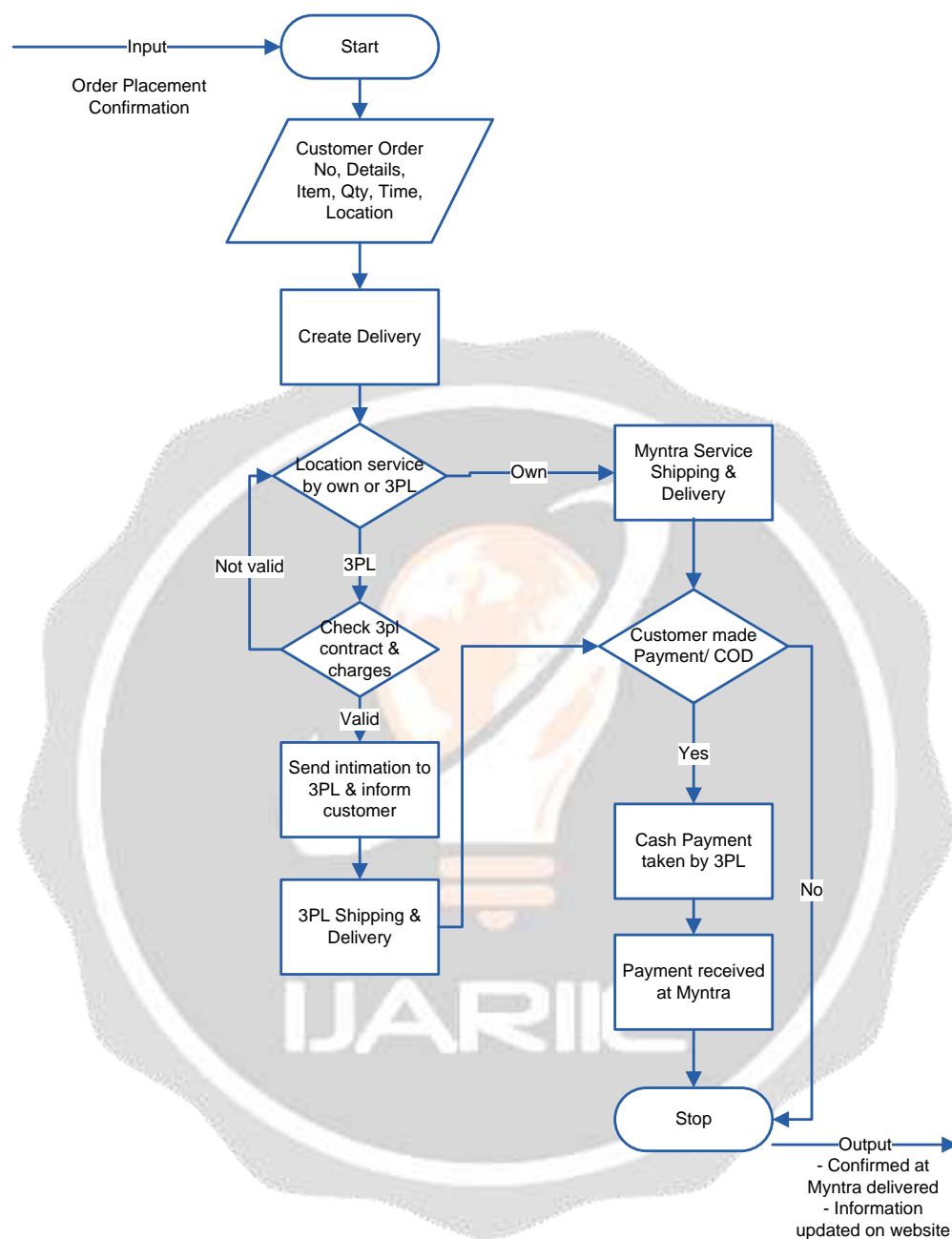


Figure 2: Outbound Logistics Diagram

(Mohapatra and Lokhande, 2014)

As demonstrated in the above diagram, Myntra regulates their downstream supply chain activities via **outbound logistics**. So, in this instance, **whenever an order has been placed/ accepted**, it functions as the **inputs** for Myntra. Following this, the organisation carries out the procedures in the following steps –

- Firstly, Myntra collects the **information of the order** which consist of the product, the amount of quantity, stock keeping unit ID, pricings, date and time, and the area to be delivered.
- Secondly, Myntra **formulates a whole delivery process** whereby their either deliver via third party logistics (3PL) or on their own, which is based upon the location where the service has to be provided.
- Thirdly, if a delivery process is conducted via third – party service, Myntra first looks over their **agreement and charges**, and then, once a 3PL is chosen, the company forwards them the delivery information.
- Fourthly, during the delivery, a third – party logistics vendor takes the **accurate amount of cash** (if ordered on COD) and if the transaction is done in advance, they simply deliver the goods and takes a signature.
- Lastly, the cash received from the COD deliveries are sent to Myntra after the **subtraction of the commission charges**.

(Mohapatra and Lokhande, 2014)

Moving on, in 2017, Myntra had established a “**Kirana Delivery Programme**” which was also referred to as “**MENSA (Myntra’s Extended Service For Augmentation)**.” Through this initiative, the company focused on streamlining their delivery process in the most effective method possible, whilst also offering an excellent collaborative opportunity to their **Kirana associates** (Martins, 2019). Since then, this initiative has assisted Myntra in delivering clientele orders in more than **19000 pin codes**.

For this initiative, Myntra had **meticulously picked the delivery partners from the local stores** that consist of grocery shops, milk shops, recharge stores, and other various small stores. As, many of these individuals had been staying in the **locality for a while**, they had a better understanding of the neighbourhood and were able to carry out the deliveries on a **hyperlocal basis** with no misunderstandings of the addresses. Hence, this boosts the efficacy of the process and provides a smooth shopping experience to consumers.

Moreover, here, these shopkeepers make use of the **free space available** in their stores for **holding the packages**, and during their spare time, mainly in afternoon or evening hours when customer demand is less, they make the deliveries. Therefore, whenever a client receives their orders from a nearby Kirana store, **they feel comfortable as they observe that the deliveries are fulfilled by someone, whom they interact with on a regular basis**. (Team YS, 2023).

5. Issues in Operations

Cybersecurity protocols in the **E-commerce sector** pertains to a **complete set of processes, technologies, and strategies** utilised in **securing** internet - based companies, their consumers, and online transactions from cyberattacks. So, with the **growing landscape** of the e-commerce sector, the **threat factors linked with cyber security breaches**, like data leaks, fraudulent transactions, and disturbances in the company's operations, likewise grows (Neumetric, 2023).

So, although Myntra is an E-commerce company, they have lacked in integrating an adequate cybersecurity safety mechanism in their system. The below listed points highlights on how Myntra and their customers experienced cyber breaches -

Firstly, the details of Myntra's consumers were breached by a phishing group who were functioning from Noida. They had acquired the **private customer data**, which consisted of names, emails, delivery address, buyers purchasing history and order numbers. Here, the group tricked the consumers by pretending to be an employee of the company and provided cashbacks to them on their earlier purchases. Hence, this illustrates that Myntra's systems are very vulnerable, which enabled the cyber attackers to **obtain unauthorized access in their system** (Soni, 2019).

Secondly, Myntra's consumers had encountered **unauthorized login attempts** in their accounts, which caused concerns over their personal and financial information getting disclosed (Deep, 2022).

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, this research paper highlights how Myntra have excelled in various areas of operations and supply chain management. The evaluation exhibits Myntra's effective practices on carrying out the Operation Management Activities, Upstream and Downstream Supply chain Activities. Although having these operational strengths, Myntra have lacked in integrating an adequate cybersecurity safety mechanism, which is clear from the occurrence whereby Myntra's consumers were breached by a phishing group who were functioning from Noida, and events of unauthorized logins attempts in their accounts. Hence, for safeguarding the customer data and to assure long term success, Myntra should focus on strengthening their cyber security measures.

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TITLE: OPERATIONS AND SUPPLY CHAIN OF NYKAA

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ABSTRACT

Over the years, as technologies have advanced, businesses are employing more technical supply chain practices that are necessary for companies especially e-commerce companies to identify the needs of their consumers and maintain their positions in the market along with their competitors. The purpose of this research to examine supply chain management techniques utilized by Nykaa, one of the leading and a prominent online retailer of beauty and cosmetics in India. Throughout this study, there are cases that explore how Nykaa has managed their wide product catalogue, ensured to provide their consumers best delivery along with comparative analysis with their competitors in the beauty sector. The research covers concepts of Upstream Supply Chain that delves into the procurement processes and supplier contract relationship of Nykaa for both its homegrown and licensed brands meanwhile the sections of Downstream Supply Chain, covers crucial aspects of order fulfillment and the operations behind Nykaa's physical stores across the country. About Nykaa, several observations have made using concepts like 4V's that details the Visibility, Variation, Volume and Variety of the company and other concepts of 5 Performance Objectives, are used to access the operations of Nykaa. Additionally, this research analyses the Nykaa's processes with its market competitors, using the information gained from this analysis.

Keyword: - Nykaa, Supply Chain Management, Inventory Management, Upstream Supply Chain, Downstream Supply Chain

1. Company Introduction

Nykaa is one of India's largest **omnichannel ecommerce platforms** that sells beauty, wellness and fashion products and currently is retailing over 650+ brands, ranging from domestic to premium international brands such as MAC, Clinique, Bobbi Brown, NYC and more. At present, Nykaa is delivering to over a thousand cities in India, with each almost 15,000 orders being shipped out, Nykaa utilizes an inventory-based model, having their main warehouses in Mumbai, New Delhi and Chennai (Nykaa, 2024).

Nykaa holds a **significant competitive advantage** in the ecommerce industry in comparison to its competitor such as Tira, Myntra, Purpille, Mamaearth (Statista, 2024) by boasting their omnichannel presence, Nykaa is operating a total of 33 physical stores which are divided into two formats, Nykaa On Trend, Nykaa Kiosk and Nykaa Luxe as well as Nykaa Beauty, the company's own range of cosmetics. This allows the consumers to make a purchasing choice by giving them a **'touch and feel' experience** on products and help Nykaa to provide a more personalized customer service (Pal, 2023). Below table exhibits pointers that distinguish Nykaa's competitive advantage using **Order Qualifiers and Order Winners**.

Order Qualifiers are the necessary product requirements that companies **must possess** in order for a customer to choose their product or service. Whereas Order Winner are the features in a company's product that **makes them stand out or sets them apart** from their competitors (Franza, 2023).

Order Qualifiers	Order Winners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Competitive Pricing - Authenticity of the Products - Easy Return Policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Personalisation - Loyalty Programs(eg. rewards) - Free samples with purchase

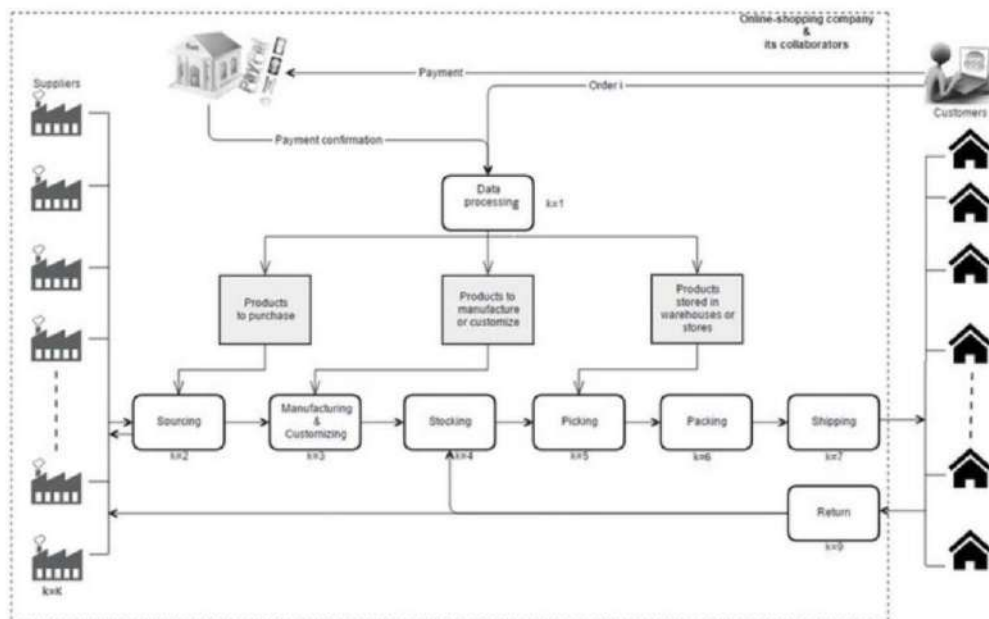
Amongst the 5 performance objectives, Nykaa seems to prioritize **Cost Efficiency** as well as providing **Speedy Delivery** and providing **premium Quality products** to its customers.

The author details the understanding of Nykaa's operations and supply chain in this report.

2. Supply Chain Diagram Of Nykaa

Supply Chain Management is referred to as the **organizing and coordinating of relationships** between individuals, information, processes and technology that are utilized in producing value. In order to achieve efficient supply chain management, it is necessary to integrate all internal business operations of the company with external circumstances (Stanton, 2023).

Figure 1- Supply Chain Diagram



3. Upstream Activities

(Figure 2- Inbound Logistics of Nykaa)



(student work, 2024)

Upstream Supply Chain management represents the initial stage of the supply chain which requires locating, operating and transporting raw materials to the production facilities. There are other activities that are involved in this stage such as Inventory Management, procurement and choosing of suppliers (Shijintran, 2024). Figure 1.2 showcases the Inbound Logistics process of an ecommerce platform such as Nykaa.

At present, Nykaa imports and **outsources** its beauty products directly from the brands itself or their approved Indian distributors across the country in order to avoid any counterfeit items and deliver authentic and genuine products to its customers (Malodia, 2023). Over the years, Nykaa has actively implemented **sustainable sourcing procedures** by leveraging recycled plastic for their packaging requirements and has managed to fulfil 80% of its packaging needs by using only eco-friendly materials in their day to day operations. The company

sources most of its packaging materials from small-to-medium sized businesses or suppliers. By integrating sustainable sourcing methods, Nykaa has been able to monitor its ESG footprint across the entire value chain (Nykaa Integrated Report, 2023).

The company also operates on a **decentralized supply chain** for customized fulfilment, to assure delivery from the closest finishing facility and also optimizing inventory investments and shipping costs (Nykaa Integrated Report, 2022). As a result, this allows them to **enhance economies of scale and decrease environmental impact**. For its own homegrown brands such as Nykaa Cosmetics, Nykaa Skinx and Nykaa Beauty, the company **outsources** all the raw materials, ingredients for the products and packaging from various suppliers in the country and carries out manufacturing for these products through third-party vendors, with manufacturing sites located across the country in states like Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand. Nykaa along with its subsidiary company Nykaa KK beauty limited have handed over manufacturing to third-party companies, and have set **contractual supplier relations** by entering into licensing agreements, under the conditions of carrying out production of these brand owned items as per Nykaa's requirements and standards. Similarly, Nykaa has also **established agreements with third-party vendors** for established beauty brands by negotiating inventory corrections and return-to-vendor conditions to **limit the possibility of excessive stock and near-expiry products** (Aggarwal *et al*, 2021).

Furthermore, Nykaa has also facilitated **seller portals** that allow different authorized vendors to list and sell their products online on the Nykaa website or mobile application. The company allows complete authority to the sellers to monitor the inventory and update the availability of a certain item from the brand, in order to avoid any issues with order fulfillment as well as manage inventory levels efficiently (Gonukkad, 2023).

Nykaa's objective to maintain their **Quality**, begins from ensuring to adopt sustainable packaging materials such as replacing plastic fillers or bubble wraps to paper fillers or paper retention boards, using smaller resized boxes. The company has also initiated partnerships with all the brands, to ensure the leftover packaging materials is sent back to the warehouses of the brands in order to be recycled and reused. Nykaa has also taken the steps to conduct regular robust quality inspections on their beauty and wellness products to ensure the products are genuine, authentic or haven't been damaged. Moreover, there are established monitoring systems that help Nykaa track or address any concerns or customer complaints (Nykaa Integrated Report, 2022).

Nykaa's packaging has been **rated to be more well wrapped in comparison to its competitor such as Tira**, where consumers reported not enough safety measurements were taken as no foil or paper was used in the packaging to ensure a more secure package resulting in the product to spill. Consumers also reported the lack of communication from Tira's side, proving that it doesn't have established systems to check customer complaints (Sarkar, 2023).

3. Operations Management

3.1 4V's Typology



3.2 5 Performances Objective linked to Nykaa

Speed- Nykaa's focus on fast delivery processing has increasingly grown over the years. At present, the company promises to **deliver orders within 1- 4 business days** through prominent delivery service companies such as Blue Dart and Delhivery; **which is faster and quicker to its competitor such as Tira**, which takes 4-7 business days to dispatch its orders (Nykaa Shipping Policy, 2024).

Quality- As added in **Appendix 5**, the table suggests various regulations Nykaa has adhered to over the years, to meet the interest of its stakeholders. Nykaa has obliged to the CDSCO acts which is a regulatory body that oversees cosmetics products safety and quality, ensuring to register and receive all permissions for the products they are currently retailing (CDSCO.gov.in, 2024). For Nykaa's own homegrown brands, it has received all contract manufacturing and Loan License for Quality Management from the CDSCO. The company has also ensured to comply with Labeling regulations of CDSCO, by adding product declaration and other information (Nykaa Integrated Report, 2022).

Dependability- By equipping with **advanced and robust warehouse management systems**, Nykaa monitors order processing through a company named WareIQ which has a centralized fulfillment platform that contains information about the order. WareIQ's WMS technology helps Nykaa to locate the nearest warehouse from the customer's address and informs the warehouse, which will then prepare the order. The partnered courier services will pick the order on the same day itself and ensure to deliver the next day to the customers (WareIQ, 2024).


Cost- The **D2C or Direct-to-Customers model** that Nykaa has optimized has significantly helped them cut costs as well as offer discounted or lower rates for products to its customer; also giving them a slight competitive edge over its competitors. As the company directly sources all its products from the brands itself and authorized suppliers, it helps them to eliminate any other overhead costs (Surabhi, 2022).

Flexibility- Nykaa is highly flexible when it comes to returns and refunds, as stated on their website, the company is open to providing an **'Easy Return Policy'** where customers can initiate the return on their order within 15 days of delivery. It has also introduced 'Partial Returns' where customers can request returns on single or all the products ordered through the website or mobile application. Nykaa also has a clear refund policy, where customers making net banking, card or cash transactions will receive their money in their account within 24-38 hours of receiving the products back (Nykaa Shipping Policy, 2024).

3.3 Process Type

Process Type consists of different methods such as Batch, Continuous, Flow and so on, however in the case of Nykaa, it is likely to follow **Batch Production** method especially for its order processing and fulfillment. For its own homegrown brands such as Nykaa Cosmetics or Nykaa Beauty, the company carries out production of its products in batches, with each item undergoing the same order of steps, at the same time until the entire production of the batch is complete. Whereas, for the other sourced brands, as soon as Nykaa receives orders from its website or mobile application, it is grouped in different categories for example, orders received from the same region are packed accordingly to be shipped or orders of different brands and its products are packed simultaneously. By grouping its orders into batches, Nykaa is able to accelerate its order fulfillment and cut down on processing time while enhancing the use of its resources effectively (Pearson, 2021). Below is a Product-Process Matrix diagram for better understanding of Nykaa's Process Type as compared to its competitors.

Figure 3- Product Process Matrix

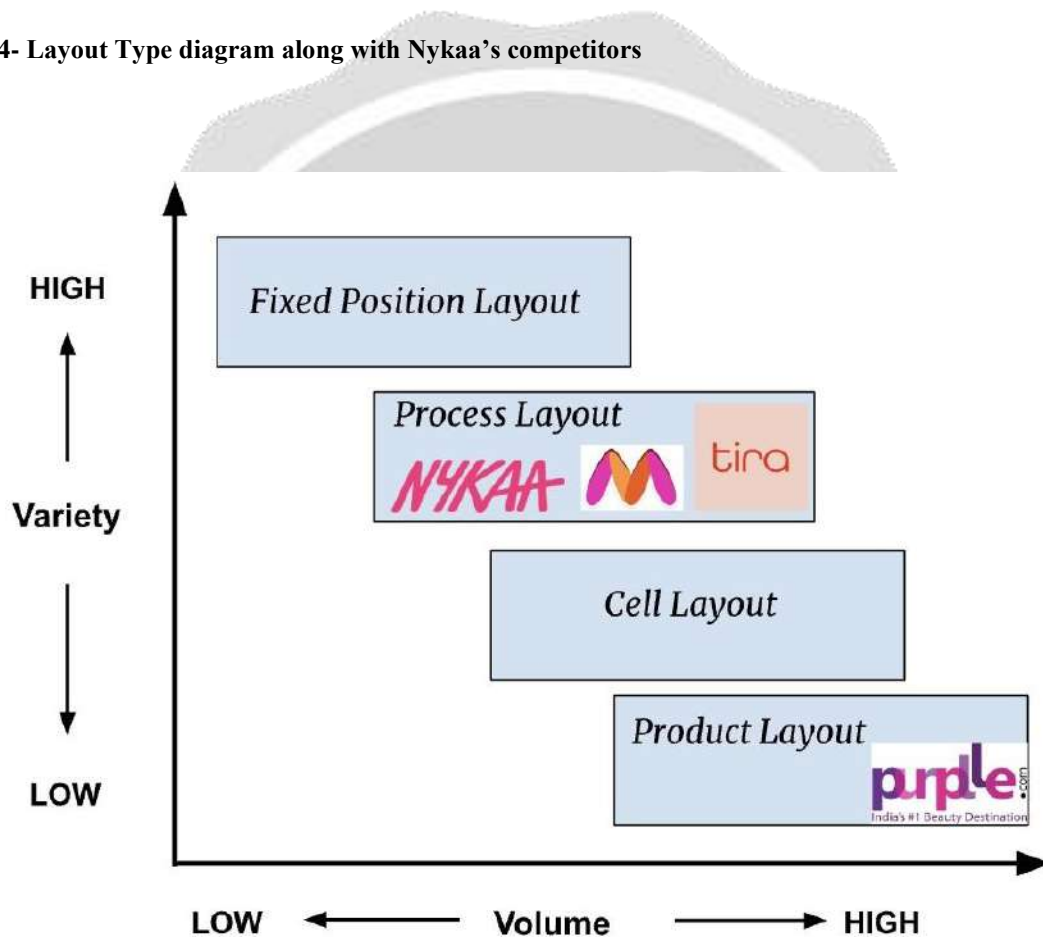
		PRODUCT CHARACTERISTICS			
		Low Volume Low Standardisation	Low Volume Multiple Products	Higher Volume Few Major Products	High Volume High Standardisation
PROCESS CHARACTERISTICS	Random Flow (Project)				
	Jumbled Flow (Jobbing)				
	Disconnected line flow (Batch)				
	Connected line flow (Mass)				
	Smooth Flow (Continuous)				

(student work, 2024)

3.3 Layout Type

Nykaa is observed to follow a **Process or Functional Layout type**, which allows them to efficiently arrange and convert resources together in order to have a smooth execution of quality control checks (Slack and Brandon-Jones, 2022). Nykaa's distribution facilities usually are divided within different departments that manage orders according to its product type, demand and brand. These are then processed in the company's own warehouses where the order undergoes different steps by using its robust technology, it conducts Quality control checks after every batch is packed to ensure there is no damage to the product before shipping (Nykaa integrated report, 2022). Below is a Layout Type diagram that showcases Nykaa's position along with its competitors.

Figure 4- Layout Type diagram along with Nykaa's competitors



3.4 Inventory Management

Inventory Management can be well defined as the process of keeping track of the stock right from the purchasing of it, to its storage at the warehouses and selling it to the customers. Usually the goal of inventory management is to decrease overstocks and boost efficiency to ensure that the projects are conducted on time and within the budget (Waida, 2022).

In the case of Nykaa, as far as its fashion vertical is concerned, the company is observed to operate on **JIT (just-in-time) and SOR (sale or return) model** (Nykaa Integrated Report, 2022) and has signed third-party agreements with sellers, allowing them to display their products on Nykaa's website or mobile application. It is expected that the vendors manage to keep their inventory in stock, as upon receiving an order from the customers, the sellers can immediately pack the product and ship it directly to the customers using Nykaa's partnered delivery services. Whereas, in a JIT agreement, Nykaa has to first make a purchase of the particular item from the vendor and then ship it to the customers which minimizes inventory holding costs. This has helped the company to be flexible in altering the product catalogue especially for their Fashion range to the newest trends in the market, without having to worry about the inventory risk (JM Financial Institutional Securities Limited, 2021).

As discussed in Volume of 4V's Typology, Nykaa records maximum number of orders on their website during their Pink Friday Sale, hence, the company adds about 95% of catalogue, up to stock by utilizing their distribution centres in order to prevent any delays, however that can also lead to excess of inventory which could lead to waste and possibly higher need for working capital (Singh *et al*, 2022). This is one of the biggest challenges for the company, as due to frequent changes in demand especially in the beauty and fashion sector, most of the products or brands don't often sell out leading to overstocking of unnecessary inventory. While Nykaa has conducted different initiatives, for example lowering the prices or selling the products with lower demand at a discounted rate, however most of the products still have to be discarded causing waste.

3.5 Quality Management

Quality can be best described especially for businesses focusing on production that would be emphasizing on the need of achieving the standards of a product or a service, so much so that it has the ability to satisfy the needs and demands, while minimizing defects (Brennan, 2010).

The brands associated with Nykaa issue documents and a 'Brand Authenticity Certificate' themselves to attest that the company is a verified retailer of the brand's own goods. This certificate acts as a way to assure consumers that the items they buy from Nykaa's website or mobile application are 100% authentic. In order to regularly evaluate and monitor customer complaints, maintain data privacy, IT security and customer protection, Nykaa has implemented IT-enabled compliance systems that also assists in quickly resolving issues from consumers as well as uphold the highest standard in preserving environmental conservation. Over the years, Nykaa has managed to align their extensive risk management framework with industry standards such as the ISO 31,000 Risk Management protocols and the COSO ERM framework. Furthermore, the company's manufacturing of its own homegrown brands are conducted in facilities that are ISO certified, which fosters the health and safety of the environment as well as of the people that work (Nykaa Integrated Report, 2022).

Figure 5- Brand Authenticity Certificates issued to Nykaa

Source: Nykaa.com, 2024

3.6 Push and Pull Philosophies

A push system allows companies to predict their supply chain operating plans, assist in managing inventory levels and formulate activities prior to schedule. It also implies the initial stage of the supply chain, with an emphasis on moving and storing of goods. In the case of Nykaa, it can be observed that the company may follow this method only during their seasonal sales in order to prevent any delays in order fulfillment and processing (Hagglund, 2022).

Whereas, a pull system emphasises on efficiency and flexibility by directly responding to customer demand. It focuses on the incoming consumer demand, which helps them to be flexible in responding to the changes rather than depending on the forecasts (Hagglund, 2022). Nykaa likely follows a **Resource to Order strategy**, for its operations apart from its seasonal sales, where the company holds off purchasing or manufacturing products until an order has been received in Nykaa's system. Implementing a pull system has helped Nykaa significantly reduce its costs as they no longer have to hold on to goods that have not been sold.

4. Downstream Activities

(Figure 5- Outbound Logistics)

Downstream Activities are referred to the stage after the manufacturing, where a company has a finished product and has to process its product distribution by dealing with distributors and consumers (Widianty and Harihayati, 2019).

As a part of their omni channel presence, Nykaa has their own set of **brick-to-mortar stores** in three formats, Nykaa Luxe, Nykaa On Trend and Nykaa kiosks, spread across the country, in almost 60 cities and at present, have more than 150 physical stores (Naidu, 2023). These stores were created to provide seamless experience, with an offering of a variety of products ranging from personal care, fashion and beauty.

Furthermore, having physical stores helps Nykaa achieve its **Quality** objective by allowing them to “touch-and-feel” and test the products before purchasing. Moreover, the company has also invested in an **eB2B technology-enabled distribution approach** known as Superstore by Nykaa

which will help the company to lessen its reliance on their physical stores as well as utilize technology to provide entry to neglected routes and markets. A separate mobile application has been created for this online platform that helps independent local Indian merchants such as beauty stores, Kirana stores (local supermarket), pharmacies and salons to sell their choice of BPC products from Nykaa to its consumers (Nykaa Integrated Report, 2023).

In 2022, Nykaa had managed to establish partnerships with 18,806 retailers across 302 cities in India which will help them connect with retailers as well as build touchpoints. SuperStore has been developed with following objectives that foster, a guidance providing and an advocacy-drive distribution channel:

- 1) **All-in-One-Store:** Nykaa has used this store to store all top brands, international brands and bestsellers and newly launched products in one location, in order for it to be more convenient and easily accessible for the retailers.
- 2) **Super Service:** offering swift returns, 24-hour doorstep delivery and safe credit facilities
- 3) **Super Flexibility:** Provides the opportunity for retailers to decide and choose upon how much quantity to purchase.
- 4) **Super Earnings:** It allows retailers the access to popular products in the market.

Out of the four channels mentioned above, it has been reported that the All-in-One Store channel is the most convenient and easier for retailers as they no longer have to wait for days to receive their deliveries and can access to all brands and products at one location without having to contact, other facilities or warehouses for the same.

As far as outbound logistics is concerned, in the case of Nykaa, it utilizes **both third-party logistics providers and conducts in-house operations** for their order processing and packaging. The company has invested in an allocation engine, in order to fulfil customer purchases, that ensures to effectively make use of inventory throughout the 23 warehouses across the country (Nykaa Integrated Report, 2023). Simultaneously, Nykaa has also partnered with a company called WareIQ that assists in monitoring order processing, with the help of their centralized fulfillment platform that contains all the information about the orders, to prevent any delays in order processing and fulfillment (WareIQ, 2024).

At present, Nykaa is working with 6 delivery companies like Blue Dart Express, Delhivery, Ecom Express, Xpressbee, ShadowFax and Dependo to manage the transportation and delivery of the orders. These courier companies have been instructed to ensure the deliveries of the orders are picked from the fulfillment centres that are nearest to the fulfillment centers. This helps Nykaa to minimize its shipment costs as well as ensure inventory utilization, which in turn helps the company to improve its customer experience (Nykaa Integrated Report, 2022). Partnering with top courier servicing companies helps Nykaa achieve its **Speed**, performance objective as these companies abide by the commitment of delivering orders within 5 days of dispatchment from the warehouse.

While Nykaa is working with 6 top courier companies which helps them deliver quickly to their consumers, in comparison to their competitors such as Tira or Purple, that work through only one or two delivery service companies, which have proved to delay the speed of the deliveries for the respective companies, however Nykaa as well poses the challenge of misplacing their customer's orders due to partnering with multiple delivery partner services. Customers have reported the issue of not receiving their orders on time or receiving wrong orders due to the miscommunication between the warehouses and delivery service companies.

In order to improve customer shopping experience even after making their purchases, Nykaa has implemented live **real-time tracking systems** that the consumers can use to monitor the updates on their order. Through both website and mobile applications, customers can receive in depth details about their orders right from the shipment to dispatching as well as provide the details of the courier service company and the rider, the order will be delivered through. Nykaa also has a system in place to deal with customer complaints and feedback, through emails, SMS, app and 24/7 Customer Call Centre, customers can register their issues and are immediately assigned with a unique tracking ticket number that smoothen the process of resolving the conflict and provides necessary solutions (Tesfaye, 2024).

Nykaa also has instances of **Vertical Forward Integration**, a process where a company removes third party vendors by managing the supply chain itself as well as multiple manufacturing stages (Messina, 2022). By conducting the production of its own homegrown brands across skincare and beauty such as Nykaa Cosmetics, Nykaa SkinRx, Nykaa Beauty, Dot and Key, also its own range fashion and accessories line, for example, Pipa Bella, IYKYK, Kica, the company is receiving more authority over the quality, pricing, the uniqueness of the product, as well as on a greater share of the value chain.

5. Possible Issues in Nykaa's Supply Chain

As compared to other ecommerce platforms, Nykaa has significantly better delivery management however through this research, it can be suggested that it is not efficient and not up to date with the new technologies in the market that help ecommerce platforms improve their customer service through delivery services. Major issues faced by customers of Nykaa, are the orders being misplaced, not delivered within the estimated delivery date or the delivery courier service companies delivering the wrong or damaged product due to lack of communication with the warehouses or distribution facilities of Nykaa. Hence it is necessary for companies like Nykaa, that deal with high volume of orders every day to have an efficient delivery management software, that can smoothen the networking between the delivery personnels as well as the distribution facilities through having up-to-date database of the personnels which can reduce the scope of misplacing orders.

6. Conclusions

The research on Nykaa's operations and supply chain concludes with the finding that the systems and techniques utilised by the e-commerce giant have been efficient, allowing for a smoother process from product procurement to providing timely delivery services of products to its customers, which has laid a foundation of success for Nykaa in comparison to its competitor in the beauty sector. The critical role of Inbound and Outbound Logistics accounts for a easier accessibility of materials, the quality and flexibility of the products along with the speed in which these products are delivered. However, the company has also faced the challenges of disruption of delivery management systems that led to poor customer experience due to the setback of technology implemented within the company's systems. Introducing better delivery management software within the system can ensure a smoother and efficient communication that will elevate customer satisfaction and help Nykaa maintain its position in the market.

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EXPLORING WALMART'S OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY THROUGH THE INDIAN MARKET

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ABSTRACT

Wal-Mart Inc. is a worldwide retail firm based in the United States that manages chains of warehouses and large discount department shops. Walmart employs more than 2.1 million people worldwide, making it the largest employer worldwide with a market capital of 483.89B. (All U.S. Listed Stocks, Ranked by Market Cap, n.d.)

In 1962, Sam Walton founded Walmart. 1972 the corporation began trading publicly on the New York Stock Exchange. The company's main office is in Bentonville, Arkansas. Currently, Walmart has the title of being the biggest grocery store in the US. Walmart has a large e-commerce presence, with over 10,500 stores and clubs throughout 19 countries.

Walmart offers a range of products including home goods, groceries, apparel, electronics, toys, its private label, pet food, and services that include Walmart clubs, money services, insurance services, etc.

As of 2024, Walmart does not run stores in India due to the government's initiative 'Make in India' policy which requires foreign companies to manufacture a certain percentage of their products in India. To enter the Indian retail market, Walmart invested billions and owns a 77% stake in Flipkart (a leading Indian E-commerce site). Today, it's still partnered up with Flipkart to reach the Indian consumer base.

Keywords: *Market Capital, 'Make in India' Policy, Indian consumer base.*

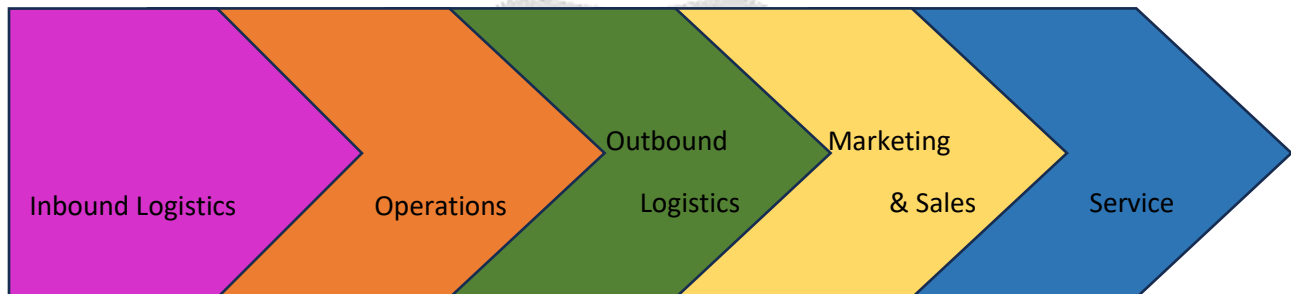
1. Mapping Walmart's Value Chain: A Pictorial and Analytical Approach.

Value chain analysis is a **strategic tool** that boosts profit margin and gives a firm a competitive edge. This applies to firms of all sizes. Having an effective value chain gives the firm an advantage to take the lead in the industry it is in. (Russell & Taylor, 2003)

Walmart owes the majority of its success due to a highly effective value chain which has given it an advantage to provide a range of items at a lower rate than its competitors. Focusing its value chain on efficiency, high tech, commitment, and affordability has allowed Walmart to build a loyal customer base.

Let's examine Walmart's Value Chain.

Figure 1: Walmart's Efficient Value Chain



Let's further break this down into the parts mentioned above.

Firstly, **inbound logistics**. This focuses on handling, shipping, and storing items delivered by suppliers. In Walmart's case, its strong supplier relationship has aided it in sustaining operational efficiency. The firm is renowned for its automated distribution centers, having 140 distribution locations and more than 40 regional distribution centers for import flow in the United States alone. The company's effective logistics system depends so much on responsive transportation operations that it uses 3500 operating vehicles to move goods throughout.

Secondly, **operations**. This involves inventory management, in clearer terms Walmart's warehousing. This is further split into three categories:

I. Walmart US

Walmart has a large distribution network in the US, along with online retail. With the aid of robotic vehicles, WMS systems, AI, etc., have all assisted in reducing overall operational costs.

II. Walmart International

Walmart has spread its operations across 19 countries effectively.

III. Sam's Club

This is a membership-based model that targets individuals and businesses offering discounts.

Thirdly, **outbound logistics**. This involves how products are routed to Walmart stores. Four million gallons of fuel have been saved via the use of ORTEC's load-building and routing technologies. A steady supply of goods and, hence, cheap costs are maintained by extensive cross-docking. Walmart has multiple stores across the globe, in India particularly, according to Statista, it is recorded to have 28 operational stores.

Fourthly, **marketing and sales**. By January 31, 2023, it was reported that Walmart generated 605.88 billion U.S. dollars. They reached this milestone by following EDLP (Everyday Low Pricing) which as the name suggests, aims to offer the lowest possible rates daily. The firm targets the lower class and the middle class, who are price-sensitive. Thus, to advertise they promote their discounts via TV, billboards, social media, etc., by using slogans such as 'Save Money, Live Better' among others.

Lastly, **service**. As the largest employer globally, Walmart upheld training employees to ensure that their customers have a smooth shopping experience. They continually gather client feedback and provide services such as their exchange policy.

Other factors in the value chain analysis include firm infrastructure, human resources, technology development, and procurement.

1.1 Understanding Walmart's Products and Services in a Dynamic Market Landscape.

Walmart is an **international retailer**, which offers products someone would use in their daily life. Let's break down the firm's product portfolio. These include groceries, clothes, accessories, shoes, electronics, furniture, electronic appliances, pharmaceutical products, baby products, personal care, beauty products, pet products, household essentials, movies, books, stationary, etc.

To put it in simpler terms, they offer a vast array of goods and venture into many different industries. Walmart provides auto care center services, including car maintenance, low-priced new and used cars, clinical services like birth control, and flu and Covid 19 testing in various areas.

They also cover insurance services which aids people in discovering their benefits over and under 65 years old by Medicare Insurance. Additionally, offers pet insurance. Furthermore, they offer customizable cakes, which can be picked up from a nearby store. Money services (gift cards), protection services (repair and maintenance offers on tech items purchased), and 'make a difference' services open opportunities to aid multiple charities around your area. This section further breaks into ways to support black and women-owned brands, which are authorized through the National Minority Supplier Diversity Council and Women's Business Enterprise National Council.

For a clearer understanding, Walmart efficiently allocates the products and services they offer on their site marked as 'departments' and 'services'.

The firm operates in a retail market. Fundamentally, retail is the practice of selling products or services to customers directly. This includes sourcing products from manufacturers, managing inventories, setting prices, promoting, and providing customer support.

Let's delve deeper into retail market traits and how Walmart fits in them.

1. Competitive Pricing:

Walmart made its name for itself by offering consistently low pricing, which drew in a sizable consumer base and helped the business keep its loyal customers. The company achieved this by ongoing operational optimization, including economies of scale and an efficient supply chain, as discussed in Task 1 A.

2. Various range of products:

The company offers a range of products venturing into many different industries. These products also range from well-known and reputable brands, giving their customer base many choices and alternatives.

3. Physical and Online store

As per the latest count on 31st October 2023, Walmart has 10,482 retail units internationally. It operates in 19 countries offering physical and online shopping mediums.

4. Efficient inventory management

As mentioned previously, efficient inventory management plays a crucial role in Walmart's success today. Suppliers have first-hand information on inventory levels causing them to supply faster. Types of inventories they use include: finished goods inventory, transit inventory, buffer inventory, and anticipation inventory.

2. Technological Integration in Walmart's Supply Chain: Benefits and Challenges.

Walmart's founder, Sam Walton's mission of aiding people to save money to live better was the standard set for the company's successful supply chain today. Notably, Walmart was one of the very first retailers to implement computer-based technology at every step of their supply chain process including back-end merchandising and various suppliers, as well as front-end customer service such as billing, checkouts, etc. Being the first in the market to achieve this. After relying on technology and automation, the company can seamlessly able to restock inventory, meet demands, and remain profitable, across multiple locations.

In line with its philosophy of continuous improvement, Walmart uses **artificial intelligence (AI)** to improve standard supply chain procedures and more precisely predict demand cycles, particularly during unplanned or high customer traffic surges.

Technology plays a major role in Walmart's ability to anticipate its consumers' needs and wants and deliver things to them promptly. AI uses a range of data, including seasonality, customer behavior, buying trends, and popular products, to generate the item catalog. Once third-party suppliers add products to the company's marketplace offering, AI and **ML (machine learning)** support logistics. This aids the company in efficiently meeting consumer demand and ensuring customer satisfaction.

According to 75% of Walmart retailers, **AI is essential for supply chain operations** and management, as stated by IDC's Industry AI Path research. Furthermore, similar opinions were shared by leaders who said AI was critical to Walmart's marketing, retailing, etc. Technology usage depends on a country's technical adaptability and progress.

Srini Venkatesa the Executive Vice President of Walmart U.S. (2022) further discussed how efficient their AI was in predicting a spike in demand after a hurricane hit Southwest Florida. With AI, Walmart was able to reroute

shipments and ensure that demand was met. This indicates AI's usefulness even during natural calamities to large retailers such as Walmart.

Walmart is constantly updating its warehouse management systems (WMS) to have efficient inventory and labor management (Forbes, 2021). WMS aids in predicting the supply and reduces delays, the system also analyses the optimal floor space to maximize Walmart's warehouse movement. This information can be constantly updated on the ERP (Enterprise resource management) to streamline the real-time data to departments. This is tremendously beneficial to Walmart as it aids in avoiding excess inventory in their warehouses.

Furthermore, David Guggina the Executive Vice President of Supply Chain Operations, at Walmart U.S. expressed how their partnership with Blue Yonder (software and consultancy company) will open doors to transforming Walmart's supply chain with software implementation. **Walmart is investing heavily in the automation of its warehouses.** The business has pallet-moving autonomous mobile robots in place. New applications and tools are also available for truck cabs. There will be new onboard computers for their 11,000 drivers, which will enhance last-mile delivery by optimizing routes leading to quicker deliveries.

However, Srini Venkatesa shed light on how adopting flexible algorithms has been a challenge.

Considering the constantly evolving E-commerce retail landscape, Walmart's supply chain faces challenges when managing large-scale operations worldwide, procuring products from vendors, and managing inventory levels efficiently.

According to Statista in 2022, Walmart has over 2 million employees worldwide making it the largest employer in the world, followed by its competitor Amazon with 1.61 million employees. Additionally, with 10,000 plus outlets, it becomes challenging to guarantee a proper cost-efficient flow of goods delivery to their customers. Especially with the growing importance of **sustainability** by reducing greenhouse emissions and implementing more ecologically friendly technology poses another challenge.

Inventory management becomes another challenge when it comes to utilizing excessive capital on unsold goods providing customer wants efficiently and minimizing stockouts. Walmart would ultimately need to integrate online and offline activities and have access to real-time inventory data to improve supply chain speed and efficiency.

Undoubtedly the most challenging part of having technology in Walmart's supply chain is that the company needs to be constantly innovative and adapt the latest technology changes to their processes to remain a giant in a fiercely competitive retail market.

To conclude, technology in the supply chain for Walmart has proved to bring benefits and challenges. Benefits include enhancing the inventory management process, reduced costs, better demand forecasting, and much more. This undoubtedly supports Walmart's position as a successful retail giant in the industry. However, this came with its own set of challenges which included costs, maintenance issues, constant updates, adaptation, etc. Despite all of this, Walmart's remarkable dedication to continue adapting technology to achieve efficiency keeps them a leading company in the industry.

In India, Walmart is legally not allowed to use its name and logo due to legal aspects involving the government. However, the progress of their technology use in supply chain front-end and back-end is executed through their joint venture with Flipkart.

3. Walmart's First-to-Market Advantage: Speed, Benefits, Design Process and Issues.

Today, Walmart is the world's largest retail store, achieving a trailing twelve months (TTM) of \$600.1 billion (Johnston, 2023). Walmart wasn't necessarily the first to introduce a specific product or process into the market considering it's a retail company.

However, it is the **first to adopt 'Everyday Low Prices'** successfully and trademark the phrase as its own. This marketing tactic is the benchmark of Walmart's success.

Additionally, Walmart played a crucial role in **revolutionizing supply chains** worldwide by implementing technology and introducing a more efficient and cost-saving way to streamline operations.

Walmart is the first organized retailer to introduce its own 'private label', developed by retailers and exclusively sold in their retail branches only. The company offers a large array of products under its private label, which amounts to the majority of its profits contributing to its success.

1. Everyday Low Prices (EDLP):

According to Walmart, the company's mission involves ensuring customers save money for a better lifestyle. Everyday Low Prices (EDLP) as the name suggests, aims to offer customers low prices every day instead of occasional discounts.

Therefore, implementing this strategy gave Walmart a competitive advantage in the industry and ultimately drove more sales. This strategy has also allowed Walmart to remain dominant and expand for the last six decades and counting.

Upon entering a Walmart store, a customer is met with daily essentials including food, apparel, etc. Clear blue or red color signs are placed above products for easy identification and a seamless shopping experience. Furthermore, Walmart's online platform clearly outlines discounts and special offers. EDLP design is simple to understand, prices are displayed in a larger font communicating the message to customers.

Walmart's commitment to constant low prices creates loyal customers. Considering the rising inflation, consumers look for cheaper alternatives and Walmart meets that demand by offering low prices with consistent good quality. This generates customer trust. Walmart can seamlessly manage its inventory with EDLP reducing the risk of excessive inventory thus decreasing storage costs.

Offering low prices all year long allows daily profits instead of seasonal profits. The main advantage of adopting this pricing strategy for increased customer traffic and higher frequency of visits, this further boosts profits and market share. With EDLP, Walmart is also able to manage its operations effectively since overstocking inventory costs are reduced. This aids in streamlining operations effectively.

2. Revolutionising Supply Chains:

Walmart is credited with transforming the supply chain into what it is today by using WMS (Warehouse Management System) and ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning). Its innovation and investments in technology for a more efficient and effective supply chain process have been the key to enabling the company to offer constant low prices and expand across the globe. Walmart's supply chain resulted in reduced costs, optimization of decisions, advanced logistics management, etc.

It is not immune to challenges despite its effective integration and procedures. Walmart experienced severe overstocking and inflationary problems, particularly in 2022. Resulting in an 8% decrease in the average number of daily visitors to their website, according to statistics from the web analytics company Similarweb. The recession-related shifts in consumer behavior were not factored in by the technology used. Tobin (2022). The COVID-19 pandemic reduced the consumption of some products, and the corporation had to lay off a large number of workers as a result of the recent drop in profitability.

As inflation increased, customers spent more on necessities such as food and groceries instead of other items. Doug McMillon, CEO of Walmart, said in a statement issued at the end of July 2022 that "the rising levels of food and fuel inflation are affecting how customers spend." Walmart updated its earnings forecasts during the same period.

3. Private Label:

Moving on to Walmart's private labels, a concept they have popularized. The company provides integrated private labels for stationery, food, clothing, and other necessities. Notable brands include Equate, Great Value, Ol' Roy, and Sam's Choice.

Having a private label provides benefits such as higher profits, customization, reduced supply chain and licensing costs, etc. Additionally, Walmart may effectively leverage its private label to attract and retain devoted customers, which facilitates marketing. According to William (2023), the company's private label contributes as much as 30–40% of its total revenues.

Walmart is **slower in expanding** within Asian markets including South-East Asia due to the legalities involved. Additionally, the company is not as aggressive in E-retailing compared to its competitors like Amazon. Due to the company's vast size, at times quality issues arise from products procured from various suppliers. However, they are efficiently solved using their advanced technology and networks.

To conclude, despite Walmart not being 'first to market' its commitment to offering customers products at the best price, streamlining an efficient supply chain, and expanding itself through its private label products allowed Walmart to remain a competitive force in the retail industry.

4. Walmart's Supply Chain Quality: Issues, Measurements and Improvement Strategies.

Supply chain quality coordination across all of Walmart's operations becomes a challenge considering the massive network of vendors, warehouses, and endless items it has to offer.

Walmart has a long history of being a pioneer in supply chain management. Yet in 2022, it was unable to shield it from an issue that had been ailing the transportation sector for decades: **enormous data inconsistencies** in the goods carrier invoice and payment process to vendors/suppliers, which resulted in lengthy **payment delays** and expensive reconciliation operations. This disrupted the flow of goods causing significant delays in items across Walmart Canada stores.

It's an operation challenge to move large quantities of goods across different borders, time zones, and other varying factors. Most confusing of all is Walmart's many information systems which make it all the more confusing for

freight carriers. Fuel gallons, temperature updates, locations, etc., will need to be determined independently and added for each invoice, this becomes difficult to track and process diligently with a large network of suppliers.

According to a Business Harvard Review (2022), it was reported that 70% of shipping provider bills were under reconciliation procedures to ensure accurate payments causing more delays.

Later that year, Walmart Canada came up with a **solution of introducing ledger technology (blockchain) to build an automated system for tracking payments to and invoicing from its 70 third-party freight providers and suppliers**. Walmart Canada partnered with DLT Labs, an innovator in creating and implementing cutting-edge enterprise solutions utilizing distributed ledger technology. With their assistance invoices with **errors are easily detected and promptly settled the payments**.

In 2022, Walmart faced further inflation issues and an operating cost of \$1 billion in its first quarter. As reported by John David Rainey (Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer) inventory is recorded to be 15% above optimal levels, noting a shocking \$1.5 billion in inventory stocks. The company's next step was to slash prices to reduce the load on its warehouses.

Revenues increased as a result while operating and gross margins dropped by 6.8% over the quarter. Walmart executives stated that the primary causes of this included problems with the Last in First Out (LIFO) accounting records and shifting consumer preferences due to unpredicted inflation, which led to excessive inventory levels. Walmart is attempting to adopt a strategy that is more focused on e-commerce to deal with this issue.

Walmart can overcome these problems in the future by establishing **effective quality management and control systems**. The company can keep updating its real-time inventory management system ensuring it continues to give them real-time information. Furthermore, they should introduce and update AI tools and information systems that can forecast issues and provide solutions at any moment. To continue measuring performance in the long-term Key Performance Indicators (KPI) that will measure carrier delivery timings, inventory levels, etc. This will help the organization understand its strengths and evaluate where changes can be made to improve its supply chain procedure.

Economic turbulence at times cannot be predicted, however, with real-time supply chain updates Walmart should strategically supply the demand accordingly. In my opinion, Walmart should focus on stocking up on necessities such as nutrition, medication, hygiene, etc. As regardless of economic inflation a customer cannot go without essential items. Walmart can set up **specific Machine Learning (ML) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) on daily provision items and moderately supply** other items such as electronics, furniture, entertainment, etc.

Implementing price **forecasting tools** should be done in all locations individually to aid in forecasting. Inspections should be conducted weekly to ensure smooth operations at all levels of operations. Walmart can establish **Total Quality Management (TQM)** to further enhance the quality of its supply chain. For example, to ensure carriers are operating smoothly, audits should be conducted ensuring goods are received on time, etc. KPI for key items will be set to evaluate quality adherence in the long term.

Next, **feedback systems** should be implemented to understand feedback from **suppliers and customers** alike leading to quicker response.

Constant real-time data should be presented on supply chain updates to Walmart executives through flowcharts, histograms, scatter diagrams, etc. This will also aid in predicting future trends by comparing old data with evaluating the current market situation. Lastly, Walmart should establish quality targets and ensure they are diligently followed by all team members at all locations.

5. Walmart's continuous Service Improvement: Through lean manufacturing principles, six sigma, value stream mapping, 5 Ss, SMED, JIT systems, and four key elements of agile manufacturing.

Here is how Walmart is navigating and improving the services it offers to its customers through the core concepts of managing operations.

Lean Manufacturing principles revolve around the elimination of waste and increased speed of delivery to the customer as per specified quality standards. Leading to reduced costs of manufacturing/operations. (Bhat, 2008) According to a statement by Walmart, their mission is to reach the goal of **Green Retailing** by 2025. How2Recycle label® from the Sustainable Packaging Coalition in the US is also in effect.

Value-stream mapping is a part of lean operations which involves dissecting a procedure into its parts and graphically outlining each step to pinpoint areas in need of improvement. Walmart has its inventory process mapped out involving its many suppliers. It can identify where delays are occurring and efficiently offer improvements to streamline products in its warehouse.

Six Sigma is a defect-elimination quality control method. (Sarkar, 2004). Below is how Walmart tackled supply chain issues using this principle.

1. Define: Walmart identified its problem of challenges in the supply chain causing late deliveries
2. Measure: Examined inventory management data, identifying where to improve.
3. Analyse: Statistically compare previous data from quarters to improve next quarter's inventory
4. Improving: Invested in supply associated and increased manpower to improve delivery timings.
5. Control: Walmart remains committed to meeting quality standards and consumer expectations to date.

5 S is a quality management system that Walmart utilizes to keep inventory allocation organized.

1. Sort: ML and AI technology at Walmart sort inventory requirements, keeping everything ready.
2. Set in Order: Allocating products in their sections accordingly.
3. Shine: Hygiene and cleanliness are maintained in warehouses and stores.
4. Standardise: constantly reinforces goals and procedures
5. Sustain: Done through audits and evaluations.

Single Minute Exchange of Dies (SMED) is implemented by Walmart to ensure efficiency in the supply chain and reduce changeover time. This is done by monitoring deliveries and ensuring the products are in good shape.

Just-in-time (JIT) is used to minimize inventory costs and time. By using real-time data Walmart is to establish its strategies to reduce costs and deliver services faster.

Lastly, **agile manufacturing** (lean) is a production process that emphasizes quick customer responsiveness, through these 4 elements. (Mahadevan, 2009)

1. **Modular Product Design:** Involves quick and simple variations, such as the shelves for different products at Walmart. The same can be easily established all across.
2. **Information Technology:** Involves implementation of POS, CRM, etc.
3. **Corporate Partners:** Walmart is partnered with 4KMILES, Accenture, Acorn-I, Ad Advance, etc.
4. **Knowledge Culture:** Walmart constantly invests in employee training and promotes good culture.

CONCLUSION AND RECCOMENDATIONS

As previously discussed, logistics challenges such as delays in delivery, and natural disasters hampering the delivery process, are the main challenges Walmart is currently facing. Considering Walmart has a massive global network of suppliers, distribution centers, etc., millions of products are moved daily across large distances through the organization's established supply chain. This creates difficulties in managing and organizing the flow of goods and making sure that things are supplied to clients and businesses in an efficient and timely manner.

I would propose Walmart place a higher focus on providing its private label at the forefront of its operations. This would mean that the organization won't be heavily reliant on suppliers, and have better control over the product quality leading to reduced delays and consumer satisfaction. Additionally, Walmart will be able to control the price ranges of its products and make them cheaper than alternatives.

Furthermore, Walmart should focus on delivery and stock of essential items, as they will continue to be in demand despite economic turbulence. Thus, the ratio of luxury and durable items should be lower than that of daily necessities. Inventory rotation for critical daily items should be done up to 15-16 times a year in comparison to 12 times for other products.

Lastly, the implementation of a FIFO system for perishable items should be established to ensure smooth inventory management and reduce waste.

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Operations and Supply chain management analysis in H&M Group – Europe & Asia

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ABSTRACT

In the highly competitive fashion industry, H&M Group has distinguished itself through a robust operations and supply chain management (OSCM) system, enabling the brand to offer trendy and affordable clothing to style-conscious customers. This research paper delves into H&M Group's OSCM strategy, highlighting its critical role in aligning the company's operations with its strategic objectives. The study provides a comprehensive examination of upstream and downstream activities within H&M Group's supply chain. The upstream analysis explores the company's supplier relationships, procurement and sourcing strategies, outsourcing and offshoring practices, and inbound logistics. It delves into how H&M Group strategically selects and manages suppliers to ensure a steady flow of materials and components necessary for production. The downstream analysis focuses on retail, wholesale, and franchise operations, vertical integration, and outbound logistics. It investigates how H&M Group effectively manages its distribution channels to ensure products reach consumers efficiently and cost-effectively. Additionally, the paper presents an in-depth analysis of H&M Group's operations management using the 4Vs typology – Volume, variety, variation, visibility, 5 performance objectives – Speed, cost, flexibility and quality, and inventory, lean, and quality management models. This section examines how H&M balances volume, variety, variation, and visibility to meet customer demands and maintain high-quality standards. Through this detailed exploration, the research aims to provide insights into how H&M Group's OSCM practices contribute to its market success and offer a framework for other companies in the fashion industry to emulate. The findings underscore the importance of integrated OSCM strategies in achieving competitive advantage and operational excellence in the fast-paced fashion sector.

Keywords: H&M Group, Operation and Supply Chain Management (OSCM), Upstream Activities, Downstream Activities, Operation Management, Inventory Management, Lean Management, Quality Management

1. Introduction

H&M Group was founded in 1947 in Sweden by Erling Persson. It began as a single women's clothing store named Hennes. In 1968, it expanded into men's fashion with the acquisition of Mauritz Widfross, becoming Hennes & Mauritz (H&M). It aims to provide fast fashion designs at accessible prices, appealing to a diverse customer base, with a commitment to sustainability and corporate responsibility.

Under the leadership of its current owner, Stefan Persson, H&M Group has expanded its business in **77 markets worldwide** mainly in **Europe, North America, Asia and Middle East**, with **online sales available in 60 countries** and **4375 physical stores and digital channels** offering a wide range of clothing that includes casual wear, formal attire, sportswear and accessories for men, women and children.

Brands operating under H&M Group are: H&M, H&M Home, COS, Monki, Weekday, Other stories, Afound, Sellpy, Creator studio, Arket and Cheap Monday. (H&M Group, 2023)

1.1 Order Winners & Order Qualifiers

The author identifies **order qualifiers and winners** of H&M Group to analyse what puts the company in a competitive disadvantage or advantage in the fashion industry by comparing it to Zara, another big renowned fast fashion brand. In 2023, Zara's brand value was at **\$16.5 billion** and H&M Group's brand value was just under **\$13.65 billion**. (P. Smith, 2023) **Order Winners** are the competitive advantages that differentiate a product or service and make it more appealing to customers than its competitors. These are the "why choose us" factors. **Order Qualifiers** are the baseline

requirements a product or service needs to meet to be considered for purchase by a customer. These are essentially the "must-haves" that make a product viable in the market. (Goldsmith. D, 2015)

Order winners	Order Qualifiers
<u>Price</u> : H&M is generally known for being more budget-friendly than Zara. They often cater to a wider range of income levels with their pricing strategy.	<u>Brand Value</u> : While H&M (\$13.65 billion) offers trendy pieces, Zara (\$16.5 billion) might have a more upscale brand image. This can influence customer perception of quality and exclusivity.
<u>Variety</u> : H&M typically offers a broader variety of clothing. This includes basics like t-shirts and jeans, alongside trendier pieces and even dedicated lines for kids, sportswear, and homeware.	<u>Fashionability and Trendiness</u> : Both H&M and Zara offer fashionable and trendy clothing items to attract customers. This includes staying up-to-date with the latest fashion trends and styles.
<u>Availability</u> : H&M tends to have a larger global presence with 4,375 retail stores while Zara only has 2,312 retail stores. This can make H&M a more convenient option for some customers.	<u>Quality</u> : While both companies offer affordable fashion, they maintain a certain level of quality to meet customer expectations. This includes using durable materials and ensuring well-constructed garments.
<u>Fashion Sustainability</u> : H&M has been increasingly emphasizing sustainability initiatives, including the use of organic cotton, recycling programs, and promoting circular fashion. This commitment to sustainability serves as a significant order winner, especially as consumers become more environmentally conscious and seek ethically produced clothing.	<u>Speed-to-Market</u> : Both H&M and Zara have efficient supply chains and production processes to quickly bring new fashion items from concept to store shelves. But Zara is more efficient in this matter. Zara's lead time 14 days while H&M's lead time in 21 days .

Table - 1: Order winners and qualifiers

1.2 Operation Strategy

Market Requirements Perspective: H&M Group closely monitors market trends and consumer preferences. The company places significant emphasis on understanding customer needs and adapting its strategies accordingly. H&M regularly conducts market research to identify emerging trends, consumer behaviours, and competitive landscapes. This information guides its product development, marketing campaigns, and expansion plans. For instance, H&M's focus on sustainability aligns with the growing demand for eco-friendly fashion among consumers, demonstrating its responsiveness to market requirements. In 2020, the AI Movebox tool was introduced by H&M Group. It is an algorithm that allows merchandise to be redistributed where there is demand. Going forward, this algorithm will also enable quicker response to shift in client preferences, resulting in less overproduction. (H&M Group, 2021)

Bottom-up Approach: While H&M predominantly follows a top-down approach, it also incorporates elements of a bottom-up perspective. Local store managers and regional teams have some autonomy to adapt strategies and make decisions based on local market dynamics, customer preferences, and operational needs. Store managers has flexibility in adjusting promotional activities to better suit the preferences and demographics of their specific location. H&M encourages feedback and insights from frontline staff, as they are often closest to customers and can provide valuable information on market trends and consumer behaviour.

Top-down Approach: H&M Group often relies on centralized decision-making processes driven by corporate strategies and directives. Key decisions regarding product assortment, pricing strategies, and sustainability initiatives

typically originate from the corporate headquarters in Stockholm, Sweden. This allows H&M to maintain consistency in branding, product offerings, and operational standards across its vast network of stores worldwide. Corporate executives and management teams at the headquarters set the overall direction and vision for the company, which is then cascaded down to regional and local levels for implementation

2. Supply Chain

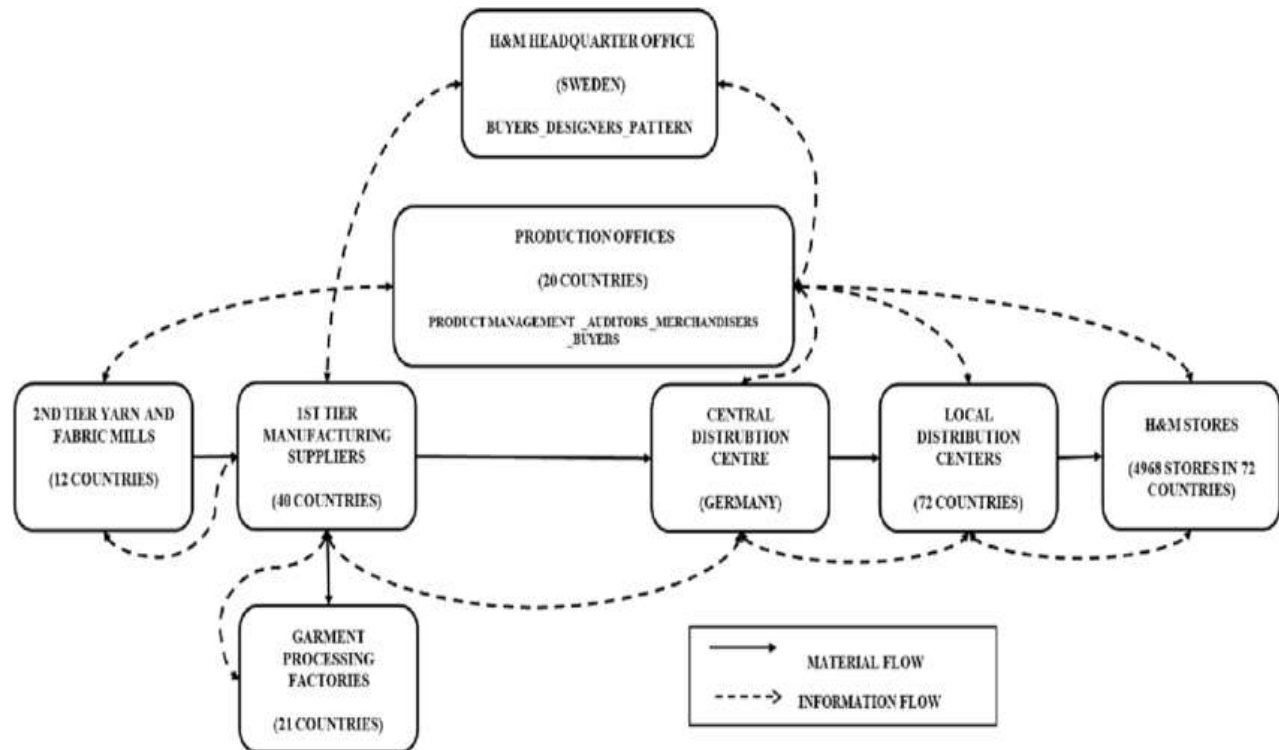


Fig - 1: Supply Chain Diagram

3. Upstream Supply Chain

3.1 Suppliers

Production offices, which oversee H&M Group's interactions with manufacturers, work along with its suppliers. The organisation utilises three primary categories of suppliers. Leading **manufacturing factories** come in first, providing the cutting and sewing; **processing factories** come in second, handling the creation of prints, washing, embroidering, and dyeing; and **fabric and yarn mills** come in third, serving as second-tier suppliers of fabric to the manufacturing and processing factories. The company divides suppliers into groups: Gold, Silver and Others based on the experience and time that they have dealt with a supplier. (H&M Group, 2018)

Supplier Name	Country	Factory Type	Grading
Fakir apparels ltd.	Bangladesh	Manufacturing factories	Gold
Cotton world (unit 5)	India	Manufacturing factories	Silver
Hangzhou tianlong leather garments co ltd	China	Manufacturing factories	Other
Laila styles ltd.	Bangladesh	Processing factories	Gold
Indian designs exports pvt ltd	India	Processing factories	Silver
Crystal martin (Hong Kong) ltd	China	Processing factories	Platinum
Vardhman (auro textile - dyeing & weaving)	India	Tier 2 factories (fabric and yarn and tanneries)	Gold
Qingdao y.l.s textiles co ltd.	China	Tier 2 factories (fabric and yarn and tanneries)	Silver
South-east textiles ltd	Bangladesh	Tier 2 factories (fabric and yarn and tanneries)	Other
Li peng enterprise co. ltd.	Taiwan	Fibre processing (recycled polyester)	Gold
Far eastern Polytex	Vietnam	Fibre processing (recycled polyester)	Silver

Table – 2: Important Suppliers List

3.2 Procurement and Sourcing Strategy

H&M Group employs a predominantly **centralized approach** with strategic decision-making and policy formulation managed centrally to ensure alignment with sustainability goals. **Single sourcing** is utilized for critical materials through strategic partnerships, such as platinum and gold suppliers. However, it also decentralized execution, particularly in supplier relationship management, allowing local teams autonomy to adapt strategies. **Multiple sourcing** strategies are employed for less critical materials, ensuring supply chain resilience. While **parallel sourcing** may be used for specific projects, delegated sourcing is less common. Overall, H&M Group's approach is tailored to balance consistency, flexibility, and sustainability across its supply chain. (H&M Group, 2022)

With production offices located in key regions and close to suppliers such as **Dhaka in Bangladesh** and **Shanghai in China**, as well as **28 additional production offices across Europe and Asia**. These offices collaborate with the production facilities and the buyers in Sweden to evaluate samples, verify quality and select the suppliers who will fulfil each order. (Petro, G., 2012) It creates **80%** of its goods in advance and uses a dynamic production strategy, producing **20%** of its things dependent on trend success. Regional replenishment centres manage all product flow and maintain lean operations with minimal buffer stock through this centralised approach. (H&M Group, 2022)

H&M Group's procurement and sourcing strategy is characterized by a commitment to responsible raw material sourcing, focusing on both environmental sustainability and human rights. The strategy is aligned with international guidelines such as the OECD Due Diligence Guidelines for Responsible Business Conduct and the UN Guiding Principle on Business and Human Rights. (H&M Group, 2022)

<u>Sustainability Commitment</u>	All suppliers and business partners are required to sign H&M Group's Sustainability Commitment before entering a business relationship. This commitment underscores the importance of sustainability and responsible sourcing throughout the supply chain.
<u>Compliance with Raw Material Requirements</u>	Suppliers must adhere to specific raw material requirements outlined by H&M Group, including providing information such as country/region of origin, volume, species (for natural materials), and proof of legality or certification where applicable.
<u>Risk-Based Due Diligence</u>	H&M Group conducts risk assessments for key materials and suppliers to evaluate social and environmental risks associated with raw material production. Based on the severity and likelihood of adverse impacts, due diligence efforts are tailored accordingly.
<u>Supplier Training and Collaboration</u>	Suppliers are expected to collaborate with H&M Group on due diligence activities and sourcing mitigation strategies. This includes providing necessary information, completing product declaration forms, and participating in joint efforts to address sustainability risks across the supply chain.

Table – 3: Pre-check Criteria for Suppliers

3.3 Outsourcing and Offshoring

H&M Group strategically utilizes outsourcing and offshoring as integral components of its business model to effectively manage its production processes. H&M outsources production to a network of approximately **800 suppliers**, out of which **80%** of the production takes place in Asia where longer lead time products are produced because of lower working wages, flexible government standards and labour laws and lower production and material cost, while the rest **20%** takes place in Europe where items with very short lead times are produced. But this led to the problem of longer lead times & less flexible inventory. (Petro, G., 2012) (Srinivasan, S., 2018) Since its inception in 1947, H&M has outsourced its production, partnering with both locally owned and multinational garment manufacturers largely based in Asia. This strategic approach allows H&M to leverage the expertise and resources of its (H&M Group, 2023)

3.4 Inbound Logistics

H&M Group is actively innovating its inbound logistics capabilities to enhance efficiency and sustainability. By developing new, highly automated logistics centres, the company aims to create additional capacity, flexibility, and speed between sales channels. For instance, the upcoming launch of a new logistics centre in Ajax, Canada, supplements recently opened facilities on the US East and West Coasts, supporting continued expansion in North America. The company maintains a constant focus on optimized transport solutions while taking actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This includes selecting efficient equipment, maximizing transport unit capacity, and tracking progress to secure future emissions reduction. H&M prioritizes sustainable transport practices, collaborating with verified ocean carriers and participating in initiatives like the Sustainable Air Freight Alliance. (H&M Group, 2022)

4. Operations Management

Any business that produces items and sells them to consumers must have operations management as an essential skill. According to Jacobs and Chase (2021), operations are a collection of procedures used by businesses in the

manufacturing and service sectors to transform raw resources into finished goods. Every business uses various techniques and the resources at its disposal to produce goods and services that are offered to customers. Hence, operations management is concerned with controlling the resources that are used to produce goods and services to guarantee their delivery. (Slack, et al., 2023)

In the competitive fashion industry, H&M's success depends on a reliable operations management system. With a strategy focused on manufacturing and selling trendy clothing items at affordable prices, the brand targets customers who seek style without the high cost. H&M achieves this by cutting production costs, offering designs inspired by luxury brands, and providing a wide array of products in stores. This operations strategy caters to a broad clientele, ensuring accessibility to fashionable clothing for those who cannot afford exclusive fashion houses. It underscores the importance of operational efficiency in meeting customer needs and gaining a competitive edge in the market.

4.1 4 Vs Typology

H&M Group, being one of the leaders in the fashion industry by providing fast fashion clothes at an affordable rate, it incorporates all the 4Vs in its operation.

Volume: H&M Group operates on a large scale, producing and distributing clothing to a vast network of stores worldwide. To manage high volumes efficiently, H&M invests in advanced production facilities and logistics systems. By leveraging economies of scale, the company can keep production costs low while meeting demand in multiple markets. (H&M Group, 2023) But while comparing the company to its competitor Zara, the author found out that the production volume of garments of Zara (450 million garments) is lower than H&M (3 billion). (Live Frankley, 2024)

Variation: H&M contends with variations in customer demand, seasonal trends, and regional preferences across its global markets. To address these variations effectively, the company employs agile production and supply chain management strategies, allowing for quick adjustments to changing demands and market conditions (discussed in Inventory Management). (H&M Group, 2023)

Variety: H&M Group offers a wide variety of clothing styles, catering to diverse consumer preferences. The company continuously introduces new collections, trends, and collaborations across its various brands, ensuring there is something for everyone (covered in Introductick). This extensive variety helps H&M capture a broad market segment and maintain relevance in the fast-paced fashion industry. (H&M Group 2023) However, Zara releases 24 collections each year, 500 designs per week and almost 20,000 per year, whereas H&M releases 15- 16 collections each year. (Live Frankley, 2024)

Visibility: H&M Group prioritizes transparency in its downstream supply chain as a cornerstone of its sustainability efforts, evident through its dedicated Sustainability section on its website. Here, the company openly shares its sustainability strategy, goals, and performance metrics, providing stakeholders with insights into environmental impact, supply chain practices, and social responsibility. Through regular sustainability reports and engagement with stakeholders, including customers, investors, and NGOs, H&M Group fosters trust, accountability, and dialogue within the industry. This commitment to visibility not only enhances the company's reputation but also empowers stakeholders to make informed decisions and hold H&M Group accountable for its sustainability commitments. (H&M Group, 2023)

4.2 Performance Objectives

In the sector of fast fashion, H&M Group has thrived because it prioritizes Cost, Speed, Flexibility and Quality in its operations.

Speed: H&M Group prioritizes speed in its supply chain operations to swiftly bring new fashion trends to market and to react quickly to changing customer demands and market trends. The company is known for its fast-fashion model, which involves quickly designing, producing, and distributing clothing collections in response to emerging trends. It utilizes advanced technologies such as AI and automated logistics centres, the company achieves faster production and distribution cycles, reducing lead times and improving responsiveness to market dynamics. (H&M Group, 2020) However, when compared to Zara, it moves in a much slower pace. Zara's lead time is max **5 weeks** while H&M Group's is **3-4 weeks to 6 months**.

Cost: H&M Group prioritizes cost-effectiveness by making sustainable choices in material sourcing and production processes. Through internal carbon pricing and strategic buying decisions, the company aims to minimize expenses while maintaining quality and sustainability standards. This approach ensures that products remain affordable for customers without compromising on ethical and environmental considerations. By leveraging economies of scale, streamlining production processes, and negotiating favourable supplier contracts, H&M Group also aims to offer affordable clothing while maintaining profitability. (H&M Group, 2020)

Quality: Despite its emphasis on affordability, H&M Group maintains a commitment to quality across its value chain, from design and production to distribution. By fostering long-term relationships with suppliers and implementing stringent quality control measures (discussed in Quality Management), the company ensures that its products meet high standards of craftsmanship and durability, enhancing customer satisfaction and brand reputation. (H&M Group, 2020)

Flexibility: H&M Group embraces flexibility in its supply chain to adapt swiftly to evolving circumstances, such as shifts in customer preferences or unexpected events like the COVID-19 pandemic. Through close collaboration with suppliers and partners, the company adjusts production volumes, sales channels, and market strategies as needed, demonstrating agility and resilience in a dynamic business environment. (H&M Group, 2020)

4.3 Process & Layout Type

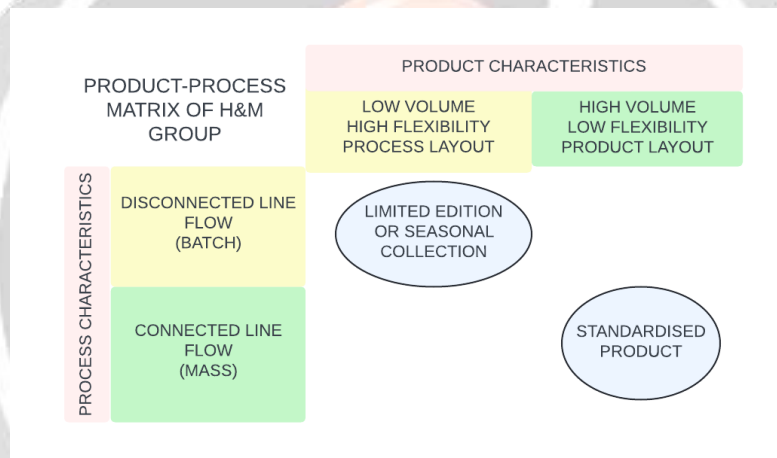


Figure – 2: Product-Process Matrix

H&M Group predominantly utilizes a **mass production process**. This manufacturing approach involves the continuous production of large quantities of standardized products to meet high demand efficiently. By leveraging economies of scale, H&M can produce its fashion items in bulk, ensuring cost-effectiveness and timely delivery to its global network of stores. However, the company also employs elements of **batch production**, particularly for limited edition or seasonal collections, allowing for more flexibility in product variations while still benefiting from efficient production processes. Overall, H&M's combination of mass and batch production enables it to meet diverse customer needs while maintaining operational efficiency.

H&M strategically utilizes both **process and product layouts** within its manufacturing operations to optimize efficiency and flexibility. In process layout areas, tasks are grouped based on similar processes, such as cutting, sewing, and finishing. This allows for specialized equipment and resources tailored to each task, ensuring efficient utilization and flexibility to adapt to varying production needs. (Slack, et al., 2022) On the other hand, product layout is applied in assembly lines for standardized products, organizing production in a linear sequence to minimize material handling and optimize workflow. (Slack, et al., 2022) By combining these layout strategies, H&M achieves a balance between customization and efficiency, catering to diverse product types and production requirements while maintaining streamlined operations. This hybrid approach enables H&M to effectively meet the demands of its global customer base while ensuring operational effectiveness and flexibility.

4.4 Inventory Management

H&M Group employs a hybrid inventory management system, blending **centralized quality inspections and excess stock management** with **decentralized approaches tailored to regional customer needs**. The absence of backup stocks in stores necessitates replenishment requests upon stock depletion, a strategy driven by the company's reported excess inventory of **\$4.3 billion** in 2018. Initiatives like RFID implementation in 1800 stores and the introduction of Afound aim to alleviate excess inventory and optimize sales channels (Grill-Goodman, 2018).

Investments in **automated warehousing systems**, particularly in the central warehouse in Hamburg, Germany, facilitate efficient handling of the daily influx of over **160 million pieces** of merchandise. Leveraging **Information Communication Technology (ICT)**, H&M optimizes transportation processes, directing products to the central warehouse or regional markets based on demand signals and design specifications.

Using a dynamic production method, H&M produces **20% of its items that are sub-collections based on trend success with short lead times** and manufactures the remaining **80% of its goods that are traditional long-lead times in advance**. (Petro, G., 2012) Using centralised inventory management, regional replenishment centres run lean operations with little buffer stock and handle all product flow. H&M prioritises effective lead time management in its operations by combining push and pull methods in a "leagile" production approach. To increase productivity, cut waste, and improve quality, around **80% of production uses a push system** that combines lean principles with demand-driven material requirements planning (MRP). (Gelders and Van Wassenhove, 1985; Brown et al., 2006)

The remaining **20% use a pull system**, which allows for quick responses and flexible inventory management to keep stock levels at ideal levels. (Slack and Brandon-Jones, 2019).

Despite MRP's effectiveness, challenges in considering capacity constraints may lead to production bottlenecks. H&M addresses this by strategically investing in fulfilment and logistics centres across Europe and the UK, enhancing supply chain agility to manage capacity disruptions and meet dynamic demand (H&M Group, 2018).

4.5 Lean Management

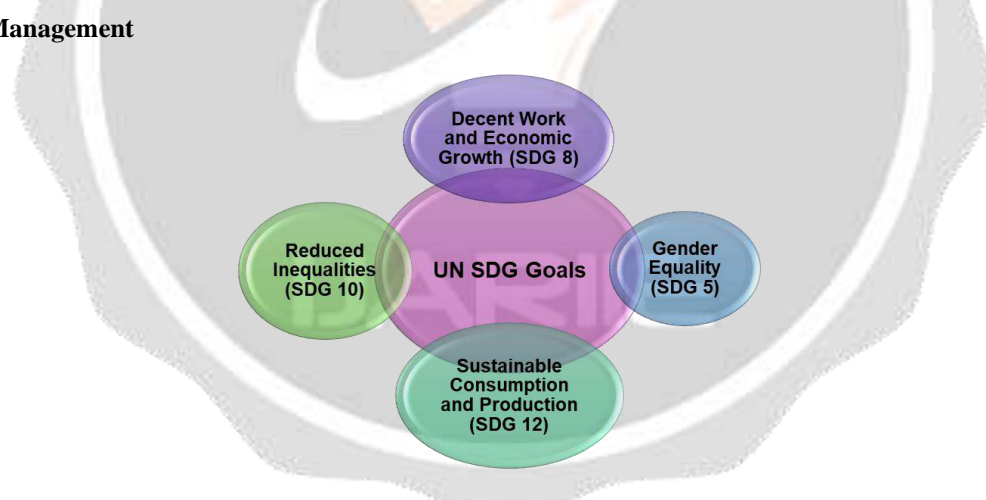


Figure – 3: UN SDG Goals followed by H&M Group

In addressing waste/lean management, H&M Group prioritizes reuse over recycling, donating faulty products, with a focus on maximizing the value and lifespan of goods. In 2023, they collected **16,855 tonnes** of used products through **in-store garment collection** initiatives, out of which **68% are reused as a product**, **24% are recycled to make new fibre or product** and **8% are disposed to incinerate it for energy recovery**. This aligns with their commitment to circularity, evident in initiatives like **Looper Textile Co.**, a joint venture with **Remondis**, and the **Circular Innovation Lab's** collaboration with **Sysav** and **Ioniqa Technologies BV** to test textile recycling processes. (H&M Group, 2023)

Within their own operations, H&M Group emphasizes waste segregation and reduction, notably **90% of waste** in distribution centres was recycled or reused. They also prioritize circular packaging strategies, such as reducing hanger

usage and increasing hanger reuse. COS, a brand under the group, implements innovative recycling schemes for store interiors and materials, like concrete and fiberglass. (H&M Group, 2023)

In addressing supply chain waste, H&M Group provides guidelines to suppliers and collaborates with partners like **Reverse Resources** to optimize material recirculation. Collaborations with entities like **Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)** demonstrate their commitment to regulatory improvement in waste management, exemplified by their joint study on post industrial waste in Bangladesh's textile sector. Through these efforts, H&M Group advances its circularity goals while advocating for systemic change across the industry. (H&M Group, 2023)

4.6 Quality Management

H&M Group maintains a strong quality management system to ensure the safety, reliability, and satisfaction of its products. Led by professionals like **Anki Ahlström, the Global Product Compliance Department** ensures compliance with laws and safety regulations across markets, proactively influencing industry benchmarks. **Elin Robling, Global Product Quality Manager for Accessories**, emphasizes the importance of customer feedback, continuously analysing it to drive improvements in product quality.

Collaborating closely with suppliers, H&M requires them to have **Quality Management Systems** and conducts regular visits to their premises for collaboration and improvement suggestions. **Ylva Weissbach, Global Chemical Compliance Expert**, underscores H&M's commitment to chemical safety and sustainability, banning harmful chemicals and actively seeking alternatives. With a focus on rigorous testing, compliance, customer-centricity, supplier collaboration, and sustainability, H&M maintains its reputation for offering fashion and quality at the best price in a sustainable way. (H&M Group, 2021)

5. Downstream Supply Chain

5.1 Retail

H&M Group has a global presence, operating in over **77 markets worldwide**. It serves customers through approximately **4,375 physical stores and digital channels**. While the company's headquarters are in Sweden, it conducts domestic sales as well as exports to international markets, with **online sales available in 60 countries**. (H&M Group, 2023) From H&M Group's full report 2023, The highest sales and highest number of stores have been recorded in two markets **Asia, Oceania, Africa (2.7 billion euros, 1143 stores)**, and **Western Europe (6.8 billion euros, 1079 stores)** which makes them one of the largest and growing markets. This is because in Asia, Oceania and Africa, rapid urbanisation, rising disposable incomes & growing middle class fuel demand for affordable yet trendy fashion, whereas in Western Europe, population is more sustainable fashion-conscious. (Robert, S., 2020)

	H&M Group	Inditex Group (Zara)
Net sales	20.9 billion euros	36 billion euros
Cashflow	3.9 billion euros	7 billion euros
Profit	749 million euros	5.8 billion euros
Average no. of employees	150,000	161,000
No. of stores	4375	5692
No. of store markets	77	96
No. of online markets	60	106

Table - 4: Comparison of H&M and Zara through key figures acc. to 2023

5.2 Wholesale & Franchise

To keep control over its brand image, product quality, and customer experience, H&M Group refrains from engaging in wholesale and franchise operations. It maintains complete control over pricing policies, merchandising initiatives, and customer relations by operating solely through its own retail channels, including physical stores and online platforms. This guarantees uniformity across every channel and strengthens the brand's reputation for providing stylish apparel at reasonable costs. This allows it to cultivate a direct contact with its clients and the company can quickly adjust to changing consumer tastes and market trends, which promotes innovation and agility in its retail operations.

5.3 Vertical Integration

H&M Group strategically employs vertical integration in its downstream distribution stages. This encompasses operating its own retail operations, managing store design, and overseeing customer service to ensure a seamless shopping experience. By integrating vertically, H&M maintains control over distribution costs, lead times, and product quality, aligning with brand values and sustainability objectives. Specifically, H&M employs forward integration by utilizing production offices to coordinate with suppliers and manage distribution centres and retail outlets. This approach centralizes control, enhances cost management, and reduces transportation expenses.

5.4 Outbound Logistics

H&M is committed to improving outbound logistics to ensure availability for customers while reducing environmental impact. The company offers various sustainable delivery options, including bicycle delivery services and electric vehicles, in select markets. These initiatives contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions compared to conventional delivery methods. Moreover, ongoing testing and scaling of sustainable delivery initiatives underscore H&M's commitment to innovation in outbound logistics operations. By prioritizing sustainability and actively participating in initiatives like the Sustainable Air Freight Alliance, H&M demonstrates its dedication to reducing its environmental footprint across its global network. (H&M Group, 2022)

6. Issue in the organization

Zara own their production factories, unlike H&M who offshores its entire production, so that they can quickly increase or decrease production rates to have less inventory thus needing less working capital to manage the inventory. Zara only does **40-50%** of their manufacturing in advance because it keeps smaller bets on short-term trends rather than on yearly fashion trends. Due to this they can flexibly change their manufacturing systems quickly over operations, unlike H&M who does **80%** of their manufacturing in advance and the rest **20%** change based on trendier items, long or short. Its supply chain is based on flexibility and agility instead of low cost and cheap labour.

Zara manufactures **50%** of its items in Spain where the main **11** Zara-owned clothing factories are within a **16km radius** far from Zara's distribution center – the Cube in Spain connected to it by an underground tunnel with high-speed monorails. They move all the raw materials from Cube to factories to assemble them into finished goods which then goes back to the Cube for shipment to stores. It can deliver garments to its worldwide in few days (**24-72 hours**). Whereas H&M does **60%** of its production in Asia and then transports the finished goods to its distribution centre in Germany which is almost **6-7 thousand km** through air freights which then goes for shipment to stores.

This shows that Zara's lead time is obviously shorter than H&M (**2-3 weeks in Europe and 3-6 months in Asia**) due to higher logistics timing. (SCM Globe, 2020)

7. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, H&M Group's extensive global reach and focus on affordable, fast fashion contrast sharply with Zara's agile, vertically integrated supply chain. While H&M's strategy emphasizes large-scale production and cost efficiency, it faces challenges in flexibility and lead times due to its reliance on offshoring and long supply chains. Conversely, Zara's model, with its significant in-house production and proximity to distribution centers, enables quicker responses to market trends and shorter lead times. This comparison highlights the trade-offs between cost-efficiency and operational agility, emphasizing the need for H&M to innovate further to enhance its competitive edge in the fast fashion industry by reducing their lead time and making changes in their production pattern.

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TITLE: The Professional Manager and Leadership in Uber

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ABSTRACT

The author has chosen a set of leadership and management theories and has applied said theories to a company as they have been using the same style for the past 10 years.

This report consists of leadership and management theories that they have been using under their old CEO while explaining how it affected the employees well being at the workplace, its advantages and the same under the new management while highlighting how they can build motivation among the employees and create a healthier workplace. It also consists of a discussion on how leadership impacts team building amongst employees and furthermore, it's impact on performance management of the employees. If an employee is emotionally invested in the company they would most likely stay in the firm longer than the others and would be more affected by an autocratic style of leadership where the power only lies in the top management and the lower management is not able to voice out their opinions.

A workplace with a more lenient leadership style where the management takes in opinions from all sorts of employees is more likely to be successful and will have a more healthier work environment because the employees will know that they are valued in the workplace.

Keyword: - Leadership theories, Management theories, Employee well-being, Employee retention.

1. INTRODUCTION

After being stuck on a snowy Paris evening in 2008, Uber's former CEO Travis Kalanick and Garrett Camp had an idea of developing a platform where people could request a ride simply by tapping their phone. The idea of using one's phone to order a ride from the exact location the customers were at was a revolution since people would no longer have to wait for a taxi to pass by or having to walk in search of one. (Uber, 2023)

With annual revenue of more than \$11 billion, over 19,000 employees, a market capitalization rate of \$74 billion and multiple corporate controversies, Uber has created a name for itself in the taxi service industry. (O'Connell, 2020)

1.1 Uber Former CEO's management style

Uber's former CEO, Travis Kalanick was responsible for the toxic work culture that built up within the company. This included problems such as focus on aggressive growth and intense competition that failed to prioritise the internal environment and the well-being of the employees.

Former Uber employee Susan Fowler detailed the allegations of sexual harassment and gender discrimination in a 2017 blogpost, Fowler also mentioned how they had a toxic work culture and how discriminating practices occurring in the workplace acted as a demerit to the company's brand and reputation. #DeleteUber campaign took off after Uber was perceived to be attempting to profit from a strike in protest of Donald Trump's initial Muslim ban.

1.2 Uber's main problem

One of the main problems Uber faces is the treatment of drivers by paying them minimum wages, working longer hours and not providing worker's insurance and other non monetary benefits. (Wong, 2019)

2. Blake and Mouton's: Leadership Grid (1964)

This theory identifies a managers degree of task centeredness in accordance with their persons centeredness, and talks about the different types of leaders organisations have. This includes country club manager, team manager, middle-of-the-road manager, impoverished manager and produce or perish manager.

Travis Kalanick's leadership can be classified as an authority obedience manager who focuses more on achieving the output by any means necessary rather than training and helping to develop the employees skills.

Employees under this sort of leadership usually have less motivation and autonomy, which lowers job satisfaction and increases turnover. There have been many examples of authoritarian leadership in the past, where the implementation of this type of leadership was justified by the need to increase output without concern for the employees.



(Fig.1)

Uber commissioned an inquiry following the detailed publication of a blogpost by a former employee who described her experience of sexual harassment and gender discrimination at the company while Travis Kalanick was the CEO. The report also called out Uber to improve their diversity efforts starting with promoting the head of diversity to the most senior level of the company's executive team. (Wong, 2017)

2.1 Bass and Avolio's transformational leadership (1994)

This theory talks about how a leader can help increase productivity among the employees and increase motivation. Bass argued that there are four key factors to successful transformational leadership which include Trust, Inspiration, Creativity and Personal growth.

Leaders nowadays have to consider all ways of motivating employees to work on the output while allowing them to work on self-training helps employees to have a more positive attitude and helps the work culture be more pleasant. (Stewart, J. 2008)

After having negative publicity, Uber's current CEO Dara Khosrowshahi was promoted to his position after the dismissal of Travis Kalanick. In the first two weeks, Dara met with drivers, women employees and even staff who worked on customer support lines, which earned him a reputation of being a measured and diplomatic leader.

He reshaped the entire work culture within Uber and sealed a \$9.3 billion investment deal led by Japanese internet giant Softbank that earned him a reputation of being a calm and driven leader. He also met the company's staff-run clubs that support people from different backgrounds which include "UberHue," which promotes black diversity, "Women of Uber," "Los Ubers" for Latino diversity and "UberPride" for LGBTQ inclusion. (Kerr, 2018)

2.2 Max Weber Bureaucratic Approach of Management (1930)

This theory talks about bureaucracy being the most effective way to set up and manage an organisation and achieve maximum productivity with employees and tasks. In an ideal bureaucracy, everyone is treated equally and responsibilities are divided according to each team's level of expertise dividing clear lines of communication and division of labour is based on the layers of management. Weber believed that the work environment should be professional and unprofessional, his ideal bureaucracy favours efficiency, uniformity and a clear distribution of power. (Fantuzzo, J. (2015))

Nearly a year after Uber was introduced in India, Uber driver Shiv Kumar Yadav raped his 27 year old women passenger in Delhi. With the Nirbhaya rape case in Delhi still fresh in everyone's minds the public outcry was immediate and there were slogans shouting and protests on the streets. (Eshwar, 2016)

Uber's aggressive workplace culture came to light at a global meeting in late 2015 in Las Vegas where the Uber employees were found using cocaine in the bathrooms and a manager was found groping several female employees as witnessed by the attendees. (Issac, 2017)

3. Elton Mayo Human Resources Theory (1951)

This theory states that employees are motivated by more relational factors such as attention and fellowship rather than monetary rewards or environmental factors. Mayo created a matrix to showcase the likelihood that a given team would be successful if the employees are more motivated and know that their opinions are valued in creating the final output. (Peek, 2023)

Burnout rate is one of the active factors since the COVID pandemic which affects the employee turnover rate in an organisation, Mayo's theory allows organisations to understand ways to reduce burnout and reduce the amount of employees leaving by creating a more friendly and inclusive workplace. (Peek, 2023)

3.1 Management under old CEO

Under Kalanick, Uber has a list of 14 "cultural values" that were displayed in conference rooms and screens around its San Francisco headquarters. Employees were expected to personify values such as toe-stepping, principled confrontation and "always be hustlin." (Kerr, 2018)

3.2 Management under new CEO

Before changing the cultural values Khosrowshahi rewrote those values as eight "cultural norms" by taking ideas from every Uber employee. Values management in an organisation shows how a leader undertakes the risk and manages people with high skills. People sent in more than 1,200 submissions, which were then voted on 22,000 times. Khosrowshahi wrote in an email addressing a journal article, "These norms and management rules came from the bottom up, so employees can feel invested and committed to them, rather than having to follow strict directives from the top." The final eight norms include sayings like "we celebrate differences" and "we value ideas over hierarchy" and the one that identifies Khosrowshahi's leadership: "We do the right thing. Period." (Kerr, 2018)

4. A leadership approach that will improve the working environment within the organisation

By motivating and inspiring employees, leaders make sure that they foster a sense of shared vision, igniting a sense of purpose and commitment among the team members. There are various characteristics that define a true leader such as promoting individual growth by encouraging creativity and innovation while cultivating a positive work environment. This type of leadership enriches job satisfaction and loyalty by promoting skill development, open communication and valuing each and every employee's contributions which increases productivity and a sense of fulfilment and reduces employee turnover.

Bass and Avolio's leadership theory allows leaders to inspire and motivate their employees to achieve goals beyond their own expectations while instilling a sense of purpose and vision among the employees. This leadership style fosters a healthy working environment built on creativity and innovation that instructs the employees to think beyond their abilities and come up with new solutions to any problems that can occur in a workplace

Using this theory, leaders are able to motivate their employees with more than just monetary benefits, when employees feel that they are respected in the workplace and are not just treated as workers, the employee turnover reduces and

they are more likely to stay at one job and make sure they do more than they are capable of. (Bass, B. M. Bernard M. & Avolio, B. J. 1994)

Although this theory has various advantages, it also has its disadvantages such as high dependency on the leader as the employees become dependent on the leader for guidance and decision making which can affect the employees independent thinking. While transformational leadership is effective in most situations, it may not be suitable in all circumstances. There are various situations that may require a more directive and transactional leadership style. The effectiveness of any leadership style depends on various factors including characteristics of the employees, organisational context, and challenges faced by the organisation.

5. Linking chosen theories to team building within the organisation

Belbin's Team Roles (1981)-

Belbin's theory of team roles is used to identify the existing or future strengths and weaknesses within a team in order to guarantee that both individuals and group members interact and collaborate effectively. This theory shows that the most successful teams are made up of diverse roles which makes them more coordinated and motivated. Belbin's team roles highlight each team member's roles in the company by taking their skills into consideration ultimately leading to higher motivation and a more effective team.

The 9 team roles of Belbin's include Resource Investigator, Teamworker, Co-ordinator, Plant, Monitor Evaluator, Specialist, Shaper, Implementer, Completer Finisher. (Belbin, R. M. 2010)

Resource Investigator is that team member who uses their inquisitive nature to find unique ideas to solve problems. Their strengths include being outgoing, enthusiastic about exploring new opportunities and developing their network of contacts.

Teamworker is the team member who helps the group get together by using their versatility to identify the work required and complete the work on behalf of the team. Their strengths include being co-operative and listening to each member to avoid complications within the group.

Co-ordinator is one of the most important team members as they are responsible for understanding the team members skills and delegating work accordingly. Since they are responsible for delegating tasks in the group these members tend to be confident, mature and create goals for the team to follow.

Shaper is the member who motivates the team to keep them moving to achieve their goals without losing focus or momentum. They have the drive and courage to overcome any obstacles and thrive in pressure situations.

Implementers are similar to team workers as they are efficient, have the ability to turn ideas into actions and are able to get the work done.

Completer Finisher are those members who make sure that the task they are incharge of is subject to the highest standards of quality control.

Using Belbin's team roles, organisations can get a better understanding of their strengths which leads to more effective communication in the team. Managers can enhance the performance of their team to ensure that every team member feels that they are making a difference in the workplace which leads to higher productivity and lower conflict. **"A good team member treats members of a team like actors on a stage. There need to exits and entrances. Not everyone is required to be on the stage at the same time"** -Meredith Belbin

Although Belbin's theory has several benefits, it may not be right for every business. Some of the drawbacks of this theory include, Belbin's team roles do not take into consideration that every member has different skills and while some members can easily cope with their task for some it may take them time to develop their skills which makes them more suitable for a different role

6. A leadership approach will improve motivation and performance

Performance Management Process

Performance agreement-

Susan Fowler, a former engineer at Uber recently opened up about her “very, very strange year at Uber,” in relation to the culture of sexual harassment under the former CEO Travis Kalanick. This also included potentially illegal managerial activities such as Fowler's boss telling her that she could be fired for reporting the behaviours, which is a striking description of Uber's HR organisational structure. Khosrowshahi, during his tenure at Expedia learnt valuable leadership skills, including how critical flexibility is along with being a more effective communicator and listener. These skills aided him in navigating the transition of taking over Uber after the former CEO resigned. (Bariso, 2023)

Personal Development Planning-

Finding solutions to give workers a sense of security and well-being is key with the shift in how different employees will need to be supported on a day-to-day basis. Uber for Business has helped HR departments adjust their current policies to introduce solutions for employees working from home and commuting to the office. (Uber, 2023)

Performance-

The old processes for managing employee performance was very subjective and enabled the managers to get away with their biases and mistreatment. Now by entering concrete goals into a system accessible by all levels, it is easy to hold everyone accountable. In addition to setting individual goals around performance there has been an introduction of new citizenship goals which is about doing something good for someone else, within or outside the organisation. (Dickey, 2017)

Performance Review-

Uber's current CEO Dara Khosrowshahi mentioned that they are not planning to layoff employees like other companies but are deciding the fate of the employees solely based on their performance and are aiming to maintain a high-performing workforce to ensure that its resources are utilized effectively. (Chakravarti, 2023)

7. HRM and its impact

Change management:

Organisational change theories have to deal with forces that push change forward and forces that hold it back. A methodical way of handling the changes in the organisations objectives and procedures and applying those techniques for bringing about change, managing change and helping individuals in reacting to the changes is known as change management. Change management is the application of processes and tools for leading the people's side of change to achieve a desired goal. (Baker, D. & Taylor, Kathryn. (2007)

How companies adapt to change:

At the organisational level, change management is leadership competency for initiating change in the organisation. Effective change management follows a structured process and employs a holistic set of tools to encourage successful individual and organisational change. Projects with excellent change management were seven times more likely to meet the objectives they have set than those with poor management. Businesses these days are becoming more sensitive to change management since in the long run only organisations with effective management. Creating a plan allows the employees to understand the reasons for change and define its scope to establish a team and provide a detailed review of the steps required to complete the project.

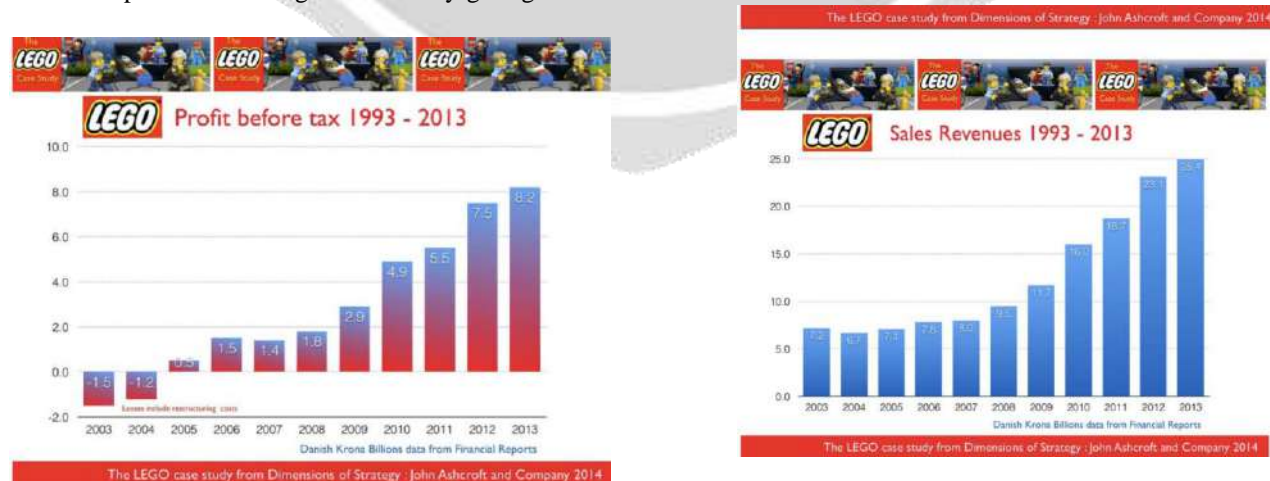
8. Lego Case Study

Lego case study: The company underwent a major loss of DKK 831 million in 2000, which the chairman regarded as unsatisfactory. With very little growth, global net turnover fell from DKK 9.8 billion in 1999 to DKK 9.5 billion in 2000, the business also lost \$100 billion and \$1.2 billion in sales. In response to this loss a decision was made to reduce product lines and give up on additional initiatives like publishing and wristwatches extending beyond the main business. Adopting a refocus approach that gave attention to imagination, creativity and education, new products were developed such as the 'power product' programme and introduction of the TECHNIC and BASIC brands. In 2001 with the introduction of Bionicle, it offered a higher potential by combining LEGO story creation with both online and offline play.

The purpose of the product strategy behind using LEGO parts was to create open-ended game situations featuring well known fictional or real life characters. Several European countries, the US, the UK and Japan adopted new market entry strategies in 2001 and multichannel retailing with focus on mail order and online sales using LEGO Direct were introduced. The introduction of "The LEGO 'Light 'Project" which was done to respond to the challenging market led to extensive changes in control systems, planning procedures which enabled quicker response time to market demands.

A significant change occurred in 2003 when LEGO stock levels doubled beyond the acceptable stock levels due to an increase in inventory. To counter this, LEGOLAND parks were introduced with different levels of success determined by the location. Despite these efforts the company faced several communication challenges. With twelve senior vice presidents overseeing six areas, the matrix management in the organisation functioned in isolated areas with minimal accountability. Lack of attention on product development teams and insufficient assessments of the product profitability led to overstocked retailers and reducing returns. A lack of continuity planning was shown by the cancellation of successful diversification projects and failure to follow through with important franchises like Star Wars and Harry Potter. Failure to come up with profitable innovation greatly affected the company along with diversification strategies aiming at over three hundred stores which turned out to be unsuccessful.

In response to these changes a business strategy was implemented at the end of 2003 led by Knudstorp, focused on a precise action plan to decrease costs, sell enterprises, restore competitiveness, produce cash and neglect immediate growth. Knudstorp implemented ten developing strategies emphasizing on going back to basics. The action plan called for defining a clear vision, changing the company's strategy with large retailers, putting in place a clear command structure and setting goals for gross and net margin 4 and regaining competitive advantage by putting the profitability of customers ahead of their goals. This strategy also involved reducing risk by right-sizing activities and reintroducing focus on the core Lego brick legacy with emphasis on developing core products for a well-defined consumer base avoiding needless diversification. In conclusion, LEGO had a lot of difficulties in the early 2000s resulting in loss and an unclear strategy. The turnaround that followed included a thorough action plan to return to the core of the brand and a competitive advantage achieved by giving retail customer



(Fig.2,3)

profitability top priority. (Hacerlobien, 2023)

9. Sources of change:

Travis Kalanick, the former CEO of Uber was responsible for the toxic work culture that built up within the company. This included issues like an emphasis on rapid expansion and fierce rivalry that neglected to put the workplace culture and the worker's welfare first. There were several allegations of sexual harassment and gender discrimination within the company against the former CEO and how they had a toxic work culture and how the discriminating practices occurring in the workplace worked against the company's reputation. (Wong, 2019)

9.1. Triggers for change-

Triggers for change are the factors that can trigger change within an organisation and allows the management to review their current management and how they can improve it.

Failure or poor performance-

In previous interviews, Uber employees have mentioned that the company's internal process was very 'competitive' and 'very competitive'. Uber managers ranked their employees twice a row from a scale of one (low) and five (high). Employees who receive one's or two's are considered underperformers and are placed for performance improvement plans which served as a warning that they could be fired if they continued to underperform. (Griswold, 2017)

Competitor activity-

Founded in 2009, Uber has become a major player in the ride-sharing industry and has revolutionised mobility and transportation by digitising the taxi services. Even though it is a leader in the transportation industry they have to face several competitors like Lyft, Ola, Grabb that provide a broader perspective on the ride-hailing market.

Quality Improvements-

After the dismissal of Uber's former CEO Travis Kalanick, the new CEO Dara Khosrowshahi made sure that he incorporates a better sense of understanding the viewpoint of each and every employee under Uber. Uber staff has mentioned that he makes sure to incorporate empathy into his leadership style and under his leadership, Uber has become a more stable work environment with better employee retention and morale. (Kerr, 2018)

New Leadership-

Since joining the company and taking over as CEO, Khosrowshahi has played the role of flatterer, diplomat, negotiator and salesman. He also introduced a new set of cultural norms for the company with showcase a simple phrase that Khosrowshahi characterises as his bottom line: "We do the right thing. Period."

He also hired a chief diversity officer and reviewed his employees salaries to ensure that everyone including women and minorities receive fair pay. (Holley, 2018)

10. Forces behind change-

Driving forces:

Interpersonal relationships-

Under Khosrowshahi's leadership, he helped develop the way the internal environment of the company and highlight the importance of talking to the employees to build a more positive and production work environment. He influence the employees to write and vote on the cultural guidelines for the workplace which gave rise to 1200 submissions from Uber employees which are: (Balakrishnan, 2017)

- **We build globally, we live locally.**
- **We are customer obsessed.**
- **We celebrate differences.**
- **We do the right thing.**
- **We act like owners.**
- **We persevere.**
- **We value ideas over hierarchy.**
- **We make big bold bets.**

(Fig.4)

(Balakrishnan, 2017)

Previous experiences-

Dara Khosrowshahi was appointed as the CEO of Uber after ending his tenure at Expedia for 12 years. He has been president and chief executive of Expedia since 2005 before joining as Uber's new CEO and has experience in the digital industry. At Expedia, Mr Khosrowshahi has been known to be an outspoken chief executive and after entering Uber has been working on building up the reputation that the company lost due to the sexual assault allegations exposed by a former employee against the former CEO and the toxic workplace culture. (Issac, 2017)

Financial issues-

One of the main reasons behind Uber's lack of profitability is its focus on aggressive expansion. The company has rapidly expanded its operations to over 450 markets across the globe in just a few years.

Uber finally achieved a profit in the second quarter of 2023 after 14 years of cumulative losses totalling to nearly \$32 billion of which a significant amount came from investment in stocks. (Rana, 2023)

Social issues-

The negative press endured by Uber is 2007 not only harmed the reputation but also lead to Uber becoming subject to DOJ criminal inquiries and investigations as well as investigations by government agencies abroad and in the United States. Alleged deceptive business practices and fraud, the use of alleged inappropriate means to obtain a rape victim's medical records and financial disclosures to certain investors were all a part of the scandal that eventually lead to the downfall of Uber in 2017.

They have also faced backlash for the way they treat the drivers which have been classified as independent contractors making them ineligible for minimum wage, workers insurance and other non-monetary benefits. (Wong, 2019)

Goals-

Shift from short term to long term thinking-

Dara Khosrowshahi has shifted the focus of Uber from short term aggressive growth to long term growth with a inclusive workplace culture. By reforming the top level management as the first step towards reforming the company's corporate culture made Uber become more synonymous with opportunity not misogyny. (Finley, 2017)

Cultural change-

Following the sexual assault allegations against the former CEO made public leading to his dismissal, they have made progress in the overall representation of women as now they account of 42.5% of Uber's global workforce and there has been a 3.8 percentage point increase in women leadership positions globally as of December 2021. (Uber, 2023)

11. Application of Balogun and Hope Hailey's (2008) Change Path Model

Steps	Application	Evaluation
Evolution	<i>Uber, under Dara Khosrowshahi's leadership, followed a slow transformational change in the workplace culture. This involved redefining the strategy and altering the processes to address the toxic work environment with the dismissal of the former CEO. The focus shifted to prioritize the well-being of employees and a workplace with positive attitude instead of aggressive growth and competition.</i>	<i>This approach aligns with the Evolution step as over time Uber has aimed to transform their organisational culture. This indicated an understanding that the company needs to change the entire trajectory and not just the superficial elements. The slow pace of change allows a more comprehensive and deeper understanding of change and lasting transformation.</i>
Adaptation	<i>In his initial week as CEO, Dara Khosrowshahi implemented changes gradually by meeting different stakeholders including women employees and the support staff. These initiatives earned him a title of being a transformational leader while reshaping the workplace culture and promoting diversity through staff-run clubs and securing a significant investment deal.</i>	<i>The adaptation step is reflected in the gradual initiatives undertaken by Khosrowshahi. Meeting with various stakeholders, reshaping the workplace culture and making an all-inclusive working environment acted as an effort to bring change and reflects an understanding of the importance of a transformation process.</i>
Revolution	<i>The appointment of Khosrowshahi as the CEO after the dismissal of Travis acted as a revolutionary change. Khosrowshahi's swift actions months after being appointment represent a fundamental transformation in a short time period.</i>	<i>This approach is suitable when there is a need to address urgent issues and reshape the organisations trajectory. It signifies a recognition of the need for radical change in response to the challenges the company has faced.</i>

Steps	Application	Evaluation
Reconstruction	<i>The overall change in Uber's culture from a toxic environment to an all-inclusive and employee-friendly one represented reconstruction of the company. This focus in this step is on evolving from a traditional mindset to a more customer focused on.</i>	<i>Reconstruction is evident in the transformation of Uber's toxic workplace culture to a more friendly one. This showcases how a more friendly workplace can help employees develop their interests while working on the organisation goals. The focus on strategy and culture implies a more holistic and enduring transformation.</i>

Analysis-

The application of Balogun & Hope Hailey's Change Path Model in relation to Uber's transformation under Dara Khosrowshahi provides several benefits to the organisation.

Structured approach to change

The change path model provides an organised framework for understanding and implementing change. This framework helps in dividing the transformation process into different manageable steps to make it easier for managers and staff to follow and implement the change.

Commitment to the organisational framework

The model helps explain the particular difficulties and environment that Uber faces under the former CEO. For example, the toxic work culture was the main reason for the revolutionary transformation that resulted from Travis Kalanick's dismissal and the evolution that followed was in accordance with the need for change within the organisation.

Transformation

In relation to the bad press that Uber received due to its hostile workplace, the model emphasises the significance of cultural development which is important for the company. Dara Khosrowshahi has demonstrated a commitment to altering the base of the organisational culture by emphasising inclusivity, diversity and constructive employee participation through staff run clubs. (Mann, 2019)

Positive organisational image

Under Khosrowshahi's leadership, Uber has been able to restore its brand reputation by adhering to a change route and resolving problems with innovative and evolutionary methods. The company's positive impression was further made stronger by its emphasis on diversity and inclusivity. Dara made sure to engage with various stakeholders including employees of all ethnicities, drivers and support staff which showed his proactive approach in understanding all their concerns and to make sure that all their employees have a sense of shared purpose.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the impact of leadership and management theories on employee well-being and organisational performance is significant. The use of autocratic leadership under the previous CEO has shown its advantages and disadvantages, including streamlined decision making at the cost of employee engagement and job satisfaction. This style often leads to lower morale and higher turnover rates since employees felt less valued and pressured by the top-down approach.

Adopting flexible leadership styles that combine elements of participative and transformational approaches help individuals attain organisational goals as well as their individual goals which leads to better performance management and long term employee retention. Incorporating more participative transformational leadership styles allows the workplace to become healthier which leads to increased collaboration and stronger emotional investment from employees.



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Sustainable Business Initiatives & Climate Action of Hindustan Unilever

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ABSTRACT

The world is going through a climatic catastrophe, where the climate is changing rapidly and irregularly. The earth is getting heated, resulting in temperatures rising, there is an increase in level of methane. Glaciers are melting at an unbelievable pace, global warming is rapidly increasing due to rise in greenhouse gases, carbon emissions, sea levels rate is doubling to its past decade. Death rates are rising to 15 times more due to climatic calamities and natural disasters are increase. Globally climatic financing is required to 6 trillion dollars. There is an “Urgent need for climate action”. SDG Goal 13, targets to “combat climate change and its impacts” and encourages business and people to initiate sustainable practices to save the earth and future. Hindustan Unilever an FMCG company aims through their brands and products “to make sustainable living a commonplace.” They understand the immediate need of climate action in this climatic crisis. Their Sustainable initiatives like Climate Transition Action Plan, practices, campaigning through products make their mission to decrease carbon dioxide emissions, greenhouse gas emissions clear, which they also achieved reduction of 97% and 77% respectively. They implement changes through technology, innovation and finding better alternatives in their operations like transitioning to renewable energy and sources, value chain like reformulating their products, investing towards sustainability. Through their projects like Shakti empowering women, progress in their initiatives for climate action, sustainability standard reports, they not only save costs, gain transparency but also benefit the people and environment. For their future vision, they are planning improvement in climate action strategies, like 2039 target net zero emissions for products, 2030 target renewable or recycled carbon for cleaning, laundry products, etc. Sustainability theories identified in HUL are Sustainable Human Resource Management and Sustainable Supply Chain Management, they have implementing many practices in HRM for motivating their employees based on diversity, justice, respect, dignity, etc. For supply chain they are making sustainable changes in their operations, product generation and programs waste disposes like in-vessel vermiculture system.

Keywords: - Hindustan Unilever, United Nations (UN), Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Climate Action, Greenhouse Gases, Sustainability initiatives, Sustainable Supply Chain Management, Sustainable Human Resource Management and Triple Bottom Line (People, Planet, Profit) etc....

1. Goal 13- Climate Action

“Unless we act now, the 2030 Agenda will become an epitaph for a world that might have been” (Guterres, 2023). Our planet is on the **verge of a climatic catastrophe**, and the efforts and strategies to address the situation are not sufficient. So, there is a urgent need to take account a plan of action. Therefore goal 13 Climate Action aims to **increase global ability** to adapt to climatic risks and emergencies like disasters.

It targets to embed **climate change initiatives**, approaches **into national regulations**, to **enhance education** to spread knowledge and **increase capacity** of individuals, institutions towards adapting, decreasing impact, indicating prior alertness for climate change. To execute climate change commitment agreed by countries to UN Framework Convention **put into practice the Green Climate Fund** through its capitalising quickly, to encourage methods to boost efficient **planning, management in countries and island nations** that are least developed, with emphasis on women, youth, and local and marginalised populations. The goal focuses on the **measures to mitigate climate change**, to address the need Climate change awareness its fair progress, UNFCCC commitments and **to work on lack of adequate data** for climate change.

There are **45 countries** with adaptation plans for the climate (Global SDG Database, 2023). It is important for us humans to begin taking small steps towards climate action in every way because **“the change begins with us”** and small collective progress will **create a huge impact**. Companies can initiate by reducing their energy consumption, using technology to make changes in their process of creating the product and find alternatives to **save the climate**

for us and the future generation. The number of nations implementing Sendai Framework-compliant national disaster risk reduction policies from 2015 to 2030.

The **key issues** due to which we need to “take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts” (Sdg.org, 2015). **Irregular climate change** over the world, has affected every region, there has been **15 times** greater **fatality rates** caused due to catastrophes, comparing to severely vulnerable zones. There is an exceeding rate of **global warming**, where it is estimated that the world will exceed 1.5°C by 2023 and will face a **2.5°C warming by 2100**. Humans caused **greenhouse gas emissions** are responsible for around 1.1°C of warming from 1850-1900 (IPCC, 2021). **Heat in atmosphere is becoming common** and hotter weathers are existing for a longer time and cooler seasons are shorter. **“The 10 most recent years are the warmest years on record”** (NASA, 2023). The earth has warmed previously, but never as quickly, and it is largely attributable to **human activities like deforestation, burning fossil fuels, exploitation of non – renewable resources**. For example, the Arctic has undergone dramatic changes in the last six years. “It has been clear for decades that the Earth’s climate is changing, and the role of human influence on the climate system is undisputed” (Masson-Delmotte, 2021). There was **146% of atmospheric carbon** of preindustrial levels as of 2017. In fewer than 200 years, human activities have **increased** the amount of **carbon dioxide** in the atmosphere **by 50%** and the latest measurement of CO_2 as of January, 2024 is **423 ppm** ([NOAA](#), 2024). As of 2022 methane measurement is **1912 (± 0.6) ppb**. Methane is a potent heat trapping gas. Its accounted that **60%** of current methane emissions are outcome of **mankind actions**. The amount of methane in the earth’s atmosphere has surpassed twofold in the past two hundred years.

Increasing level of the sea has also become a major concern, as it **become twice** and doubled in the last decade making areas vulnerable. Sea level has **risen 104.0 millimetres** since 1993 to 2013 (NASA, 2023). The main reasons of sea levels increasing is due to **glaciers melting** and global warming. **Antarctica loses ice melts** at a standard rate of **fifteen hundred billion tonnes each year**, Greenland, leading to sea level rise. Other problems being Forest fires, Wildfires, Floods, Draught, Hurricanes, Storms, Glaciers melting. **GNG Emission reductions by 43% by 2030 is needed**. It is also important to reach net zero by the year 2050. The need for **worldwide climate financing**. Developing nations will need a total of **six trillion dollars by 2030**. Whereas it has just reached an average of \$803 Billion in 2019-2020 (Sdg.org, 2015).

Figure 1: Meaning of Sustainability and its overview, (own illustration, 2024), (Sustainability Documentary, 2019)(Harrington, 2016)(Farrington, John, Kulman, Tom, 2010)

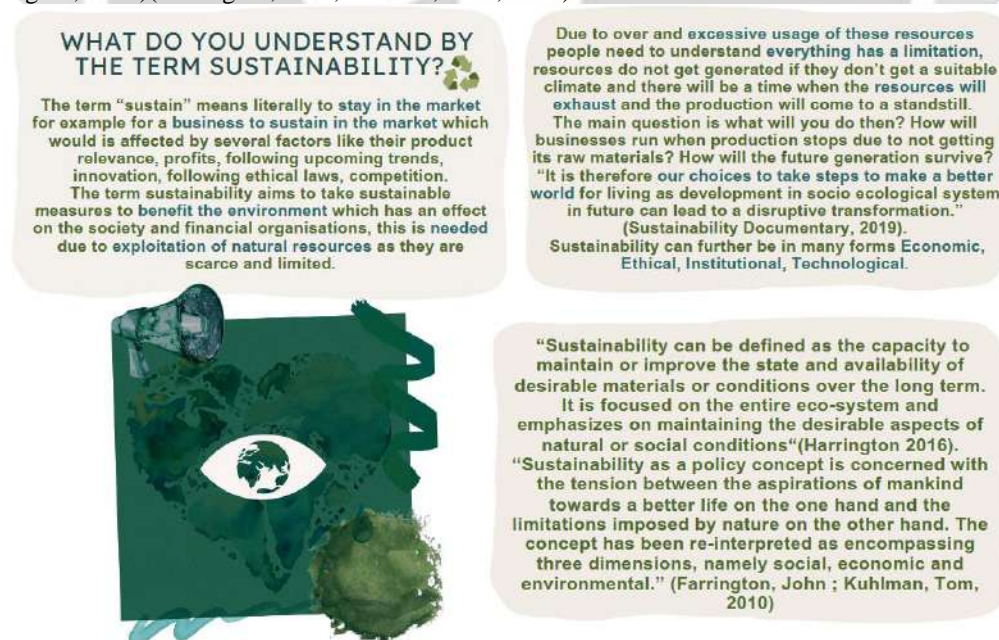


Figure 2: Pictures explaining climate action problems, to create plans and implementing solutions, (own illustration, 2024), (SDG, 2024).



2. Hindustan Unilever Analysis

Hindustan Unilever Limited established in 1933, thrives in India as **largest fast moving consumer goods** with being rated as **leading ESG**. Produces yearly over **75 billion items** and caters to **million customers** with their diverse collection of **50+brands**.

Figure 3: Picture of HUL company overview (Unilever PLC, 2023)



Hindustan Unilever, as a global leader in sustainable business, has classified climate change as an unavoidable "**climate crisis**", they are working to address it by implementing **sustainable business practices** and also strive carry out changes aiming towards the Paris agreement temperature issue, by **advocating national climate policies**. Their **Climate Transition Action Plan (CTAP)** mainly focuses on **decreasing Greenhouse gases, cutting emissions** completely in chain. More than **99% of shareholders** in 2021 **approved the proposal** to cut emissions of greenhouse gases across the company's supply chain to net zero by 2039. **HUL partners with Ficci** in setting "Centre for Sustainability Leadership". (livemint, 2020)

Supply Chain head says HUL to change fossil fuel-derived chemicals in cleaning, laundry products use, "**Carbon Rainbow strategy**, replacing black carbon (fossil fuel) with carbon from different sources such as green (plant), purple (atmosphere carbon dioxide capture) and blue (marine)". "Globally, we have **saved €1.2 billion of cost** as a result of sustainable sourcing and eco-efficiencies in our factories." (Uijen, 2021) (businessstoday.in, 2021)

They are **decreasing carbon** in their business by switching to **renewable energy instead of fossil fuels** by using alternatives like plant based and green carbon in their operations. HUL **decreased Carbon dioxide emissions by 97%** per tonne in production. They have also **reduced 77%** of their **greenhouse gas emissions** in 2023. They also intend to **invest €150 million** for their manufacturing decarbonisation initiative.

As a **member of RE100** (headed through Climate Group), they prioritise **cost-effective thermal energy solutions**, locally generated **biofuels**, and market-based mechanisms such as **Energy Attribute Certificates (EACs)**. Through International Renewable Energy Certificate brought for their factories, it became possible for them to turn to **renewable sources like solar energy, wind, biomass** helping switching to renewable energy also reducing costs, they were successful in **converting electricity 100% from renewable methods** and decreased energy footprint in overall factories, they also **reduced their total energy consumption by 44%** per tonne production than 2008.

Figure 4: Initiatives of HUL achieved (own illustration, 2024). (HUL,2019).



HUL implemented **energy-saving capital projects** including using pumps with higher energy, drives of variable volt and frequency, condensate plant recovery, utilising heat recovery air compressor systems, steaming boosters, energy-efficient cooling systems, ventilating devices, motor sensors, installed infrastructural upgrades, interventions have **eliminated usage of coal** across all manufacturing facilities. Extending their renewable energy footprint, they have achieved using **93% renewable energy in manufacturing units**. They make small, large scale **direct purchasing agreements** of hydropower, wind, solar, geothermal scheme, apply biomass briquettes in boilers, **replacing fossil fuels to biofuels**, capturing solar energy from power purchase agreements, solar panels. By 2025, they want to have further reduced **logistics carbon emission** intensity by 10%, having already reduced it by **60% in 2022**. Utilising tactics like **"Load More, Travel Less,"** natural gas, CNG, LNG, and **working with EV vendors** for few mile operations, they seek to achieve net zero emissions in transportation. For **Eco-friendly refrigeration** they partnered with manufacturers, operated around **1,50,000 freezers** in India using **HC (Hydrocarbon) technological advances**, working on transportable solar-powered ice cream cabinets, manufacturing environmentally friendly freezer cabinets that use hydrocarbon refrigerants instead of hydrofluorocarbon refrigerants. To **eliminate CO2** use in detergent products including Rin, Wheel, Surf, and Vim, they have **collaborated with Taticorin Alkali Chemicals and Fertilisers Ltd (TFL) and Carbon Clean Solutions (CCSL)** for converting usage in manufacturing processes to soda ash. Hindustan Unilever Foundation **generated water potential 2.6 trillion litres** cumulatively, they also **decreased 48% consumption of water in their operations**, working on freshwater abstraction, adopting captive rainwater gathering, and increasing utilisation RO plants, they are working for reduction strategy Life Cycle Assessment (LCA).

Figure 5: HUL climate change actions (own illustration, 2024),(economictimes,2023)(HUL, 2023)

• **What is hindustan unilever doing to combat climate change??**
 Manufacturing Process Innovation- Hindustan Unilever has been working on developing new technology and ways to produce key components and raw materials like Soda Ash and Silicate that is used in their detergent products. This change implemented in their manufacturing process will significantly reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and indicates that they are trying to move towards being more environmentally friendly and sustainable.
 Impact on Production: This change in production process does not impact the product itself as the finished product will remain the same and the new technology will improve efficiency and environmental impacts that the organisation has due to greenhouse gas emissions. (economictimes 2023)

HUL's key goals for Climate Action are:

- By 2039, **net zero emissions for all of products** from supply until the point of purchase, as well as in the way they operate by 2030. (Reuters, 2020)
- By 2030, to **reduce our products' greenhouse gas emissions** by half across their entire lifecycle.

- By 2030, all cleaning and laundry **product compositions** will contain **renewable or recycled carbon** rather than carbon sourced from fossil fuels.
- **Communicate the carbon footprint** for each product sold.
- They focus on four areas: **operations, branding and product, the value chain, and societal impact.** (Unilever PLC, 2024)

Figure 6: HUL Value Chain Sustainable practices (own illustration, 2024), (HUL, 2023).

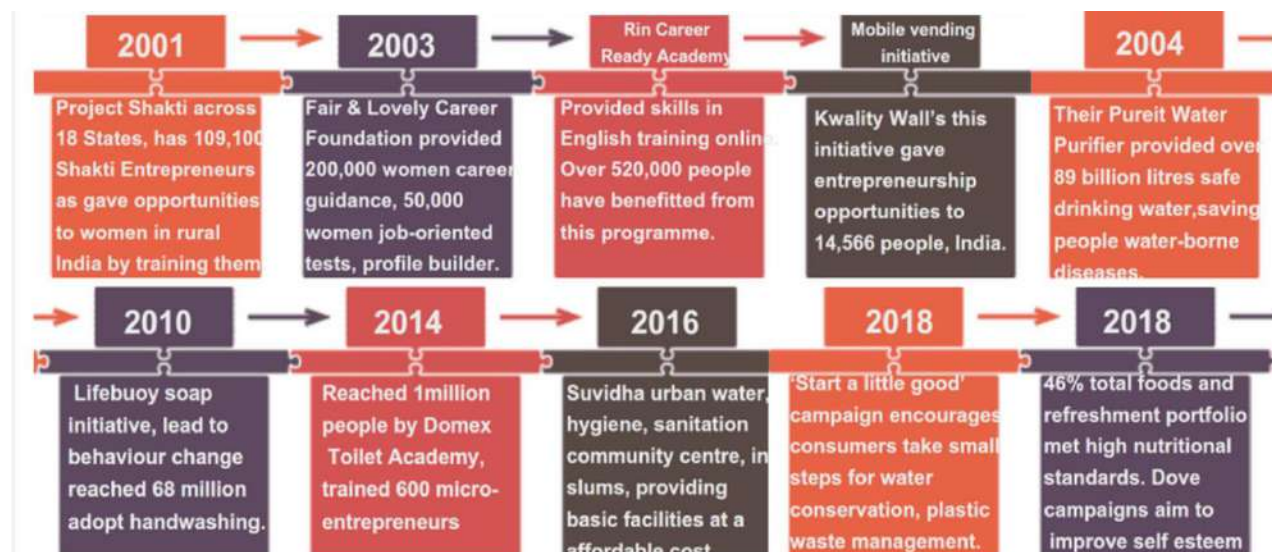


2.1 Triple Bottom Line of Hindustan Unilever (Elkington, 1997)

Social (people)- HUL through its various sustainable practices are lowering GHG emissions, pollution, etc providing a healthy environment to people reducing illnesses caused due to such factors. By Shakti project they supported and

empowered women and through Project Prabhat empowered Communities". HUL provides scholarships, educational infrastructure, spreading education opportunities to the society. They spread “awareness basis of environmental and social consciousness” through campaigns messages like lifebuoy, lead to developing health and hygiene.(Forbes, 2021) They have also worked on various sanitation programs. HUL is estimated to create job opportunities due to shifting to sustainable practices by International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA).

Figure 7: HUL’s initiatives for people with timeline, (own illustration, 2024), (HUL,2023).



Environmental (planet)- HUL believes to make “sustainable living a common place” and make changes in their business through setting goals and implementing sustainable products and creating alternatives to taking steps to create a healthy environment. They created water conserving programs, reduced their water usage by 55% and total waste by 58% from production. Implemented Zero waste initiatives, decreasing waste from their operations by the collecting waste, segregating it, transitioning circular economy model etc. Reducing carbon footprint in 2018 decreased co2 emission by 59%, switching to renewable energy to reduce using greenhouse gases. (HUL PLC, 2023)

Economic (profit)- "Sustainability is the new profitability."(Forbes, 2021) They saved €1.2 billion in costs through sustainable practices, procurement and eco-efficiency. Their sustainable initiatives and goals also help them reduce their operational costs and lead them to a long-term growth. Businesses are estimated to save 20-30% decrease in usage of water costs (Arora, A. et al., 2024)

Hindustan Unilever adheres to **GRI Content Index**, they follow GRI Universal Standards which show their sustainability report components, also provides transparency to stakeholders about their sustainable practices like their **ESG disclosure**. Their progress is represented through their **Business Responsibility and Sustainability Reports, Digital Business Sustainability Report, Sustainability Performance Data**. They use **IOS** for their environment management system and through **ESG microsite** provides information about planet, society and governance practices established with the **ESG Committee** founded in 2022. Through their **ESG highlights** on their website they give data of their achieved sustainable operations, sourcing and partnerships. HUL has received **rankings and ratings** thorough sustainability. From **Material assessment** they find material sustainable issues. (HUL, 2024) (Developing Standards,2024)

Figure 8: Components HUL’s uses for Reporting Sustainability, (own illustration,2024), (HUL,2023).

GRI Content Index	HUL'S GRI Universal Standards include General Disclosures, GRI 3: Material, GRI 201: Economic Performance, GRI 202: Market Presence, GRI 203: Indirect Economic Impacts, GRI 204: Procurement Practices, GRI 205: Anti-corruption, GRI 206: Anti-competitive Behaviour, GRI 302: Energy, GRI 303: Water and Effluents, GRI 304: Biodiversity, GRI 305: Emissions 2016, GRI 306: Effluents and Waste, GRI 308: Supplier Environmental Assessment, GRI 401: Employment, GRI 403: Occupational Health and Safety, GRI 404: Training and Education, GRI 405: Diversity and Equal Opportunity, GRI 406: Non-discrimination, GRI 408: Child Labor, GRI 409: Forced or Compulsory Labor, GRI 410: Security Practices, GRI 413: Local Communities, GRI 414: Supplier Social Assessment, GRI 415: Public Policy, GRI 416: Customer Health and Safety, GRI 417: Marketing and Labelling, GRI 418: Customer Privacy
Sustainability Ranking and Rating	S&P Dow Jones Sustainability Index - ranked 1 in Corporate Sustainability Assessment (CSA), 5 globally personal products category, top 10% S&P Global ESG Score companies. CRISIL - ranked 1 in the FMCG sector CDP - rated Leadership category climate, water and forest LSEG - ranked 1 st in India, globally 4 th in Personal & Household Products Sustainalytics - 'Medium risk' company, risk rating of 23.4, in 2023. MSCI - Rated 'A' in ESG, 2022.
Business responsibility and Sustainability Report	Identifies indicators of sustainability, provides information of listed entries, provides details of products and services through business activities, operations through their location, markets they serve. Has information about their employees, holdings, subsidiaries, joint ventures, associate companies, transparency and disclosure compliance, governance, leadership, data and overview on principle wise performance, leadership indicators, profile of directors, <u>Corporate</u> governance report, financial statements, cash flows, balance sheet. Principles and SDG goals they follow overview.
ISO	HUL's environmental management system is based on the requirements of the international standard ISO 14001 , their safety standards are linked, and ISO 45001 incorporates ISO 19001 for quality management. According to their ESG microsite they have validation of ISO 14040 Life cycle assessment and Environmental product declaration, FSSC 22000 food safety and Forest Stewardship Council
ESG Microsite	They provide ESG profile through detailed overview of management approach, company overview, board of directors, Environment, Social, Governance , Resilience, Materiality assessments, recognitions and awards, Ratings and indices, ISO certifications, press releases, corporate information MEMBERSHIPS- UN global compact, ESG policy activism, CII, FICCI, PAFI, WBCSD, ASSOCHAM, WEF. PARTNERSHIPS- NGOS and publications
Digital Business and Sustainability Report	Policy and management progress , general disclosures Principle 1- Integrity and Ethics, Principle 2- Sustainability Report, Principle 3- Employee Wellbeing, Principle 4- Stakeholders Interest, Principle 5- Human Rights, Principle 6- Environment, Principle 7- Regulatory Policy, Principle 8- Inclusive growth, Principle 9- Consumer and IT
Sustainability Performance Data report	Consists of data on their progress on initiatives Planet like climate action, Environmental Fines and Prosecution, Environment, Waste Free World, Food Loss and Waste other Packaging material. Society like product recalls, customer satisfaction measurement. People like safety at work, metrics on people performance.

Figure 9: Stakeholder theory and mapping of HUL, (own illustration, 2024), (HUL,2023)(Freeman, 1984)(Madhusudhan Rao, 2023)(BSR, 2014)



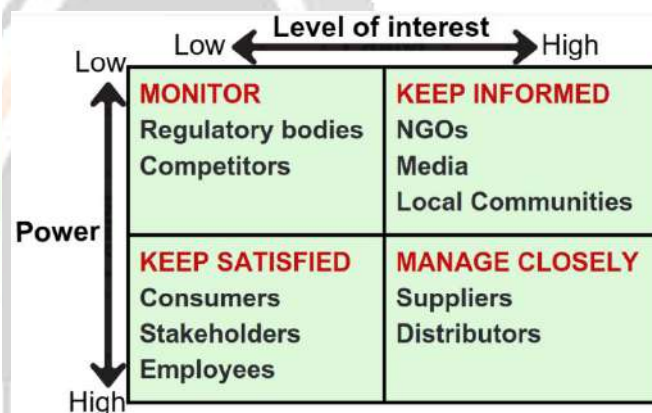
HUL STAKEHOLDERS:

"Stakeholder theory is a theory of an organizational management and business ethics that addresses morals and values in managing an organisation. Its an idea about how business works, which suggests that a company should create value for all parties integral to its livelihood (stakeholders), not just those who stand to profit (shareholders)." (Freeman, 1984)

- People:** Our goals are to provide high-quality goods and meaningful brands that address the problem that concern people and the environment.
- Consumers:** We collaborate to expand both our and their businesses via conventional trade wholesalers, retailers, and online marketplaces. Suppliers and Business partners To encourage mutual and sustainable development as well as to improve our goods, we collaborate with suppliers.
- Our folks:** Our goals are to assist individuals discover their purpose and get just compensation for the job they perform so they may grow to be the finest employees of the company.
- Planet & Society:** Our goals are to make the world more equitable and socially inclusive while simultaneously enhancing environmental health.
- Shareholders:** Our goal is to provide responsible, profitable, competitive, and continuous growth.

"At Hindustan Unilever, we take pride in our business being a force for larger good. We believe in creating long-term value by caring for all our stakeholders comprising of our consumers, customers, employees, shareholders, business partners, and above all, the planet and society."
(Madhusudhan Rao [Executive director], 2023)

"Stakeholder mapping is a collaborative process of research, debate, and discussion that draws from multiple perspectives to determine a key list of stakeholders across the entire stakeholder spectrum. Four phases are **Identifying, Analyzing, Mapping, Prioritizing**." (BSR, 2014)



3. Exploration of Sustainable Theory

Supply Chain Management is a set of three or more entities (organizations or individuals) directly involved in the upstream and downstream flows of products, services, finances, and/or information from a source to a customer" (Mentzer, 2001). Basically, it means the link outside the business from receiving raw materials, goods from supplier, to processing, carrying out operations to manufacture the product, setting out for delivery, sending to retailers or selling to final customers. It also consists of outbound and inbound logistics. Contracts are made with supplier on bases of obligations agreed and relationship relating the products to be supplied its operation which affects kind of sourcing strategy. **Sustainable supply chain management** gives "transparency" through

ESG practices and “traceability” based on product components. Through building a responsible supply chain, a business gain reputation due to its initiative towards ESG and also receives economic benefits.

Figure 10: Sustainability supply chain, transactional relationships, supplier sourcing, (own illustration, 2024),(Carter and Roger, 2008)(Slack, 2016)



Human resource management “refers to the policies, practices, and systems that influence employees’ behaviour, attitudes, and performance. Many companies refer to HRM as involving people practices.”(Raymond, Hollenbeck, Gerhart, 2022) “**Sustainable HRM** evolves around soft issues such as demonstrating sincerity towards the employees, including providing a decent work environment and conditions, providing development opportunities and being attentive to employees’ physical and psychosocial well-being at work” (Bányai, 2019). Sustainable HRM means to understand the problems faced by employees relating to workplace and addressing them and maximization of value of a shareholder like initiative towards well-being of employees, mentally as well. To motivate employees in a company, providing Job satisfaction to them that would ultimately lead to encouraging best performance. Through providing employees incentives to increase their efficiency. Its characteristics include “long-term orientation, care of and environment, profitability, employee, development, participation and social dialogue, external partnership, flexibility, compliance beyond labour regulations, employee cooperation, fairness and equality” and their core aspects.

Figure 11: Strategy of Sustainable HRM, (own illustration, 2024)

One strategy that sustainable human resource management use to counteract corporate policies that put an emphasis on shareholder value is to place an emphasis on performance results and long-term stakeholder interests that go beyond financial considerations. These are some of the ways that problems can be solved through the implementation of sustainable human resource management. In one of the remarks, the need of adaptation in a dynamic business environment as well as the efficient management of both internal and external factors is acknowledged. Specifically, this statement is included in the article.

3.1 Sustainable Supply Chain Management :

HUL is **updating its supply chain** as part of its efforts to keep its **future-fitness, agility, and strength** as well as its strong emphasis on sustainability. During managing difficult external environment, which is typified by disruptions in global supply chains and geopolitical instability, this is being done. The reason behind this is to guarantee that HUL **practices help control** the environment. They give great attention by **working on developing**

products that are excellent in **value, availability, and environmental and human care**. Furthermore, this emphasis is an extra to our dedication to making sure that our **operations** are conducted safely. **Resilience and agility** are need. HUL **monitors indicators** and moves quickly to coordinate the whole value chain from start to finish in order to deliver outstanding service. The company does its jobs with discipline and rigour. They consider their asset and expense basis. **Competitive growth** is driven by **cost and asset base optimisation**. Good for the environment and for people alike, the goal is to make sustainable living the standard. Everyday actions HUL does are with the goal of **improving the state of the environment** and transforming the world into a more just and **inclusive society**. Talent fit for the future HUL creates a **diverse and friendly culture** with the support of **values-based leadership**. Company investment in **future-fit capabilities** allows us to build a world-class supply chain. Through electronic evolution their target completely changing value chains by **using the data and technologies** that are part of the fourth industrial revolution, therefore creating a competitive and sustainable advantage. Purposeful companionship HUL also create **purpose-driven partner ecosystems** that power industry-leading technology and preserve and revitalise the natural world. (HUL,2023) “HUL recycling program, disposes waste using **in-vessel vermiculture system**, converting **organic waste into vermicompost organic fertilizer and vermi-wash liquid fertilizer** like paper and cardboard recycled. Partnership with the penniless ragpickers for plastic junk pile-up.” (Verma, 2014) The implementation of cradle theory on the sustainability practices undertaken by Hindustan Unilever related to Climate Action. **Raw Material Extraction:** Hindustan Unilever has been working on developing new technology and ways to produce key components and raw materials like Soda Ash and Silicate that is used in their detergent products. **This Process innovation** implemented in their manufacturing process will significantly reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and indicates that they are trying to move towards being more environmentally friendly and sustainable.

Figure 12: HUL supply chain understanding and cradle to grave theory, (own illustration, 2024)



3.2 Sustainable Human Resource Management

HUL is a top employer with a **40% gender balance**, making it an excellent choice for female employees. To foster equalise in gender HUL took initiative through **Project Ahilya** and hired **1000 women** in the sales team and **850 women** within their factories.

Figure 13: HUL analysis on Schein Career Anchors model, 1990, (own illustration,2024)

Schein's Career Anchors model (1990) can be implemented to HUL through:

- Vision and mission on Sustainability-** HUL dedication to initiatives and practices towards environment, social responsibility, this leads to positive change.
- Growth and Innovations-** Sustainability practices incorporated in products, operation through innovation. This can attract people
- Technical Capability** encouraging entrepreneurial creativity skills, who like to take challenges and innovate.
- Worldwide Presence:** HUL presence is global across countries. Which is likely to boost individuals' cultural collaborating at a huge scale.
- Recruiting employees:** HUL for hiring asks questions by interviewing to assess candidate, that gives an idea of most appropriate individual skills for that particular job role.
- Diverse Job roles:** Through providing different job roles and segregation of departments, lead boosting employee as their work is allocated according to their specialization more which leads to better performance.
- Security-** HUL has consideration policies according to situations and for safety of its employees has implemented strict policies against any injustice in work place.

At HUL, **diversity and justice** take front stage, and this guarantees that those with disabilities have appropriate accommodations. The company follows the rules in the **Persons with Disabilities Act of 2016** as part of its Disability Accommodation Policy, which is a component of its **Equal Opportunity Policy**. Although adhering to regulatory requirements, HUL values the variety of its employees and makes an effort to apply a broad spectrum of abilities, expertise, and experience. Basic **principles** of the company are **respect and decency**, which foster a supportive atmosphere that enables every employee to realize their greatest potential. The **ED&I team** handles the recruiting process and ensures that facilities and amenities are accessible to persons with disabilities. In this sense, **liaison officers resemble HR business partners**.

Figure 14: Types of motivation- intrinsic, extrinsic, (own illustration, 2024)(Canvas,2024)

Human behaviour is driven by two distinct types of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations are the two different kinds that propel human activity. The two main categories into which motivation is further separated are extrinsic and internal motivational influences. Extrinsic motivation drives employees to behave a certain way when there are concrete rewards available, such compensation, bonuses, and professional advancement. Herzberg sees these aspects as what he calls "movement," rather than as real motivators. During the session exercise, maybe, you will see this. To be truly driven, one needs to have an innate want to work because it has intrinsic value. Motivational incentives come from outside sources and include feelings of accomplishment, recognition, and job satisfaction. These several elements taken together are referred to as "intrinsic motivation." The table that follows briefly describes the differences:

The organisation **enables its staff** to have a good, safe, and excellent **work-life balance**, therefore ensuring that they are the greatest versions of themselves. HUL is aware that people may give more to their families, their jobs, or society at large when they are in good health and **fulfilling their "purpose" in life**. At the core of their operations, HUL's wellness Framework guides all that would promote **the health and wellness of their workforce**.

To create safe workplace for its employees, HUL **incorporates Policy on Prevention of Sexual Harassment (POSH) and 'Respect, Dignity & Fair Treatment' Policy**

in "Code of Business Principles". Their Business Integrity Committees ["BICs"] looks after issues and addresses them. They also provide **educational assistance** since 2012, WL 1A-C staff are eligible. Assistance in further studies through postal/part-time courses relevant to their current and future job requirements. The company **pay for tuition and examination fees** upon exam completion, no prior payment required. Academic leave for studies of five working days per semester may be provided. In addition to this, **considering situation of employees they also have policies** for career break, parental leave, travel policy for new parents, to support survivors, WL1D+ location flexibility and split family arrangement.(Unilever PLC, 2023)

4. Recommendation

Having examined HCL's sustainability strategies, these are number of suggestions recommended.

HUL can use **Refill stations**, despite the fact that HUL is currently using smart fill approach, the addition of a refill station might be beneficial to the firm in terms of its leftover products. Consumers may replenish their containers with cleaning and personal care products. Customers don't have to buy throwaway plastic items since they may replenish their reusable containers at refill stations. Refill Station Benefits reduced single-use packaging reduces waste. Resource Conservation. Encourages container reuse to conserve energy and water. Individual shipments cost more than bulk orders. Modification and flexibility allow product modification without a large container. "Future of Reusable Consumption Report [recorded a rise in global patent filings for refill innovations](#)." (World Economic Forum, 2023). "Refill, packaging reuse systems show promising concepts for future-proof retail and physical supermarkets, investigates position of refill systems with product packaging combinations as the central point of interaction." (Koeijer, 2023),

It is possible that HUL might benefit in a number of ways from the **use of liquid-free lithium-ion batteries**. There are a number of benefits associated with this, including enhanced safety, extended battery longevity, simplified product designs, less influence on the environment, and the creation of a distinctive selling feature for their goods. Through the use of liquid-free lithium-ion batteries, HUL has the ability to manufacture goods that are both more ecologically friendly and have a longer lifespan. Enhancing the brand reputation of the organisation, appealing to customers who are environmentally sensitive, and fostering partnerships for inventive problem-solving are all outcomes that will result from the implementation of this approach. "lithium batteries weight between 50 and 60% less than traditional batteries lithium ion batteries are relatively tolerant." (Petro.com, 2022)

When production materials can be recycled and used, the process is known as **closed-loop manufacturing**. The idea behind closing the loop is to gather and repurpose any waste that customers produce so that the cycle may be restarted. The environment benefits much from this approach as it "conserves natural resources". (Bearaby, 2023). CLM reduces waste, improves resource efficiency, and lowers costs, making it a future trend for Hindustan Unilever Limited. Reusing materials cuts manufacturing expenses. Reduces environmental impact, meeting HUL's sustainability objectives. Supply chain resilience reduces disruption and raw material pricing concerns. Encourage recycling technology and product quality innovation to boost HUL's morality and environmental responsibility and consumer loyalty. HUL avoids fines by meeting sustainability and environmental requirements. CLM improves HUL's environmental impact, FMCG competitiveness, and operational efficiency. Further, Unilever whose subsidiary is HUL was accused of green washing due to using non-recyclable plastic by CMA and Greenpeace. They should use alternatives and use recyclable biodegradable plastic.

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