



The role of marketing to avoid product returns in online shopping

How marketers help online consumers to make better purchase decisions and thus avoid product returns

Mohamad Saad El Deen

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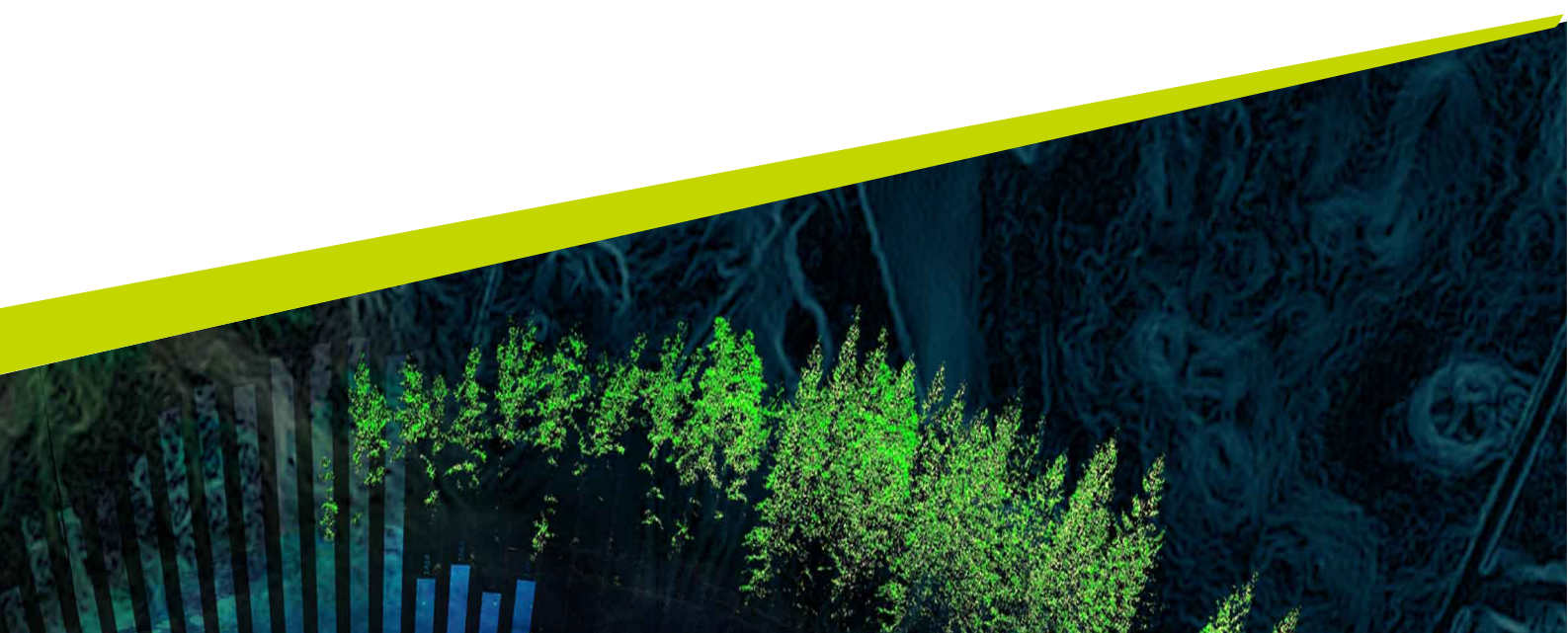
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Abstract

The increasing alarm about global climate change and the related consequences on the planet and humankind has raised the voices to adopt sustainability within organisations and businesses. The wide spread of the internet and smart devices allowed many consumers to buy their needs through smart devices without the need to travel to physical stores. Online shoppers are expected to increase significantly in the coming years. The online shopping environment allows a wide range of products and provides convenience to online consumers. However, this led to a significant increase in product returns among different retail sectors, including the clothing and home electronic sectors. The high products return folds into many disadvantages to the environment, society, and economics, such as higher CO2 emissions because of the increased number of shipping trips when products are returned. The increase in the number of packages and loss of product values when a consumer returns a product also significantly impacts sustainability. The high competition in the online shopping market drive marketers to provide different services such as free and fast delivery and flexible returns policies to maintain competitive advantages and thus encourage consumers to buy their products. Moreover, the legal structure protects consumers right to return the products, which hinders marketers from strict their return policies to reduce product returns. However, reducing the high returns is still in the interest of online retailers as high returns encounter higher operating costs such as repackaging and the depreciation value of the products. Many studies have explored the importance of reducing high product returns in online shopping and mentioned the different disadvantages for companies, the environment, and society. Other studies have investigated the reasons behind the high product returns within the online shopping environment.

In contrast, fewer studies have addressed solutions to overcome the problems of high product returns. Because online consumers make their purchase decisions without physical interaction with the brand or its products, online consumers need more help to ensure that their purchase decisions can fulfil their desires and needs. The author of this paper suggests that marketers can help consumers make better purchase decisions since reducing product returns fall in the company's interest. Marketers are essential actors in targeting consumers to buy products. Marketers can help to create a better fit between the consumers and the products they purchase online and thus make a better purchase decision and avoid returning the products. Therefore, this paper explores how marketers can help consumers to make better purchase decisions and thus avoid product returns. Moreover, the study investigates how digital marketing tools can help marketers reach targeted consumers and help consumers to make better purchase decisions. The paper follows a case-study research design. The data were collected through semi-structured interviews with defined individuals who have worked in eCommerce and digital marketing. The paper adapts in-depth narrative analysis to interpret marketers' practices during the consumer's decision journey to help them make better purchase decisions.

In conclusion, the findings show that marketers can play an essential role in helping online consumers make better purchase decisions and thus avoid returning products. To avoid products, return marketers have to target consumers who are in need or interested in their products and convey detailed and truthful information about the brand and products. Digital marketing enabled marketers to reach their targeted consumers and optimise communications with them like never been, which in turn helps consumers to make better purchase decisions and thus avoid products return.

Keywords: E-commerce, high products return, digital marketing, consumer decision journey, avoid products returns.

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Abbreviations

eWOM Electronic Word of Mouth

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Today we live in a world where the Internet has become widely available, and many people can communicate and use it in many activities. Also, due to the availability of smart devices, especially mobile phones, many consumers switch to online stores instead of physical stores (Faulds et al., 2018). Online shopping is convenient due to the ability to obtain purchases anytime and anywhere in the world through mobile phones and computers. Online shopping also gives consumers the ability to get information about products in a short time and the ability to compare products and prices (Kim et al., 2018).

Riksbank's survey of the payment methods of the Swedish population in 2020 stated that 66% of the respondents' purchased goods or services through online platforms in 2020 compared to 56% in 2018. 80% of the purchases of the age group 25-44 were made online. According to Statista website, Sweden has placed the 19th largest market for eCommerce, with a revenue of US\$15.5 billion in 2021. The Swedish eCommerce market has increased by 20%, contributing to the worldwide growth rate of 15% in 2021. Like in global eCommerce sales, Sweden's eCommerce is expected to increase over the following years as new markets emerge. In 2021, online shopping was estimated at 146 billion Swedish Kronor, compared to 122 billion in 2020.

Moreover, from 2007 to 2021, e-commerce grew each year, and online retail accounted for 2021 16% of the entire retail business. When looking at the online purchases of customers in Sweden, about 41% of the respondents have stated clothing and footwear. Next comes the home electronics sector, with about 23% (Statista.com). Thus, the significant increase in online shoppers led many companies to consider online stores an essential strategy to maintain their market share and keep pace with changes in consumer behaviour (Rosário & Raimundo, 2021).

Online shopping can contribute to achieving several advantages for sustainability. Before online shopping, everyone had to go to the shops to buy their needs. Sometimes, consumers need to move from one place to another to identify alternative products and verify that they made the right purchasing decision.

Through online shopping, consumers can compare and buy what they need without travelling; therefore, online shopping helps reduce consumers' trips to the markets and thus reduce carbon dioxide emissions (Carrillo, J.E, 2014). Economically e-retailers can achieve better financial performance due to the current opportunities of reducing costs, such as eliminating or reducing the number of physical stores (Mangiaracina, R., 2015).

On the other hand, online shopping has many disadvantages, some of which pose severe problems for sustainability. On the environmental dimension, online shopping has contributed to an increase in the number of shipments which has led to an increase in the amount of carbon dioxide emissions (Nisar, T.M. & Prabhakar, 2017). Moreover, online stores wrap up consumers' purchases and put them in special boxes to ensure they reach safely, leading to more product packaging and types (van Loon et al., 2015). On the social dimension, the spread of online shopping and its many benefits to consumers has led many companies to reduce the number of physical stores, resulting in many employees losing their jobs. (Biagi, F. & Falk, 2017). On the economic dimension, many problems also ensue, the most important of which are high competitiveness and pressures (Macchion et al., 2017).

1.2 Research problem

The following two paragraphs present the empirical problem and the theoretical problem regarding the high product returns in the online shopping environment. The empirical problem illustrates different stats of product returns volume and the main challenges contributing to the problem. The theoretical problem shows the gap in knowledge in the existing literature, which this study intends to address.

1.2.1 Empirical Problem

As stated above, online shopping provides convenience to consumers, enhancing online shopping and resulting in high product returns. This is important because product returns negatively impact society, the environment, and the company. The significant increase in product returns leads to many adverse effects on sustainable development goals. The carbon dioxide emissions from freight and delivery trips increase when consumers return products. Returns also lead to higher consumption of packaging materials, higher waste, and losses in the value of products. According to Reagan 2019, 30% of online-ordered products are returned by customers, compared to only 9% in physical stores. It is also estimated that the volume of returns will reach more than a trillion dollars annually in the coming years. UPS reported that in December 2018, returns reached \$1 million per day due to the Christmas holidays. Amazon also resorted to banning some customers due to the many returns they made (Safdar & Stevens, 2018). In some cases, Amazon and

Wal-Mart also resorted to returning consumers' money while keeping the product with them because doing so had less loss than returning the products (Kapner & Ziobro, 2021).

Different reasons contribute to the product returns problem. The online shopping environment differs from traditional shopping in different aspects. For example, the lack of physical presence of products and the absence of direct consumer-product interaction results in the loss of a large part of the consumer experience. Online consumers make their purchase decisions before touching and examining purchased products; thus, the knowledge and experience might vary before and after the delivery of the product. Moreover, the online shopping environment also provides consumers with a wide variety of different products and greater convenience with the ability to compare, choose and buy what they want at any time and without the need to travel to stores.

Nevertheless, the online shopping market is highly competitive (Hjort et al., 2016). The high competition of the online market enforces online stores to compete not only with the quality and prices of their products but also with a range of diversified services such as accessibility, fast and free delivery, and efficient returns (ibid.). In addition, the legal structures guarantee the right of return to consumers; thus, it is difficult for companies to change return policies and make them stricter. Therefore, the different characteristics of the online shopping environment exacerbate the problem of product returns because it may lead consumers to make wrong and irresponsible purchasing decisions and higher product returns (Foscht et al., 2013; Yan & Cao, 2017).

In summary, the issue of product return is one of the most critical issues in the online shopping environment, resulting in severe damage to achieving sustainability and engaging companies' goals. Therefore, the balance between consumer satisfaction and reducing product returns must be made (Röllecke et al., 2017; Hjort et al., 2016). High product returns contribute to higher costs, are unfriendly to the environment, and are annoying to consumers (E-barometern, 2019). High products return often lead to additional costs for disposal and processing, such as repackaging and depreciation of product value. In addition, customers may view product returns as an indication of the seller's inability to deliver value, negatively affecting customer satisfaction and trust (Walsh & Brylla, 2017).

1.2.2 Theoretical problem

As mentioned above, the effects on sustainability and the factors that cause high returns in the online shopping environment are known. In theory, the online shopping environment provides consumers greater convenience and the ability to order anytime from anywhere (Foscht et al., 2013; Yan & Cao, 2017). It is also known that the online shopping environment has created a market situation with

high volumes of product returns, which has both positive effects (e.g., more convenience for customers, business opportunities for firms etc. as well as negative consequences for society (e.g., working arrangement in transport/ logistics); for the environment (higher transportation trips and CO2 emissions) and more (Kim et al., 2018; Carrillo, J.E, 2014). We also know that the lack of physical presence of products and the absence of direct consumer-product interaction, the wide variety of available products, the high competition of the online market, and the legal structures that guarantee the right of return to consumers are all well-known factors that contribute to the problem (Hjort et al., 2016). Moreover, several researchers have looked at a range of solutions that could help alleviate the problem. For example, some suggested an omnichannel solution, which means providing a showroom to complement the online store and allow interaction with the products for the willing customers. However, omnichannel provides limited showroom coverage and, therefore, is not economically feasible (Bell et al., 2015).

On the other hand, very few studies have focused on the role of marketers in mitigating product returns. Online consumers make purchase decisions without physically interacting with the brand or its products. Thus, online consumers need more help to ensure their purchase decisions can fulfil their desires and needs. In contrast, marketers seek to satisfy consumers' desires and need to persuade consumers to buy their products. Therefore, the author of this paper suggests that marketers are essential actors who can help consumers to make better purchase decisions especially reducing product returns fall in the interest of the company and marketers. Therefore, marketers can help to create a better fit between the consumers and the products they purchase online and thus make a better purchase decision and avoid returning the products. Moreover, a few studies have focused on online stores that only provide online sales and are in Sweden. Therefore, there is a gap in knowledge related to the marketer's role in avoiding product returns in online stores, and this thesis will investigate this knowledge gap.

1.3 Research aim

Consumers seek to find the best products that suit their needs and desires, while marketers seek to encourage consumers to buy their products through advertisements and multimedia channels. Returning the products is not for the benefit of the company and the marketers. Therefore, the author argues that marketers can help consumers to find what they are looking for and thus avoid returning the products.

Accordingly, this thesis aims to investigate how marketers can help consumers to make better purchase decisions and thus avoid product returns in the online shopping environment. For this aim, the author suggests that it is vital to understand the different stages online consumers go through during their decision journey so

marketers can provide better communications and, thus, better purchase decisions. Investigating how marketers can fulfil online consumers' needs in each stage is also essential. Other external factors that affect consumers' purchase decisions were also investigated. Finally, this paper explored how marketers can use digital marketing tools to help consumers make better purchase decisions and lower product returns. Accordingly, this research aims to answer the following question:

How marketers help online consumers to make better purchase decision and thus avoid product returns?

2. Literature review and theoretical approach

This study investigates how marketers help online consumers make better purchase decisions and thus avoid product returns. Marketers play a central role in the online shopping environment. The theoretical foundation of this thesis builds on a literature review of how eCommerce and online shopping emerged. Then the author presented a literature review of some digital marketing practices and tools. The theoretical approach then follows and highlights the selected frameworks for the analysis of this study.

2.1 E-commerce and online shopping

E-commerce is the sale and purchase of goods or services via the Internet. The order's data, parties of the contract, and order payments are exchanged through the Internet. Exchanging information through the Internet was only possible once Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) and Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) technologies appeared. Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) and Data Interchange (EDI) were developed in the 1970s. They enabled the exchange of information and the execution of electronic purchase orders and payments, which were considered the foundation for establishing e-commerce and online trading platforms. However, e-commerce was only developed in the 1990s after developing new software that allowed the Internet to practice commercial transactions (Rosário & Raimundo, 2021).

OECD has defined e-commerce, and it is the most common definition. They defined it broadly: "An electronic transaction is the sale or purchase of goods or services, whether between businesses, households, individuals, governments, and other public or private organisations, conducted over computer-mediated networks. The goods and services are ordered over those networks, but the payment and the ultimate delivery of the good or service may be conducted on- or off-line" (Fichter, 2002). Online shopping is a form of e-commerce that allows consumers to purchase their needs via the Internet using a web browser or mobile applications.

Online shopping has spread rapidly, especially after the covid-19 pandemic, where many businesses and individuals had to change their living patterns in

different aspects. Many countries have forced lockdowns for a long time, leading people to alter their purchasing patterns. E-commerce and online markets were the prime solutions for many organisations and people, enabling them to resume their activities from their homes (UNECE, 2020). Moreover, the retail industry has undergone a significant change in recent decades. It is mainly due to the spread of the Internet, smart devices, and intelligent applications, which enabled people to practice their shopping electronically without the need to visit stores in person to get their needs (Verhoef et al., 2015). It is also expected that the number of online shoppers will increase significantly, and more product categories will be available for online sales. This increase is an opportunity to achieve profits for many online retailers. However, it entails many challenges in dealing with the large volume of sales transactions and the consequent problems of product returns (Optoro, 2019; Robertson et al., 2020).

2.2 Online shopping and digital marketing

During the last two decades, digital marketing emerged due to the wide use of the Internet and the availability of different devices which allow consumers to perform their commercial purchases through their mobiles and computers or any other device connected to the Internet (Kannan, 2017). Since more consumers are shopping online, marketers have also developed new practices of digital marketing that address the online market environment characteristics. *Digital marketing* is the marketers' practices to promote products and services using digital platforms and channels. Marketers' practices in digital markets are described as using digital technologies to obtain consumers' attention, build their preferences, promote brands, and retain customers (ibid.). It is essential to understand the online environment to develop new digital marketing practices that help consumers make better purchase decisions and thus avoid product returns. The conventional marketing strategy analyses the environment by including the five 5Cs. The 5cs are customers, collaborators, competitors, context, and company. In an online shopping environment, customers can interact with the company and other customers through different platforms and media channels. In the online shopping environment, consumers can access information about the products through interactions with search engines, online reviews, recommendations, and similar information not produced or controlled by the brand.

On the other hand, marketers can access big data, from different digital platforms, about consumers' behaviours and interactions to understand consumers' needs and thus satisfy them. Accordingly, online stores cannot live in isolation from society and consumers. Therefore, organisations have to shift their business strategies toward creating absorptive (Tidd & Bessant, 2021), adoptive (Bharadwaj et al., 2013), and dynamic capabilities (Day, 2011) to search outside the

organisation and the sector to keep pace with business development and gain better competitive advantage (Day, 2011). According to Mangold et al. (2009), Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) has traditionally leaned on one-way communication. Organisations communicate with their consumers without any control over the consumer process. The author of this paper argues that consumer interactions through different platforms and social media need to be incorporated into organisational communication strategies to facilitate two-way communication. Marketers collect information dispersed from consumers' interactions via electronic Word of Mouth (WOM) to enhance marketing strategies.

According to Kundu & Rajan (2017), eWOM includes comments, tweets, blogging, information, and opinions consumers share on digital platforms. eWOM entails processes that affect buyers' behaviour, pre-and post expectations and perceptions of the organisation and brand. The interest in WOM amongst scholars is increasing due to the rising importance of WOM affecting the consumer journey in both a positive and negative way, depending on the content (Jalilvand *et al.*, 2011; Kundu & Rajan, 2017). Through collecting and analysing such information, marketers can improve their products, clarify any missing understandings, investigate high returns reasons and thus fix them. Akbari *et al.* (2022) state that eWOM significantly impacts a company's success. One of the main advantages is the opportunity to form relationships between consumers and companies or consumers to consumers. According to Bhandari et al. (2021), negative eWOM influences consumers' attitudes and behaviours. They continue by arguing that responding to negative eWOM and getting involved instead of doing nothing can improve the company's image and reputation. However, companies must also deliver their promises when responding to a negative eWOM; otherwise, the reply would not have any positive effects.

Furthermore, the analytical tools allowed marketers to find their targeted consumers more than ever. Marketers can track consumer traffic by collecting usage data from websites and apps when consumers browse the page. Digital marketing tools generate several reports to help marketers better understand consumer activities and interactions with their business to optimise their shopping experience and satisfy their needs. It is based on artificial intelligence and machine learning. For example, Google established 2005 a new software to analyse web data through Google Analytics to help users understand and analyse the activity of their consumers and predict marketing indicators. It has become one of the most widely used statistical software.

The data that Google collects about consumers is tracking the session duration on the website, the pages that the consumer spends the longest time on, and the bounce rate of individuals, which is the percentage of visitors that leave a webpage without taking action, in addition to information about the source of consumer traffic. The latest version of Analytics Google Analytics 4 (GA4) properties

allowed marketers to create different investigations and advertisement campaigns according to their needs. For example, marketers can create an event to track any consumers has visited the home page for the first time and thus create an automatic advertisement about their latest news and products to influence consumers to move forward in their purchase decision journey. Marketers have only to create a tag and link it to a specific event. When consumers complete the tagged action on that webpage, such as adding a product to their shopping cart, Google Analytics provides marketers with complete reports that include information about these users' activities and thus act accordingly. In addition, Google Analytics can review the impact of these campaigns by tracking the quality of the results and whether they achieved the desired goals, such as increasing sales, creating lists of potential consumers, or downloading a specific file from the page. The basis of Google Analytics' approach is to provide the user with a highly detailed set of reports and data from a consumer dashboard.

Furthermore, online shoppers usually switch between different devices or accounts. Google Analytics 4 can identify these consumers based on the best identifiers to avoid duplicated decision journeys for the same consumer. The tools identify consumers through their device id, IP address, or through their signed-in Gmail. The tools allow the collection and analysis of data from both websites and applications, whether IOS or Android, which help marketers gain insights into consumer decision journeys across different platforms.

On the other hand, Google Analytics can identify weaknesses on the website through modern technologies such as funnel visualisation path, which gives the user an idea of the consumer's traffic, where they came from, the duration of their browsing, and their geographical location through their IP address. One of the essential features of Google Analytics that distinguishes it from other sites is that it provides real-time data analysis, which gives the user a quick view of the consumers currently on his site. This feature allows the collective analysis of consumers to understand their behaviour and predict their potential behaviour, which helps marketers and analysts create successful marketing strategies. However, Google Analytics faces many challenges and limitations. Many filtering programs, such as Firefox's Enhanced Tracking Protection, block Google Analytics services and deprive users of collecting data and consumer traffic.

Moreover, consumers can easily delete Google Analytics cookies for fear of violating their privacy since the cookies have the chance to remember the consumers' previous interactions on the website. Another limitation facing Google Analytics is its heavy reliance on random sampling in creating its reports. This also creates a large margin of error. Moreover, Google Analytics cannot track the traffic of those not connected to the Internet, such as points of sale or payment gateways. The audience is a feature in GA4, and it lets you segment users in ways that are important to the business. Marketers can segment consumers by dimensions,

metrics, and events and customise ads accordingly through Google Ads, another tool provided by Google.

Nevertheless, other tools such as Facebook Ads Manager enabled marketers to target consumers based on their profiles and geographical and demographic location, and other different metrics such as their interests and hobbies. The tools provide marketers with different insights related to consumers' interactions with advertisements, such as how many see the ad, what is their location, gender, and age. Marketers can also know who has moved to the company's website through advertisement and thus identify them as interested consumers. The tools allow retargeting of the same group again who already showed an interest in the previous advertisements.

2.3 Theoretical approach

In this section, the author demonstrates the theoretical framework used to analyse the collected data in the coming chapters. The author showed why it was selected for this research in each of the selected theoretical frameworks.

2.3.1 Consumer decision journey

The retail industry has undergone a significant change in recent decades. It is mainly due to the spread of the Internet, smart devices, and intelligent applications, which enabled people to practice their shopping electronically without visiting stores in person to get their needs (Verhoef et al., 2015). It is also expected that the number of online shoppers will increase significantly, and more product categories will be available for online sales. Online market growth is an opportunity to achieve profits for many online retailers. However, it entails many challenges in dealing with the large volume of sales transactions and the consequent problems of product returns (Oporto, 2019; Robertson et al., 2020).

As stated earlier, to understand how marketers can help consumers make better purchase decisions and thus avoid product returns, it is necessary to understand the different stages consumers go through during their shopping experience. The simple model divides the consumer decision journey based on social and cognitive philosophy into four stages. They are awareness, interest, desire, and action (AIDA) (Wijaya, 2012). Although the consumer decision journey is faster and less linear today, there is still a beginning, an end, and other defining stages in between. Many have portrayed the consumer journey, including Batra and Keller's (2016) framework, A Dynamic, Expanded Consumer Decision Journey, which divides the consumer's decision journey into twelve stages and shows how they are interrelated (See Figure 1). Each stage of the consumers' decision journey has different attributes and addresses different consumers' conditions. Throughout a consumer's

journey through brands and for any one brand, the consumer can undo, skip steps, move forward, or choose to reject the brand implicitly or explicitly. A consumer can be derailed by the failure of any of the journey's stages. Such as ignoring the brand's existence or a failed experience with the product.

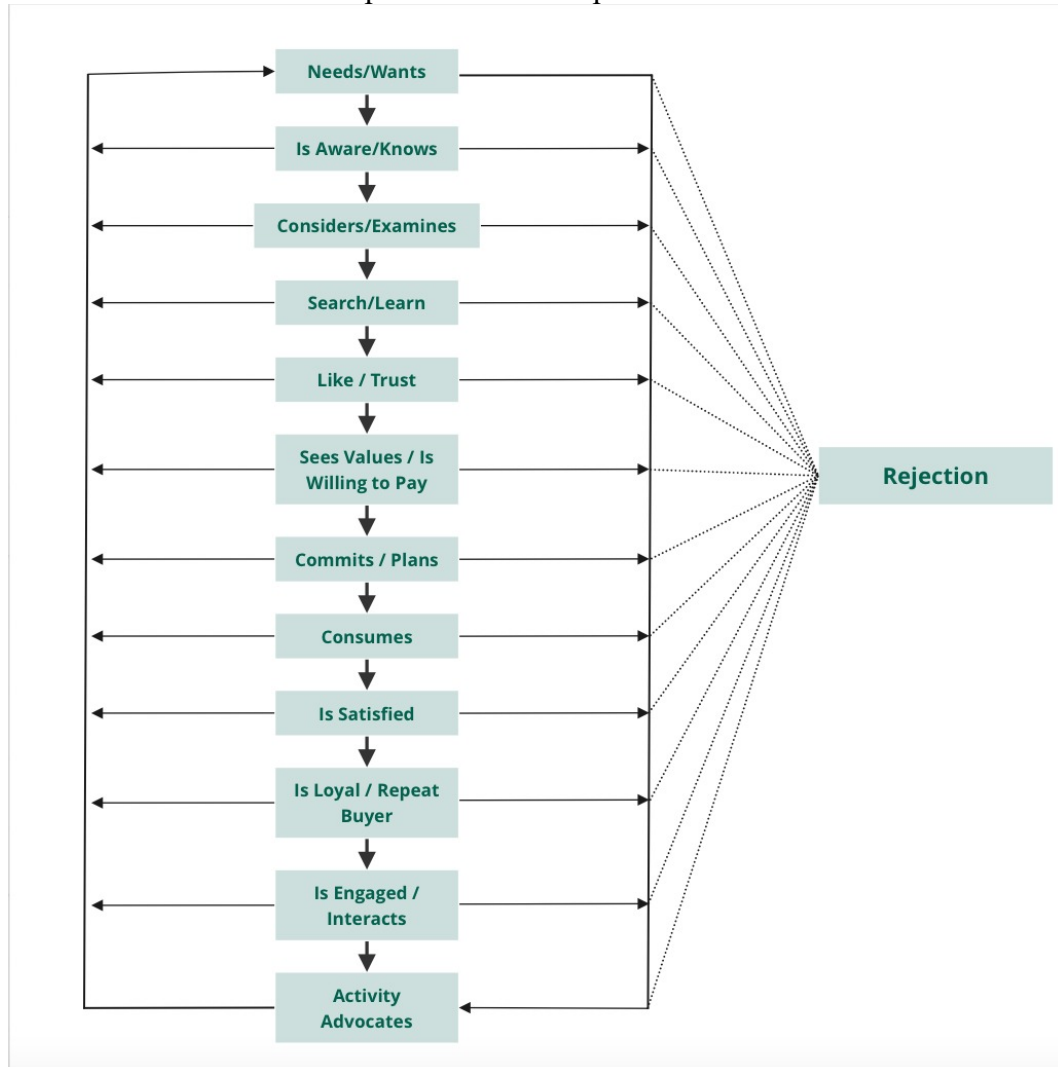


Figure 1. A Dynamic, Expanded Consumer Decision Journey (Inspired by Batra and Keller 2016)

The consumers' state of mind and needed information/experience varies according to their position in this journey. Batra and Keller (2016) have described each stage of the consumer decision journey, which starts with the Needs/Wants stage and ends with stage twelve, Interacts and Actively Advocacy. Throughout the twelve stages, consumers seek to satisfy different needs to ensure that their purchase decisions can satisfy their expectations. The needs along the decision journey vary between finding the required information about brands and products before and after consuming the products and examining brands and after consuming the products. Stage eight, Consumes, begins the post-experience after consuming the products. Stages nine to twelve consider customer satisfaction and loyalty to the brands and products. The author of this thesis demonstrated all the twelve stages of

the consumer decision journey in a table (see table 1). The objective of the table is to help the reader to understand each of the consumer decision journey stages' attributes and the sequence and interrelations of the stages. It is worth noting again that the consumers move forward/backwards, skip, or reject the brand/product.

Table 1. Stages of the Consumer decision journey (Inspired by Batra and Keller, 2016)

Consumer decision journey stages	Description
Stage One: Needs/Wants.	In the first step, the consumers notice an unmet need or desire and begin to think about products or services that satisfy that need. Marketers at this stage show consumers the needs that their product range meets.
Stage two: Aware/Knows.	Some brands are considered whose products may satisfy the desired need at this stage. In the second stage, the consumer is driven by desire and enthusiasm, not knowledge—marketers at this stage work to enhance the brand's accessibility and salience.
Stages three and four: Considers/Examines and Searches/Learns.	Consumers' processing of information increases in these two steps. Consumers are looking for more accurate information. Consumers often turn to browse review sites or even visit a physical store. Therefore, marketers drive consumers to brands' websites for this information through search engine advertising.
Stage Five: Likes/Trusts.	At some point, consumers are looking for reliable evidence to support the brand's claims and information. This can be achieved through third-party testing, endorsements, and testimonials from previous clients. Accordingly, marketers seek to raise brand value by interacting with consumers through social media. Building trust in the brand is essential to providing reliable information and guarantees to consumers during this stage.
Stage Six: See value/ Is willing to pay.	After the consumer trusts the brand, the consumer decides the value of the preferred brand and the price they are willing to pay. This value relates to the benefit that consumers receive in return.

Stage Seven: Commits/Plans.	At this point, the consumer becomes willing to purchase and trusts the product. However, a delay may occur, for example, due to the complexity of the purchase process or the fact that the desired benefit is less than the purchase price. Therefore, marketers seek to make the purchase process more accessible and ensure consumers' privacy and data are preserved or offer discounts to consumers at this point.
Stage Eight: Consumes.	Here the consumers start using the product after the purchase decision is made.
Stages Nine and Ten: Satisfied and Loyal/Repeat Buyer.	Here the consumer feels satisfied with the product, and marketers seek to enhance this feeling by continuing to show consumers the product's value. When consumers are satisfied, the chance of re-ordering increases over time. During this period, marketers work to increase interaction with these customers through various means of communication—emails to rate customer satisfaction and offer them special promotions.
Stages Eleven and Twelve: Engaged/Interacts and Actively Advocacy.	In these stages, the consumer becomes part of the brand's marketing. The consumer advises others to buy the product or service, for example, through Facebook pages and may come to the defense of the brand when they feel it reflects their personality and values or reminds them of sentiment or an essential part of their lives. To get to this point, marketers must use motivators related to sentiment and community, not just the product.

In summary, consumers seek to find the best products that suit their needs and requirements, while marketers seek to enhance consumers to purchase their products. Batra and Keller's (2016) framework shows that consumers go through different purchase decision stages. The framework also explains consumers' demands at each purchase decision stage. Accordingly, marketers must satisfy these needs to move consumers forward and encourage them to keep buying their products (Batra & Keller, 2016). However, due to the different reasons behind the high returns in the online environment, such as the lack of physical exitance, marketers need to encourage the consumers to make the purchase decisions and

keep the products after they purchase them. Therefore, since keeping the product is in the marketer's interest, marketers can play a significant role in helping consumers to make a better purchase decision that suits their needs and desires and thus avoid product returns. The marketer must understand and satisfy the different needs and demands of the consumers in each of these stages to help them to make a better purchase decision rather than promoting and pushing consumers to buy their products which leads consumers to wrong purchase decisions and returning the products. In each of the twelve stages suggested by Batra and Keller's (2016) framework, marketers can help consumers to make a better purchase decision by providing the relevant information and needs, which accordingly enhances consumers' judgment and thus result in a better purchase decision. Providing consumers with all the related information along the decision journey help them to make better purchase decisions. Therefore, the author of this paper will use the framework of A Dynamic, Expanded Consumer Decision Journey suggested by Batra and Keller (2016) as the first theoretical approach for the data analysis of this paper.

The following sub-section is the second theoretical framework the author has selected for this thesis. The framework explains how consumers process marketers' communications and what are the different factors that affect the communication process.

2.3.2 Understanding consumer communication processing

Online Marketers seek to satisfy consumers' needs along their decision journey by communicating different information contents through different media channels. To help consumers to make better purchase decisions, marketers not only have to provide all the related information about the brand, but it is also necessary to understand how consumers process the received information. When consumers process communications incorrectly, it can lead to wrong purchase decisions and product returns.

According to Batra and Keller's (2016) framework Factors That Affect Consumer Communication Processing, four key factors affect consumer communication processing: the consumer's characteristics, the context (receiving messages), the content of the communication itself, and the outcomes. The characteristics of the consumer factor affect consumer communication processing through three different attributes. They are motivation, ability, and opportunity. These characteristics play a significant role in achieving the desired results. In the event of a deficiency in these characteristics, the consumer's information processing will be impaired and may not even occur. Thus, the desired results of communication information will not be achieved. The consumer's motivation to process the received information varies with how the consumers view this

information as the potential for helping them select which brands/products can meet their needs or desires.

On the other hand, the ability of consumers to process communication relies on other factors, such as the consumers' prior familiarity and knowledge about the brand and products. While motivation and ability are factors at the consumer level, opportunity to do is often closely related to the second factor, the context of the nature of the communication medium itself and the situation surrounding when the message was received. Time and place affect consumers' communication process when they receive information. The characteristics of the communications content are the third factor that affects consumers' information processing. Creative strategies such as videos attract attention and increase consumer motivation to process information. The information varies in modality, brand and product information, execution of the information, and credibility of its source. The nature of the medium itself could affect the chance of processing communications content. For example, the size of a mobile screen reduces the processing of deep information compared to displaying it on computer screens. It is worth noting that providing credibility to this information is critical to motivating consumers throughout their consumer decision journey. The author has selected Batra and Keller's (2016) framework, Factors That Affect Consumer Communication Processing, to understand better how marketers can help consumers to avoid product returns by making better purchase decisions. When marketers understand the factors that affect consumer communication processing, they can find opportunities where consumers are motivated to process information and achieve better outcomes. The better outcomes achievement helps for a better consumer purchase decision.

3. Methodology and research design

This chapter describes the methodology and research design used to collect and analyse data. Also, it discusses the study's limitations, from an academic and practical point of view, and the challenges the researcher faced as well as ethical considerations.

3.1 Research design

The researcher decided to conduct qualitative research and collect the data through semi-structured interviews to analyse it. This indicates conducting case study research (Bell & Bryman, 2011). According to Flyvbjerg (2006), to investigate a particular phenomenon within social science, a case study is an excellent approach to answering research questions. A case study can focus on a single organisation, location, person, or event. High product is one of the challenges related to online shopping and sustainability. Since the study aims to investigate the marketer's role in helping consumers make better purchase decisions and thus avoid products return, the case study will examine individuals who worked or are working in digital marketing and eCommerce. The examined marketers are the unit of observation for this thesis, while the unit of analysis is the event of the role of marketers in helping consumers to make better purchase decisions. It is common to link case studies with qualitative data collection method (Bell et al., 2019).

Moreover, this thesis focuses on collecting primary data only. One of the biggest strengths of case study research design is that case studies investigate a representative case, can be used to conclude similar cases, and can be used as guides for future studies (ibid.). The data analysis depends on the interviewees' personnel's perception of different practices to avoid product returns. Through this method, researchers can ask several questions in the interview based on the interviewees' answers, which helps achieve greater flexibility for both the researcher and the interviewees regarding the answers and interpretation provided (Bell & Bryman, 2011). Moreover, through semi-structured interviews, researchers can identify similarities and differences in respondents' answers (Bell & Bryman, 2011).

3.2 Research philosophy

Qualitative research was chosen because it is interpretive in nature since it includes the analysis of both oral data through interviews and written data (Greener, 2008; Bell & Bryman, 2019). Because the research question requires a deep understanding of the narration of the individuals, the study is conducted based on ontological assumptions through understanding these individuals within the social world with which they interact (Deetz, 1996). Accordingly, researchers assume that these individuals' narrations of the applications they practice avoiding return are the primary source for understanding the nature of a social world phenomenon (Burrell & Morgan, 1979).

3.3 Trustworthiness of qualitative research

The author of this thesis is responsible for ensuring that the case study for this paper processes a high-quality research paper. According to Bell et al. (2019), internal and external validity are the most common parameters to ensure the trustworthiness of quantitative research. Credibility in qualitative research refers to internal validity in quantitative research, which means that the study's findings have to ensure the trustworthiness of the qualitative research paper. Transferability considers if the findings can be applied in other contexts, describes the degree of generalization of a single case, and refers to external validity in quantitative research (Bell et al., 2019). There are different measures to increase the trustworthiness of qualitative research (Cope, 2014). The author of this paper used Triangulation, a strategic approach to enhance the credibility of a study by using different resources for data collection. The author has collected primary data from different individuals working in different organizations, which results in better credibility of the results of this paper.

3.4 Data collection and sampling

The unit of analysis of this study is the event of how marketers help consumers to make better purchase decisions and thus avoid products return. Therefore, the author chose marketers as the unit of observation for this study. For this purpose, the author chose sequential purposive sampling, which allows a higher flexibility in adjusting the sample group size over time (Teddlie & Yu, 2007). The reason for selecting sequential purposive sampling is because of the time limits of conducting this research which emphasises the importance of a flexible approach, and because of the complexity of the aim of this study which investigates the high products return in online shopping environment. This study explores how marketers help

consumers make better purchase decisions and thus avoid product returns. Therefore, the data were collected through qualitative semi-instructed interviews with several individuals working in e-commerce and digital marketing. E-commerce experts enhance a better depiction of the online environment, while marketing is the core focus of the study. Semi-instructed interviews are a popular method in qualitative research, and it allows for conducting interviews with group or individuals. However, the author of this thesis chose to conduct the interviews individually instead of in groups to allow a higher focus on one interviewee and get deeper insights into the research problem and aim (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). The author selected semi-instructed interviews because it allows high flexibility and an open method for data collection. The interviewer can interact with the interviewee by asking different questions based on the interviewee's answers without following the sequence of setted questions before the interview.

Moreover, semi-structured qualitative interviewing provides a primary source, not limited to the number of interviews, but to the quality of the collected data (Bell et al., 2019). The individuals were reached through several different means, including personal networks and have been contacted by email. The questions were chosen to allow respondents to discuss openly (Bell & Bryman, 2011). This helps ensure that the questions are not questions that drive the interviewees' answers or direct them in a particular direction (Bell & Bryman, 2011; Greener, 2008). Accordingly, the questions were formulated without being incredibly defined to provide a space for open discussions and to help us answer the research question (ibid.). A list of the main interview questions is presented at the end of this paper (see appendix 1). The interviews were conducted in English and via Zoom. During the interviews, the author first notified the interviewees that the interview would be recorded to analyse the answers for the objectives of the study. Upon their approval, the interview begins, which takes an informal format and ranges between 30-40 minutes per interview. This time allows interviewees to respond more comfortably and ask new questions when we get the same answers from previous interviews (Bill and Breman, 2011). According to Bill and Breman (2011), the interviewer can take relevant notes supporting the study purpose, as it is possible to review the notes and the respondents' answers within the recordings. The process of transcribing interviews begins using an online application. However, the transcription results are reviewed to avoid any errors and work to correct them. The transcription process contributes to the reflection of the respondents' answers by analysing their verbal and body language and writing through their transcribed answers (Bell & Bryman, 2011; Greener, 2008). The author has conducted five different interviews with five individuals working or have worked in digital marketing and eCommerce. The below table shows the list of conducted interviews and the role of each of the interviewees.

Table 2. List of interviewees

Interviewee	Role and experience	Country
<i>Interviewee One</i>	Ecommerce	Sweden
<i>Interviewee Two</i>	Ecommerce	Sweden
<i>Interviewee Three</i>	Digital marketing and social media manager	Sweden
<i>Interviewee Four</i>	CEO & founder of digital marketing agency	Sweden
<i>Interviewee Five</i>	Digital marketing manager	Sweden

3.5 Narrative approach and data analysis

The author of this thesis has chosen the narrative approach, which has been widespread in organisations and administrative studies (Rhodes & Brown, 2005). Through the narrative approach, we can liberate the subconscious stories of managers about their association with the organisation and thus better explore the organisational meaning of the experience (ibid). Researchers assume that the stories of individuals are their personal experiences within organisations. Moreover, the narrative approach can be used as empirical materials because of the prevailing belief that narrative approaches rely on today in research as a theoretical lens and more accurate analytical tools for research (Czarniawska, 1997; Hatch, 1996; Phillips, 1995; Pentland, 1999). According to Stutts and Barker (1999), the research that adopts the narrative approach in the study of organisations allows access to in-depth information that can be missed when using other analytical techniques. The organisational narrative approach has witnessed research interest, as these stories can play an essential role in identifying variables that have a practical impact in describing individuals' experiences within the organisation (Gabriel, 2000). Gabriel (2000) stated that consultants have also used storytelling and narratives as part of their applications, which contributes to supporting techniques related to achieving changes in the management behaviours of the organisation.

Accordingly, this research relies on a narrative approach grounded in interpretive epistemology that allows us to change our interpretation of the existing literature and theoretical framework based on the empirical findings generated. (Bill and Breman, 2011). This approach also allows researchers to not only listen to the responses and stories of individuals but to review these stories with them in more detail and give examples to reach a deeper understanding of the phenomenon (Reissner, 2004). Marketers' experiences and applications on how to help consumers to make better purchase decisions and reduce product returns can be practical, assuming marketers' stories stem from their day-to-day management practices. The marketers' narratives can be an essential resource to identify the different practices that marketers can perform to achieve the aim of this study (ibid.).

Furthermore, the strategy used in this paper is abductive reasoning, which is considered a method to solve problems when a surprising observation takes an essential part of a particular phenomenon. There are no theories to understand that phenomenon (Velázquez-Quesada et al., 2013). The essence of this approach is to reach the best solutions to the problem based on the available information. Accordingly, and as mentioned previously, this research aims to interpret and analyse the collected empirical data through narrative analysis to solve the problem. The thematic structure is also used for the analysis, which will help to categorise the collected data and possibly identify patterns in the respondents' answers.

3.6 Academic limitations and practical limitations

As with academic writing, this thesis underwent several challenges during its writing. One of the challenges was defining the study's problem and aim, especially with the central area of interest, eCommerce, and sustainability. It took much work to reach a research gap because of the breadth of the chosen topic in e-commerce and sustainability. Also, the limitation of time and resources led the researcher to consume a long time to identify the knowledge gap in the area. Additionally, the needed data for the research paper was collected through semi-structured interviews. Five interviews with five people working or have worked in eCommerce and digital marketing. All those interviewees have educational qualifications and managerial experience. The small number of interviews and the inability to conduct more is one of this project's most critical practical limitations. The author believes conducting more interviews with marketers enhances the study results and findings.

3.7 Ethical considerations

While working on this research, the researcher considered the ethical challenges reflected in the method used to conduct the interviews. Before the start of the interviews, interviewees are notified about the interview being recorded for research purposes only and obtain their verbal and physical consent. All respondents agreed to record the interviews, but some did not wish to mention their names in this paper. Accordingly, the researcher has considered this request and anonymized all the interviewees' data to protect their privacy (Greener, 2008; Bell & Bryman, 2011) and follow the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR, 2016) in European legislation. However, it should be noted that it is difficult to guarantee their complete anonymity, although this paper has considered maintaining it throughout the thesis as this thesis provided minor details about their role in the organization.

4. Empirical findings and analysis

In this chapter, the author presented the findings of the collected data through the semi-structured interviews. The author presented an overview of the main characteristics of the online consumer decision journey. The author then presented empirical data related to how marketers help consumers make better purchase decisions. Finally, the author has summarised the empirical finding and analysis.

4.1 Online consumer decision journey

The author of this thesis selected Batra and Keller's (2016) framework, A Dynamic, Expanded Consumer Decision Journey and applied it to understand the particular characteristics of the online consumer decision journey compared to the traditional one. The online consumer decision journey differs from the traditional consumer decision journey because online consumers make their purchase orders before seeing and examining the product. Interview Three quoted, "*When customers are ordering a product, they are not sure as they have seen it in person. So, basically, customers are not sure if it is fitting for what they wanted*". In the online shopping environment, a physical store does not exist. Consumers cannot visit the store to ask the staff about the brands and products or if there is missing or misunderstanding specific information, which might affect consumers' confidence in their purchase decisions and thus lead to product returns. Many online stores provide different customer services, such as phone calls, emails, or chatting, to answer any concerns about products or orders. However, online stores are open 24 hours, and it is impossible to satisfy all consumer needs at all times. Interviewee One stated, "*Online shop is open 24 hours a day, and of course, customer service is not there and available that long*". Therefore, the online consumer decision journey is significantly dependent on providing the needed information in a detailed and accurate manner to help consumers to make better purchase decisions. Interviewee One further quoted, "*When I think of myself when I buy online, what I really like is I can have my time searching for what can this product do? I can look at reviews, and I have more to make up my mind about the product, how good it is, and if I need it. If we look at home electronics specifically that is more expensive, I think many customers are really thinking through their purchases more*".

Furthermore, although the online shopping environment provides consumers with greater convenience and the ability to learn, compare, choose, and buy products without travelling to stores, online consumers still have to purchase the products before they can examine them. Therefore, stages of Searches/Learns and Considers/Examines in the online consumer decision journey play a significant role in consumers making better purchase decisions and avoiding product returns.

The stage Likes/Trusts is more related to the credibility of the provided information as consumers try to ensure that the company's information is correct and trustful. The online shopping environment allows consumers to interact with companies through different activities, such as electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM). Consumers can share their experience with a product by reviewing and commenting on the brand's products and content. They can also communicate with each other and ask questions through different platforms and not just the marketer's website. In other words, consumers at this stage evaluate the reliability of the company's information through other prior consumers. Therefore, marketers, today must be aware that online business is extremely connected with society, and eWOM can significantly affect consumers' purchase decisions positively and negatively.

On the other hand, the availability of big data about online consumers allowed marketers to understand consumers' needs and the reason behind returning the products and fixing them. However, despite that consumers can today know other consumers' experiences with the products, they would only be 100% sure of their purchase decisions after they receive the products and examine them. When the product fails to meet consumers' expectations before the purchase order, returning the product will probably occur. Therefore, in an online shopping environment, markets must provide consumers with needed information honestly and reliably without exaggerating the product's advantages. Interviewee Four said, "*The most significant thing in terms of product returns is the authenticity, credibility, truthfulness and expectations*". Marketers have to provide all the details possible to help the consumers make better purchase decisions and satisfy their needs rather than trying to sell them their products only.

In summary, the online consumer decision journey relies significantly upon what extent marketers can ensure that all the detailed information is presented accurately and honestly. The author discusses how marketers can help consumers make better purchase decisions in the following section.

4.2 Helping the consumers to make better purchase decisions

Online shopping differs from physical store shopping, and we know this difference using the consumer journey metaphor. While physical store shoppers can access information such as price, function, and performance by visiting a shop, online shoppers access such information online and then at home if they place an order. The digital transformation of consumer markets suggests we will have more online shopping, meaning that marketers working in this space must develop new practices to satisfy consumers' needs and wants. When marketers satisfy consumers' needs and want, they help them to make better purchase decisions and thus avoid product returns.

In this section, the author presented different findings that can guide marketers in helping consumers make better purchase decisions and thus avoid product returns. The author has identified four main findings: targeting the right audience, conveying detailed information, providing authenticity, credibility, and truthfulness, and optimising the online consumer decision journey communication process.

4.2.1 Targeting the right audience

According to Batra and Keller's (2016) framework, A Dynamic, Expanded Consumer Decision Journey, in the first step, the consumers notice an unmet need or desire and begin to think about products or services that satisfy that need. Interviewee Five states, *"Marketers usually target customers who are interested in a product because they are more likely to buy it without returning it"*. Interviewee Four also said, *"If you reach out to the right people, then your goanna has less chance of it being returned"*. Therefore, to avoid product returns, marketers must know who needs their products because they probably will not return them when it meets their desired expectations.

Advanced technology such as Google Analytical 4 and Facebook Ads Manager has allowed the collecting and analysing of an enormous amount of data related to consumer interactions on different platforms. Marketers can collect massive data through consumers' interactions with their websites, mobile applications, and advertisements. Analysing the data prompts essential insights about their targeted consumers, what they are looking for and how they behave. Interviewee Four quoted, *"So, you got device ID, location, gender, anything that you give to Facebook and your interest as well. For example, you can say where you work, what you graduated from, what year you graduated from"*. Interviewee Four further quoted, *"Facebook targeting and Google ads allow you to have a lower return rate because you already know this audience and the vast data you can acquire about them. You might find a correlation between those people that, let's say, live in this*

certain type. They do not return it as much as others. So, with the data reaching out to the more relevant audience, you can also figure out that they are not gonna return it as much".

Google analytical four tools allow tracking of all consumers' clicks company's digital platforms and know who visited it and how long the visitors spent on any page. Interviewee One said, *"Analytics tools provide marketers with every click on the website"*. Interviewee Four further quoted, *"Online marketing has a lot more data and has a lot more tracking. If you have a newspaper or a billboard, there are, of course, ways to do this, but then it is hard to know exactly how many people saw something and, even if they saw it, how many people paid attention to it and viewed the content, how many people engage with the content, how many people converted. So online marketing is exceptionally well in terms of tracking"*. Moreover, it is possible to identify who has interacted with the company's communications even when online shoppers switch between different devices or accounts to avoid duplicated decision journeys for the same consumer. The tools also provide features to know who has interacted with the company's platform, applications, or ads for the last 30 minutes and who needs the company's products.

In addition, when online consumers search for something, many of them use search engines such as Google search engine. Consumers use different keywords to find what they are looking for. Digital marketing tools allow marketers to link specific keywords to a display advertisement. So, when consumers use search engines and type that specific keyword, the display ads appear. Marketers can identify who has opened the ads and thus know who is searching for or interested in their products. Interviewee Five said, *"In the ads manager, it is a filter where you can type in keywords and then they will show the ad for people who have interacted with that keyword in some way"*. Interviewee Three also said, *"So, if they follow Tony Robbins, they would probably be interested in entrepreneurship. And so, if I want to sell an entrepreneurship course, I could target Tony Robbins as a keyword and then put my entrepreneurship course in front of those people"*.

Furthermore, marketers can use digital marketing tools such as Facebook Ads Manager to send advertisements to consumers based on their profile information, geographical and demographic location, and many other different metrics such as their interests and hobbies. Interviewee Five said, *"By using Facebook Manager, I can target different groups, I can send one message to females and another message to males for the same product, I can send different messages to different group age"*. Marketers can know who watched the advertisements, how much time they have spent on them, and who moved to the company's website through the advertisement. They can identify who showed an interest and eliminate who has not. The marketer can testify how the viewers have interacted with the ads and adjusted accordingly. Retargeting the same group again is possible instead of sending them to a new audience. Interviewee Three further quoted, *"Let's say an ad*

has a low click-through rate, which means that not many people actually click on the ad. You can adjust the age group, or you can adjust the ad itself to make it test different things to try and improve the metrics. So, if an ad is performing badly, I would obviously know and change it. If it is performing well, I would still test different things to see if I can get it to perform better".

Nevertheless, data analytical tools help marketers to find what type of consumers are returning the product, so they can improve or provide special services or even eliminate them from the advertisement's audience. Interviewee Four further quoted, *"For fewer returns, look at the people returning, and cut them out from your audience group".*

In summary, advanced technology has enabled marketers to perform new practices to identify their targeted consumers like never before. When marketers know who is visiting the company's website or opening an advertisement, how much time they spend on each page, and many different metrics about the consumers, marketers can know who their targeted consumers are and what they are looking for and thus enhance their learning experience about the brand and the product to help them to make better purchase decisions and avoid returning the products.

4.2.2 Conveying the detailed information

As stated earlier, stages of Searches/Learns and Considers/Examines in the online consumer decision journey play a significant role in consumers making better purchase decisions and avoiding product returns. At these stages, consumers consider and examine different brands and products by looking into online reviews, searching for different information, and learning more details about the brands and products. At these stages, consumers have enough time to think about their choices and which product suits them and fulfils all their desires. Interviewee One said, *"I think many customers are really thinking through their purchases more, making the right choice".* Also, according to a survey from Google and Ipsos, 53 per cent of shoppers always do research before buying to ensure they make the correct purchase decisions. Therefore, marketers can help consumers compensate for the loss of in-store experience by conveying the detailed information consumers need to make a better purchase decision. Marketers can provide manuals to consumers who answer all the consumer's questions directly without the need to refer to the company's employees. Interviewee One said, *"Manuals are more focused on answering the questions that a seller may be supposed to ask in a regular store".* However, there are several cases where the consumers returned the product, not because of a lack of information from the marketers but because consumers do not spend enough time reading the information provided. Interviewee Two further quoted, *"Sometimes consumers do not know how the product works, and consumers*

are maybe not always the best on opening the instruction to read". This prompts marketers to develop more models to provide information, such as online buying guides. Online buying guides are a piece of content that highlights all the essential information to help consumers make better buying decisions when they have yet to read detailed manuals. The content includes information related to the price, dimensions, material, generic characteristics, product-specific functionality, and comparisons with other products, such as wireless or wired. Portable or desktop? Buying guides must be simple, and there is no specific format for it. Interviewee One quoted, *"Buying guides. The customer can read through them and get some expertise on the product itself and how it works and what they can use it for"*.

Moreover, some products, such as home electronics, need other parts to perform their task correctly, and some of these parts require the customers to purchase them separately from the main product. In some cases, the customer needs to replace these parts periodically. Therefore, marketers must ensure that they communicate such information clearly to consumers. Interviewee Two said, *"for example, if you buy a vacuum cleaner, it is important that customers see that they need bags for it and know which bag"*.

Furthermore, some marketers focus on the advantages of their products and do not highlight the disadvantages. Interviewee Three further quoted, *"Often, we marketers, we try to make things sound as top as possible. All the top features, and if it is something bad, we might not like to bring that up as much. So, in this case, it might lead to a product return because consumers, after they receive the product, would realize this disadvantage"*. Therefore, to help consumers make better purchase decisions and thus avoid product returns, marketers must be honest, provide consumers with all the information possible, and ensure that it is accurate for them to make a successful decision that meets their needs and desires. Interviewee Five quoted, *"It is very important to be very honest when you try to sell something and to sell it to the right person also"*.

4.2.3 Providing authenticity, credibility, and truthfulness

Nevertheless, Jalilvand *et al.* (2011) describe information adoption goes through either the central or peripheral routes where the centre refers to matters concerning the core of the matter whilst the latter refers to credibility and accuracy. While stages Searches/Learns and Considers/Examines are more related to central routes through learning information for taking a purchase decision, stage Likes/Trusts considers the credibility and accuracy of the information, which enhance consumers' trust in the company's product and encourage making the purchase decision. The online shopping environment enabled consumers to interact with companies and other consumers through different activities such as electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM), which in turn affect the Integrated Marketing Communication

(IMC) of companies and organisations. Online shoppers interact with each other by reviewing, commenting, and asking other consumers about their experiences. Interviewee One said, "*Searching for what this product can do? I can look at reviews*". Reviews enable consumers to make better decisions because it provides an unbiased opinion about the brand and the product. Reviews address any biased or missing information that might lead to returning the product eventually. Interviewee One quoted, "*Reviews provide unbiased comments about the products*". Therefore, being aware of practices such as eWOM in the online shopping environment plays a key role in enhancing the credibility and reliability of provided information. Consumers need to ensure that the company's information is presented in an honest and truthful manner, and marketers must enhance positive eWOM within their platforms and other platforms that are not controlled by the marketer. Marketers have to engage and interact with their consumers and enhance authenticity, credibility, and truthfulness. Some common and important practices to enhance reliability are providing consumers with after-sales services and warranties for any deficiency that occurs while using the product. Interviewee Three quoted, "Like 15 years repairability".

On the other hand, reviews help marketers to learn about the reason behind returning the products, such as missing or wrong online information, product deficiencies, or any other reasons. Analysing such data help marketers to enhance the shopping experience for future customers and avoid potential returns. Interviewee Two said, "*We will immediately update to make sure that we have the information missing. So, if it is something unclear on the webpage, then we will update it immediately once we get the feedback. It's about providing as accurate information as possible as well on the homepage*". Moreover, eWOM and IMC enabled marketers to gain the opportunity to form relationships between consumers and companies. Companies can learn more about their consumers' experiences and needs and thus improve their products and services to increase consumers' trust and help them to make better purchase decisions. Interviewee Two quoted, "*As an eCommerce, or as a company, you are very eager to collect reviews to understand how what the consumers actually like and what they dislike*". However, different users can act in an opportunistic manner through fake posts, which would affect the company negatively (Akbari *et al.*, 2022). According to Bhandari *et al.* (2021), negative eWOM can influence behaviours and attitudes. Therefore, companies responding to negative eWOM and involving in the process instead of letting it be shared between consumers without taking any action would improve the consumers' trust and the brand's reputation. At the same time, the company must fulfil their promises and not just responds to negative eWOM.

Finally, the consumers receive the product, and the whole process of online consumers' decisions depends on this stage. Marketers must ensure that the product was delivered as specified, including the product specification, quality, and delivery

terms and conditions. When consumers' expectation is higher than the actual product, the consumers' attention to return the product increases and they will start looking for a better option as they can return the product without any cost most times. According to Interviewee Five, *"You have to deliver the products according to customers' expectations when they made the order, or they will return them"*. Moreover, when the product fails to meet consumers' expectations, the consumers' trust in the company will be significantly affected and would, in turn, affect the next stages in the online consumer decision journey, which are customer satisfaction, and loyalty and might lead to negative eWOM and thus affect the company reputation. Therefore, providing all needed information and assuring the credibility of it as well as delivering the product as per consumer expectations before they make the purchase order is vital for the marketer to avoid products return and negative eWOM. However, in case of a return due to consumers changing their minds, marketers can offer bonuses and discounts to the consumers. Interviewee Two said, *"As instead of returns, you can keep the product, and you get a discount. So, we do have those kinds of incentives as well"*.

4.2.4 Optimise online consumer decision journey communication process

Online marketers seek to satisfy consumers' needed information along their decision journey by communicating different content through multimedia channels and platforms. However, communicating the information with the consumers to help them to make better purchase decisions would only be effective if they have processed the communication effectively. Other factors interact together and affect consumers buying decisions. Interviewee Three quoted, *"The consumers are affected by different influences and not only the correct information"*. Batra and Keller's (2016) framework, Factors That Affect Consumer Communication Processing, stated three factors: the characteristics of the consumer, the context, and the content of the communication itself. These factors interact and drive the outcomes of consumer communication processing.

Consumer characteristics are driven by their motivation to buy the product and their ability to make it. To ensure the effective processing of communications, marketers must find their targeted consumers who are in need or interested in the company's products. Consumers with higher motivation would have better communication processing. In contrast, when marketers communicate information with the wrong consumers, it either leads to ignorance of the communication or misleads them to the wrong purchase decision. Interviewee Five said, *"Basically, find a person that would be either very interested or in need of a product. So, if they need it, then they might not return it"*. Digital analytical tools have allowed marketers to find the targeted customers who are in need or interested in their

products. Interview Three quoted, *"Different tactics are used to find your targeted customers, for example, it is possible to target people who are searching for specific keywords and reach them"*. For example, when consumers search for a product using some keywords, it is most likely that they are motivated and show more ability than consumers who do not. Therefore, to optimise consumers' communication process, it is vital not only to provide complete and correct information but also to find the motivated people who started searching for a specific product.

The tools also allowed marketers to send their communications to the targeted audiences only, and it is also possible to retarget the same audience again with the same information but with different content mouldily, enhancing consumer processing of the communication. Interviewee Four said, *"Perhaps most important is that you can tailor whom you want to see your content. So, with online marketing, you can also reach out to a more relevant audience"*. According to interviewee Four, *"Zoning in on the target audience, so you know exactly who your audience will be and targeting someone multiple times with different content is a good technique to have good overall processing. For example, someone sees an ad for shoes. They look very cool. They might not buy it now. However, a couple of months later, we have a campaign. We know who watched the video. We can target them again and say hey, we have a campaign, and now our shoes are 50% off. We know they are interested"*.

Context and situational factors such as time and the place of published information play a significant role in assuring delivery and better communication processing. Interviewee Three further quoted, *"Determining where and when to publish the information is very important. Posting information in the wrong place and time increases the possibility that the information will not reach the targeted customers and thus return their purchases"*. Today, consumers interact and browse information on different platforms and communication channels. Through communication channels, marketers can reach consumers all the time and provide them with all the information they want in an easy and fast way through their mobile phones, computer or any other device connected to the Internet. Interviewee Two said, *"You can reach out to the consumers directly from their mobiles or computers, and they can do the shopping 24/7"*. Marketers must find which communication channels their targeted consumers are interacting with and understand their needs to enhance the communication processing of the information. The marketer can reply to consumers' comments, clarify misunderstandings, and fix them. Although consumers can access the needed information easily and all the time, companies can offer customers service to clarify consumers' concerns and better communications processing. Interviewee One said, *"So we provide the best customer service possible, so looking at what is not working? What is working? Is the customer satisfied?"*.

Finally, the characteristics of the communications content also affect the extent of information processing. Today, marketers can send information in different ways, such as messages, emails, photos, or videos. Through creative content, marketers build better relationships and optimize the communication process. The content of the communication plays a significant role in influencing consumer communication processing. The information can vary in complexity and the time needed for processing; therefore, marketers must convey detailed information in simple and creative ways, such as using videos about how the products work or any other complex information. The contents must be exciting and valuable. Interviewee Five quoted, *"You must be creative in providing marketing content and making it interesting and useful"*. Marketers should constantly interact with consumers and seek their opinion related to the provided information and mouldily of the content. Marketers must show credibility and reliability in their content to build trust and enhance consumer confidence in their purchase decisions. Marketers can testify how their content helped consumers by investigating different metrics, such as how much time they spend on a video and comparing it with other content to gain better insights to improve consumers' information processing. Interviewee Four said, *"You put some content that you think is goanna work best, that you always compare that content to two or three different versions based on whatever one's works best in terms of clickthrough rate, cost per click and conversions"*.

4.3 Summary of the empirical finding and analysis

The findings showed the different characteristics of online consumers' decision journeys compared to traditional consumers. The findings showed that to avoid product returns, marketers have to target the right audiences who are motivated or interested in the company's products. Motivated consumers have less chance to return the products. The finding also showed that conveying detailed information, providing authenticity, credibility, and truthfulness, and optimising the communication process of the provided information are vital for consumers to make a better purchase decision and thus avoid products return. Moreover, digital strategies play a significant role in helping marketers to identify their targeted consumers and keep pace with their desires through interacting with big data within different platforms. The author of this thesis summarised the empirical findings related to how marketers help consumers to make better purchase decisions and thus avoid products return in the following table (see table 3). The table shows the four main findings and related quotes to understand the data analysis and findings better.

Table 3. List of empirical findings

Guidelines for marketers to avoid products return	Insights	Quotes
<p>Targeting the right audience</p>	<p>- Target the consumers who are in need or interested in the company's product to avoid product returns.</p>	<p>"Marketers usually target customers who are interested in a product because they are more likely to buy it without returning it". Interviewee Four also said, "If you reach out to the right people, then your goanna has less chance of it being returned" (Interviewee Five).</p>
	<p>- Use advanced analytical technologies to collect and analyse consumer data for better-targeting audiences (GA4, FB Ads manager).</p>	<p>"So, you got device ID, location, gender, anything that you give to Facebook and your interest as well. For example, you can say where you work, what you graduated from, what year you graduated from" (Interviewee Four).</p> <p>"Facebook targeting and Google ads allow you to have a lower return rate because you already know this audience and the vast data you can acquire about them. You might find a correlation between those people that, let's say, live in this certain type. They do not return it as much as others. So, with the data reaching out to the more relevant audience, you can also figure out that they are not goanna return it as much". (Interviewee Five).</p> <p>"Analytics tools provide marketers with every click on the website" (Interviewee One).</p> <p>"Online marketing has a lot more data and has a lot more tracking. If you have a newspaper or a billboard, there are, of course, ways to do this, but then it is hard to know exactly how many people saw something and, even if they saw it, how many people paid attention to it and viewed the content, how many people engage with the content, how many people converted. So online marketing is exceptionally well in terms of tracking" (Interviewee Four).</p> <p>"In the ads manager, it is a filter where you can type in keywords and then they will show the ad for people</p>

		<p><i>who have interacted with that keyword in some way". Interviewee Three also said, "So, if they follow Tony Robbins, they would probably be interested in entrepreneurship. And so, if I want to sell an entrepreneurship course, I could target Tony Robbins as a keyword and then put my entrepreneurship course in front of those people" (Interviewee Five).</i></p> <p><i>"By using Facebook Manager, I can target different groups, I can send one message to females and another message to males for the same product, I can send different messages to different group age" (Interviewee Five).</i></p> <p><i>"Let's say an ad has a low click-through rate, which means that not many people actually click on the ad. You can adjust the age group, or you can adjust the ad itself to make it test different things to try and improve the metrics. So, if an ad is performing badly, I would obviously know and change it. If it is performing well, I would still test different things to see if I can get it to perform better" (Interviewee Three).</i></p> <p><i>"For fewer returns, look at the people returning, and cut them out from your audience group". (Interviewee Four).</i></p>
<p>Conveying the detailed information</p>	<p>- Provide Manuals.</p>	<p><i>"Manuals are more focused on answering the questions that a seller may be supposed to ask in a regular store" (Interviewee One).</i></p>
	<p>- Provide Buying Guides.</p>	<p><i>"Sometimes consumers do not know how the product works, and consumers are maybe not always the best on opening the instruction to read" (Interviewee Two).</i></p> <p><i>"Buying guides. The customer can read through them and get some expertise on the product itself and how it works and what they can use it for". (Interviewee Two).</i></p>

	- Ensure communicating any extra parts that are needed for any products to operate and must be purchased separately or periodically.	<i>"for example, if you buy a vacuum cleaner, it is important that customers see that they need bags for it and know which bag" (Interviewee Two).</i>
	- Act completely honestly with the consumer, provide them with all the information possible, and ensure that it is accurate for the consumers to make a successful decision that meets their needs and desires.	<i>"Often, we marketers, we try to make things sound as top as possible. All the top features, and if it is something bad, we might not like to bring that up as much. So, in this case, it might lead to a product return because consumers, after they receive the product, would realize this disadvantage" (Interviewee Three).</i> <i>"It is very important to be very honest when you try to sell something and to sell it to the right person also" (Interviewee Five).</i>
Providing authenticity, credibility, and truthfulness	- Be aware of practices such as eWOM and enhance positive eWOM and consumer interactions which plays a crucial role in enhancing the credibility and reliability of provided information.	<i>"Searching for what this product can do? I can look at reviews" (Interviewee One).</i> <i>"Reviews provide unbiased comments about the products" (Interviewee One).</i>
	- Update any missing or wrong information.	<i>"We will immediately update to make sure that we have the information missing. So, if it is something unclear on the webpage, then we will update it immediately once we get the feedback. It's about providing as accurate information as possible as well on the homepage" (Interviewee Two).</i>
	- Enhance reliability with after-sales services	<i>"Like 15 years repairability" (Interviewee Three).</i>
	- eWOM is a source of data to learn about consumers' needs and reasons for products return.	<i>"As an eCommerce, or as a company, you are very eager to collect reviews to understand how what the consumers actually like and what they dislike". (Interviewee Two).</i>
	-Deliver the products to consumers as per their expectations. Expectations before purchasing the order have to match those after delivery.	<i>"You have to deliver the products according to customers' expectations when they made the order, or they will return them" (Interviewee Five).</i>

Optimise online consumer communication process	- Target the consumers who are in need or interested in the company's product to optimise communication processing with consumers.	<i>"Basically, find a person that would be either very interested or in need of a product. So, if they need it, then they might not return it" (Interviewee Five).</i>
	- Use advanced analytical technologies for targeting and retargeting consumers, such as keyword targeting.	<i>"Different tactics are used to find your targeted customers, for example, it is possible to target people who are searching for specific keywords and reach them" (Interviewee Three).</i> <i>"Perhaps most important is that you can tailor whom you want to see your content. So, with online marketing, you can also reach out to a more relevant audience" (Interviewee Four).</i> <i>"Zoning in on the target audience, so you know exactly who your audience will be and targeting someone multiple times with different content is a good technique to have good overall processing. For example, someone sees an ad for shoes. They look very cool. They might not buy it now. However, a couple of months later, we have a campaign. We know who watched the video. We can target them again and say hey, we have a campaign, and now our shoes are 50% off. We know they are interested" (Interviewee Five).</i>
	- Find where the place and time where targeted consumers are interacting.	<i>"Determining where and when to publish the information is very important. Posting information in the wrong place and time increases the possibility that the information will not reach the targeted customers and thus return their purchases" (Interviewee Three).</i>
	- Provide customer services (phone, emails, chatting, etc)	<i>"So, we provide the best customer service possible, so looking at what is not working? What is working? Is the customer satisfied?" (Interviewee One).</i>
	- Provide creative and valuable contents and testify to it.	<i>"You must be creative in providing marketing content and making it interesting and useful" (Interviewee Five).</i>

		<i>"You put some content that you think is gonna work best, that you always compare that content to two or three different versions based on whatever one's works best in terms of clickthrough rate, cost per click and conversions" (Interviewee Four).</i>
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In the next chapter, the author of this thesis discussed the empirical findings about the research's empirical and theoretical problems. Moreover, the author discussed how this study contributes to the solution of mitigating product return by emphasising the role of marketers to help consumers to make better purchase decisions which would result in less product return.

5. Discussion

Product returns are one of the most critical issues in the online shopping environment, resulting in severe damage to achieving sustainability and engaging companies' goals. High products return to contribute to higher costs, are unfriendly to the environment, and are annoying to consumers (E-barometer, 2019). High products return often lead to additional costs for disposal and processing, such as repackaging and depreciation of product value. In several studies, researchers have looked at a range of solutions that could help alleviate the problem. For example, some suggested providing a showroom to complement the online store to allow the willing consumers to interact directly with the products. However, this solution will lead to high costs and limited showroom coverage (Bell et al., 2015). Others suggested charging customers the cost of transportation to return the product to encourage consumers to act responsibly when making their purchase decisions. However, this strategy may harm the company in the long run because of the nature of the procedure, which contains a punitive form for customers, and thus may affect their intention to purchase products subject to these fees. Therefore, these solutions may not be considered feasible due to the significant increase in the volume of eCommerce and the joining of more online stores.

This thesis intends to contribute to the solution of high product return in the online shopping environment. Therefore, the author of this thesis suggests that marketers can be part of the solution. The working assumption of this study is that marketers can play a crucial role in creating a tighter fit between consumers and their online purchase decisions, which in turn can mitigate products return. Since marketers' objectives are to prompt their company products to encourage consumers to buy their products and returning the products is against marketers' objectives, developing practices to help consumers to make better purchase decisions is beneficial for the company. It also helps mitigate environmental impacts from transport and waste products that cannot be resold. Therefore, the author argues that marketers are one of the most significant actors in mitigating product return by helping consumers make better purchase decisions and buy products that satisfy their needs, so consumers would not return them.

Through the empirical analysis of the respondents' narratives, several findings were observed by which marketers can help consumers make better purchase decisions and thus avoid returning products. Firstly, understanding the different

characteristics of online consumers' decision journeys helps marketers to create better communications processing. The online consumer decision journey goes through different stages. Each stage is interrelated, and a failure in any of them might lead to product returns. During these stages, online consumers cannot physically examine the product before they purchase it. Given the lack of physical appearance in the online environment, consumers must seek more information about products to ensure that they fulfil their desired needs or interests. Online consumers investigate different information content, including articles, images, videos, and reviews. Online consumers need to be sure that all the company's information is correct and that the products will be delivered as expected. Online consumers check other online consumer experiences with the products by reading the comments or digital discussions. Thus, linking the company's information with other consumers means that "word-of-mouth" plays a vital role in an online shopping environment.

Secondly, according to Batra and Keller's (2016) framework, A Dynamic, Expanded Consumer Decision Journey, in the first step, the consumers notice an unmet need or desire and begin to think about products or services that satisfy that need. Marketers at this stage seek to find these consumers and reach them through different advertisements to encourage them to buy their products. This is a common practice even in traditional marketing. However, unlike traditional marketing, the online shopping environment enabled marketers to perform new practices and better identify their targeted consumers like never before. Marketers in the online shopping environment gained access to an immense amount of data related to consumer behaviour along the multi-media channels and platforms. Marketers use advanced analytical tools such as GA4 and Facebook Ads Manager to collect different data about the consumers, such as their age group, sex, interests, and clicks along different media and market platforms. When marketers know who is visiting the company's website or opening an advertisement, how much time they spend on each page, and many different metrics about the consumers' interactions, marketers can better know who their consumers are, what they are looking for, and thus enhance their learning experience about the brand and the product. This is important because when marketers target consumers who need or have expressed a desire for their product, they will probably keep the product rather than return it. While selling products to consumers who do not have the need or desire for the product will often lead to the return of the product. Therefore, targeting the right consumers is vital to avoid product returns. When marketers reach the targeted consumers, they can help them make better purchase decisions and thus avoid returning the products after purchasing them.

Thirdly, shoppers can always buy their products without having to go to stores or talk to sales staff. Batra and Keller's (2016) framework, A Dynamic, Expanded Consumer Decision Journey, consumers' processing of information increases in stages of Searches/Learns and Considers/Examines. Consumers at these stages are

looking for more accurate information. Consumers often turn to browse review sites or even visit a physical store. In the online shopping environment, physical stores are not available. Thus, the online consumer decision journey relies significantly upon the extent marketers ensure that all the information consumers need is available and presented honestly. The information about the brand and the products is the focal point in the online consumer decision journey. Online consumers need detailed information about the products to make a purchase decision that ends with keeping the products. The information must provide everything consumers need to know about the product accurately and simply. The author of this paper has presented different information and practices that marketers can provide to enhance better consumer purchase decisions. The practices include providing manuals, buying guides, and customer services.

Fourthly, the online market opened companies' opportunities to interact with their consumers and allowed eWOM. Through eWOM, consumers can share their experiences with the product with other consumers. eWOM allowed consumers to review, comment, and share communication content. Positive eWOM provides authenticity, credibility, and truthfulness about the products, which helps consumers to confirm the company's information. Therefore, marketers have to enhance positive eWOM through interaction with consumers on different digital platforms and thus provide authenticity, credibility, and truthfulness. The opportunity of eWOM allowed marketers to understand better their targeted consumers' needs and what they have to do to achieve their consumer's expectations and avoid product returns.

Fifthly, it is necessary that marketers also identify the factors that affect the communication process and work on optimising the outcome of the processed communications. According to Batra and Keller's (2016) framework Factors That Affect Consumer Communication Processing, four key factors affect consumer communication processing: the consumer's characteristics, the context (receiving messages), the content of the communication itself, and the outcomes. Therefore, to enhance better communication processing, information must be sent to the right consumers who need the product at the right place and time. Sending complete and correct information in the wrong places, such as the wrong platforms or pages, would not avoid returns, and consumers can miss part of the information, leading to product returns. Digital marketing tools allow marketers to communicate with consumers and evaluate interactions through screens and clicks and thus could identify the most interested consumers for their products. Digital marketing tools help marketers to optimise important information and make it appear to the targeted audiences by linking advertisements or communications content to specific and unique keywords. When consumers search for a product, they start typing keywords related to what they are looking for. Moreover, advertisement tools allow marketers

to testify any communication content and adjust it to optimise the process for finding the right consumers.

In summary, marketers are the actors who communicate with consumers to encourage them to buy their products. Returning the products is not in the interest of the company. Therefore, the author of this thesis suggested that marketers are one of the most significant actors in mitigating products return. This thesis presented different findings related to marketers' role and how they can help consumers make better purchase decisions and thus avoid product returns. Moreover, the author has shown how marketers can use digital marketing tools to achieve each of the findings of this study. The existing literature has insufficiently addressed marketers' role in avoiding product returns.

In contrast, many other studies focused on the marketing strategies such as green marketing in eCommerce (Rosário & Raimundo, 2021; Sanjay Kumar Kara, Sidhartha Harichandan). Other studies investigated consumer behaviours within an eCommerce environment (Jia Zhao, Fei Xue, Shahnawaz Khan, Saleh F.A. Khatib). Some scholars investigated the environmental performance measurement, which assesses e-business activities from an environmental perspective, such as Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) methodology (Fichter, 2002). Therefore, this study addresses the gap in knowledge related to the role of marketers in mitigating products return and focuses on how marketers can help consumers to make better purchase decisions. This study can guide marketers to understand better the online shopping environment and how they can avoid products return. This thesis also helps other actors in organisations other than marketers, such as managers, entrepreneurs, and start-ups business, to understand better the different digital marketing practices in the online shopping environment to enhance the company's performance and not just avoid product returns. The finding can be implemented even in companies with low product returns as the findings enhance better targeting and customer satisfaction.

5.1 The Implications and limitations of the research

This thesis focuses on the role of marketers in mitigating products return. It aims to answer the research question of how marketers help consumers to make better purchase decisions and thus avoid products return. However, it is essential to note that many retailers and consumers are transforming toward online shopping, leading to more online shipments and higher product returns. Therefore, different actors must work together to mitigate the impacts of high returns on sustainability goals, and marketers alone cannot solve the problem. Manufacturers, logistic service providers, and consumers can all contribute to solving the high product return issue. They must all work together to enable e-commerce to achieve sustainability solutions in all processes, including manufacturing, packaging,

transporting, and reducing shipment returns, to ensure a favourable environment (Tang et al., 2016).

Moreover, one of the most significant limitations is related to the sample group. The author conducted five interviews. All the selected interviewees are working or have worked in eCommerce marketing. However, due to time and resource limitations, the author could not perform more interviews which are highly recommended for future research as more data can lead to a better understanding of the studied phenomenon. Therefore, the generalizability of this thesis is a limiting factor.

Finally, the author emphasises that this thesis only provides a general picture of the marketers' role in avoiding products return. There could be more important marketing practices that should have been found in this thesis. Also, the thesis has not investigated the high product return in a specific sector, although two interviews were conducted with individuals working in home electronic sectors. Therefore, the finding might differ from one sector to another.

6. Conclusion

This thesis aims to investigate the role of marketers in mitigating product return and how marketers help consumers to make better purchase decisions. When marketers succeed in helping consumers to find products that satisfy their desires and interests, consumers will likely not return the products. Four main findings were found in this thesis that guides marketers to help consumers make better purchase decisions. They target the right audience, convey detailed information, provide authenticity, credibility, and truthfulness, and optimise the online consumer decision journey communication process. All four findings are equally important to avoid products return. Any failure in any of these findings can lead to product returns. The author of this thesis also investigated the role of digital marketing tools. The author showed how digital marketing tools are vital in online shopping and play a significant role for online marketers to enhance communication processes and, thus, better purchase decisions and fewer products return. Digital marketing tools are significantly powerful when marketers aware of them and how to use them.

The insights of this study lead to recommendations for future research. This study depicts a general picture of the role of marketers in avoiding product returns and focuses on the author's suggested proposal that marketers can help consumers make better purchase decisions which results in fewer products return. The findings can be investigated separately to enhance better insights into solving the high returns problem. The author recommends more profound future studies that focus on the role of digital marketing in avoiding products return. The findings also have to be tested, and thus a future study to assess the proposed findings and their effectiveness in reducing product returns. Future studies can select a case study with high product return and testify to the finding of this thesis. A study investigating the actors involved in mitigating product returns is highly recommended. How the different actors have to work together to mitigate the product returns is also recommended.

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Appendix 1

Interview Questions

1. Can you tell me about your working experience a little bit?
2. What about the main challenges of online shopping compared to conventional shopping?
3. How do you think a company can mitigate the effects of the absence of consumers' interaction with the products with keeping customers satisfied?
4. Which steps of consumer decision journey and what information is the most important to avoid product returns?
5. What are the best practices to deliver the needed information to mitigate product returns?
6. What are the most effective and used digital marketing tools?
7. How is it possible to find the right customers for a company's products by using digital marketing tools?
8. How is it possible to know what stage the consumers are positioned? How it can be done in digital marketing tools?
9. What techniques/tools can be used to ensure better communication process?
10. How marketers specify what is the best communication modality for consumers according to their position in the decision journey to enhance better communications process?
11. Is it possible to detect consumers with high return and act differently with them? How?
12. Is it possible to analyze online reviews and optimize positive recommendations (EWOM)?
13. How can digital marketing help companies to not be affected by information that are not produced or controlled by the firm? (Negative comments, fake comments)
14. How analytical tools can help marketers to avoid product returns?

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