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The Future of High Streets in Iraqi Kurdistan and Their Management After the Covid-19 Pandemic: Transitioning to a New Normal

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to analyze the future of high streets and malls in Iraqi Kurdistan, with a focus on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on participants' preference for online shopping. Scholars have emphasized that high streets and malls are disappearing rapidly, and little research has been conducted on this topic. To understand this problem, a literature review was conducted, which included a discussion on the "new normal" resulting from the digitalization of the market and the Covid-19 pandemic. A deductive approach was used, and a self-response survey questionnaire was distributed online through Google Forms. Out of 450 questionnaires sent out, only 231 were deemed fit for further analysis. The data collected were quantified, and statistical evaluations were conducted to determine the future of high streets. The results show that businesses and policymakers must work together, involving communities, youth, and the voluntary sector in future plans and decision-making processes, for high streets and malls to remain relevant and increase their foothold. The challenges facing town centers are diverse and can be divided into several categories. The combined forces of E-commerce and the Covid-19 pandemic can expedite the disappearance of high streets and malls. This research provides critical insights that need further investigation.

مستقبل الشوارع الرئيسية في كردستان العراق وإدارتها بعد جائحة كوفيد-19 الانتقال إلى وضع طبيعي جديد

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المستخلص

الغرض من هذه الدراسة هو تحليل مستقبل الشوارع الرئيسية ومراكز التسوق في كردستان العراق، مع التركيز على تأثير جائحة Covid-19 على تفضيل المشاركين للتسوق عبر الإنترنت. أكد العلماء أن الشوارع الرئيسية ومراكز التسوق تخفتي بسرعة، ولم يتم إجراء سوى القليل من الأبحاث حول هذا الموضوع. لفهم هذه المشكلة، تم إجراء مراجعة للأدبيات، والتي تضمنت مناقشة حول "الوضع الطبيعي الجديد" الناتج عن رقمنة السوق وجائحة Covid-19. تم استخدام نهج استنتاجي، وتم توزيع استبيان مسح الاستجابة الذاتية عبر الإنترنت من خلال نماذج Google. ومن بين 450 استبياناً أرسلت، اعتبر 231 استبياناً فقط صالحاً لمزيد من التحليل. تم تحديد البيانات التي تم جمعها كمياً، وتم إجراء تقييمات إحصائية لتحديد مستقبل الشوارع الرئيسية. تظهر النتائج أنه يجب على الشركات وصانعي السياسات العمل معاً، وإشراك المجتمعات والشباب والقطاع التطوعي في الخطط المستقبلية وعمليات صنع القرار، حتى تظل الشوارع الرئيسية ومراكز التسوق ذات صلة وتزيد من موطن قدمها. التحديات التي تواجه مراكز المدن متنوعة ويمكن تقسيمها إلى عدة فئات. يمكن للقوى المشتركة للتجارة الإلكترونية وجائحة Covid-19 تسريع اختفاء الشوارع الرئيسية ومراكز التسوق. يقدم هذا البحث رؤية مهمة تحتاج إلى مزيد من التحقيق.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الوضع الطبيعي الجديد، الشوارع الرئيسية، كوفيد-19، المجتمع، التوظيف، صانع السياسات.

1. Introduction

High streets across the globe are rapidly declining due to various factors, including changes in lifestyle and recurring crises. These streets serve as public assets for walking, shopping, employment, and cultural exchange and have historical and social significance for the communities they serve (Mayor of London, 2017). However, high streets in major economies such as the UK and Canada are disappearing, causing concern for officials and citizens alike (Deliotte, 2020 and KIS, 2020). The localism agenda is reshaping how high streets are managed, and there is a need for them to be multi-purpose and adapted to their local context (UCL Transport Institute, 2014). The market dialogue is currently focused on repurposing shopping centers to address the decline of high streets (British Retail Consortium, 2009). The pandemic has highlighted the operations of malls and retailers and is accelerating the shift towards online shopping, which is changing the traditional role of the high streets (Deliotte, 2020B). Online

shopping is becoming increasingly popular, with non-store retail sales in the UK amounting to £30.3 billion in 2010, of which internet sales accounted for £23.4 billion (Deloitte, 2020). A report by the House of Common (2020) indicated that during the pandemic, internet sales increased to nearly 33% of all retail sales, while footfall in November 2020 was down 45% compared to the same time the previous year. This shift towards e-commerce is causing a decline in employment in the retail sector, which fell by 2% between 2015 and 2018 (Brien, et al., 2020). In 2019, there were a total of 124 UK retail administrations, of which 23% were large retailers employing approximately 51,000 UK employees (Deloitte, 2020B). Despite the pandemic, shoppers are adamant that e-commerce is essential to survive the crisis (Gruenwald, 2020, B).

2. Literature Review:

2-1. New Normal

The concept of the "New Normal" has recently gained attention in the literature, although it has been predicted for some time. While there is no clear definition of the new normal, it is widely agreed that the post-crisis world should not resemble the old norms due to various crises and powerful forces that can influence the market in unpredictable ways (Davis, 2009). The emergence of COVID-19 marked the beginning of a dramatic restructuring of the social and economic order, which is now referred to as the "next normal" (McKinsey and Company, 2020). Beer's model explains how unprecedented events such as the pandemic can bring dissatisfaction and cause changes to organizations, the way we work, and how we live (Hughes et al., 2012).

In March 2020, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic, which has since posed a serious threat to health and life and profoundly affected our lifestyle (McKinsey and Company, 2020). The pandemic has caused business lockdowns worldwide, leading to work and schooling from home becoming the new normal. Social distancing, remote work, and restricted and regulated time schedules for citizens' movement are new concepts (Deloitte, ND). The retail industry has also been significantly impacted, with shopping malls closing down to contain the virus's spread (Deloitte, 2020). These developments have put the industry under unprecedented pressure (Barclays, 2020).

Even before the pandemic, high streets were struggling to keep up with the changes, and the old normal was never working. Alakeson (2020) believes that high streets may not disappear permanently, but they are evolving (Mintel, 2019). However, in a report by the House of Commons (2020), it is shown how COVID-19 accelerated changes. Some suggest that social distance shopping could be the last straw in the high street coffin, with consumers relying more on technology for need fulfillment (Ryan, 2017). As a result, consumer behavior theories may need to be reviewed for further development or change. Others believe that the New Normal may bring opportunities for new inventions and entrepreneurs, and localization may become more important than increasing globalization (Gruenwald, 2020). Hyper-customization is believed to be the future of the retail industry

2-2 High Streets Future

The continued financial crisis and the emergence of online shopping trends reinforced many governments and decision-makers to discuss and come up with a solid planning system (Alakeson, 2020). Brien, et al. (2020) argued that high-street retailers were already under pressure from the rise in online shopping, and there were too many vacancies on high streets because businesses are moving to retail parks as a way to survive. Coresight Research, a retail research and advisory firm, is forecasting as many as 25,000 shop closures in the US in 2020, with apparel and department stores hit especially hard (Parkin, 2020). Even Germany, where retail closures lasted only four weeks, reported 30bn euros in lost sales. The industries that were hit the hardest were tourism, hospitality and culture, and fashion-related (Gruenwald, 2020).

Numerous pieces of evidence suggest that governments should invest in the public realm and efficient use of space for walking and cycling purposes around business districts to bring more people to local retailers and malls (Burns, et al., 2020). Data suggested that the empty or unused spaces used for pedestrians and cycling enjoy up to 30% more footfall than those with roads running through them. Adding to that, government reports urge the use of overflows and unused spaces for community gathering, residential properties, and activity-based centers (Moda, 2020 and UCL Transport Institute report on 2014).

Deloitte's report (2020) revealed that all the retail companies on the verge of collapsing now are the same companies that have the same problems

and share a number of common pre-COVID-19 characteristics: a lack of digitalization, lack of revenues, poor cashflow, hardly achieving breakeven, lack of brand loyalty, and customer experience. Brien, et al. (2020) stated that the Future High Streets Fund has been reserved to support high streets in conservation areas.

Mintel (2019) data suggested that success depends on having the right merchandise, in the right place, at the right time, and at the right price. 'A safe and welcoming high street and town center will enable and empower children and young people to use it more (Timpson, et al., 2018).

In 15 years, the role of e-commerce in changing town centers will be huge; by 2030, half of the UK retail sales will be done online (Milt, 2017). Therefore, the current knowledge tells us that customers are becoming more familiar with the digital world and more comfortable with online shopping. There are several different applications such as Facetime, WhatsApp, Zoom, and now the emergence of Metaverse and digital currencies such as Bitcoin help this online shopping trend to become easier, which helps with the disappearance of high streets and malls. Online businesses like Amazon appeared as true winners of the corona crisis; they have achieved the heart and minds of customers by delivering daily products to customers with the help of logistics companies like UPS, FedEx, and DHL (Gruenwald, 2020). Amazon is very successful in adapting to changes, their approach of being second to market has helped Amazon to learn others' best practices and use its infrastructure to undercut on price and speed of deliveries, which retailers and other high streets shops cannot deliver the same service quality (The Guardian, 2020).

3-1 Research Problem

Science and technology are advancing faster than society's ability to understand and bring changes in our social and cultural landscape. Society and individuals will be confronted with too many challenges if they cannot deal with current changes in knowledge. Thus, this study tries to predict the future of the high street, and whether e-commerce and the COVID-19 Pandemic have impacted this trend indirectly. Clearly, the future of high streets got scholars' attention in developed countries, yet it is still unheard of in developing countries. Therefore, this research tries to examine the market here and predict the future of high streets in Iraqi Kurdistan as a regional example.

3-2 The Importance of this Research:

Understanding the future of high streets is important for several reasons. Firstly, high streets have traditionally been important economic and social hubs in towns and cities, providing a range of goods and services to local communities. Changes in the high street, such as the rise of e-commerce and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, can have significant economic and social implications for communities, including job losses, changes in consumer behavior, and impacts on the physical appearance of town centers. Secondly, the future of high streets is closely linked to broader social and cultural trends. For example, the rise of e-commerce is not just a technological trend, but reflects changes in consumer behavior and attitudes toward shopping. Similarly, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on high streets is not just a health crisis, but also reflects changes in the way that people live and work, and the role of public spaces in society.

Finally, understanding the future of high streets is important for policymakers and decision-makers, who need to plan and adapt to changes in the economic and social landscape. This includes issues such as urban planning, the provision of public spaces, and supporting local businesses and communities.

3-3 Research Objectives

- ❖ The purpose of this study is to predict the future of high streets after the Covid-19 pandemic in Iraqi Kurdistan and whether the pandemic has had any impact on them.
- ❖ Understand the relationship between the inclusion of the community and voluntary sector with their satisfaction and more visit to their high streets.
- ❖ Examine whether safe and welcoming residential areas close to shopping malls and town centres can save high streets from disappearance.

3-4 Research Questions

. In light of these issues, two questions were raised:

1. how satisfied people in Iraqi Kurdistan are with their high streets and shopping centres?
2. Should the community, including the youth and voluntary sector be part of the future plan and decision-making?
3. Did Covid-19 influence people's buying behaviour to start shopping online?

Hypothesis

H1. The participation of the community and voluntary sector in future planning and decision-making can impact community satisfaction and increase the frequency of visits.

H2. Safe and welcoming residential areas close to market streets can save shopping malls from disappearance by increasing the frequency of visits.

H3. An increase in online merchandising due to the Covid-19 pandemic can impact buyers' opinions and decision-making about online shopping.

1. Methodology

The deductive approach was selected for this research which is a quantitative research approach method. First, the future of high streets and then the discussion around the new normal for the last ten years were outlined and consequently, data were collected and explained with a unified questionnaire. With the help of Google Forms, the questionnaire was distributed electronically on the internet. Thus, the findings were directly quantified and the statistical calculations were made which conclusion can be drawn from those numbers. The examination was focused on the future of high streets in Kurdistan. Hair, et al., (2002) suggested that quantitative research involves collecting data and then converting them into statistically calculated numbers and that conclusion can be made.

The survey was done from May to July 2021. The questionnaire was designed in two parts. The first part focuses on the future of high streets, with little changes adopted by (Sir John Timpson, 2018), and contains 9 main items, some items are open-end questions. And the second part relates to the respondents' demographic profile. The items were translated into the Kurdish language from English, double-checked with two professionals for correction, and adjusted for cultural adaptation. A convenient non-probability sampling approach has been used for this research to acquire data from respondents. Because the researcher has the full authority to choose the participants it is subject to significant sample errors (Baines and Chansarkar, 2002). To reduce the errors and increase the validity of finding university students and professionals from business schools in Erbil who have the knowledge, and also experience everyday life and shopping in both high streets and malls were chosen.

The sample was distributed with a different set of open and multiple-choice questions, to measure their opinion on the future of high streets and

town centers and predict the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on them which lead to further digitalization and localization of the market. The quantitative method with open-end questions was used in certain situations to gather data for future city developments. The survey is conducted online, by taking advantage of Google Forms. In data gathering, and increasing validity and reliability, the internet and particularly Google Forms were used to help the researcher to reach participants in some of the most isolated parts of Kurdistan. Local people are the best to ask about local problems and what their local solutions are (Sir John Timpson, 2018). The questionnaire was sent to more than 450 university students aged 18 years and over and asked to fill the form in accordance with their families which are nationally representative samples. To ensure the sample represents society and capture society's views as a whole the questionnaire was also sent to professionals responsible at the different level both in and out of the public sector. Out of 450, only 231 questionnaires were submitted and were suitable for analysis. Data were collected via a self-report questionnaire and respondents indicate their answers using multiple choice with open-end answers.

2. High Street Survey Results and Discussion

The reliability between items is very important to exist before assessing the data of this research. Through Cronbach's Alpha the internal consistency based on intern item correlation was measured and the finding projected some significant results. Brown (2002) stated.7 -.95 is an acceptable number for Alpha and each number indicate the percentage of reliability. in this case, the results shows the reliability of the main nine items is.760 and it is considered adequate.

Table (1): Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.758	.760	9

The Intraclass Correlation Coefficient ICC, is the actual measurement of the reliability of clusters. In another word, it is a measurement of similarity between the results of items within a cluster. Therefore, on this condition the ICC values indicate good reliability.

Table 2. Intraclass Correlation Coefficient

	Intraclass Correlation ^b	95% Confidence Interval		F Test with True Value 0			
		Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Value	df1	df2	Sig
Single Measures	.453 ^a	.397	.512	6.792	230	1380	.000
Average Measures	.853 ^c	.822	.880	6.792	230	1380	.000
Two-way mixed effects model where people effects are random and measures effects are fixed.							
a. The estimator is the same, whether the interaction effect is present or not.							
b. Type C intraclass correlation coefficients using a consistency definition. The between-measure variance is excluded from the denominator variance.							
c. This estimate is computed assuming the interaction effect is absent, because it is not estimable otherwise.							

To investigate correlation within a set of studied factors all items were factor analyzed. Table 3 shows the KMO result of .900 that explains the factor model is appropriate. Also, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity sig is 0.000 which is below 0.05 and is significant. Thus, it is concluded that the factor analysis is suitable.

Table (3): KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	.900
Bartlett's Test of Approx. Chi-Square	6196.989
Sphericity df	990
Sig.	.000

Table (4): The demographic information

Gender	129 (55.8) Male	94 (40.7%) Female		
Live	104 (45%) live in big cities	31 (13.4%) live in big towns	26 (11.3%) District	27.7% Live in subdistricts & villages

Age	115(49.8%) 18-24 years old	84 (36.4%) 25-34 years old	25 (10.8%) 35-44 years old	7 (3%) 45-54 years old
location	210 (90.9%) Greater Erbil city	2 persons from Selimani city	2 persons from Dehok city	The rest other parts of the Iraqi Kurdistan
Education	182 (79.5%) Bachelor degree	19 (8.3%) Master degree	9 (3.9%) PhD	19 (8.3%) high Diploma

The survey results showed that a significant proportion of respondents visit their high streets and town centers infrequently, with more than 23% visiting once a month to once every few months. In contrast, over 32% visit the town center for shopping once a week or two to three times a month, with only 28% visiting their high street two to three times a week and 15.8% visiting daily.

of the respondents, 51% of young students were satisfied with their high streets, while 17% were not satisfied at all. Those living in cities or big towns were more satisfied than those living in smaller towns and villages, who were less likely to visit their local market streets daily.

When asked about what stops them from visiting high streets, 52% of responses were related to the economic situation, such as high prices, high costs, and lack of decent earnings. 38% cited a lack of quality and variety of products and poor services, while 24% mentioned a lack of public transportation. Both lack of time and crowded city centers achieved 21% of respondents' rates. Only 10% of participants saw Coronavirus and hygiene as barriers, with 8% of them indicating parking space.

Regarding why they visit their local markets, 43% cited the quality of products and services, variety to choose from, and trust. 34% mentioned that all their needs can be found there, while 4% mentioned that they have no substitutes. Good pricing strategies and discounts were another reason for shopping there, with 29% of respondents selecting this option.

Participants valued long opening hours for shops and having sufficient facilities such as parking, hygiene, and attractiveness. They believed that a greater variety of shops and facilities, better and more green spaces in city centers, and reducing cars or freeing high streets from cars are very important

for shopping centers, with 56%, 45%, 39%, and 37% respectively choosing these options.

In future planning for towns and cities, most respondents cited a need for more libraries, green spaces, grocery stores/supermarkets, and leisure facilities, as well as freeing high streets from cars. A significant majority (61%) believed that the high street or town/city center should have residential areas within walking distance, and almost 75% agreed that the community and voluntary sector should play an active role in the design and delivery of their high streets. Additionally, more than 94% agreed that a safe and welcoming high street and town center will enable and empower them to use it more, while 86.9% agreed that young people should have a greater say in future plans.

Hypotheses Testing

H1. The participation of the community and voluntary sector in future planning and decision-making can impact community satisfaction and increase the frequency of visits.

The overall results indicate questions (9a and 9b) as independent variables and question (3) as the dependent variable. In order to predict the impact of independent variables on the dependent variable, the scores need to be examined and interpreted. The investigated findings show that ($B=.107$ and $-.071$ $P=.140$ and 328), with an R-square value of $(.010)$ is a weak predictor of people satisfaction. In addition, the ANOVA F-value of independent variables also does not significantly predict people's satisfaction, $F(2, 228) = 1.179$, $p>.309$. Therefore, there is no linear relationship between variables. Also, the P-values are above the conventional levels of $.01$ and $.05$ of significance. Therefore, based on the scores, this author accepts the null hypothesis and concludes there is no indication that the two independent variables can predict the dependent variable which is people's satisfaction.

H2. Safe and welcoming residential areas close to market streets can save shopping malls from disappearing by increasing the frequency of visits.

The dependent variable (Q1. frequency of visits) was regressed on predicting variables of safe and welcoming high streets and residential areas close to town centres. The independent variables did not significantly predict the increase in the frequency of visits, $F(2.228) = .943$, $p>.391$, which shows that the two factors under study do not have a significant impact on increasing the frequency of the visits. Moreover, the R-value $=.091$ shows that the model

explains 9% of the variance in the frequency of visits. Additionally, coefficients were further tested to ascertain the impact of the factors on the dependent variable. The findings revealed that both independent variables ($B = .010$, $t = .064$, $p = .949$) and ($B = -.094$, $t = -1.370$, $p = .172$). Hence, H2 was not supported. Therefore, this author accepts the null hypothesis and concludes both independent variables do not have a significant influence on the dependent variables.

H3. An increase in online merchandising due to the Covid-19 pandemic can impact buyers' opinions and decision-making about online shopping.

The dependent variable which is based on 7 sub-dimensions was turned into one unified variable (Q4b. change in buyers' behaviour and decision-making) regressed against three independent variables (the Covid-19 restrictions Q4, frequency in online shopping Q4a, and following social net-websites, Q4c). The independent variables significantly predict the change in behaviour and decision-making of customers, the dependent variable, where $F(3.226) = 15.052$, $p < .000$ which again indicates that the three factors under study have significantly influenced on the dependent variable. Also, the R-value = .408 suggests the model explains 40.8% of the variance in the dependent variable. Coefficients were further examined to establish the influence of the factors on the dependent variable. The results revealed that the Covid-19 restrictions has not had a significant influence on buyers' behaviour and decision-making ($B = -.441$, $t = -.459$, $p = .647$). But the results for both frequency in online shopping and following social net-website of their favorite retailers revealed that have significant influence on buyers' behaviour and decision-making ($B = 1.661$ & $.446$, $t = 6.679$ & 1.109 , $p = .000$). hence, H3 was supported. Therefore, this author can reject the null hypothesis and conclude that the Covid-19 restrictions, frequency of online shopping, and following social net-website of their favorite retailers as independent variables can predict the dependent variables which is a change in shoppers' behaviour and decision-making.

Discussion

Based on the data gathered, it appears that there are several factors contributing to the dissatisfaction of high streets and shopping centers in Iraqi Kurdistan. Economic situation, poor quality and lack of diversity in products and services, lack of public transport, and the current pandemic are some of the reasons why people are not visiting their local markets regularly.

Additionally, the majority of respondents were price-sensitive, suggesting that a good pricing strategy and promotional discounts are key to winning back customers.

There is a clear need for improvement in high streets and shopping centers in terms of the quality of products and services, diversity in choices, and the provision of leisure facilities and greener areas. Respondents also showed their support for greater roles to be given to younger people as well as community and voluntary sectors in designing and delivering future plans for high streets.

The Covid-19 restrictions have encouraged people to seek online shopping and increased their frequency of repeat purchasing, with social media playing a significant role in influencing online buying behaviors.

It is recommended that the government and policymakers be more prepared and focused on local needs, giving the local community a bigger role in future planning and decision-making. The future town centers need to be ready to adapt to new changes and future landscapes. High streets and shopping centers should not be seen as places solely for shopping, but also as places for leisure and relaxation.

Implication of Research:

It is important for the government and decision-makers to take the findings of this research seriously and consider the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the high streets and retailers in local towns in Iraqi Kurdistan. The study highlights the need for better planning and development to ensure the survival of local businesses and the future of high streets. The government should prioritize community needs and involve local businesses, communities, and charities in any future planning to ensure that they reflect the needs of the local people. Investing in the public realm, creating more green spaces and parking areas, and reallocating space in city centers for walking and cycling can contribute to the revival of high streets. Overall, this research provides important insights into the future of high streets in Iraqi Kurdistan, and policymakers should take action to address the issues highlighted in the study to ensure the long-term survival of local businesses and the future of high streets.

3. Conclusion

The study aimed to explore the future of high streets in a region that had received little attention in third-world countries compared to the

developed world. The study identified that high streets had been under pressure from online shopping, with supermarkets and department stores closing down. The pandemic caused businesses to lock down worldwide, which was the biggest shock of the century. The study suggested that high streets may evolve but not disappear, with luxury apartments and pop-up 3D printing stores occupying empty spaces.

The study identified that high streets and town centers faced a range of issues, and the pandemic was the last straw in their coffin. The government needed to work on improving services and responding to local communities needs to increase its foothold in shopping malls or town centers. Policymakers must have a plan that includes local communities and voluntary organizations. The study predicted that the focus of the future market is the localization and smaller communities.

Overall, the study highlights the challenges facing high streets and town centers, particularly in the face of online shopping and the pandemic. It suggests that there is a need for policymakers to work with local communities and voluntary organizations to address these challenges and create safe and welcoming town centers that empower young people.

Recommendations: Based on the findings of this study, the following are recommendations:

- A. Encourage collaboration between businesses, policymakers, communities, youth, and the voluntary sector to create future plans and decision-making for the high street.
- B. Promote innovation in the high street through digitalization and technology. Businesses should incorporate e-commerce into their business models and offer online shopping options to remain competitive.
- C. Foster a sense of community in the high street through events, festivals, and cultural activities to attract more footfall and encourage local shopping.
- D. Ensure that policies and regulations are in place to support the growth and development of high streets, including measures to address parking, pedestrian access, and safety.
- E. Conduct further research on the impact of e-commerce and the COVID-19 pandemic on the high street and malls in Iraqi Kurdistan, and continue to monitor changes and trends in the market.

F. Implementing these recommendations can help to address the challenges facing the high street and create a more sustainable future for retail in Iraqi Kurdistan.

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Dear Participant

I am a university lecturer at Salahaddin University, College of Administration and Economics, Erbil, and I would now like to ask you about your experiences of using your high street or town/city centre. When answering these questions, please think about the high street or town/city centre you use the most. This may not be the one that is closest to where you live. For the purpose of these questions, a high street or town/city centre is defined as a street, row, or area that is predominantly made up of retail establishments, banks, restaurants, cafes, bars, and other businesses and public services.

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Q1. Thinking about the high street or town/city centre you visit the most, on average, how often do you visit?

- ☐ 1. Daily
- ☐ 2. 2-3 times a week
- ☐ 3. Once a week
- ☐ 4. 2-3 times a month
- ☒ 5. Once a month
- ☐ 6. Less often than monthly

Q2. What prevents you from visiting your high street or town/city centre more often? Please list up to three factors.

OPEN-ENDED BOXES

Q3. How satisfied or dissatisfied, if at all, are you with the high street or town/city centre you visit the most?

- 1. Very dissatisfied
- 2. Quite dissatisfied
- 3. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- 4. Quite satisfied
- 5. Very satisfied

Q3a. You said that you are {insert answer from Q4}. Why do you say that?

OPEN-END

Q4. Did Coronavirus social distancing and non-movement policies encourage you to shop online?

Yes

No

Q4a. If yes, how often do you buy products/services online?

Extremely often

Very often

Moderately often

Slightly often

Not at all often

Q4b. Please indicate your degree of agreement with the following statements.

Online shopping is not just buying products/services - it is entertainment.	☐ Strongly agree	☐ Agree	☐ Neutral	☐ Disagree	☐ Strongly disagree
Online shopping offers greater discounts and rewards.	☐ Strongly agree	☐ Agree	☐ Neutral	☐ Disagree	☐ Strongly disagree
I tell other people about positive online shopping experiences.	☐ Strongly agree	☐ Agree	☐ Neutral	☐ Disagree	☐ Strongly disagree
I prefer online shopping to traditional/conventional shopping.	☐ Strongly agree	☐ Agree	☐ Neutral	☐ Disagree	☐ Strongly disagree
The internet is my first choice when I need any type of product/service.	☐ Strongly agree	☐ Agree	☐ Neutral	☐ Disagree	☐ Strongly disagree
The "look" of an online retailer website is appealing to me.	☐ Strongly agree	☐ Agree	☐ Neutral	☐ Disagree	☐ Strongly disagree
I intend to continue shopping online after positive online buying experiences.	☐ Strongly agree	☐ Agree	☐ Neutral	☐ Disagree	☐ Strongly disagree

Q4c. Do you follow the social networking channels of your favorite retailers/service providers?

Yes, and it influences my online buying behaviour.

Yes, but it does not influence my online buying behaviour.

No.

Q5. Please rank the three most important things to you from the list below for your high street or town/city centre to have.

1. The shops and services are open when I need them
2. It is clean and attractive
3. A good variety of shops
4. The public services I need are there
5. The shops sell the products I need
6. Sufficient car parking
7. Sufficient facilities such as toilets, benches etc.
8. Everything I need is within walking distance of each other
9. Accessible for those with impaired mobility or with a pram/pushchair
10. Good variety of leisure and entertainment facilities
11. Attractive to visitors as well as locals
12. The shop fronts are well-maintained
13. Range of events to attend such as markets, festivals, carnivals etc.
14. Good recreational space
15. Feeling of safety
16. A good place to live
17. People from different backgrounds can meet and mix
18. None of the above

Q6. From the list below, please rank the top three things that you feel could be improved for your high street or town/city centre?

- a) better community spaces for people to mix/meet
- b) Better green spaces
- c) A greater variety of shops
- d) More restaurants
- e) Fewer empty/boarded up shops
- f) public services hubs, e.g., council services
- g) More GP services/Health care services
- h) Free from cars
- i) better transport links

- j) Regular bus services
- k) better parking facilities
- l) More residential areas (e.g houses and flats to live in)
- m) Other (please specify)
- n) Nothing

Q7. We'd now like you to imagine that you are a town planner, involved in planning the facilities and services for a new high street or town/city centre. Which of the following would be most important to you to include in the plans? Please rank your top 5.

- a) GP surgery
- b) Library
- c) Dentist
- d) Health care centre
- e) Post office
- f) Leisure facilities (e.g gym, swimming pools)
- g) Grocery store/ supermarket
- h) Bars/pubs
- i) Restaurants/cafes
- j) Cinema
- k) Bank
- l) Pharmacy
- m) Clothes shops
- n) Newsagent
- o) Barbers/hairdressers/ beauty salon
- p) Book store
- q) Coffee shop
- r) Department store
- s) Electronic goods store
- t) Food takeaways
- u) Music/movies/video games store
- v) Charity shops
- w) Travel agent
- x) Off licence
- y) Launderette/dry cleaners
- z) Estate agent
- aa) Petrol station

- bb) Bookmakers
- cc) Community centre
- dd) Council services
- ee) Housing
- ff) Green space
- gg) Public toilets
- hh) Parking
- ii) Excellent phone signal and wifi hotspot availability
- jj) Free from cars
- kk) Other (please specify)

Q8. How important is it to you that a high street or town/city centre has residential areas within walking distance?

1. Not at all important
2. Not very important
3. Quite important
4. Very important
5. Don't know

Q9. Please rate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements?

1. The community and voluntary sector should play an active role in the design and delivery of the high street.
 2. Young people should have a greater say on the future of their high street and town centre
 3. A safe and welcoming high street and town centre will enable and empower children and young people to use it more
- Strongly agree
 - Tend to agree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Tend to disagree
 - Strongly disagree

Q10. Please indicate which of the following you live in.

1. Village
2. Small town
3. Big town
4. Small city
5. Large city

SD1 - Gender: Are you?

Male

Female

SD2 - Please indicate your age...

16-24

25-34

35-44

45-54

65-75

75 and over

SD3 - Which city of Kurdistan do you live in?

SD4 – Educational level

High School

Bachelor Degree

Master Degree

PhD