

ANALYSIS OF FINANCIAL AND NON-FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE OF THE 3 LARGEST COMPANIES IN THE UNITED KINGDOM'S APPAREL RETAIL INDUSTRY FOR 2018-2022

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Keywords: Financial Performance, ESG Score, PESTLE, CSF, Financial Ratio, Company performance.</p>	<p><i>This study aims to analysis of the financial and non-financial performance of the 3 largest companies in the united kingdom's apparel retail industry for 2018-2022. This research use a quantitative with Cluster Random Sampling. Data was collected using documentation from companies annual report and sustainability report. The data were processed using financial ratios, ESG (Environmental, Sosial, and Governance) Score, PESTLE analysis, and Critical Success Factors. The results of this study show that the financial and non-financial performance of retail companies in England in 2018-2022 faced several factors that made these companies have to adapt starting from Pandemic Covid-19, brexit, shifts in consumer tastes, e-commerce developments, customers who are more concerned about environmental impacts, supply chain disruptions, and decreased consumer spending. The results of a comparison of financial and non-financial performance before the Covid-19 pandemic, and during Covid-19 for companies in the apparel retail sector in England in 2018-2022. Before Covid-19 companies had steady growth, reliance on physical stores, table supply chains, Employee well-being, and sustainability initiatives. During Covid-19 companies had different challenges such as Revenue decrease, E-commerce surge, and supply chain disruptions, financial strain, Digital transformation, and employee safety. As a whole, the Covid-19 pandemic forced companies in the clothing retail sector to change quickly and change their strategy in order to stay in business. This crisis shows how important it is to be flexible, digitally ready, and have a strong supply chain. Companies that have invested in digital capabilities and embraced e-commerce are better able to weather the storm. Sustainability and ethical practices remain important, but staying afloat and making changes to operations becomes even more important during the peak of the pandemic. The results also show that between the three companies Next plc has had a stable financial condition for the past five years, which is crucial for long-term success and growth in the retail industry. Next has also built a strong brand identity over the years. This recognition helps in building trust and attracting new customers, making it easier to introduce new products or expand into new markets</i></p>

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented the global economy with unforgettable challenges and risks, surpassing those encountered even during armed conflict (Altig *et al.*, 2020; Osteholm and Olshaker 2020). Governments implemented measures to limit the spread of the pandemic by restricting the ability of people to travel and interact with each other; these are now commonly referred to as "lockdown measures". The stability and resilience of many industries have been tested by the pandemic (Béné, 2020; Chenarides et al. 2020). For example, consumers' ability to access some goods and services, such as taking public transport or shopping at physical stores, is constrained by mobility restrictions. Merchants are required to keep selling groceries, as usual, to keep households fed. Lockdown regulations, which limit the ability of stores to rely on customers making in-store purchases, accompanied by the 2-meter in-store distance rule, forced supermarkets to restrict access and resulted in longer queues. Meanwhile, restaurants were restricted from doing business through delivery.

Everything from toilet paper rolls to airline tickets are just a mouse click away, making the way of life very fast. The worldwide influx of COVID-19 has halted all business activities, including meetings and traveling. The COVID-19 pandemic has prompted many to reflect on the characteristics of the households with the strongest and fastest response, and make a dynamic and timely diagnosis on how families adjust their spending and online shopping habits. From an entrepreneur's perspective, this is a surprising and unexpected setback. The side effects of the pandemic have been felt across all demographic regions. This alarming outbreak has put a damper on online marketing and consumer spending habits and has affected the overall performance of companies from financials to performance. Major global companies such as Myntra, Flipkart, Amazon, etc. as well as companies in the apparel retail industry in the UK such as Next, Asos, Boohoo, etc. have high employee turnover rates. Have a high employee turnover rate as well as excellent financial performance and if this situation continues, these companies will not be able to maintain their current good performance (Sharma and Jhamb, 2020).

Many are wondering who will benefit and who will lose from the pandemic's impact on retailers. Many predict that the shock will cause fundamental changes in society, especially when it comes to online shopping. Some argue that consumers will quickly get used to the new norm once the restrictions are lifted, suggesting that the initial shock will be short-lived. Two others cite revenue lost forever. However, there is an unspoken agreement that the effects of lockdown restrictions will vary according to the retail channel due to the unique challenges that each channel faces. Retail channels with more malleable business models are more likely to survive and even thrive in the face of disruption (Béné, 2020; Macfadyen et al., 2016).

During the pandemic many retailers in the UK experienced a significant decline in revenue of around 12 percent for the full year (MarketLine, 2021). Retailers such as Boohoo, Asos, and Next did most of their sales in the UK and US, which saw the biggest declines. After the pandemic, the UK was hit with massive inflation (MarketLine, 2021). A major retailer has closed one of its UK warehouses in response to high cost inflation. The company has reduced stock by 27%, and 100 jobs in London (Alim, 2023).

Company performance in dealing with situations like this is very important in determining the company's goals in restoring the health of the company itself in terms of financial and non-financial. With the achievement of company goals can be assessed from various points of view by looking at company performance. According to Fahmi (2017) this assessment can be done by looking at financial and non-financial performance. Financial performance analysis includes an examination of the company's financial matters reflected in its financial statements, including information contained in the statement of financial position (LPK / Balance Sheet), income statement, and cash flow statement. Environmental, Social and Governance Score (ESG Score), PESTLE analysis and CSF (Critical Success Factors) analysis are examples of non-financial performance.

According to Cahyani (2017) stated "A company's financial performance can be defined as its ability to sustain its day-to-day operations". Credit ratios, profitability ratios, activity ratios, market ratios, and cash flow ratios all provide insight into the financial health of a business. Ratio analysis is used to evaluate financial performance. A company's financial ratios can give an idea of its strengths or weaknesses in areas that are important to stakeholders (customers). Paying off debt is a primary concern, but it is also important to understand how well the company is managing its assets, how profitable it is, and other metrics like these.

According to Al-zoubi, (2023) Optimal financial ratios are very important. The best indicator of a company's financial health is its net profit. How much can an organization generate revenue, manage its debt, keep its capital turnover low, and so on. As a result, the financial statements will be analyzed. In reality, businesses come in three sizes: small, medium and large. The range from individual businesses, family businesses, subsidiaries, affiliated companies, to multinational conglomerates: Financial performance metrics cannot be compared across businesses of different sizes as they are specific to each scale. The gap between theory and practice in the field can be very wide. Even if the theory is correct, there are times when the observed values do not match what is expected by the theoretical model. This empirical method, at the very least (Fatihudin et al., 2018).

The forecasts of the UK clothing market is expected to bring in an amount of less than 55 billion British pounds in 2022. This figure represents a decrease compared to the previous year, specifically 2021, during which the UK clothing market accomplished a total of 55 billion British pounds. However, it is anticipated that the market will experience recovery and rise above a value of 65 billion British pounds by the year 2026 (Smith, 2022). Throughout the projected timeframe, it is expected that the global apparel market will experience a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 5.8%. The rapid growth of e-commerce and online shopping has provided consumers with increased access to high-end brands and exclusive merchandise (Inteligence, 2021). Three companies were chosen based on their geographical location, revenue size, reputation, and number of employees. The revenue of ASOS Plc, a well-known online retailer based in the United Kingdom that specializes in the sale of

clothing and cosmetics, experienced an approximate 2% growth in the year 2022 (ASOS Plc, 2022). Boohoo Plc revealed a growth rate of 14% in the year 2022, despite facing a more challenging comparative period. This notable achievement underscores the company's steady growth over a span of two years. The international figures have experienced an impressive rise of 40%, while the United Kingdom has observed a substantial increase of 77% (Boohoo Plc, 2022). In the year 2022, Next Plc introduced four additional clients onto the Total Platform. The company achieved a revenue of £10 million in its inaugural year, with projections indicating a potential revenue of approximately £20 million for the upcoming year (Next Plc, 2022).

Based on these reasons, namely the return of the companies good performance after the Covid-19 pandemic, the interest is in discussing the Analysis of Financial and Non-Financial Performance of Apparel Retail Sector Companies in the UK before and after the Covid-19 pandemic.

METHOD

In this research the design uses a quantitative approach using descriptive analysis and examines 3 large companies in the UK retail apparel industry, namely Asos Plc, Boohoo Plc, and Next Plc from 2018-2022. The population in this study is the Apparel Retail Industry and the sample in this study are three (3) large companies in the retail apparel industry in the UK, namely ASOS Plc, Boohoo Plc, and Next Plc. The method used by researchers in selecting the sample is Cluster Random Sampling where companies are selected based on the geographical location of the company. The type of data used in this research is secondary data. Secondary data is one type of data that can be relied upon in terms of convenience, cost efficiency and practicality in terms of data collection. Secondary data is a type of additional data that is not obtained from the main source, but has gone through other sources before. This means that the user of the data does not directly experience the phenomenon being studied, but obtains information from other primary sources (Jabnabillah et al., 2023). Secondary data in this study were obtained by means of documentation. Documentation, namely data collection by recording data related to the problem to be examined from documents owned by the relevant agencies. Where the documents in this study are the Company's Annual Report and the Company's Sustainability Report from 2018-2022.

Definition and Measurement of Company Performance:

Measurement of Financial Ratios

Liquidity Ratio

The liquidity ratio of a company shows the extent to which the company can fulfill the company's obligations and pay off its short-term debt (Hartono, 2017). When conducting financial analysis, companies often use a variety of different liquidity ratios (Kasmir, 2018). The importance of this ratio lies in its potential to contribute to the occurrence of corporate bankruptcy if short-term obligations are not met. This ratio assesses the ability of a company's short-term liquidity by looking at the company's current assets in relation to its current debt, which refers to the company's liabilities (Fahmi, 2017). The liquidity ratio used in this study is the Current Ratio:

Current Ratio

According to Nuryani, (2020) This ratio examines the company's capacity to fulfil its existing and forthcoming debt obligations. A high current ratio serves as an indicator of the company's operational and managerial efficiency. The current ratio proves valuable in assessing the success and profitability of a business as it compares the company's profits to the assets or capital employed in generating those profits. This relationship becomes evident upon analyzing the company's current ratio in relation to its profits.

Current Ratio = Current Assets / Current Liabilities

Profitability Ratios

Profitability refers to a company's capacity to generate profits through the efficient utilisation of assets, capital, and the attainment of favourable sales outcomes. The aforementioned performance is commonly referred to as profitability. The measurement of company profitability holds significant significance as a performance metric for both company management and shareholders (Irfani, 2020). The profitability ratio is a metric that assesses a company's ability to generate profits within a certain period of time (Hery, 2018). Following are the Four (4) Profitability Ratios used:

Return on Equity (ROE)

According to Hanafi, (2016) Measurement of Return on Equity (ROE) is used to assess a company's ability to generate net income relative to its equity holdings. In essence, the return on equity (ROE) metric gives investors an indication of the profitability that can be expected from their investment. The return on equity metric can be used as a measuring tool to assess management's efficiency in utilizing equity financing to fund the company's

operations and expansion. This can be achieved by conducting a comparative analysis of the Return on Equity (ROE) metric against a predetermined benchmark.

ROE = Net Profit / Total Equity

Return on Asset (ROA)

According to Brigham and Houston, (2019) The determination of the return on total assets (ROA) encompasses the consideration of interest and taxes, and is computed by dividing the net income by the total assets. A greater return on assets (ROA) signifies that a company is employing its assets with greater efficiency, leading to increased profitability derived from the same magnitude of assets. On the contrary, a diminished return on assets (ROA) signifies a reduced level of efficiency in utilizing a company's assets, leading to diminished profitability.

ROA = Net Profit / Total Assets

Net Profit Margin

Brigham, and Houston, (2019) defines the concept of "net profit margin" (NPM) as the proportion of a company's net profit in relation to its sales. Another illustrative example relates to the after-tax profit earned on each sale. A higher ratio is desirable because it indicates that the company has a relatively higher capacity to generate profits. The exclusion of non-operating revenue and expenses from the NPM calculation prevents an accurate representation of the percentage of a company's net profit per sale. Alternatively, net profit margin (NPM) represents the total revenue generated after deducting all costs.

NPM = Net Profit / Net Sales

Activity Ratio

According to Irfani, (2020) Operating efficiency, also known as activity, relates to a company's ability to use its assets efficiently to generate revenue from sales. This includes variables such as the rate of employee turnover from the organization and the length of time each fixed asset component is connected to the revenue-generating process. Evaluation of the efficiency of the use of assets in the company's operations depends on the turnover frequency of asset components, which is measured by the value of sales or cost of goods sold. The effectiveness of the company's operational business is manifested in the fast or slow turnover of assets. Likewise, a shorter duration of asset engagement indicates a greater degree of efficiency in a company's practices related to asset management. There is a negative correlation between the duration of the asset engagement and the asset turnover rate. A greater rate of asset turnover indicates a reduced period of asset involvement in the company's operations. Conversely, the opposite is also true. Following are the Two (2) Activity Ratios used:

Inventory Turnover

Gitman, (2020) Explains that inventory turnover is a metric used to assess the level of activity or liquidity related to a company's inventory. Inventory turnover ratio, on the other hand, serves as an indicator of a company's liquidity and proficiency in managing its inventory effectively. A low value of this ratio indicates a significant amount of inventory that is still unused, while a high value of this ratio indicates that inventory is selling quickly due to the company's effective inventory management practices. When a company's inventory is quickly purchased by customers, it usually increases profitability.

Inventory Turnover = Sales / Average Inventory

Measurement of Non-Financial Ratio

ESG Score

According to Șerban et al., (2022) The integration of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors is becoming increasingly common in the evaluation of non-financial performance indicators of companies. As a result, companies are increasingly prioritizing upgrading and promoting their Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) ratings. The ESG score consists of three fundamental pillars, namely environmental, social and governance, each of which includes various subcategories. (Melinda & Wardhani, (2020) Explaining ESG Score is a quantitative measure derived from a collective rating across various pillars, which serves as an indicator of a company's level of achievement in the field of sustainability. The ESG score is an assessment of the company's operational effectiveness and financial achievement, which comes from information that can be accessed by the public. There is a positive correlation between a company's ESG score and its level of environmental responsibility. Two pillars are used in this study, namely the Social Pillar and the Governance Pillar:

Social Pillars

a) Workforce Score evaluates the effectiveness of a company by examining its performance in various areas, including job satisfaction, the creation of a safe and healthy work environment, the promotion of diversity and equal opportunities, and the provision of growth opportunities for its employees. b) Human rights score is an

assessment of a company's success in upholding the principles outlined in the fundamental human rights conventions. c) Community score metric evaluates an organization's dedication to upholding corporate social responsibility, maintaining community welfare, and adhering to ethical business practices.

Environmental Pillar

a) Emission Score evaluates the level of dedication and efficiency exhibited by the organization in mitigating environmental emissions during production and operational activities.

Governance Pillar

a) CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) Score is a company's practises show that it takes economic (financial), social, and environmental factors into account when making decisions on a daily basis.

Measurement of Pestle analysis

According to Fam et al., (2018) PESTEL analysis is a theoretical framework used in marketing principles and serves as a strategic tool for conducting business analysis. The application of this concept serves as a means of observing and assessing the business environment in which a company operates or intends to introduce new initiatives, products and services. In addition, this concept also helps predict macro-level conditions that may impact the overall situation of the company. In this study Pestle analysis uses 5 of 6 factors in the UK:

Political Factor

This factor evaluates the degree to which governmental policies might have influence on companies and brands. Political environmental factors encompass various elements connected with governmental actions, stability, and support for industries and organizations. Furthermore, a vital component of the political environment is the impact of government policies on business activities. These policies encompass various areas such as monetary, fiscal, supply side, exchange rates, and foreign trade policie (Rastogi & Trivedi, 2016).

Economic Factor

Economic factors play an important role in determining the success of an organization, and it can be said that this factor has a very important meaning. Consideration of factors related to age and age structure is very important in the economic field. Various factors are taken into account, including income levels, domestic disposable income, poverty rates, employment and unemployment rates, tax rates, gender distribution, inflation rates, exchange rates, population growth, literacy rates, education levels, consumer attitudes, perceptions, and buying behavior, among other related variables. In the event of unfavorable economic conditions, the industry will lose its attractiveness for prospective investment, expansion or sustainability (Rastogi and Trivedi, 2016).

Social Factor

The factors included in Social Factors consist of demography, culture, market share, trends, population, norms, customs, and population growth rates. Consideration of social factors is very important in the context of product targeting of certain customer characteristics. In addition, this factor can be used to find local workers and assess their willingness to work in certain situations (Perera, 2017).

Technological Factor

This factor is closely related to technological advances, which can have a positive or negative impact on the operations of various industries and businesses (Perera, 2017). In today's world, most businesses operate online and use technology. Therefore, the technical environment is very important. Companies must consider advances in technology, infrastructure, expertise, technology efficiency, upgrades, hardware and software. Technology is becoming increasingly important to customers as internet usage increases in rural areas. Technology drives business value (Song et al., 2017).

Legal Factor

Business-related laws and regulations, such as those pertaining to patents and workplace safety, fall under this category. The laws and regulations that apply to an apparel retail sector, for instance, will include those labor and employment laws, advertising and marketing regulations, customer protection laws, and data protection and privacy law. Researching how these rules and regulations might affect business is crucial. When stakeholders view a company favorably because it acts lawfully, it gains an advantage over its rivals. As a result, Ethical Business will be even more central to the company's daily operations (Perera, 2017).

Environmental Factor

This factor covers the environmental elements that can impact the industry, such as weather patterns, geographical characteristics, and climate change, particularly those that have an influence on the company. This variable can be utilised to formulate a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) strategy. The consideration of ecological factors is gaining significance, particularly for manufacturing enterprises involved in chemical reactions. The adoption of energy-efficient and environmentally sustainable production or manufacturing

methods serves as a catalyst for gaining a competitive edge and mitigating expenses related to shutdowns, penalties, and other financial burdens (Perera, 2017).

Measurement of CSF

Critical Success Factors (CSF) are used to define and articulate the most important aspects of running a successful business (Noureldeen et al., 2022). In an even more precise way, Critical Success Factors (CSFs) refer to a limited set of readily identifiable operational objectives that are established by various stakeholders such as industry, firms, managers, and the external environment. These objectives are intended to guarantee the achievement of organizational success. Critical Success Factors (CSFs) are valuable tools in the realm of business planning as they offer a comprehensive understanding and direction regarding the specific areas that require special considerations, allocation of resources, and continuous attention. CSFs are commonly employed to delineate the crucial elements that necessitate contemplation in order to effectively operate a financially viable enterprise (Rizkiana et al., 2021).

	Current Ratio				
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Next Plc	1,97	1,59	2,06	1,91	1,99
Asos Plc	0,90	0,81	1,19	1,56	1,49
Boohoo Plc	2,06	1,83	1,76	1,69	1,00
Industry Average	1,71	1,79	1,76	1,74	1,69

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The current ratio in the fashion industry is stated to be good at 1.5 to 3. A high current ratio indicates that the company has a fairly good ability to meet its short-term obligations, implying that the company has enough cash or funds to pay it. Based on the average current ratio table above, it can be seen that of the 3 companies above the current ratio the best company is Next Plc and followed by Boohoo Plc with a value of 1.90 and 1.67 and where the value is more than 1.5 for declared good. Meanwhile, Asos Plc does not have a good average current ratio of 1.19, which is below the industry average. With an average current ratio it can be explained that with an average value of 1.90 Next Plc and 1.67 Boohoo Plc, these two companies have a fairly good ability to meet the company's short-term obligations, one of which is lease liabilities. On the other hand, for Asos Plc, with an average value of 1.19, where this value is less than the industry average, which is 1.5, it can be explained that Asos has a poor ability to fulfill its short-term obligations.

In 2018-2019 the current ratio decreased by 0,38 because Next Plc bank overdrafts and short term borrowing account rose by £77.3m (Next Plc, 2019). In the same range of the year, this ratio for Boohoo Plc and Asos Plc decreased. Boohoo Plc by 0,23 due to an increase in company financial liabilities, namely in trade and other payables by 54,784 (2019:145.898; 2018: 91.114) (Boohoo Plc, 2019). Asos Plc decreased by 0.09 due to increased in company current liabilities where in 2018 Asos had a zero pounds in borrowing account but in 2019 the company had Borrowing Account total £75.0 (Asos Plc, 2019).

Based on Next Plc Annual Report, (2020) Next Plc explained that the company anticipates that retail sales will not fully recover to pre-COVID-19 levels and, as a result, Next Plc has increased its property reserves by £100 million. This was a combination of £18 million written off store assets and assets and an allowance of £82 million for future cash losses arising from onerous leases. Next Plc also closed its 18 flagship stores after its lease expired. The shops fall into 3 categories:

- 1) Low profitability shops where the stores are losing money or are expected to lose money in the near future.
- 2) Stores in locations where Next has more than one store, and Next plc can increase profits by consolidating sales into one location.
- 3) Forced closing where the shop owner does not wish to extend the lease

In addition, the company also hopes that by closing these stores the company can allocate these funds to meet other company needs, for example the company's own short-term debt. In the same year, Boohoo Plc also set up a scenario with a substantial decline in revenue from April to June, with some recovery from June to September. The company has also forecast a business closure through February 2021, as an unlikely, but worst case scenario. The company current liabilities increased such as its lease liabilities (2019:0 ; 2020: 5.400.000),

Financial liabilities (2019: 1.421.000 ; 2020: 8.678.000), and Current Tax liabilities (2019: 3.939.999; 2020: 6.636.000) has increased (Boohoo plc, 2020). In 2021 Asos plc had the best current ratio when compared to other years. This is because although Current Liabilities, namely trade and other payables, and borrowings rose, it was still offset by higher current assets, namely the increase in Inventories by £274.7m (2021: 807.100.000; 2020:532.400.000) and Cash and cash equivalents (2020:407.5; 2021: 662.7) in current assets.

Return On Equity (ROE)

	ROE (%)				
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Next Plc	122,63	163,60	138,21	43,38	67,08
Asos Plc	18,78	5,42	13,96	12,42	-3,04
Boohoo Plc	14,88	16,12	19,42	19,20	-0,86
Industry Average	37,15	43,68	39,60	16,63	19,61

ROE (%)	5 year average	Ranking
Next Plc	106,98	1
Asos Plc	9,51	3
Boohoo Plc	13,75	2
Industry Average	31,34	

ROE in the apparel retail industry is stated to be good at a minimum value of 18.29%. Return on Equity is considered as a measure of the company's profitability and how efficient the company is in generating profits. The higher the ROE, the more efficient the management of the company and the growth of its equity financing. Based on the average ROE table, it can be seen that of the 3 companies above, a good company's Return on Equity is Next Plc with a value of 106.98%, which is more than 18.29%, which is the industry average. Meanwhile Boohoo Plc with a value of 13.75% and Asos Plc with a value of 9.51% have a poor ROE because the percentage value is lower than the industry average of 18.29%. With a fairly good average ROE, this explains that Next Plc is efficient in generating profits from its equity financing.

Cash flow remains strong and Next Plc returned £541 million to shareholders through a combination of ordinary dividends (£216 million) and share buybacks (£325 million). During 2019 the company bought 6.3 million shares at an average price of £51.65 and reduced the number of shares outstanding by 4.3%. Next continues to invest into its business, spending £129 million on stores, warehousing and systems. Net debt increased to £1.096 million from £1.002 million driven by growth in sales of its online credit business. Net debt of £1.1 billion remains in bond and bank facilities of £1.5 billion and is broadly aligned with the company's online debtors' books (Next Plc, 2019).

Asos Plc which was ranked third in 2019 the company invested heavily in its operational infrastructure spending £79.7 million on property, plant and equipment and £115.6 million on intangible assets. The most significant elements of this expenditure, as described in the CFO review relate to the atlanta warehouse which started operating this year and the expenditure to automate the distribution center in Berlin (Asos Plc, 2019). In 2022 Asos Plc has a -3,04 in ROE Ratio due to companies net loss (30.8m) and inflation that happened in the year (ASOS Plc, 2022). Whereas in 2019 second-ranked Boohoo plc invested in a substantial new office facility for boohooMan near boohoo's headquarters in Manchester (Boohoo Plc, 2019). In 2022 The impact of the pandemic has had farreaching and some unexpected consequences for businesses: customer demand has been dampened by continued and unpredictable lockdowns in different parts of the world; and sudden price inflation and restricted availability in the transportation of goods have both impacted service levels and reduced profitability (Boohoo Plc, 2022).

Return On Asset (ROA)

ROA

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Next Plc	23,10	16,10	16,61	7,63	17,02
Asos Plc	8,18	1,98	5,70	4,45	-1,03
Boohoo Plc	9,68	9,91	11,18	11,69	-0,40
Industry Average	11,19	8,66	8,32	5,18	5,37

ROA (%)	5 year average	Ranking
Next Plc	16,07	1
Asos Plc	3,86	3
Boohoo Plc	8,41	2
Industry Average	7,74	
ROA (%)	5 year average	Ranking
Next Plc	16,07	1
Asos Plc	3,86	3
Boohoo Plc	8,41	2
Industry Average	7,74	

In the Apparel Retail Sector, a company's ROA is categorized as good if the company's ROA has a value of 5.98%. Return on Assets measures a company's ability to generate profits from the total assets used by the company. The greater the value of ROA, it means that the better the company uses its assets to earn profits. Based on the average ROA table, it can be seen that of the 3 companies above the Return on Assets the best company is Next Plc with a value of 16.07 where this value is above the industry standard average value of 5.98%. Apart from Next Plc, in second place is Boohoo Plc with an average value of 8.41%, where the company's ROA is also considered good because it is above the industry average. The third position is occupied by the company ASOS Plc with an ROA value below the average of 3.86%. With a ROA value that is above the industry average for Next Plc and Boohoo Plc, it can be concluded that these two companies manage their assets properly and efficiently so as to generate good profits as well. For Asos Plc with a value below the industry average, it can be concluded that over the past 5 years this company has not managed its assets properly to generate profits.

Net Profit Margin (%)					
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Next Plc	17,75	17,60	17,55	9,69	17,78
Asos Plc	4,22	1,21	4,35	4,53	-0,81
Boohoo Plc	7,47	6,98	7,47	7,14	0,39
Industry Average	8,11	7,56	7,73	5,36	6,38

In 2018 Next Plc opened a new branch in Plymouth, Marsh Mills (UK) apart from that there were also new company stores opened overseas such as America and Europe where these stores contributed +0.6% to the company's total sales growth. In the same year Next Plc relaunched the credit account as "Nextpay" and actively promoted it to corporate "cash" customers, with Next Pay corporate credit customers increasing +0.6% over the previous year. Online credit sales (including VAT) per active customer also increased from the previous year £454 (2017: £419) (Next plc, 2018). In 2019 the company's credit customers increased again by +1.3% where this year the company launched the nextpay application which makes it easier and allows credit customers to pay for goods at the company's retail stores in the same way as a physical payment card. On average, the app is downloaded 1,400 times per week, mainly by existing customers (Next PLC, 2019).

Boohoo Plc is in second place with a value of 8.41% which means that the company's ROE has been good for the last 5 years. In the same year, 2018, the company's revenue was £374.1 million, up 32% from the previous year. Revenue growth in the UK's largest geographic market has been very strong, and international growth has been very strong as brand reach and appeal have increased. This year, Boohoo also released several new product categories that contributed to the company's revenue growth (Boohoo Plc, 2018).

Net Profit Margin

Net Profit Margin (%)	5 years average	Ranking
Next Plc	16,07	1
Asos Plc	2,70	3
Boohoo Plc	5,89	2
Industry Average	7,03	

Net Profit Margin is a profitability ratio that shows a comparison between net profit and sales, besides that it can interpret the level of company efficiency to what extent the company is able to reduce operational costs incurred in a certain period. Where the greater the net profit margin, the better, because it means the company is able to earn a high enough profit through sales with the ability to reduce operating costs properly. The net profit margin in the apparel retail sector is said to be good if it is more than 5%. Asos Plc is in third place with a value of 2.70 where this value is below the industry average, meaning that the company's Net Profit Margin is not good. Meanwhile, for the first rank, there is Next Plc with a value of 16.07, followed by Boohoo Plc in the second rank with a value of 5.89.

In 2022 Asos Plc reported a pre-tax loss of £31.9 million, although the company had anticipated increased revenue growth against a weaker benchmark, the effect of inflation on consumers increased significantly over time, impacting consumer confidence and additional revenue. Because of this, growth in the second half was less than expected (Asos plc, 2022). In the same year, Boohoo experienced an increase in its operational costs by 46.2% of the company's revenue, this was due to the company being driven by high marketing costs and high overseas distribution costs caused by the pandemic and also the effects of inflation. The company's EBITDA also decreased by 28% from 173.6 M to 125.1 M and as a percentage of revenue, decreased from 10.0% to 6.3% (Boohoo Plc, 2022).

Next Plc with a value of 16.7% is ranked number 1 on the 5-year average NPM among these 3 companies. Of these 5 years, the highest percentage of NPM will be in 2022, namely 17.78%. Even though the company's Net Profit Margin is the highest, the company is not free from several operational losses such as the profit of one of the Next Plc brands decreased by 13% compared to two years ago, due to a -2% decrease in sales and additional overhead related to COVID, shipping delays and containers, staff incentives, and foreign currency movements (Next Plc, 2022).

Inventory Turnover

Inventory Turnover					
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Next Plc	8,77	8,29	8,09	6,58	7,31
Asos Plc	5,93	5,09	6,13	4,85	3,67
Boohoo Plc	12,02	12,83	12,46	12,05	7,10
Industry Average	7,44	7,24	7,51	6,89	6,07

Inventory Turnover	5 year average	Ranking
Next Plc	7,81	2
Asos Plc	5,13	3
Boohoo Plc	11,29	1
Industry Average	7,03	

The higher the inventory turnover rate, the higher the profit obtained. The industry standard of inventory turnover is 2.5 times. In general, the higher the inventory turnover, the better and this is a sign that the business sells inventory quickly and efficiently or in the sense that the business manages inventory levels effectively and avoids excess inventory. At this ratio, the average of the three companies above exceeds the industry average. Boohoo Plc with an average number of 11.29 and is ranked first, ranked second followed by Next Plc with an average number of 7.81, and in the last rank with a value of 5.13 where the value is above the industry average,

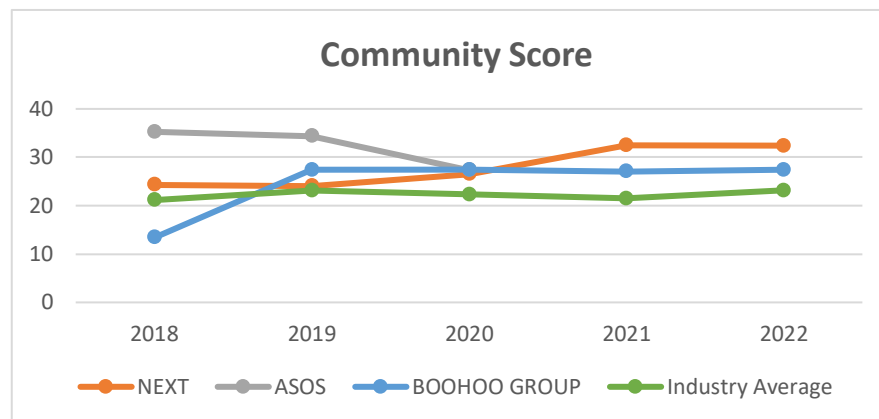
namely ASOS company Plc. The three companies with values above the industry average can be explained that Next Plc, Boohoo Plc,

In 2019 based on an independent auditor's report, the gross value of inventories at the end of the year was £67.9 million, with an allowance of £5.2 million where the company operates in a dynamic and fast-paced fashion industry which inherently means there is a risk of inventory not conforming to fashion and therefore it becomes difficult to sell above cost. Boohoo Plc has an allowance policy based primarily on the age of the goods, with additional amounts recognized against inventory which management expects to be discounted. Inventory of goods that management expects to sell at a discount through an alternative to its website is recorded to reflect the discounted selling price (Boohoo Plc, 2019). In 2022 the retailer (Boohoo) that benefited from the online shopping boom during the Covid-19 pandemic has cut costs including reducing the level of stock it holds by more than a third during this half of the year, to revive corporate profits (Onita, 2023).

Next Plc's company stock levels are "still off target" and it will take time to return them to normal due to the pandemic in early 2021, but online sales are up 49% with Label's very strong business on the online platform (Eley & Alabi, 2022). Meanwhile, Asos has a low turnover compared to the other two companies as much of its inventory is still in stores leading to a Partnership with Secret. As well as giving Asos an avenue to reduce financial loss, working with Secret Sales gives the company another way to clean up inventory efficiently besides clearing inventory by discounting it and selling it on the web (Burney, 2023).

Measurement of Non Financial Ratios (ESG Score)

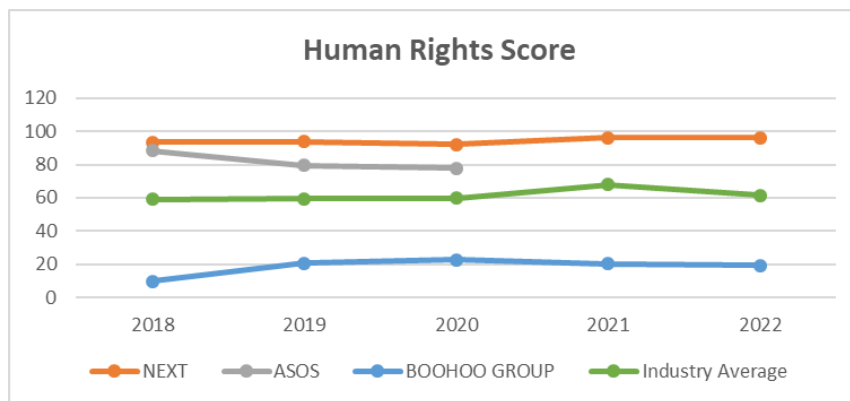
Community Score



	Community Score				
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Next Plc	24,32	24,03	26,54	32,47	32,4
Asos Plc	35,26	34,34	27,32		
Boohoo Plc	13,39	27,43	27,41	27,08	27,43
Industry Average	21,15	23,13	22,31	21,51	23,12

The community score measures a company's commitment to being a good citizen, protecting public health, and respecting business ethics. Asos Plc became the company with the highest Community score in the last 5 years compared to Next and Boohoo. By 2022 100% of partner brands at Asos will commit to Asos' promise of transparency and ethical trade policies by 2025. Asos also has the project #MySenseOfSelf, an interactive program that addresses issues of body image, self-esteem and social media impact, a collaboration between Asos Plc and the anti-bullying organization Diana Award (ASOS Plc, 2022). Next Plc in partnership with Parkinsons UK formed to raise awareness of the disease and raise funds, by designing an exclusive line of t-shirts, tote bags and home goods (Next Plc, 2022). Boohoo also works with many charities including support for the homeless in Manchester, Teenage Cancer Trust, etc (Boohoo Plc, 2022). In 2018, the boohoo group raised £159,000 through peer fundraising and charitable donations and donated over £1,430,000 worth of stock samples to various charities for fundraising (Boohoo Plc, 2018).

Human Right Score

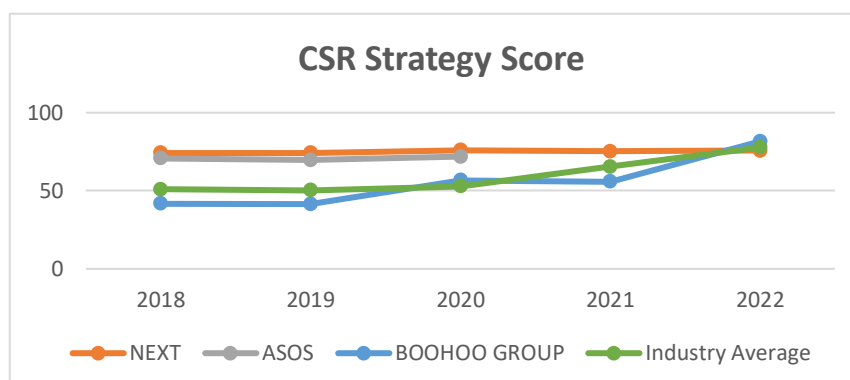


Human Rights Score					
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Next Plc	93,48	93,75	91,98	96,01	96,06
Asos Plc	88,24	79,46	77,7		
Boohoo Plc	9,57	20,49	22,53	20,26	19,35
Industry Average	59,13	59,37	59,74	67,75	61,42

Human Right Score	5 Year Average	Ranking
Next Plc	94,26	1
Asos Plc	81,80	2
Boohoo Plc	18,44	3
Industry Average	61,48	

The human rights score measures a company's effectiveness in respecting fundamental human rights conventions. Next plc in 2022 implements the "Protect, Respect and Improve" framework of the UN guiding principles on Business and Human Rights. Use the UN Guiding Principles Reporting Framework to help identify and manage risks of harm associated with unsatisfactory working conditions, discrimination, modern slavery, human trafficking and forced or bonded labor, especially for the most vulnerable and exploited, such as women and children. Upholding internationally recognized human rights principles (Next Plc, 2022a). Even though it is in the last rank of Boohoo, boohoo has also signed the International Accord, which is committed to improving the health and safety of the garment and textile industry in Bangladesh. Boohoo is also a member of the Slave Free Alliance ("SFA"). SFA will support Boohoo offices overseas by providing advice and guidance on NGOs, which can support prominent human rights issues (Boohoo Plc, 2022).

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Strategy Score



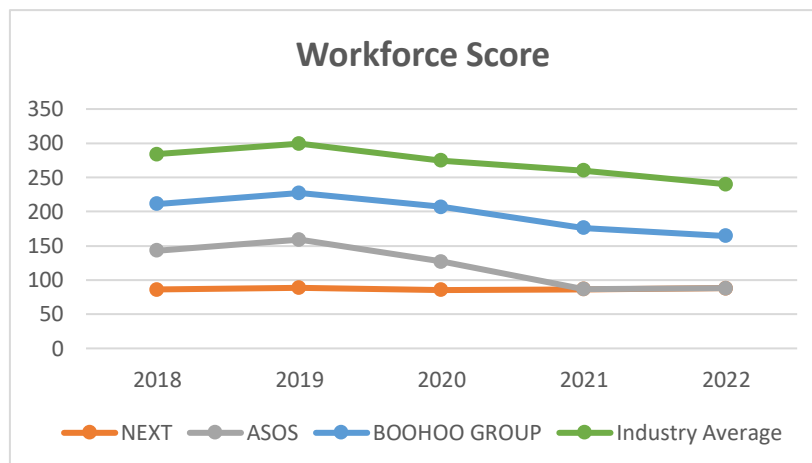
CSR Strategy Score					
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Next Plc	74,16	74,16	75,88	75,18	75,78
Asos Plc	70,69	69,73	71,88		
Boohoo Plc	41,75	41,46	56,73	55,73	81,59
Industry Average	50,91	50,19	52,89	65,46	77,72

CSR Strategy Score	5 year average	Ranking
Next Plc	75,03	1
Asos Plc	70,77	2
Boohoo Plc	55,45	3
Industry Average	59,43	

CSR Score is a company's practises show that it takes economic (financial), social, and environmental factors into account when making decisions on a daily basis. Next Plc has been implementing sustainable product sourcing practices. This includes efforts to ensure the ethical and responsible sourcing of raw materials, particularly in the fashion and textile industries, where labour and environmental concerns are of the highest priority (Next Plc, 2022).

In the same year Asos Plc goals is to Be Transparent. Through our Be Transparent initiative, the company working to advance human rights across its supply chain, with a particular emphasis on issues like women's empowerment, the right to freely associate, and the eradication of modern-day slavery. Asos Plc recognise the importance of transparency and are dedicated to expanding the data the company share about its supply chain in partnership with non-governmental organisations (ASOS Plc, 2022). In 2022 Boohoo Plc made a dispatch bags now contain over 80% recycled plastic. The company working with its suppliers to ensure a consistent approach across all its garment packaging, and the companies keep exploring more sustainable, recyclable packaging materials (Boohoo Plc, 2022).

Workforce Score



Workforce Score					
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Next Plc	86,07	88,59	85,31	86,64	87,81
Asos Plc	57,05	70,48	41,75		
Boohoo Plc	68,03	68,2	79,61	89,53	76,46
Industry Average	72,94	72,15	68,09	83,97	75,83

Workforce Score	5 year average	Ranking
Next Plc	86,88	1
Asos Plc	56,43	3
Boohoo Plc	76,37	2
Industry Average	74,60	

The Workforce Score measures the company's effectiveness on job satisfaction, a healthy and safe workplace, maintaining diversity and equal opportunities, and development opportunities for its workforce. Next is committed to creating an environment where all individuals feel welcome, respected and supported. Next provides equal opportunity and will continue to ensure that Next offers career opportunities without discrimination (Next Plc 2019). In 2021 Next plc conducts an employee engagement survey. The survey was sent to almost 40,000 employees and the response rate was very good. The result of the survey is that employees feel proud to work for Next, and also feel safe at work (Next Plc, 2021).

In second place is Boohoo Group, this company always encourages diversity in the workplace. At the end of February 2022, female colleagues accounted for 54% of the workforce. As for some of the facilities provided by the company so that employees feel safe in their workplace, such as: the existence of gym facilities at the office and also other sports classes, or in collaboration with external partners such as Calm, British Heart Foundation and Mind (Boohoo Plc, 2022). In addition to the mental health support the company offers. this year Asos Plc launched a new package of policies to provide essential support to colleagues of all genders and circumstances who are experiencing health-related life events. This new policy provides support to collaborators experiencing miscarriage, fertility treatment, menopause, and broader health-related life events that require paid time off, such as cancer care (ASOS Plc, 2022).

Emission Score

Emissions Score	5 year average	Ranking
Next Plc	78,39	1
Asos Plc	75,58	2
Boohoo Plc	55,15	3
Industry Average	72,07	

The Emission Score measures the company's commitment and effectiveness in reducing environmental emissions in production and operational processes. Textiles 2030 is a collaboration of the UK textile sector that is making rapid science-based progress on circularity and climate action. Launched in April 2021, this new voluntary agreement builds on the learnings and successes of the 2020 Sustainable Apparel Action Plan and has more than 100 signatories across the retail, recycling and reuse sectors. As a founding signatory partner, by 2030 NEXT aims to reduce combined greenhouse gas emissions by 50%, enough to limit global warming to 1.5°C in line with the United Nations' target to mitigate climate change. NEXT also aims to reduce the water footprint of new products sold by 30% (Next Plc, 2021).

Boohoo Group has set climate change targets based on its Science-Based Targets Initiative, with the goal of achieving carbon reductions across our value chain equivalent to a 52% reduction in emissions relative to our growth by 2030 (Boohoo Plc, 2022). Asos Plc Establishes a new 'Be Net Zero' ambition in this programme, committing to achieving zero carbon emissions by 2030 and carbon reduction through targets set through the Science Based Targets initiative (Asos plc, 2022).

Overall Ranking for Financial and Non Financial Ratio

Overall Ranking Table

Table 2							
Ranking Criteria	Weight	Boohoo Plc		Asos Plc		Next Plc	
		Score	Weighted Score	Score	Weighted Score	Score	Weighted Score
Financial Ratio							
Current Ratio	3	2	6	3	9	1	3
Return On Equity	5	2	10	3	15	1	5
Return On Asset	5	2	10	3	15	1	5
Net Profit Margin	5	2	10	3	15	1	5

Inventory Turnover	4	1	4	3	12	2	8
Non Financial Ratio							
Community Ratio	3	3	9	1	3	2	6
Emissions Score	5	3	15	2	10	1	5
Human Rights Score	4	3	12	2	8	1	4
CSR Score	3	3	9	2	6	1	5
Workforce Score	4	3	8	3	12	1	4
Total Score		23		25		12	
Total Weighted Scores			93		105		48
Ranking			2nd		1st		3rd

Weighting criteria

Importance in the business environment	Weighting
High Importance	5
Above average importance	4
Average Importance	3
Below Average Importance	2
Low Importance	1

For the overall ranking table, the reverse ranking method is used to show the best performing company where the best performing company is given number 3 and the worst performing company is given number 1. From the table above it shows that the best performing company is Next Plc. and the company with less good performance is Asos Plc.

CONCLUSION

This study analyzes the financial and non-financial performance of the apparel retail sector in the UK from 2018-2022 and how the financial and non-financial performance of the apparel retail sector compares before the Covid-19 pandemic and during the Covid-19 pandemic. The results of this study show that the financial and non-financial performance of retail companies in England in 2018-2022 faced several factors that made these companies have to adapt starting from the pandemic, Brexit, shifts in consumer tastes, e-commerce developments, customers who are more concerned about environmental impacts, supply chain disruptions, and decreased consumer spending.

The results of a comparison of financial and non-financial performance before the Covid-19 pandemic, and during Covid-19 for companies in the apparel retail sector in England in 2018-2022. Before Covid-19 companies had steady growth, reliance on physical stores, stable supply chains, Employee well-being, and sustainability initiatives. During Covid-19 companies had different challenges such as Revenue decrease, E-commerce surge, and supply chain disruptions, financial strain, Digital transformation and employee safety. As a whole, the Covid-19 pandemic forced companies in the clothing retail sector to change by quickly and change their strategy in order to stay in business. This crisis shows how important it is to be flexible, digitally ready, and have a strong supply chain. Companies that have invested in digital capabilities and embraced e-commerce are better able to weather the storm. Sustainability and ethical practices remain important, but staying afloat and making changes to operations becomes even more important during the peak of the pandemic.

Overall, the company that has the best performance among the three companies (Next Plc, Asos Plc, and boohoo Plc) in the apparel industry in the UK is Next Plc. The results show that Next plc has had a stable financial condition for the past five years, which is crucial for long-term success and growth in the retail industry. Next has also built a strong brand identity over the years. This recognition helps in building trust and attracting new customers, making it easier to introduce new products or expand into new markets.

The author's choice of a source, namely the annual financial statements of the company, which contains data that is incomplete contributed to the difficulties that the author encountered when writing this research. For poor-performing Company: Asos Plc has a poor performance in 5 out of 5 financial ratios and 1 out of 5 non-financial ratios (ESG Score). The 5 financial ratios and 1 non-financial ratio are Current Ratio, Return

on Equity (ROE), Return on Assets (ROA), Net Profit Margin (NPM), Inventory Turnover, and Community Score. To increase the company's profitability through its financial performance which is calculated using Asos Plc's financial and non-financial ratios by reducing underperforming projects, increasing asset turnover, selling underperforming assets, and increasing the company's cash flow. To increase the community score, companies can focus on increasing short-term targets within a period of 6 months to 1 year, companies can also track the number of participants for each event held. For future researcher The author anticipates that forthcoming studies will explore various industries or populations. Alternatively, in the case of examining the same population, future researchers are encouraged to employ distinct samples or companies. Future researchers are also expected to use various trusted sources outside the company's annual report in order to obtain more information related to related companies such as bloomberg.com which provides the latest news related to the company.

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