



Department of Business and Management

Course of Web Analytics and Marketing

AN EVOLUTION OF THE STRATEGIC APPROACH AND THE WORD OF MOUTH ROLE IN E-COMMERCE: THE BERETTA ESTORE CASE STUDY

Prof. Matteo De Angelis

Supervisor

Prof.ssa Feray Adıgüzel

Co-supervisor

709301

Davide Modonesi

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Introduction

On the web, one of the favoured occupations for many users, is shopping: it's accessible, easy and satisfactory to use. E-commerce became possible in 1991 ("History of Ecommerce," n.d.) when internet extended its use to commercial uses, generating an attractive marketplace for companies.

At the very beginning, e-commerce meant only the activity of executing a commercial transaction via internet, using the net as a means for exchanging documentation about the trade. Afterwards, nearly four years later, the security protocols have been created, which permitted a rapid access to internet and a reliable connection to the World Wide Web. Rapidly some companies of the United States and Western Europe set up their own marketplace online. The cyber business changed, and the terms started to refer as the process to purchase available items on internet, making use of settled connections concurrently with an electronic payment method. In 2001 the most successful e-commerce operated into the B2B market, while the B2C was rising more slowly; this was mainly due to the complete absence of the internet connection in many households or in other cases to the lack of knowledge in the field. The majority of consumers started to glimpse the potential of e-commerce, only later, with the birth of important platform like Amazon or eBay; those events laid the foundations of the digital transformation in many businesses.

The digital transformation is one of the most characterizing changes brought from the historical period in which we are living, more than an evolution is usually considered a revolution. Since the advent of the internet a lot of progresses have changed the habits of human beings, facilitating and improving their existences. This transformation involves deep mutations, mainly from the technological point of view, contributing to "digitalize" many activities, behaviours and more widely many aspects of our lives.

But this is not enough for considering this as a revolution, in fact what makes it so, is the consequent advancement in cultural, organizational, social and managerial aspects of the human society.

The first chapter is divided into two main blocks: the first part, regarding the general situation of e-commerce worldwide considering the statistics, case studies and the managerial literature in this field, while the second part of the chapter will consider a deep analysis into "Beretta eStore" case study in order to understand the relevance of this study in a real business environment. In the second chapter the literature review and the theoretical background will be presented, starting point of the research. Lastly, in the third chapter the research method and the relative results will be described, introducing the tools deployed and the research design. In the last section of this study discussion and conclusion will provide managerial implications and suggestions for further studies in this field.

Chapter 1 – E-commerce: from birth to the state of the art

1.1 E-commerce, Marketplace or Offline?

When introducing this theme, it is proper to give some definitions about the differences between the possible alternatives that companies can embrace for doing business online:

- E-Commerce: is basically a website in which one single vendor sells his services or his products to potential customers using online payment systems. An e-commerce can be addressed to other businesses (i.e. B2B e-commerce) to final customers (i.e. B2C e-commerce) or both.
- Marketplace: is defined as a website in which the vendor offers products from different sellers. In other words, a vendor provides items to customers from third party, that could be other brands or labels. It is considered the “virtual equivalent” of a shopping mall.

Understanding which is better and why for a specific case is considered out of the scope for this research, even if it has to be said that this decision has obvious consequences on a successful strategy for online businesses. Opting for an established marketplace instead of creating an e-commerce of their property has several operational and managerial advantages for companies, including a heavy-traffic website, a trustworthy image and already consolidated processes. But, on the other hand, a self-managed e-commerce could be more customizable and correctly targeted to customers; moreover, the firms can avoid the competitive threats that typically they may face on a marketplace.

In this study the focus will be only on e-commerce, even though many aspects are common to both, making the reasoning valid for the two.

However, it is possible to state that e-commerce and marketplaces are gaining ground in their competition with offline shops, as reported in an article from Harvard Business Review (“To Compete with Amazon, Big-Name Consumer Brands Have to Become More Like It,” 2018): “Over the last decade, e-commerce has imposed a painful profit squeeze on big-box retailers, resulting in layoffs, store closings, mall reconfigurations, and even bankruptcies. With no reprieve in sight for retailers, the online world is poised to do the same to brand-name consumer products companies.”

The main reasons are under the public eye, first of all e-commerce (EC from now) can provide an always-on service associated with a deeply targeted content for every different user, thing that is way less easy for their offline counterparts.

This is possible thanks to a massive use of data, in fact, collecting and analyzing information through software permits to managers to know the preferences and the habits of their customers developing the best solutions for them. This modus operandi typical of online shops turns into greater levels of satisfaction, connection and loyalty in customers. Moreover, an effective use of artificial intelligence and machine learning permits managers to reduce the human components in the relationship with users; the touchpoints with the customers are rising dramatically, suffice it to say that the customer journey is complex as never before and to keep managing effectively the relationship with consumers is key to exploit this technological tools. So, what are the reasons that make online shopping so impactful on customers? We will try to depict some strategical guidelines in this study that company should follow in order to be competitive, but let's start doing reporting some findings from other studies. As the previous cited article from Harvard Business Review, stated, it seems that online retailers are able to generate levels of engagement that is hard to reach for offline shops. This is true especially for the big players like Amazon, using a combination of machine learning and AI they are able to provide an experience that is completely personalized and in-line with intention of the visit in the mind of prospect. Consequently, it is possible to notice the decrease in the expenditure for adv. online because they are becoming less influential in driving consumers purchases, just think of the 1.7 seconds of average view for a mobile appearing, a very short time for marketers trying to spread messages to potential customers, this indicate the reduction of effect from the so-called interruption marketing. What users are searching for is the one-to-one interaction with the hub, the conversion rate of e-commerce grows only thanks to the continuous relationship with customers.

As already said, thanks to tools like cookies or more specifically the UTM for Google, it is possible to track the behavior of customers, surfing the net. These two are literally pieces of codes that can be easily recognized from analytical platforms like Google Analytics or Facebook Analytics, making it easier to follow every single user during his user journey on the web. Ultimately, coming back to the comparison with the offline stores, it is clear that these digital revolution permits to online shops to be not only more effective but even more efficient, furthermore this better relationship with consumers leads to a greater customer satisfaction.

1.2 The customers point of view

As a good practice, in every field of Marketing, it is important to take the role of customers, understanding behaviours and choices from their perspective. As already said, the main advantages that the digitalization brought, are the improvements in the activities of measuring and monitoring consumers.

Nowadays it is possible to acquire and manage fundamental insights for e-commerce, like for instance one of the most important variable: the source of the traffic.

Understanding the source of traffic is one of the core activities that managers need to accomplish in order to assess the right channel to reach the audience effectively. According to Statista, on average, the 35% of traffic for EC is generated from Google organic researches, one remaining 23% is generated from Google but not through an organic source but from an adv.

| In percentage % | Retail | Multi-channel | Online only | Overall |
|------------------------|---------------|----------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Google Organic | 42 | 46 | 35 | 43 |
| Google Paid Search | 18 | 15 | 23 | 18 |
| Direct | 20 | 21 | 18 | 20 |
| Email | 4 | 5 | 2 | 4 |
| Social | 6 | 4 | 10 | 5 |
| Display | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Referral | 6 | 5 | 7 | 7 |
| Other | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 |
| Tot. | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |

Table 1.1: Distribution of global e-commerce sessions as of June 2018, by source and medium.

Source: Wolfgang Digital, 25 September 2018, in Statista.

According to the research on “Tableau Public” based on the data from Salesforce Commerce Cloud, the traffic raised in the first quarter of 2020 by +16% with a medium shopper spend increased by +4%.

In Italy it is estimated for example that nearly 37.8 millions of consumers shop online, which represents the 78% of the total population; according to the report published by Statista (E-commerce in Europe, October 2019) on average nearly 668 euros are spent on online stores in Italy.

According to the just mentioned statistic, online shopping is no longer utilized by the younger generation, actually the largest increase has occurred among older individuals: statistics show that e-commerce has become attractive even for the generation 65-79. This is probably due to the raised user-friendliness that technology has brought in the last years, another reason is the possibility to shop with different devices, from tablet to smartphone passing through voice-recognition tools such as Alexa and Google.

As it is possible to see from the infographic here below, the use of smartphone and tablets are greatly increasing in many European countries:

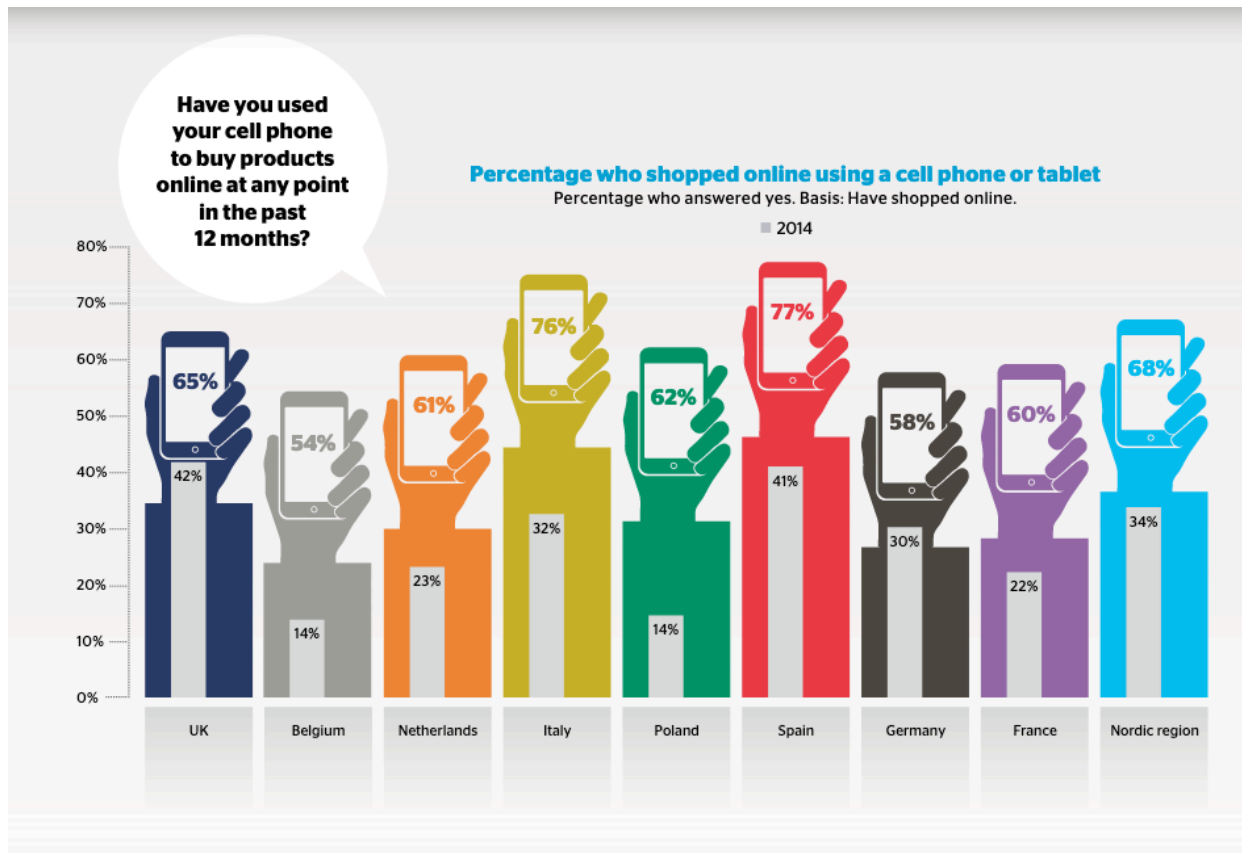


Figure 1.1: Percentage who shopped online using a phone or tablet

Source: “E-commerce in Europe”, Postnord October 2019

In the last five years, the number of customers that used the tablet or the cell phone to purchase products online nearly has nearly tripled. The tendency for consumers is to expect websites that rapidly load the contents, that are easy to be “goggled” and that give specific suggestions. Another demand characteristic is the efficiency and facility of the payment system. Given the fact that online is not difficult to opt for a different e-commerce that offers the same items, any complication in the purchase process could mean a lost customer, so another focal point of the corporate strategy is to well manage development and innovation in order to offer the best possible service to their users.

At this point of our analysis we cannot ignore the fact that while this research is written, we are in the center of the storm from an ongoing worldwide pandemic of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

This emergency situation is changing the perspective for online stores, the panorama is drastically driving all the global population to change their perspective about the online shopping. More and more people are doing online what they were used to do offline, they are experiencing the facility and the potentiality of e-commerce.

According to a research conducted by Netcomm in February 2020 the 75% of customers for online stores had never done it before. This demonstrates the rising importance of the phenomenon and highlights the researches in this field that aim to achieve a better understanding of the online commercial channels. From a managerial perspective this means to find the correct solution to integrate new strategies, creating an effective omnichannel structure able to exploit new necessities and trends in customers.

In the next years many companies will radically transform their distribution and commercial channels, an innovative approach will be necessary no longer just for big or particularly innovative companies, but for much more businesses. Then in all likelihood, groceries stores, perfume shops or wine shops are just some example of stores that will face new necessities of supplies, delivery and shopping behavior in customers.

Suffice it to say that some applications like the Italian app Winelivery has grown in the last month of the 50% in northern Italy and of the 25% throughout Italy, this is because of the restrictive measures imposed by the government but many customers could be satisfied with the service and become loyal to it.

In the near future, this way of behaving could become a consolidated habit in customers that first had to experience the service in a situation of necessity, then got used to it and finally became advocates of it.

Accordingly, it is important for the businesses that are pursuing a strategy that is even today completely based on the offline channels or that are little concerned about the new challenges that they have to face, to reconsider their opportunities and threats for the imminent future.

1.3 The strategic approach

The companies that decide to run their own business have to meticulously design their strategies to constantly improve their performances. From the managerial point of view this is a never-ending challenge, many steps and decisions have to be taken in order to be competitive; according to the successful platform Shopify, four strategic areas are identified in order to set up a well-crafted e-commerce:

- Choose the product: In this specific phase the firm choose the SKU that wants to upload and show on the online store. The companies could already have their own production process, or they might lean on external suppliers. It's important to asses and evaluate the market potential, in order to determine the budgets and the margins.
- Research: In this second step the objective is to map the competitors, trying to analyze weaknesses, strengths and business opportunities. Online it is not difficult to find a multitude of stores that offer the same products, in the same manner and through the same means. In this phase it is important for managers to find different solutions that permit to the store to stand out from the pack. A business plan is needed, in order to strategically rethink what to prioritize and the value proposition for customers.

- **Setting up the business:** The most operative phase in which some practical operations have to be executed (including to register the domain and other legal regulations), the SEO and SEM strategies play an important role for structuring the site and the pages in order to be correctly indexed by Google and other search engines. Using a metaphor, this is the step in which the store is built and organized, the focus is on the content that has to be arranged perfectly for the final goal.
- **Preparing to Launch:** In this penultimate step some final decisions have to be taken, everything has to be in place from shipping conditions to the returns policy. It is important to define the KPIs for tracking the outcomes and the possible improvements of the online store.
- **Post launch:** The last step involves the most difficult aspect of the promotional side; indeed, the marketing of the products takes place. The aim is to acquire new customers, to use tools (mainly digital but not necessarily) driving targeted traffic. It is the responsibility of the management to effectively integrate strategies based on e-mail marketing, social media marketing, advertising, conversion techniques and analytics for capture insights.

The companies usually elaborate their own *modus operandi*, mixing a theoretical approach based on proven methods from the literature with the best practice coming from a first-hand experience in their market.

Dealing with a relatively new field, having a starting point or some guidelines is usually crucial for the management permitting to be more effective and efficient. Even though the preferences of users are continually in changes, there are some key points which increase the performance of an online store.

One of the biggest dilemmas in e-commerce consists in the strategic decisions about the contents, this research will examine the outcomes of some tactics and the possible implementations.

1.4 The role of the content

An online store, exactly as in the offline world, is not just made up of products but many other factors are involved in the consumer experience. The aesthetics of the web pages, the UX design, the facility, the payment process and many other aspects have to be considered. A well-designed web site has the ability to raise the conversions, transforming a visit into a purchase and boosting the traffic.

It is well known that one of the most important KPI to be monitored is in fact the traffic, because the web site is the biggest opportunity to deepen the relationship with the shopper, transmitting the values of the brand, letting him know more products and promotions. Having as much as possible visits to an online store is the lifeblood and the major priority of every digital marketer. But what makes a product page worthy enough of a visit? Of course, a store is composed of many web pages, typically the most important are the home page and the product pages. The first one is the one with the majority of visits, using a metaphor it probably represents the structure of the store but even the front door, customers usually produce evaluations about the quality, the

value proposition and the heritage of the brand from the homepage. This latter has to be inspiring but at the same time rich of information about the brand, the products on it and the store itself.

In the early stages of online stores, the product pages were considered only as a shelf, showing the products with some minimal information. But as it is possible to see from many examples, the attention to the details on the e-stores is increasing year after year, following the preferences of users that are in search now more than ever of an inspiring, engaging and “easy to take content”.

Before any consideration about the optimization of a product page it is key to remember that the definition “easy to take” regarding the content is very relevant, in fact, as it is possible to see from the statistic below the average time of visiting a retail e-commerce online is becoming smaller. Even if the average time of visiting is decreasing, the number of total transactions since 2015 has constantly increased, this is a positive signal, meaning that the efficiency and the easiness of using such channel is improving.

Nevertheless, this means that users are dedicating less time to browse on the store online, this could be a threat for marketers and in particular for content creators. This is no surprise, given the fact that on internet users are increasing the number of activities per access: thanks to the modern processors and advanced technologies, which make it possible to do online much more and in less time.

These considerations lead the managers to rethink about the role of the content and to redesign the user interface to better accomplish the request of online shoppers. This research takes into account the new user behavior; indeed, the strategies being analyzed in this study are consistent with the habits of customers.

| | Desktop | Smartphone | Tablet |
|--------|---------|------------|--------|
| Q2 '15 | 6 | 6 | 7 |
| Q3 '15 | 6 | 5 | 7 |
| Q4 '15 | 7 | 6 | 7 |
| Q1 '16 | 7 | 6 | 7 |
| Q2 '16 | 6 | 5 | 7 |
| Q3 '16 | 6 | 5 | 7 |
| Q4 '16 | 7 | 6 | 8 |
| Q1 '17 | 7 | 6 | 8 |
| Q2 '17 | 6 | 5 | 7 |
| Q3 '17 | 5 | 4 | 5 |
| Q4 '17 | 5 | 4 | 5 |
| Q1 '18 | 5 | 4 | 5 |
| Q2 '18 | 5 | 4 | 5 |
| Q3 '18 | 5 | 4 | 5 |
| Q4 '18 | 6 | 4 | 5 |
| Q1 '19 | 5 | 4 | 5 |

Table 1.2: Retail website visit duration worldwide as of 1st quarter 2019, by device

Source: “Global retail site visit duration per device”, 25 April 2020, in Statista

This statistic bring to light, the even more important role of the content, being prospects quicker in acquiring all the information they need and employing less and less time on the EC for taking the final decision, marketers have to know precisely the kind of content to convince and engage customers.

It must be said that another reason for this decreasing is the more complex and more articulated customer journey; basically, many users arrive at the online store already informed and they seek only confirmations or new stimuli for finalizing the purchase.

But what exactly are the principles for a strategic use of the content?

According to Shopify a product page has to be simple, containing the right amount of information and with a strong focus on four main elements:

- **Product:** the dominant factor, on the product page should prevail on any other element; how a product is presented can impact on the perceived quality, on the positioning of the brand and as discussed in this study, on the engagement of the user.

- **Brand:** is without a doubt the signature of the company, it has to be present on the main pages of the website; not only the trademark represents the brand but even symbols, slogans, typical colors or other distinctive factors.
- **Copywriting:** the narrative voice of the e-commerce, is influential to develop a unique voice and tone. The optimization of the texts and the relative effectiveness are a strategic spot for marketers.
- **User experience:** involves the usability, the satisfaction to use the website and the engagement; design the whole experience from the user's perspective can raise the conversions and encourage the loyalty of consumers.

In the “e-commerce environment” there are some factors that have the explicit role of nudging and facilitating the purchase, it is the case of the call to action that merely represents the last link in the chain but that does not represent the main strategic component to drive the conversions.

It is different is for an element such as the photos of the products, these represents a crucial strategic driver for conversions and deserve a particular attention.

Taking into account the increased processing speed for the contents online, the pictures have become more than a photographic representation (Desrochers, Léger, Fredette, Mirhoseini, & Sénécal, 2019) they impact on the idealization of the products, on the suggestions about the context of use and in the creation of a storyline for both the product and the brand.

A content which draws attention not only has the predictable benefit of remaining better in the memory of many users, but it has also to be considered that the images will appear on Google search, on social site, on social recommendations sites and have better chances to become viral.

On the other side, it has to be coherent with the brand, with the distinctive tone of voice and the market in which the company operates; hence, providing quality does not only mean to manage the high-resolution or other technical details of the pictures but it's a matter of manifesting the essence of the product and the brand without undermining the clarity and simplicity, peculiar features for product pages.

1.5 The outdoor market

The outdoor market, otherwise known as sports & outdoor market, involves the sale of leisure products related to sport and outdoor activities (commonly called athleisure). Some typical items in this category are shoes for sport & outdoor, backpacks, fitness equipment, hunting devices, swimming accessories and winter sport gear (Statista “Sports & Outdoor”, 2020). This market segment is literally skyrocketing, according to Statista, the revenue in the Sports & Outdoor amounts to US \$84,538m in 2020.

In the same way, revenue is expected to show an annual growth rate (CAGR 2020-2024) of 6.8%, resulting in a market volume of US \$109,798m by 2024; ultimately, the penetration is 12.4% in 2020 and is expected to hit 19.1% by 2024. Here below the relative graphs:

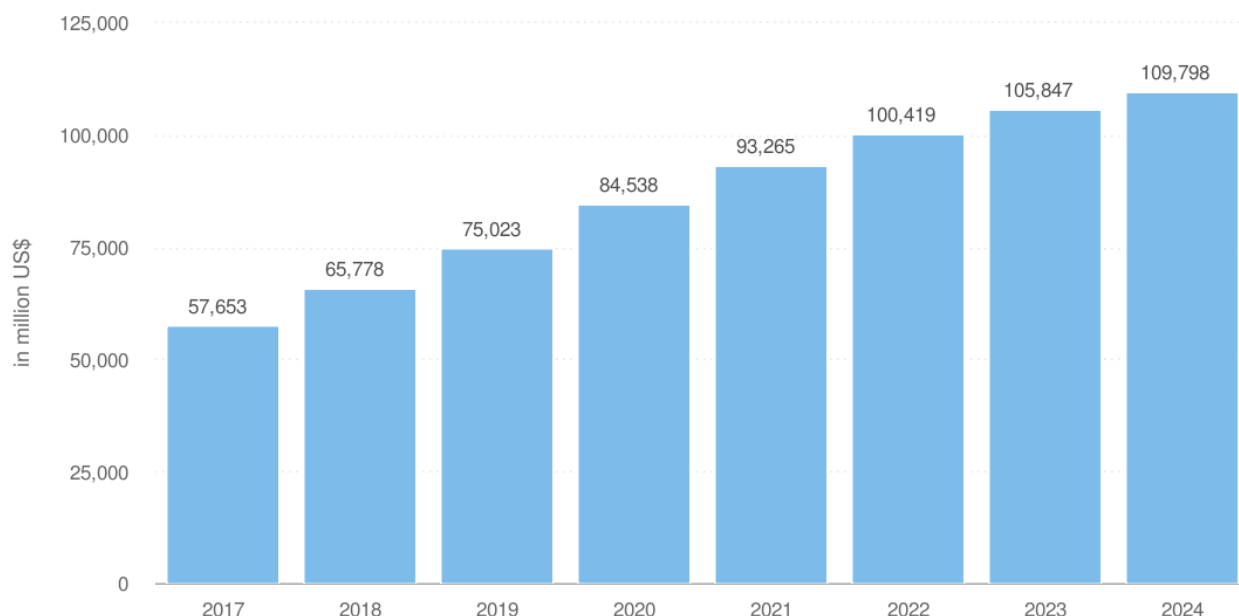


Figure 1.2: Revenue in the Sports & Outdoor

Source: “Sports & Outdoor”, Statista, April 2020

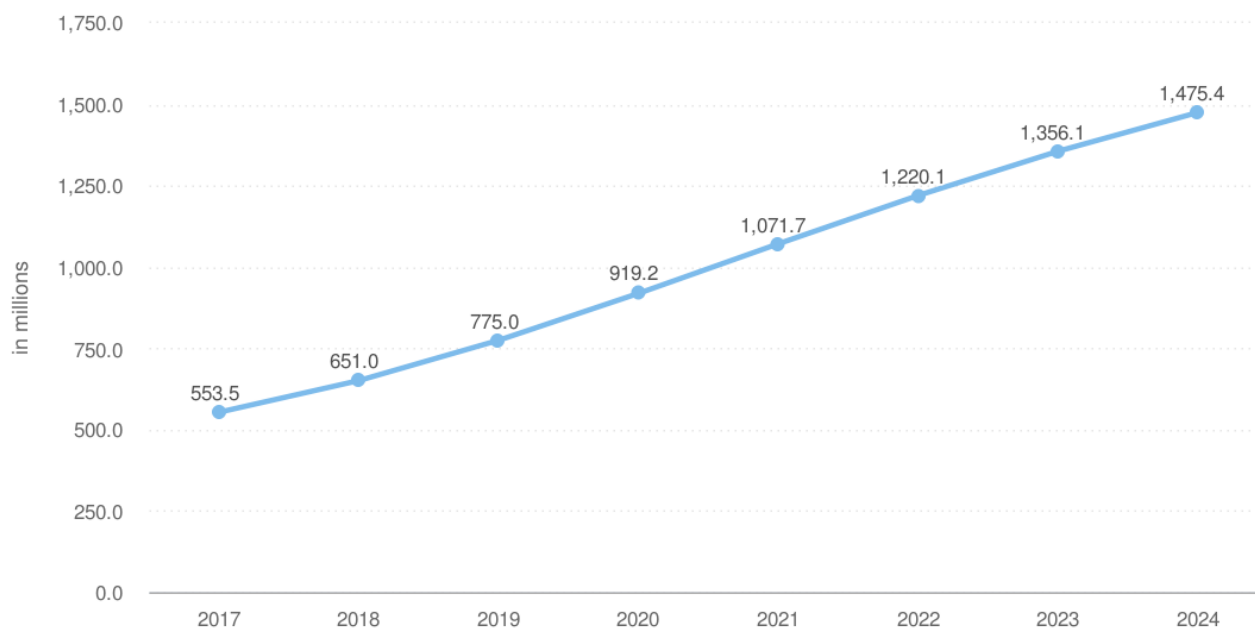


Figure 1.3: Number of Users in the Sports & Outdoor

Source: “Sports & Outdoor”, Statista, April 2020

In this study, the market taken as main reference will be the just presented “Sports & Outdoor” in fact not only is the market in which the “Beretta eStore” compete (the case study that will be introduced in the next paragraphs) but even because it is one of the fastest growing market online. This positive return is reinforced from the positive outlook dictated from the demographic profile of the average user; indeed, this proves to be quite a young market. According to Statista, the distribution of costumers by age is the following:

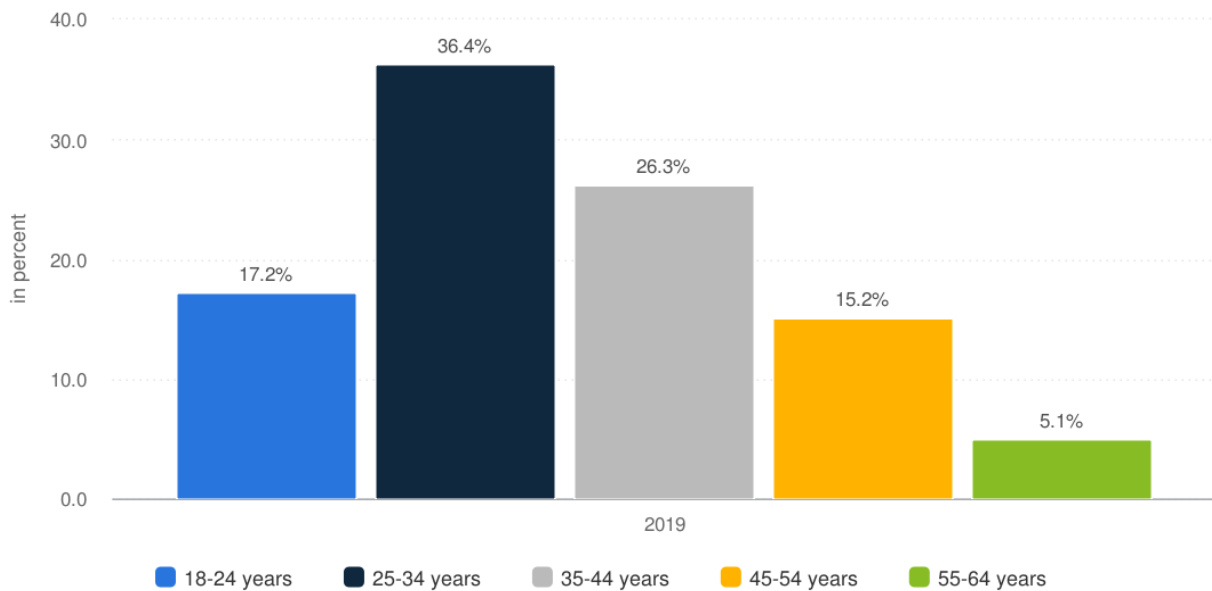


Figure 1.4: Users by age in the Sports & Outdoor

Source: “Sports & Outdoor”, Statista, April 2020

But why is the *athleisure* becoming so attractive for customers? What is the reason behind the rapid growth of the “Sports. & Outdoor” online?

According to Salesforce (Salesforce Blog, 23 January 2018) the answer must be sought into the unique relationship that the brand establishes with the customers. This relationship is grounded on the communication of an adventurous lifestyle, leveraging emotions by stimulating a challenge with themselves.

Probably in no other vertical segment the lifestyle is so tied to the brand as in the outdoor, this is demonstrated also by the fact that the activewear is so deeply rooted into customers to be worn even at work or in more formal occasions. A major asset for the brands in this market is the online business, in fact the most significant growth is obtained thanks to the digital channels. In the outdoor category, the connector between brand and the users is action, and companies aim to personify and invoke action into everything they do. The e-commerce in this market are content rich, able of inspiring users from the very beginning of the experience and through every touch point, the pictures and the descriptions are focused both on the technical aspects and on the evocative related feelings. The expenditure of companies in this field is addressed to the creation and maintenance of media content capable of generating engagement in the users that browse the site. One of the

methods to stimulate this engagement in prospects is the user generated content; indeed, it is not rare that brands exploit the so-called UGC, to be fair it is one of the leading trends in digital marketing nowadays and more specifically it is a practice very widespread in the outdoor market. According to some recognized data in literature, it is stated that the 63% of consumers trust more the user-generated photo than the brand-created ones.

The benefits of the UGC use are different, first of all it drives the attention toward the customers: as already said the customers have become an active part of the selling process, especially in this field prospects usually they are well aware of what they want and they are just searching for the brand that can satisfy their needs; using contents coming from customers means recognize their importance and could get customers closer to the brand by facilitating a sense of community. Another advantage is the perceived authenticity of this kind of contents, proving the reliability of the brand and last but not least it has to be said that the UGC usually has a very high ROI, due to the low cost of this marketing activity but with a significant return.

A good example of firm that use this kind of contents is Patagonia, in fact, the American company employs on its online stores many videos and pictures from costumers. Their e-commerce displays many inspiring scenarios, stories and even some short films about outdoors activities, it tries to represent the essence of the activewear in every section of their website and online store. On these latter, it is possible to find whole sections dedicated to promoting the adventures lived by their ambassadors, activists or as written above from users through the UGC. The pages of Patagonia EC present an alternation of this kind of emotionally charged content, with technical aspects that usually interest the users of this apparel vertical.

Another virtuous example is represented from KUIU, the American company specialized in hunting clothes and outdoor apparel which bases its business entirely online, selling directly to the final customers; this case study is particularly helpful to understand the compelling evidence of the power attained by the online channels, in fact this brand has been able to develop a corporate identity and a customer base without any physical touchpoint, becoming one of the leading brand in the market. This was hardly thinkable until a few years ago, the tangible presence of the brand via offline retail channels was essential to build the storyline around the corporate identity. But how did they do it? How was it possible?

Again, the answer is to be found in content, KUIU has been able to exploit an omnichannel strategy basically grounded around their EC; indeed the online store is being used to promote the values and the mission of the company, also to engage the users by inspiring them and by stimulating their emotions.

The role of the pictures appears to be of paramount importance for the goal of creating an immersive and engaging e-commerce, it's worth to investigate how consumers perceive these elements as drivers for their user experience. Also, texts and descriptions might have an important role in creating a storyline around the brand and the products, eliciting emotions in prospects.

1.6 Conversion triggers and social proof

There are a number of factors influencing the conversions on e-commerce; we discussed about the engagement as a booster of conversions and the content as a driver, but there is more. For years both practitioners and academics have explored the components that encourage customers to make a purchase: in this paragraph the aim is to group and analyse the main strategic levers employed by marketers in the digital world.

It must be specified that offline, the understanding and the consciousness of these themes obviously goes back a long way, while online, due to the relatively recent widespread diffusion of these digital businesses, the development of tactics to convince and persuade prospects, is the latest “state-of-art”; nevertheless the improvements and the refinements in this area of digital marketing are very rapid, firstly thanks to the deployment of specific analytical techniques that ensure a deep understanding of users, and secondly because many triggers which were used offline have been successfully adapted in the online world.

According to the statistics published by Marketing Charts and retrieved from Statista (MarketingCharts, 2017) in 2017, the most successful e-commerce techniques ranked on average uplift in revenue-per-visitor, reveal that scarcity is the most effective tactic with an increment of 2.9% on average of revenue from visitors (RPV); with the term scarcity it is meant every tactics that “highlight items that are low in stock”.

Second in importance and of special interest for our study is the social proof with an increment of 2.3% on RPV; with social proof it is meant “techniques that leverage the behavior of other users to provide information about trending products and items currently popular”.

Finally, urgency proves to be the third most important factor for boosting RPV with an average increment of 1.5%; with urgency it is meant “techniques that use a time limit to promote urgency to complete an action before a deadline”.

MarketingCharts underlines that the outcome of this statistics is crucial for researchers because it confirms the “long-held beliefs about psychological techniques – particularly scarcity, urgency and social proof”.

Therefore, it seems confirmed that the three main persuasive techniques, recognized from psychology too, are: scarcity, social proof and urgency.

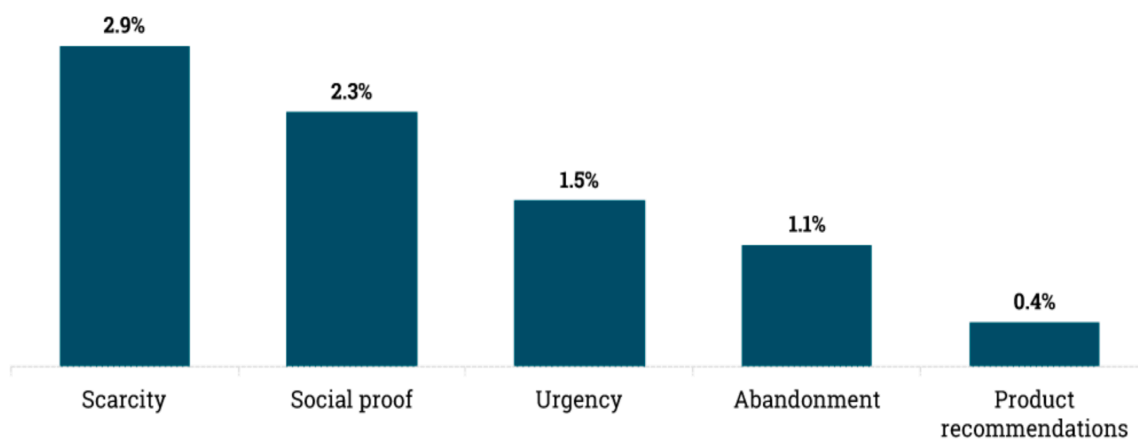


Figure 1.5: Most successful e-commerce marketing personalization techniques worldwide as of June 2017

Source: MarketingCharts, June 2017

Understandably, all these three tactics lead to an emotional activation in the users; scholars have always supported that any decision taken by consumers consists of several conscious and subconscious emotional triggers. Emotion is, in fact, a key component in every decision. The main techniques used in e-commerce for trigger emotions in prospects are listed below:

- **Storytelling:** In consumer behavior it has always been said that people love stories, especially when it comes to brand or product stories; many companies use texts and sections like “about us” or “our history” on their e-commerce with the aim to recreate a storyline around them.
This is intended to humanize and to “give a face” to the brand but also to entertain the users online.
- **Inspiring forms of fear:** considered a negative emotion and provoked from a perceived threat, it is often used from marketers to generate marketing stimuli. People have an innate instinct to avoid situations that give them pain and to pursue those which give them pleasure. On online stores some companies voluntarily disseminate subtle scaring messages and then suggest themselves as a solution to avoid the threat.
- **Greed:** leverages the sense of good deal, offers various forms of reward and amplifies the cost of inaction facing the compelling offer available only for a limited time; these latter are some of the techniques used to exploit the “calling that cannot be denied” from a good bargain.
The perceived personal benefit in prospects is the emotional trigger in all these techniques.
- **Altruism:** can be implemented and communicated as a form of positive actions done by the brand. The standards of corporate social responsibility went up in the last couple years and the expectations are defied by customers. Using altruism as a strategic asset on EC can be dangerous for the brand image, but if it is coherent and credible it could contribute to create a positive image of a company.
- **Reciprocity:** grounded on the psychological process for which people are feeling pressured to pay back those who gave something to them. In e-commerce formulas like free-gift or loyalty programs with rewards, are often being used.
- **Social proof:** like stated earlier in this paragraph it is one of the most effective techniques for boosting revenues. To successfully encourage prospects to make the purchase, in many cases is a matter of reassurance. Bringing evidence of what other customers have experienced with the product or simply showing the number of reviews or the items already sold are some examples of this strategy.

It is correct to consider social proof as an extension of the eWOM, actually we are used to consider reviews as the main component of the electronic word-of-mouth but despite this, if one considers the role of this latter, the connection is evident. The awareness of the number of customers that already have chosen the product, seems to be online, an effective game changer.

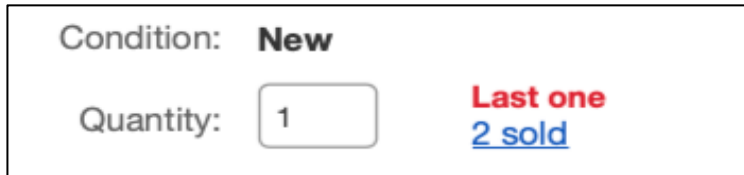


Figure 1.6: *A particular of a social proof technique on e-commerce*

Source: eBay, April 2020

Optinmonster, the digital company expert in lead generation, has categorized the social proof in six main types/sources:

1. Customers: any form of social proof coming from the existing customers or users.
2. Experts: social proof coming from authoritative sources or from esteemed experts.
3. Influencers: social proof coming from influencers or celebrities.
4. Crowds: social proof coming from a wide number of people.
5. Friends: the core of WOM, social proof coming from friends or relatives.
6. Certification: social proof coming from a third-party entity that certifies the trustworthy source.

Social proof is a powerful instrument, even if it could be a double-edge sword. This is the case when there is a poor availability of “social confirmation” to be shown on the EC. If we imagine an online store that proudly reports the number of the products sold and that this number is not too impressive, the effect on prospects could be exactly the opposite. Few exceptions are represented by limited series, niche products or extra-luxury goods; for digital marketers having a confirmation of the influence exerted by this social proof represents an important step forward. So, ultimately, investigating on the perceived trustworthiness generated from this

social proof should add another piece in the understanding of WOM. Specifically, we could observe if the awareness of the customer base (i.e. the products sold) has a reassuring influence on the purchase.

1.7 Case study: Beretta eStore

The Italian company Fabbrica d'Armi Pietro Beretta S.p.A, one of the global biggest players in the sector of weapons and guns, has launched his own business to consumer e-commerce in Europe in 2014, even though the company operates at business to business level too, this research is focused only on the end-customer market. Despite the almost 500 years of business, the company has as its main strategic asset the ongoing research and the inventiveness. The company is part of the Beretta Holding, composed of 32 companies dedicated to hunting, sporting, military and personal defense. Over the years, the group has progressively expanded its range of products, especially developing new lines of clothing and accessories, characterized by the attention to quality and technology.

Traditionally the company sells its products via traditional physical retail channels, usually by relying on sporting goods retailers or armorers. Named “Beretta eStore”, the online store, is active on three main layers: clothing, accessories and spare parts. This research will be focused on clothing and general accessories, considering out of the scope the analysis of gun accessories and spare parts.

The e-commerce covers the demand of all the main countries in Europe and comes in four different languages: Italian, English, Spanish and French. The clothing lines sold are mainly targeted for agonistic and amateur athletes in the sporting disciplines, for hunters, for activities of practical shooting and for leisure. Excluding products with sophisticated technical components or specifically developed for practicing the above-mentioned activities, the rest of them could be categorized in the “Sports and Outdoor”.

The online store is divided into nine categories, six of which are in the scope of this analysis:

- **New:** The first category covers the latest released items, the new collections and the products suggestion.
- **Men:** Categorized for gender, this category displays a cross sectional window in all the subcategories that fit for men.
- **Women:** Categorized for gender, this category displays a cross sectional window in all the subcategories that fit for women.
- **Gear:** In this section luggage, cases, backpacks, binoculars, knives and safety gear are brought together.

- Gadget: This category includes all the official merchandise from the brand Beretta.
- Outlet: A section dedicated to discounts on inventories and last sizes.

The EC has its own internal search tool and it is possible to filter product family, segment, activity, feature or even availability; the online store is fully available on smartphone.

The performance of the store is satisfactory, and it showed a positive trend in the last periods; nevertheless, some competitors remain the point of reference for turnover.

In terms of contents, the homepage is the main catalyst for the storyline and the inspirational images; instead on the product pages the layout includes: a short product description (with all the information about sizes and variants of colors), the call to action, the social sharing buttons, the list of related items, the long description (with information about the technologies) and a section for the reviews.

Since the number of products already sold is not present, the count of reviews represents the main source of social proof on the product page; however, it needs to be said that not all the items benefit from a large number of reviews, which generates a consequent lower “reassuring effect”.

In parallel with the launch of the new “Spring-Summer 2020” collection, some new prototypes of product pages have been released where the product is presented in its typical “usage scenario” developing its storyline. This means that through contents like videos, action images and texts, managers aim to engage and better interact with prospects creating an inspiring leverage for the final purchase. It is worth noticing that in this new prototype layout, a special section of images is aimed to convey technological and technical features.

1.8 Beretta eStore analysis

According to Google Analytics the demographic distributions of the users on Beretta EC are the following:

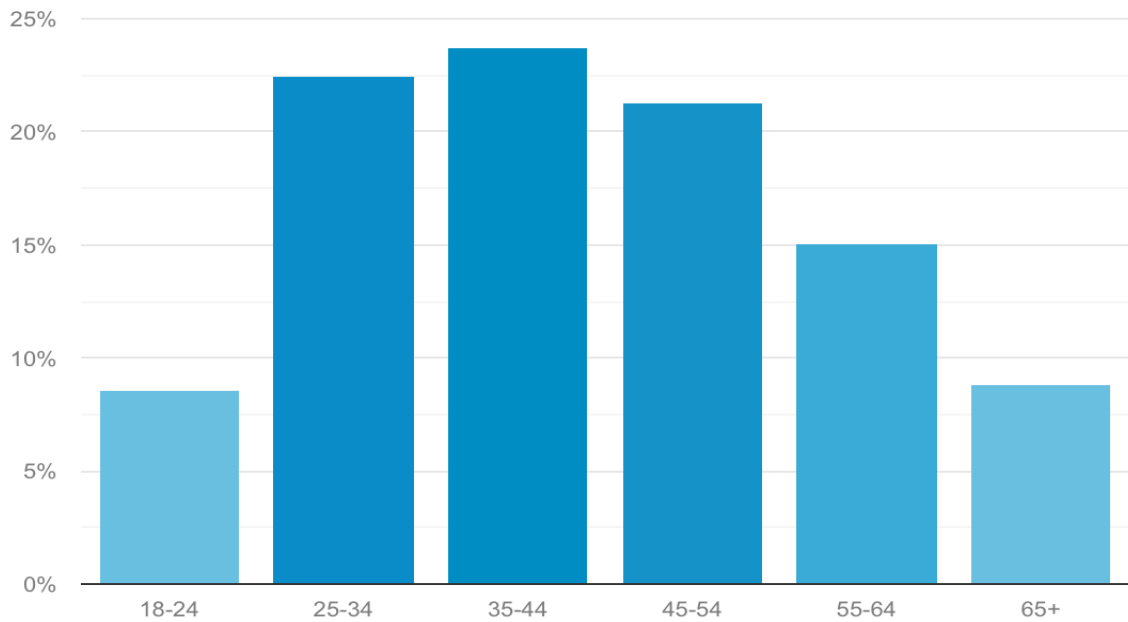


Figure 1.7: Beretta eStore: age distribution

Source: Google Analytics

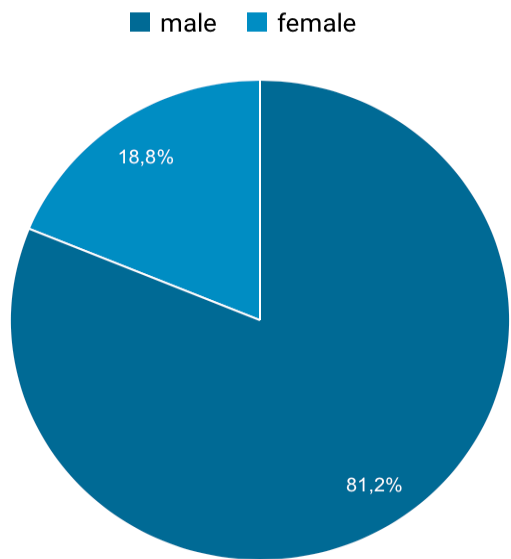


Figure 1.8: Beretta eStore: users sex ratio

Source: Google Analytics

As reported in these graphs, the average user profile is a male aged between 25 and 54.

For what concern the geographical distribution of the users, the main countries are represented firstly by Italy with a value of 34.5% of the total, followed by the United States with a value of 17%; the United Kingdom comes third with 10% then France comes fourth with the 6.4% of total users.

The fifth and sixth positions are occupied by Spain and Germany, both below 3% of the total.

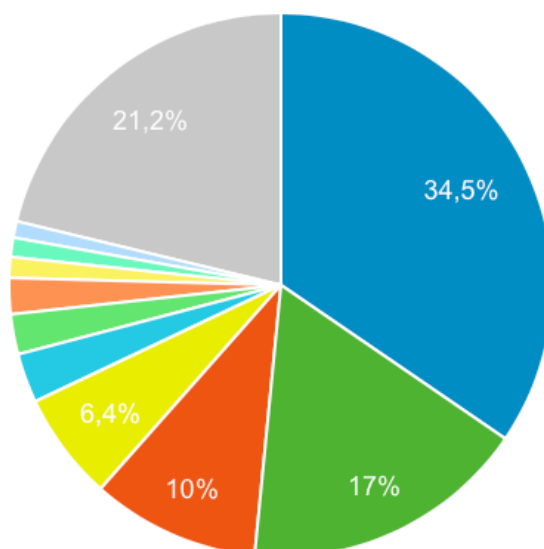


Figure 1.9: Beretta eStore: geographical distribution

Source: Google Analytics

Google Analytics also reports the share of traffic divided by device as follows:

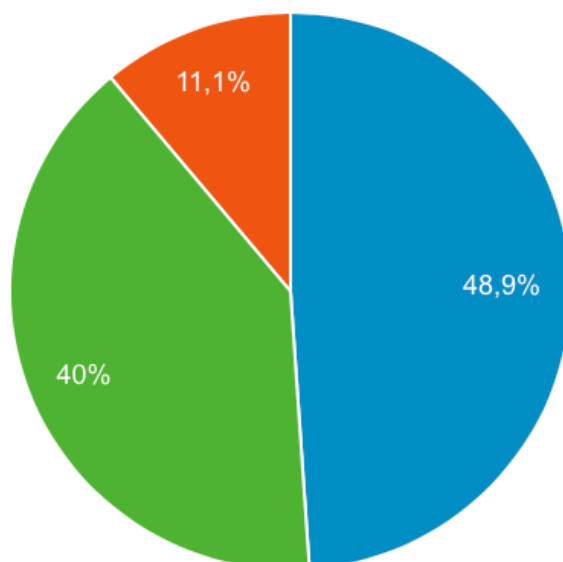


Figure 1.9: Beretta eStore: share of traffic by device

Source: Google Analytics

Mobile traffic accounts for 48.9% of the total traffic whereas desktop accounts for 40%.

Lastly the traffic generated by tablets is 11.1%.

Since 2015, the Beretta eStore has received 34.426.653 visits with 24.608.408 of unique pageviews.

The average time spent from users on the website is 57 seconds with a bounce rate of nearly 28%.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

2.1 Framing

The economic environment has changed profoundly in the last decades due to the coming of some epochal innovations, the metamorphosis has at its center the customer, as it has never been throughout history. In fact, consumers cannot be considered passive anymore, they have to be seen as coproducers of value. Marketers cannot limit their work to observe the behavior of individuals, they have to actively interact with them in order to provide the solutions they need. The difficulty to track in a simplified manner the conduct of customers, brought to the creation of new tools and methods in order to better mark opportunities and threats. The rapidity of changes and the mutant nature of economy pushed customers to become cleverer and sharper.

Not only the younger generations have familiarized with the newest platforms and media, but even the older generation developed habits in using those systems.

The new media permits more engaging experiences, able to generate satisfaction and interests in users; furthermore, a wider and more targeted participation of users completed the picture.

Communication and purchase habits have changed, these two factors are within the others, responsible for ideas like the digitalization of businesses. In this field, riding the wave of new technologies, companies were able to design strategic approaches for the conversion of classic business model into “cyber business”, involving various types of computerized solution.

The advantages from the point of view of customers are many, both social and economic: the ease of use, the rapidity, the availability, the convenience and the price transparency (Huseynov & Özkan Yıldırım, 2019).

Some of the main advantages for firms and for the society are lower entry and transaction costs, better access to information, better resource allocation, improvement of international coordination, an open economy stimulating competition, diffusion of key technologies, less road traffic, and lower air pollution are some other positive impacts of e-commerce on economy and society.

2.2 Newest shopping behavior

E-commerce is defined as all those business activities in which transactions are prepared and conducted online. This research is specifically referring to the selling activity of physical goods through a digital channel to a private end user, the purchases can be finalized via mobile or via a desktop. Instead, what is not taken into consideration are the digital distributed services, the resale of used goods and the sales between private persons. The demand for products via online platform is growing consistently, the number of users is expected to increase linearly reaching a user penetration of nearly 65.5% in 2024 starting from a user penetration of

56.1% in 2020. The revenue is expected to show an annual growth (CAGR 2020-2024) of 7.6% resulting in a market volume of €2,660,571m by 2024 (Statista, March 2020).

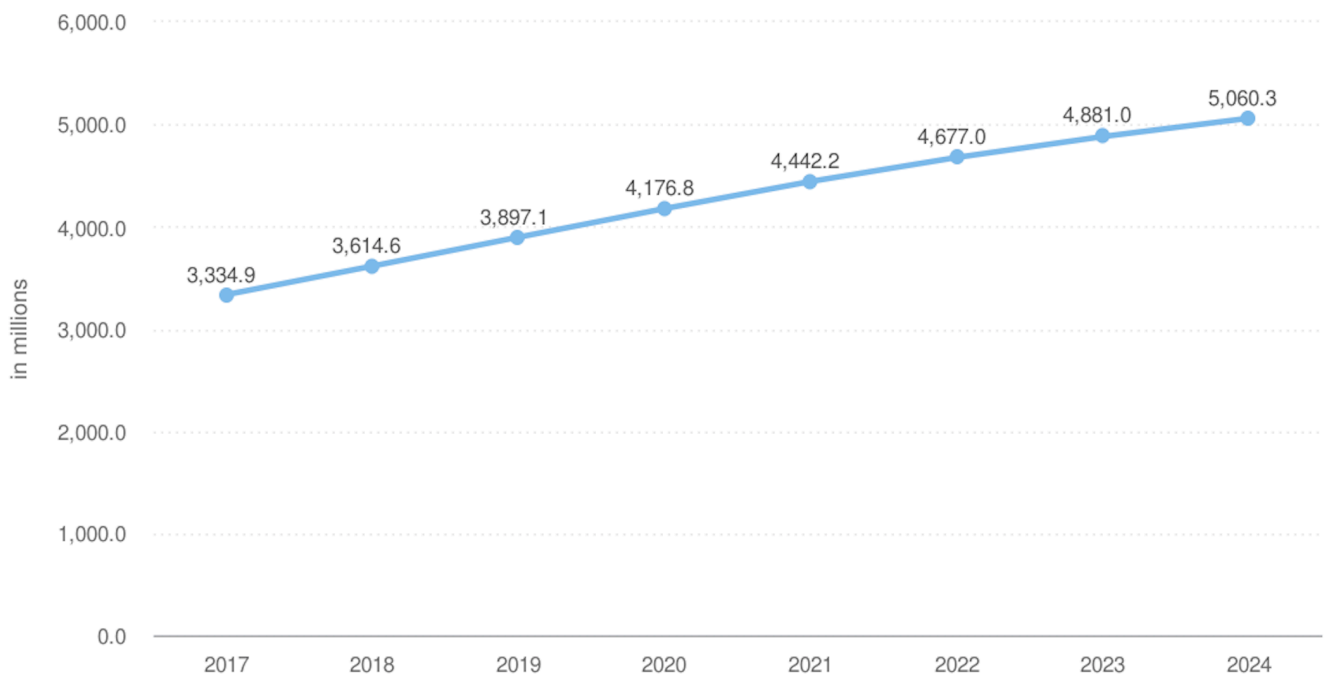


Figure 2.1: Number of users in the e-commerce market worldwide

Source: Statista, March 2020

The coming of new channels, in fact has changed profoundly the customers preferences in purchase and has opened the route for new possibilities. However, consumers have shown to seek for efficient and valid new alternatives to their routine, this is crucial when EC represent an alternative and not the only channel for buying physical goods that normally are purchased in bricks and mortar stores.

In addition to efficiency and effectiveness, users are influenced by other factors, which themselves influence the activity of a cyber business. We have to split the focus on two separate dimensions: internal and external variables. For what concerns the internal factors the security of the system, the reliability, the ease of use and other variables have a strong impact, the e-commerce should create a strong sense of loyalty in customers able to generate commitment for the products and the brand.

E-commerce therefore has to assure the safety of the platform, otherwise the customers would prefer to opt for a complete “touch and feel” experience, being sure that in the physical stores they will buy exactly what they saw. Another fundamental aspect is the technological capacity of the firm, this impact heavily on the success of the web shop. The capacity of the firm means the skills and knowledge of the project from within the firm and the outsourced IT support. Customers want to navigate on ECs smoothly and quickly; the technical aspects of the navigation have to fulfill the desire of immediacy, typical of the newest buying behaviors. In this area outsourcing represents a good solution for managing easily and with cost efficiency all

the latest technologies without the long term and expensive alternatives of developing all the necessary expertise in-house. The ability of being in step with the time, is influential for key aspects like the structure of the user interface; this last-mentioned has an impact on the perceived quality of the products and has a link with the idea of quality on available information about the product on the website (Thatcher & Zhu, 2010). In light of what has just been written, a cyber business, exactly like a classic brick and mortar, has to be renovated continuously, following the trends and the preferences of users. A careful analysis of the insights and feedbacks from consumers are the two principal activities that permit firms to be competitive, gaining new customers and acquiring loyalty into repeat customers.

In the next paragraph the analysis of the literature will deepen in the aspects that permits cybershops to grow and to extend the penetration into their consumers and to manage effective strategies for gaining leads and consequently prospects.

2.3 Critical factors of success

In an authoritative study in this field (Dogerlioglu & Cosgun, 2012) tried to analyze the critical factors of success for an e-commerce. With critical factors of success, it is meant that when these variables are satisfactory the cyber business benefits of competitive performance and probabilistically this will bring to gain satisfied consumers and to position themselves in a lucrative segment of the market.

In the past, other studies have demonstrated that the financial assets, the dimension of the company, the top management sensitivity on the topic, the IT expertise, the perception of the potential advantages brought from the EC activity, the market, force from the external environment, affinity with the core business and IT outsources support are the main variables that drive SMEs to adopt and exploit EC. Furthermore, an advantage brought by this innovation that has to be mentioned, is that new tech's permits to magnify the effect of a capillary diffusion, in rural areas where it is sometimes difficult to reach stores; therefore with new technologies for businesses it is possible to expand their offer and to become widespread, enlarging their presence in new territories. This just mentioned, represents a cost-reduction strategy particularly effective for SMEs that gives them the possibility to compete with multinationals with higher resources available.

In the analysis of this context it is key to depict the reasons that make consumers satisfied during the use of a cyber-business; the satisfaction has an influential role in the analysis of the strategic components that firms have to manage in EC, that's why satisfaction is a proven antecedent for loyalty in customers (Heskett et al., 1994). Besides loyalty is one of the main goals that brands want to establish with their consumers. The objective of this research is to investigate on the components that affect the performances of online businesses. In the early stages of the phenomenon Srinivasan et al. (2002) conducted a study trying to depict the variables influencing the experience on EC; what they found is that interactivity, content and convenience are affecting the website satisfaction of users accordingly. A more recent research, (D.Fornari, S.Grandi, & E.Fornari (2018) renewed those intuitions in the current situation; with their study they analyzed the migration from

physical stores in the retail market to what is called the E-grocery. They affirmed that the H24, 365 day-a-year and everywhere accessibility is an important plus for consumers, meaning from a strategic point of view, that the availability is a priority and any possible malfunction or delay could instill a negative sentiment in prospects. Regarding the convenience aspect in the study of D.Fornari, S.Grandi, & E.Fornari (2018), it is pointed out that the real time comparison with other EC or other platforms is easier and more instantaneous in respect of the offline environment. From a managerial perspective this means that the pricing activity could not be conducted without a real activity of benchmarking, making analogies with competitors. This consideration on prices puts in light a key issue regarding margin for EC. In fact as D.Fornari, S.Grandi, & E.Fornari (2018) stated cyber business profit margins are significantly lower than store-based channel ones; strategically thinking this means that it seems important to run a cyber business with lower cost, however, even though the lower margin on a single product could be an obvious downside, it is understandable that the potential customer base is higher for EC due to the previews cited concept of accessibility.

Continuing the screening of the components that affect the demand of e-shop, the possibility of having an assortment that is potentially infinite, gives a drastic advantage to online shops. Usually e-commerce is linked to a delocalized storage that has more items in comparison to the physical storage of the majority of bricks and mortar. This give the possibility to firms that operate online to display a wider range and possibly to offer more configuration of the products; because of this, usually EC with big assortments ensure a deeper personalization of the purchase. What has been demonstrated is that usually customers, among other uses, resort to EC when they have difficulties in finding exactly the item they were searching for.

Beyond every strategic optimization, there are some antecedents that increase the chance of success for a cyber business. One of the first antecedent is the financial asset of the company, which has been considered a notable factor, because, due to their financial resources it is possible for them to face up the massive amount of investments in IT and for the training of employees, making it possible to start and run all the activities connected with the EC. Outsourcing again could represent an effective solution but even in this case it requires the possibility for the firm to deal with an expenditure.

The dimension of the company has been shown to have a positive influence on the adoption of e-commerce, as a study had already stated in the early stages of the phenomenon (JW Weiss, 2001). SMEs have to daily face up operational more than strategical decisions; considering this, it is understandable that the more organized companies, even though with greater inertia are in many cases more prone to adopt in advance the latest developments in the field; moreover suffice it to say that many large companies are equipped with specific departments that evaluate and study how to exploit the latest in technologies. Electronic commerce is in many cases a necessity nowadays for many industries but for many others it is still an innovative method of selling, still unexplored and unexploited. The vision and sensitiveness of top management come at this point, pushing the awareness on this theme through the main branches of the company is pivotal; the role of guiding the collaborators and colleagues through the entire digitalization of the processes can have a multiplier effect on the positive outcome of the operation (Kohnke, 2017). As said before the IT previews experience

can be a positive driver in the adoption of an e-commerce, making employees and management already used to understand and implement, in their daily activities, new tasks linked to the upcoming changes in the asset of the company; lastly but not less important, training has to be fully embraced and made palatable for the personnel involved (Ghobakhloo, Arias-Aranda, & Benitez-Amado, 2011).

2.4 Role of customers

The main objectives of this research are shaped around the new possible implementation for EC strategies that permits to improve the performance and to deal with the on-line as well as off-line competitors. The majority of the literature explores the phenomenon from the demand side, understanding the reasons behind the choices and the preferences of consumers. This research will be more focused on the offer point of view i.e. the firms, thinking about the users as co-producers of value and final beneficiaries. Nevertheless, the customers are the starting point of every strategy in EC as well as just said the end point; in the literature copious studies treated their role in the success of a cyber business strategy but not as many papers argued about the consequent implementation in respond to these behaviors. The objective in this paragraph is to interpret the functioning behind the choice of customers in preferring EC to other more classic forms of purchase. First in the list their readiness is a clear antecedent for the success of an EC, because it is a good predictor of the magnitude and the size of the potential market; the consumers are the final and most important arbiter of the value offered by a company, which has not to be confined to a strict definition. In fact, it is possible concept than satisfy needs or solve problems for consumers, is possible to state that the presence of an EC, giving to consumers the possibility of buying online, increases the value proposition offered by the brand in the eyes of customers. Considering that this last cited affects the whole experience with the brand and the relationship established with the company (Lindič & Marques da Silva, 2011) the EC represents a competitive advantage for prospects and could drive loyalty in customers. But the online environment is an effective touch point only if these latter are ready; nowadays in the developed countries the percentage of people using internet is around 87% (Statista, Global internet penetration 2019) so we cannot consider the access to internet an effective driver in the choice of using or not an EC; it is more useful to focus on the acceptance of users for the online shopping alternative, making distinctions between the different markets. Like D.Fornari, S.Grandi, & E.Fornari (2018) have shown, many products like books and toys have an online sales shares of around 40% in the first case and 30% in the second which is a significant amount, but this is not true for every industry.

In the early stages Donthu and Garcia (1999, p.52), affirmed “the increase in the quantity and quality of available information on the Internet and the presence of well-known corporations and brands on the Internet are also generating higher interest among consumers”; it is important to underline that since those years the amount of content, the innovative user-friendly techniques and the raising engagement of users have made it possible to turn Internet into a powerful medium in every stage of the customer journey.

Consumers can gather information about brands and products through the website, they can visualize how the products can help them in satisfying their necessities. They can use forum searching for specific products, details or simply suggestions, they can surf through social media searching for official pages, communities, competitors' pages or fan pages. The control that users experience through internet has no correspondence in real life. In EC as on websites prospects or simply occasional audiences can switch from platform to platform, from brand to brand exposing themselves only to the contents that really matters to them.

This difference with the offline is significant here, especially because people is developing a lower attention threshold and the typical interruption effect of classic advertising usually bother customers during their customer journey causing the reduction of effectiveness for the traditional media. A component that gives cyber business a competitive advantage is thus, the selective exposure to content and information in general. In the actual online context, due to the proliferative number of private labels, unknown brands, autonomous brands etc., prospects adapted their strategies to protect themselves against fraud or undesired products. As (Mróz-Gorgoń & Szymański, 2018) recently noted, the online clothing industry is within the others one of the slowest to reach, in volume and values, the physical channels.

This is of course due to the nature itself of the goods that is in the majority of cases important for customers; these latter want to physically see and try out the apparel, for size and quality reasons. The reliability and the validity of the EC is carefully verified by customers, using the means at their disposal. This accuracy and thoroughness are an affirmed behavior in users online, but which was perpetrated even in the purchase offline. When customers do not use the EC as the means for finalizing the purchase, it happens that it is used to make comparison on prices or for gathering info about the brand or product. This gave the origin to the so called ROPO phenomenon: consumers search for information via internet and complete the purchase in a classic off-line store. Doing so, they are able to identify the most convenient offer or the product that satisfies their needs, mitigating the perceived threat of buying an inadequate item. A characteristic that some online buyers search for is the intimacy, usually underrated or not considered is in fact a relevant reason for the success of many EC. For some reasons during the purchase many consumers hope for an experience that does not involve other people like shop assistants or sales consultants. An undesired interaction could involve a waste of time and emotional discomfort. It is not only the case of "socially uncomfortable" goods, but many other shopping experiences have in common a desire for privacy during a portion or all the phases of the purchase.

The motivation that stands behind many visits of prospects to EC is the research of exciting and interesting contents about the products and the brand. The gratification resulting from a satisfactory visit could be converted into a purchase and possibly to loyalty. Even if, at first glance it seems not easy to figure out the source of gratifications, understanding the role of this component is important to differentiate the first use of the EC, resulting from fortuitous or involuntary reasons, to the continuing relationship that is an indicator of the intentional decision to repeat the visits to the website.

Strictly related to the concept of gratification, of which often it is the outcome, is the personal involvement; the personal involvement is related to the feeling of personal relationship with the website, users usually seek for contents in line with their values, their habits or state of mind.

The personal involvement is itself the result of a pleasant and stimulating experience, in the next paragraph we will try to define the components and the effects of the experiences proven by consumers.

2.5 The role of the experience

Cyber businesses have the primacy of exploiting online the combined potential of goods, experiences and services. As Vargo and Lusch (2004) underlined marketing has been originally conceived for a goods-centered, manufacturing-based model of economic exchange developed during the Industrial Revolution. Never before, in economic history, has been possible to see the importance of services and experiences, as influential as nowadays. Services are dominating the market; they are key for the competitiveness of firms and for keeping customers satisfied and consequently loyal: the S-D logic does not make differences between economies of industries, it rather assesses the competitive advantage of being strong in providing services to consumers. E-commerce represents an additional service that the companies could offer to their customers, it contributes to create a customer-oriented relationship, and as it is affirmed in the paper of Vargo and Lusch (2004) this provides an inner worth to prospects. But this value is distributed among customers only if the experience on the EC is valuable for them.

It has to be specified, that according to the above-mentioned authors, the value cannot be measured and evaluated from anyone else aside the final beneficiaries or rather the customers.

In line with this idea of the value provided by the service, it is coherent to say that for different customers, the concept of value takes different meanings. In this research the value of the EC will involve the experience that prospects have during the interaction with it, accordingly not only to the content but even to some typical dynamics of cyber business, like reviews and product suggestions. Designing an experience that is impressive and satisfying for users is key in many activities of the company, for an EC as for many other touch points with the customers it is an occasion to leave an indelible sign in their minds increasing the possibility of conversions and to boost loyalty. Tynan and McKechnie (2009) stated “Over the last twenty-five years, experience marketing has been a topical issue. Ever since Holbrook and Hirschman first introduced the influential idea that consumer behavior has an experiential dimension (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982) and postulated the experiential perspective as an alternative to the hegemonic information processing view to understanding consumer behavior, there has been an increasing recognition amongst academics and practitioners of the need for marketers to have a deeper understanding of the role of customer experiences influencing how customers behave...”

Therefore, the experience is achievable through services and networks, not only by the design of a compelling product for the customers. The experience in the online context is facilitated by the co-creation of value from

the users, even though to assess and strategically design an experience for users is not so linear. An experience has for sure to be remembered in the mind of customers and requires engaged users (Pine and Gilmore, 1998) but how to strategically design the content to delight them and how to measure the engagement of the users are two variables depending on the knowledge and the expertise of the managers.

There is a missing in the literature in respect of this themes and the goal of this study is to identify some defined variables that could give a new perspective to the phenomenon.

Internet has many advantages in respect to the off-line world in this direction, between the others; it is possible to interact easily with global audiences, it is cost efficient, it permits to avoid interruption marketing and it permits to collect feedback and metrics.

However, the online context doesn't run without disadvantages, in fact, marketers interacting with the cyber world have to understand the decreasing attention threshold of the audiences, the potential negative impact of the virality of contents and last but not least the absence of tangibility. Keeping the focus on experiences, Tynan and McKechnie (2009), understood that there was a link between customer experiences and customer advocacy, when the firms are capable to recreate real stimuli on the web, they gain a competitive advantage that cannot be achieved easily from competitors.

Citing Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) in their renowned paper, customers are in search for “fantasy, feeling and fun” through the consumption, so this concept drives the attention of academic and practitioners from consumption as a mere need satisfier to a more complex mixture of variables. This feeling-driven purchase behavior is common to many industries nowadays and is at the base of the creation of brand's communities. The attachment to the brand nudge persons to impersonating the value of the brand and to behave like the rest of the brand community. Experience marketing has the advantage to enter in the personal sphere of users, evoking brand advocacy, loyalty and word of mouth (Smilansky, 2009). According to the research of Tynan and McKechnie (2009), value is not something that can be attached to products, or that a well-designed service can provide to the brand, value includes compulsorily the interaction of the customer in the entire process or in a relevant part of it. The concept of “fantasy, feeling and fun” called the “three Fs” was extended to include the “four Es” (Holbrook, 2000) of “experience, entertainment, exhibitionism and evangelizing”.

The invitation of the paper is to consider the consumer behavior not only during the act of buying but during the entire cycle: newest methods of analysis come to the aid of marketers tracking what is called the customer journey.

Tynan and McKechnie (2009) stated “The seminal work of Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) addressing subjectively-based experiential aspects of the consumption experience, stimulated recognition of the need for a deeper understanding of consumer behavior through examining the overall consumption experience. Hirschman later identified three consumption motives including cognition seeking, that is the experience sought to stimulate the senses and finally the novelty seeking experience or desire to seek out novel stimuli.” Moreover, other authors suggested that the experience has a link with learning new things, with the

characteristic of novelty and to amaze customers or prospects. Extending this concept to e-commerce it is understandable how services online are different in the designing stage, in the experiencing stage and ultimately in the adapting stage. The biggest difference among the online and the offline environments is in the way of interacting with the shop, in fact, in the offline service there is a contact with a real, non-virtual, environment involving all the human senses and able of evoking emotions that vary the perception of the service itself; online the service is provided usually impersonally and through interactions via computer. To achieve an experience that is meaningful for users online many variables have to be intersected like the right functioning of the IT technologies, the correct operation from shareholders and suppliers, the right combination of partners and the tracking and management of the WOM.

In this study the focal point of the analysis will be the content on the E-commerce, the intent is to measure its effectiveness in impressing a good memory in customers minds. As content we will consider only images and descriptions of the products, considering out of scope other characteristics of the user experience. Further studies could implement the analysis studying the interaction of other variables. Our first research question is therefore the following:

RQ1: Which kind of contents evoke the engagement of prospects?

Assuming that the engagement represents an antecedent for shaping the perception of a good experience with the EC, in the mind of customers, discovering the type of images and texts that could generate engagement represent the first step. Here is our first hypothesis:

H1) Images representing a typical “usage scenario” have the ability to get prospects more closely involved increasing their engagement toward the product in respect to “product centric” images.

There is a missing in the literature in this regard, the aim is to test if users, during the navigation, could experience an increased engagement being exposed to scenes that show a real situation of usage of the products. On the contrary, the so defined “product centric” gives the visibility only to the product itself.

In their popular research Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) stated that the consumption of hedonic goods provides more engagement, fun, joy and positive emotions in general.

It is for this reason that many e-commerce varies in respect of the target customer, B2B e-commerce usually is technical, precise, clarifier and information rich.

On the other side e-commerce for hedonic consumption, usually targeted for final customers are engaging, interactive, full of stimuli and image rich. However, consumers could be easily exposed to an overload of information and to a massive use of unwanted storytelling. The intention with the second hypothesis is to demonstrate if the storyline about the products could be confined to the images on the product page and to let to the written descriptions the role of informing prospects about more technical features. We will try to bridge the missing in the literature in this regard, opening a new interpretation on the phenomenon. Hence, here is our second hypothesis:

H2) Using the texts for spreading the storyline about the product will enhance in customers the perceived engagement toward the e-commerce.

Understanding if images can be exploited to develop the storytelling about the product, could help practitioners to give due weight both to images and product description on the product page.

2.6 Word of Mouth

The previews cited word of mouth (WOM), in the online environment takes the name of electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) and represent a powerful driver for sales and product evaluation. In a paper from 2017, Huete-Alcocer has reviewed the main literature regarding the characteristics of these two similar but different phenomena. Here in the table below it is possible to see the differences summarised by the author:

| | WOM | eWOM |
|-----------------|--|--|
| Credibility | The receiver of the information knows the communicator (positive influence on credibility) | Anonymity between the communicator and the receiver of the information (negative influence on credibility) |
| Privacy | The conversation is private, interpersonal (via dialogs), and conducted in real time | The shared information is not private and, because it is written down, can sometimes be viewed by anyone and at any time |
| Diffusion speed | Messages spread slowly. Users must be present when the information is being shared | Messages are conveyed more quickly between users and, via the Internet, can be conveyed at any time |
| Accessibility | Less accessible | Easily accessible |

Figure 2.3: Main differences between WOM and eWOM

Source: Huete-Alcocer, 2017

The WOM has always been one of the main and oldest drivers that affects consumer choices on brands and products, usually considered, more effective than regular advertising.

Like Goyette, Ricard, Bergeron, & Marticotte (2010) affirmed in their study:

“Studies on word-of-mouth have demonstrated that its effectiveness is based on the overwhelming influence that it has on consumer behavior. Researchers have shown that word-of-mouth was strongly and positively associated with clients’ levels of trust (Bergeron, Ricard & Perrien, 2003), service quality (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1998), satisfaction (Anderson, 1998) perceived value (Hartline & Jones, 1996) relationship quality (Boles, Barksdale & Johnson, 1997) and with clients’ intention to purchase (Crocker, 1986).”

The WOM can be originated by a post purchase evaluation from customer to customer, or more simply could be an exchange of opinions regarding products or brands that usually happens in a face to face relationship, via phone, mail or any other communication means. The measures used to assess this phenomenon are around four typical dimensions: Intensity, positive valence, negative valence and content (Goyette, Ricard, Bergeron, & Marticotte, 2010). The reviews have a correlation with the sales (Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006) customers are sensitive to the amount of reviews that are present on a media.

The authors Yang & Mai (2010) found that positive and negative bias occur in the evaluation of the positive and negative reviews of a product on an e-commerce. Depending on the goal of the purchase there are two outcomes that consumers can seek: the promotion or the prevention products. The first cited are typical products that evoke an advantage in the purchase while the second are products that prevent a bad situation.

The interaction and engagement of customers is the lifeblood of e-commerce, interaction gives rise to reviews that constitute the WOM on the products. In the same way reviews generate interest for the products in customers and help them to distress from the threat of a wrong purchase. What mostly affects the WOM is the outcome generated from the consumption of the product. The authors suggest that the biggest e-commerce contains a larger amount of comments that contributes to corroborate the perceptions of customers and that are able to push sales for the products with better reviews, in terms of average stars rate and in terms of positive tone of voice in the written comment. Anyhow, some studies affirm that negative reviews are evaluated more impactful in respect to the positive ones (Yang & Mai, 2010) but that the effect of negative reviews is moderated by the user's base.

According to the above-mentioned study a large user's base is perceived as a guarantee for the worth of the product, at least for what concerns experiential goods; in this research we will focus on one additional characteristic that nowadays is more and more common. Some EC deliberately started to show, among the reviews, the number of "already purchased" for their products, reporting on the product page the amount of SKU sold, assuming that this option should reassure prospects.

But no specific studies related to this concept are deepened in the literature. From this missing, came our second research question:

RQ 2: Does making explicit to prospects the number of items already purchased raise the sense of security in them?

This study will try to analyze the consequence of a "crowd effect" in prospects during the navigation on the e-commerce. In the previews cited literature, the effect of the user's base on the perception of the reviews, has been widely treated. Our intent is to extend the investigation of those phenomena on the perceived trustworthiness of a product. Hence our third hypothesis:

H3) An explicit customer's base increases the perceived trustworthiness toward a product.

Thus, this hypothesis will show if the awareness of previews purchases will prompt in prospects a raised feeling of security, with the expectation of encouraging them toward the final purchase.

Direct consequence of this third hypothesis is the last hypothesis:

H4) A larger customer's base increases the perceived trustworthiness toward a product.

Ultimately, with this last hypothesis the goal is to test the incremental effect of a bigger number on users' trustworthiness toward the products. The concept is to extend the consideration made by Yang & Mai (2010) expanding their study to the "already purchased" feature. They have shown that a wider user's base has a moderating effect on the bad reviews; this takes us to assume that a wider customer's base could also have a mitigating effect for the perceived threat of the purchase. Understanding this, would help in identifying the real potential into this new communication tool and possibly to provide managers a new way to optimize their customers satisfaction just letting them know of their peer behavior. Finally, this could be the starting point for further researches based on this mechanism of communicating peer behaviors with the goal to develop and test new methods for improving the effectiveness on users.

2.7 Conceptual Model

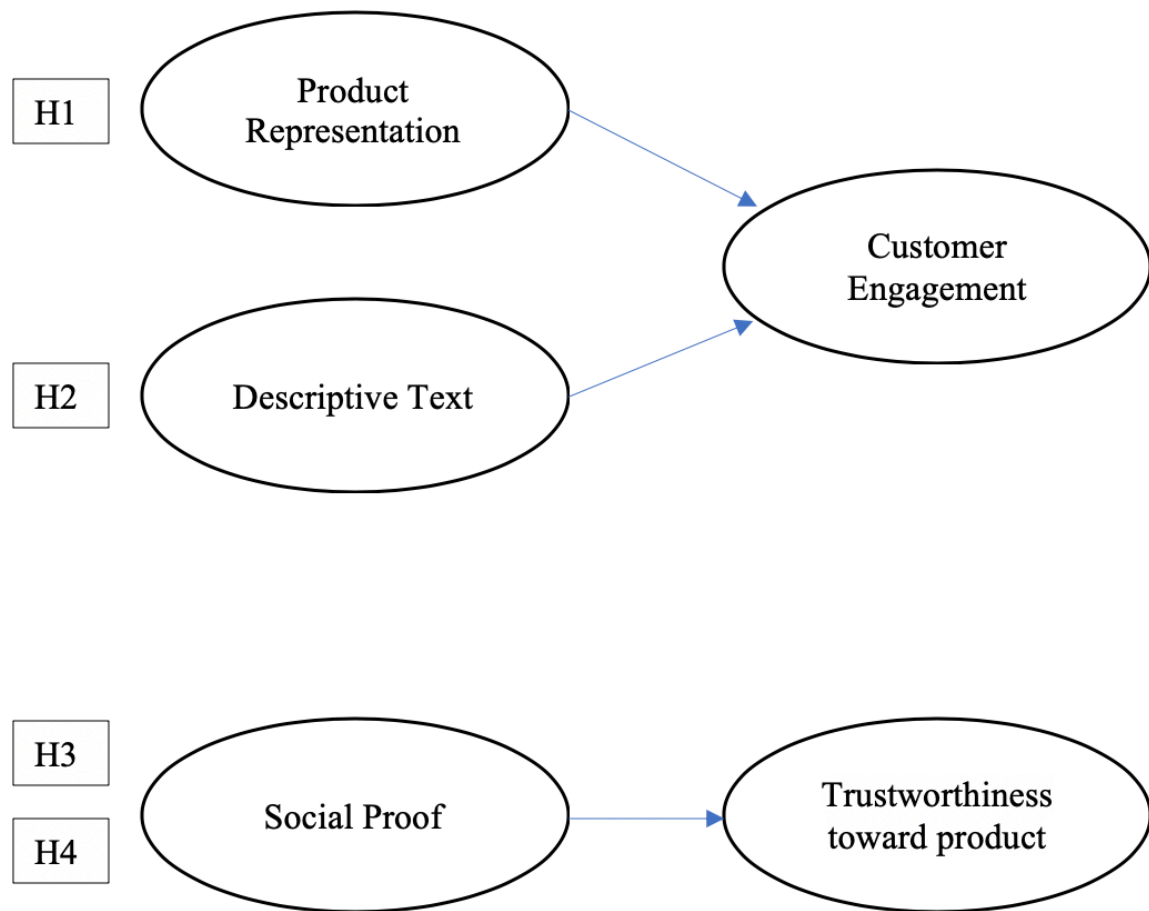


Figure 2.10: *The research model*

Source: *Created ad-hoc*

CHAPTER 3 – Data collection and empirical study

After presenting the hypotheses to be verified, the conceptual model and the research questions, this third chapter will deepen the methodological considerations, presenting the operative part of the study and analyzing the results obtained.

The type of research will be explained, presenting the rationale, the methods for the data collection and how to measure the information gathered. The discussion of hypotheses, the managerial implications and suggestions for further studies will conclude this last part of the study.

3.1 Methodology

The main purposes of any kind of research are to explore, describe and explain a given phenomenon. The objective of this work was to test the hypotheses that have been formulated grounding on the research questions. Typically for testing hypotheses about cause and effect relationships, it is used the causal research methodology; whereas for describing customer's attitudes and demographics attributes or for determining the product's market potential doing concept testing a descriptive research methodology is usually set up. For this study the key pillar for the method to be used, was the assumption that for our purpose a quantitative methodology would have been more effective. This kind of approach, in fact, benefits from an intrinsic reliability, originating from the possibility to test the statistical evidence of the phenomena. Dealing with numbers provide the possibility to measure the entity of the events, giving a scientific documentation to that occurrence; moreover, this approach allows to collect easily a greater amount of data, difficult to replicate in terms of volumes by qualitative researches. To confirm the hypotheses in this study, a questionnaire survey has been conducted, relying on items adapted for our scope. All the analysis in this chapter will be based on primary data gathered from the above-mentioned survey and collected to address the problem currently under investigation. Regarding the diffusion of the questionnaire, an online media has been adopted, exploiting the ability to reach more respondents.

3.2. Item Scale and questionnaire design

For the survey, ad-hoc item scales have been used to measure and assess the theoretical construct presented in the previous chapter. The necessity to have a reliable, valid and accurate research tool, made us opt for an adaptation of the items from already existing literature with small adjustments about the content of the questions. The modifications and the adaptations were not made on the logical direction of these latter but on the specification in order to make them effectual for the purposes of this study. It must be said that there is no evidence about the minimum number of items that has to be considered as an indication of the reliability of

the results. The questionnaire in both its translations, English and Italian, maintains the same form and the same questions. The items are divided in two main subcategories: in the first item type multiple statements are shown to the respondent and he is asked to indicate the degree of agreement or disagreement for each of that statement, using a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 stands for “strongly disagree” and 5 stands for “strongly agree”; in the second item type a single question is shown to the respondent and he is asked to answer that question based on five alternatives: from an extremely negative response to an extremely positive response. The questionnaire is structured in nine blocks: the first block is an introduction with all the information regarding the anonymity and the object in analysis, the second block is intended to collect demographic data about the respondent while the remaining blocks are the core of the questionnaire and intended to testing our hypotheses. In the demographic block information like the age, the gender and the employment status are asked to the respondents.

3.2.1 Questionnaire structure

As reported in the previews paragraph the seven central blocks of the questionnaire are intended for gather data with the aim to confirm or disconfirm our hypotheses. Before describing in detail, the sample and other clarifications about the items used, it is prominent to describe the design of the survey. A sequential monadic survey design has been configured, showing three scenarios to every respondent. The scenarios are randomized, and the possible concept shown to each respondent are as follow:

- In the first scenario the respondent is exposed to a product page concept from Beretta eStore, in one of the two randomized concept it is shown a product image showing the product in a static way as if it were displayed on a common mannequin in a shop; conversely, in the second concept the product is shown in its usage environment simulating the context of use.
- In the second scenario the respondent is exposed to a product description concept from Beretta eStore, in one of the two randomized concept it is shown a shorter description, which reports all the features about the product using a synthetic and direct language; conversely, in the second concept the product description is longer, reporting all the characteristics about the item but exploiting a storyline in order to describe the product features, also additional information are provided outlining the emotional side about the item and its use.
- In the third scenario the respondent is exposed to some word of mouth concept in the form of social proof on a product page from Beretta eStore, in one of the three randomized concept it is shown as a social proof only the cross-reference to the reviews section and the average grade assigned by customers to the product, indicated on a five stars rating scale; conversely, in the second concept the social proof is represented by the average grade assigned by customers to the product farther it is made explicit the number of items already sold (in this case with an indication of 10 items already sold);

lastly, in the third concept the social proof is represented by the average grade assigned by the customers to the product farther it is made explicit the number of items already sold (in this case with an indication of 1000 items already sold).

3.2.2 The effect of product images on prospect involvement

The construct that is measured first, proceeding according to the flow of the questionnaire, is the impact of the different layout of the product image in respect of the resulting engagement of the customer or prospect toward the product. The definition of engagement and its effect on online users are taken from the paper by Demangeot and Broderick (2016) in which it is stated that:

“Specifically, more involved customers develop positive attitudes towards a site (Richard and Habibi, 2016), which prompts them to gather more information [...]. Further, customers can form attachments to the object of involvement” (Broderick et al., 2007). Involvement has effective consequences (Mittal 1989, Park and Moon, 2003) therefore customers experiencing a higher activity engagement are likely to develop stronger relational bonds with the website, as empirical studies show, which find relationship between website involvement and purchase intentions or approach attitudes (Kim et al., 2007; Richard and Habibi, 2016).

Exploiting the items from Demangeot and Broderick an adaptation was necessary in order to make them converge towards the goal of this research; further items were retrieved from the model “concept testing” by Qualtrics, the authoritative platform widely used for marketing research.

In this first item type multiple statements are shown to the respondent and he is asked to indicate the degree of agreement or disagreement for each of that statement, using a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 stands for “strongly disagree” and 5 stands for “strongly agree”.

| |
|--|
| My first impression on the product is positive |
| The product seems exciting |
| The presentation of the product is stimulating |
| I would like to discover more about the product |
| I would like to see other products on Beretta eStore |
| I would like to scroll down and/or continue the navigation on Beretta eStore |

Figure 3.1.1: Items for measuring the engagement

Source: adapted from Demangeot and Broderick (2016)

| |
|--|
| La mia prima impressione del prodotto è positiva |
| Il prodotto risulta accattivante |
| La presentazione del prodotto è stimolante |
| Vorrei scoprire di più sul prodotto |
| Vorrei vedere altri prodotti su Beretta eStore |
| Vorrei scorrere verso il basso e/o continuare la navigazione su Beretta eStore |

Figure 3.1.2: *Items for measuring the engagement (Italian translation)*

Source: *translated ad hoc from Demangeot and Broderick (2016)*

In the second type of item a single question is shown to the respondent and he is asked to answer that question based on five alternatives: from an extremely negative response to an extremely positive response. These two following questions have the aim to measure and compare the levels of acceptance of the product image under analysis and consequently to make comparison between the two different layouts proposed in the two scenarios.

| |
|--|
| How appealing this representation of the product is? |
| How much do you like or dislike this product presentation? |

Figure 3.1.3: *Measures used for assessing the preferred concept of product image*

Source: *adapted from Qualtrics: “Concept testing”*

| |
|---|
| Quanto risulta accattivante la presentazione del prodotto? |
| Quanto ti piace o non ti piace la presentazione di questo prodotto? |

Figure 3.1.4: *Measures used for assessing the preferred concept of product image (Italian translation)*

Source: *translated ad hoc from Qualtrics: “Concept testing”*

All the items in the questionnaire have been used for our analysis, with the only exception of the item “How relevant is Beretta eStore to you?”. In fact, this item, was included in the questionnaire with the scope to

monitor the average loyalty of the respondents toward Beretta eStore. The item will be considered only in the descriptive statistics, not being part of the multi-item scale that has been set for our purposes.

Finally, two qualitative optional open questions regarding “Beretta eStore” appear in this first part of the questionnaire, these two additional requests have the aim to collect useful feedback from customers but further to give the chance to respondent to leave a personal comment.

3.2.3 The effect of product description on prospect involvement

The second construct that is measured, following the flow of the questionnaire, it is the impact of the different layout of product description in respect of the resulting engagement of the customer or prospect toward the product. The definition of engagement and its effect on online users remains the one taken from the paper by Demangeot and Broderick (2016).

Exploiting also in this case the items from Demangeot and Broderick an adaptation has become necessary in this scenario in order to assess the consequence of the product description on user engagement; further items were retrieved even in this case from the model “concept testing” by Qualtrics.

The items for measuring the engagement are identical to those reported in the previews paragraph: some multiple statements are shown to the respondent and he is asked to indicate the degree of agreement or disagreement for each of that statement, using a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 stands for “strongly disagree” and 5 stands for “strongly agree”.

| |
|--|
| My first impression of the product is positive |
| The product seems exciting |
| The presentation of the product is stimulating |
| I would like to discover more about the product |
| I would like to see other products on Beretta eStore |
| I would like to scroll down and/or continue the navigation on Beretta eStore |

Figure 3.2.1: Items for measuring the engagement

Source: adapted from Demangeot and Broderick (2016)

| |
|--|
| La mia prima impressione del prodotto è positiva |
| Il prodotto risulta accattivante |
| La presentazione del prodotto è stimolante |
| Vorrei scoprire di più sul prodotto |

| |
|--|
| Vorrei vedere altri prodotti su Beretta eStore |
| Vorrei scorrere verso il basso e/o continuare la navigazione su Beretta eStore |

Figure 3.2.2: *Items for measuring the engagement (Italian translation)*

Source: *translated ad hoc from Demangeot and Broderick (2016)*

In the second type of item a single question is shown to the respondent and he is asked to answer that question based on five alternatives: from an extremely negative response to an extremely positive response.

These three following questions have the aim to measure and compare the levels of acceptance of the product description under analysis and consequently to make comparison between the two different layouts proposed in the two scenarios.

| |
|---|
| How appealing this description of the product is? |
| How much do you like or dislike this product description? |
| How suitable is the description to the product? |

Figure 3.2.3: *Measures used for assessing the preferred concept of product description*

Source: *adapted from Qualtrics: “Concept testing”*

| |
|---|
| Quanto accattivante risulta questa descrizione del prodotto? |
| Quanto ti piace o non ti piace la descrizione di questo prodotto? |
| Quanto risulta adatta al prodotto la descrizione? |

Figure 3.2.4: *Measures used for assessing the preferred concept of product description (Italian translation)*

Source: *adapted from Qualtrics: “Concept testing”*

3.2.4 The effect of social proof on trustworthiness

The third and last construct that is measured, it is the impact of different additional components for word of mouth, specifically the use of different social proofs in respect of the resulting trustworthiness of the customer or prospect toward the product. The definition of trustworthiness describes qualities such as being well-

intentioned, truthful and unbiased (Tseng and Fogg, 1999). Trustworthiness can have different meanings from discretion, reliability, competence, integrity to empathy (Sheppard and Sherman, 1998).

“The meaning of trustworthiness is related to the assumption of the type of risk that people take at exchanging information. The risk refers to the possibility that the source of information does not accept moral responsibility or is unable to provide correct information. Hence, the information seeker needs to judge whether or not the source is sufficiently knowledgeable or skilful on one hand and on the other, whether they are honest and truthful (Hertzum et al., 2002).” (Mehdi Ghazisaeedi, 2012).

The concept of trustworthiness has been adapted for the scope of this research, and in particular the objective was to measure consumer trust toward the quality of the product displayed.

By comparing the potentially diverse results obtained, it could be possible to evaluate the effects of the different social proofs. The decision to opt for three, though very specific items, was taken to make the questionnaire more fluid. Even in this case some multiple statements are shown to the respondent and he is asked to indicate the degree of agreement or disagreement for each of that statement, using a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 stands for “strongly disagree” and 5 stands for “strongly agree”.

| |
|--|
| My first impression on the product is positive |
| The product quality seems satisfactory |
| I trust on the quality of this product |

Figure 3.3.1: *Items for measuring the trustworthiness*

Source: *adapted from Mehdi Ghazisaeedi (2012)*

Finally, two additional items have been set in order to measure the behavioral engagement of respondent and consequently to appraise possible discrepancies among the scenarios. The behavioral engagement is shown to be a direct consequence of the trust toward the contents on a website (Demangeot and Broderick, 2016).

| |
|---|
| I would like to discover more about the product characteristics |
| I would like to check the reviews for this product |

Figure 3.3.2: *Items for measuring behavioral engagement*

Source: *adapted from Demangeot and Broderick (2016)*

| |
|--|
| La mia prima impressione del prodotto è positiva |
| La qualità del prodotto sembra soddisfacente |
| Mi fido della qualità del prodotto |

Figure 3.3.3: *Items for measuring the trustworthiness (Italian translation)*

Source: *adapted from Mehdi Ghazisaeedi (2012)*

| |
|---|
| Vorrei scoprire di più sulle caratteristiche del prodotto |
| Vorrei controllare le recensioni di questo prodotto |

Figure 3.3.4: *Items for measuring behavioral engagement (Italian translation)*

Source: *adapted from Demangeot and Broderick (2016)*

3.3 Data Collection

There is a need for many attentions when it comes to collect the data, especially for a quantitative research. The sample is an important issue; indeed, a small number of respondents can represent a threat for the reliability of the study.

The questionnaire was created using Qualtrics Online Survey Software and it was administered to more than 230 respondents from Italy and other European countries. The online survey was distributed through a mailing list of registered customers owned by Beretta eStore by adding the link of the questionnaire in two different newsletters.

3.4 Descriptive statistics

The first part of the quantitative analysis in this study include a brief introduction of the dataset providing some descriptive statistics. More than the 90% of the respondents are men, their minimum age is 22 years old; the maximum age is 87 while the average age is 51 years old. Concerning the employment status nearly 50% of the respondents are paid employee while the majority of the others are self-employed or retired, respectively the 24% and the 20%. Noting that respondents could answer from 1 to 5 where 1 stands for completely disagree and 5 stands for completely agree with the questions and the statements in this study, on average the majority of the answers has totaled more than 3.5, which shows a general feeling of agreement.

Figure 3.4.1: Descriptive statistics first and second scenario

| Item n° | Mean | Std.Dev. |
|---------|------|----------|
| 1 | 3,87 | 1,095 |
| 2 | 3,50 | 1,071 |
| 3 | 3,50 | 1,027 |
| 4 | 3,70 | ,954 |
| 5 | 4,17 | ,852 |
| 6 | 4,06 | ,794 |
| 7 | 3,21 | 1,119 |
| 8 | 3,57 | ,989 |
| 9 | 3,68 | 1,232 |

| Item n° | Mean | Std.Dev. |
|---------|------|----------|
| 1 | 3,85 | 1,082 |
| 2 | 3,70 | 1,071 |
| 3 | 3,64 | 1,123 |
| 4 | 3,55 | 1,063 |
| 5 | 4,00 | 1,027 |
| 6 | 3,93 | ,871 |
| 7 | 3,33 | 1,158 |
| 8 | 3,74 | ,999 |
| 9 | 3,91 | 1,047 |

Figure 3.4.2: Descriptive statistics third and fourth scenario

| Item n° | Mean | Std.Dev. |
|---------|------|----------|
| 1 | 3,57 | 1,129 |
| 2 | 3,22 | 1,110 |
| 3 | 3,38 | 1,107 |
| 4 | 3,72 | 1,051 |
| 5 | 3,96 | ,939 |
| 6 | 3,96 | ,888 |
| 7 | 3,14 | 1,214 |
| 8 | 3,53 | 1,078 |
| 9 | 3,50 | 1,102 |

| Item n° | Mean | Std.Dev. |
|---------|------|----------|
| 1 | 3,88 | 1,052 |
| 2 | 3,41 | 1,023 |
| 3 | 3,58 | ,967 |
| 4 | 3,71 | 1,023 |
| 5 | 3,97 | ,984 |
| 6 | 3,95 | ,812 |
| 7 | 3,38 | 1,177 |
| 8 | 3,72 | ,983 |
| 9 | 3,78 | ,968 |

Figure 3.4.3: Descriptive statistics fifth, sixth and seventh scenario

| Item n° | Mean | Std.Dev. |
|---------|------|----------|
| 1 | 3,54 | 1,093 |
| 2 | 3,41 | 1,062 |
| 3 | 3,69 | 1,094 |
| 4 | 4,02 | ,892 |
| 5 | 4,02 | 1,000 |

| Item n° | Mean | Std.Dev. |
|---------|------|----------|
| 1 | 4,00 | ,795 |
| 2 | 3,87 | ,801 |
| 3 | 4,08 | ,882 |
| 4 | 4,08 | ,829 |
| 5 | 4,18 | ,905 |

| Item n° | Mean | Std.Dev. |
|---------|------|----------|
| 1 | 3,82 | 1,017 |
| 2 | 3,72 | 1,028 |
| 3 | 4,00 | ,874 |
| 4 | 3,92 | 1,051 |
| 5 | 3,83 | 1,027 |

Here below the charts representing the main demographic information:

Figure 3.4.4: Sample gender distribution

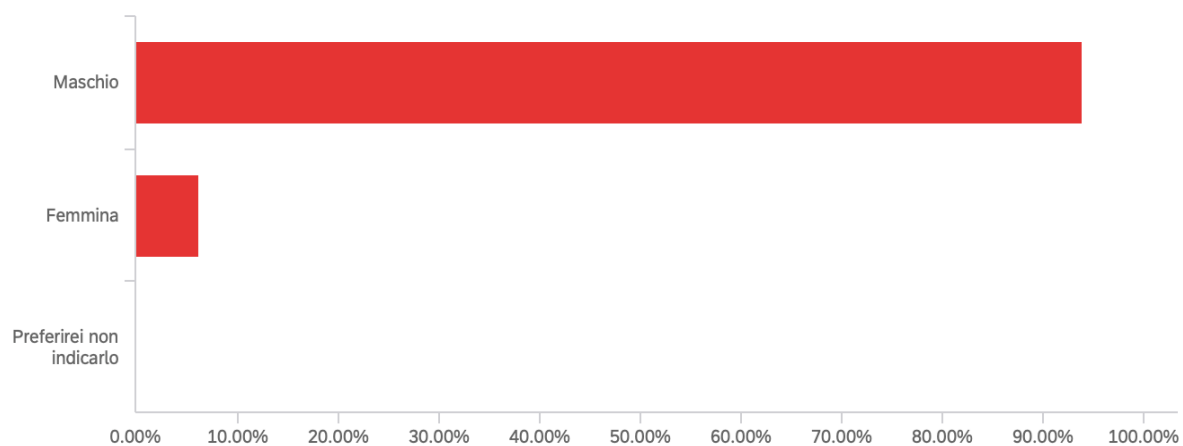
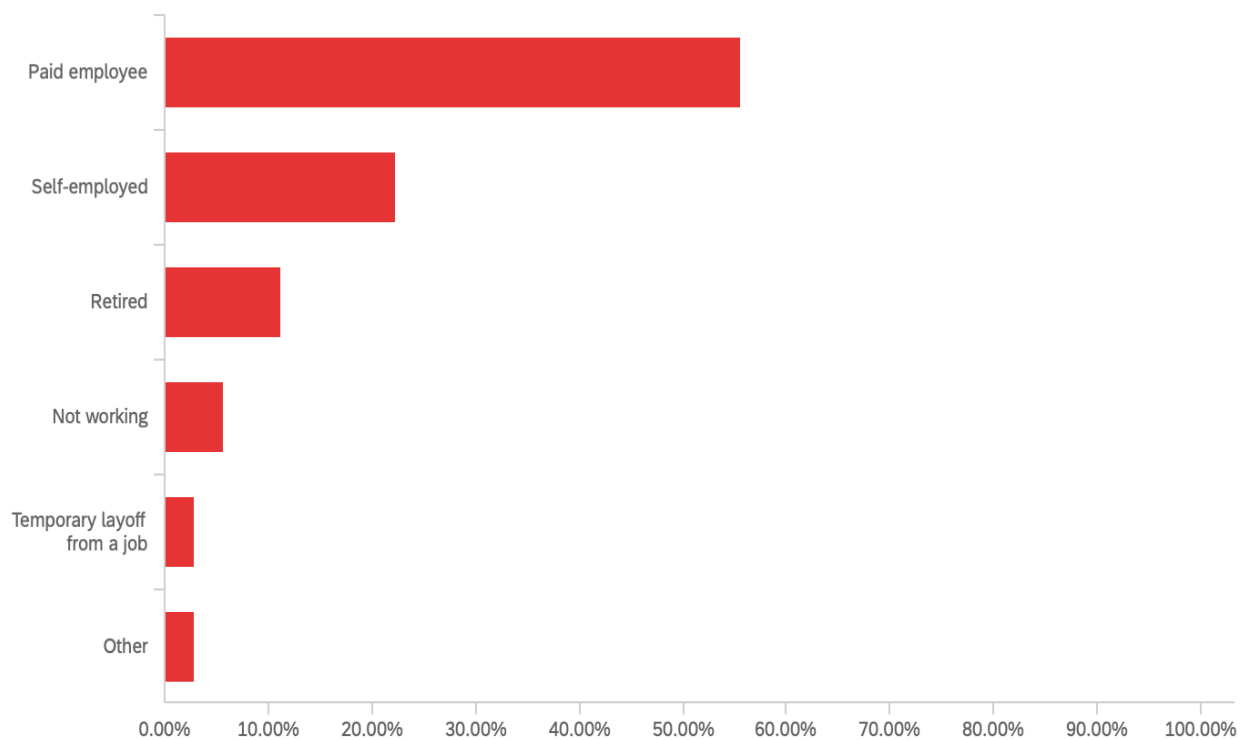


Figure 3.4.5: Sample employment status



3.5 Validity and reliability: Cronbach's Alpha Analysis

In this research the constructs have been measured with a multi-item scale, in which different items have the role of measure different conjectures. The objective in this paragraph is to test that every set of items, pointing to the same concept, doing this means to verify their reliability in terms of internal consistency.

The reliability is defined as the degree to which a scale generates consistent results if multiple measurements are set up (Malhotra, Birks and Wills, 2012). To test the reliability of our scales it was used the widely used Cronbach's alpha, a test capable to verify the internal consistency within the items. Alpha is basically a coefficient that varies from 0 to 1, where a value greater than 0,5 suggests an acceptable reliability of the scale in case there are less than 10 items (Pallant, 2013).

The following tab show the value of alpha for the three multi-item scales utilized for the purpose of this study.

Table 3.5.1: Cronbach's Alpha Analysis

| Multi-Item n° | Alpha |
|---------------|-------|
| 1 | 0,811 |
| 2 | 0,926 |
| 3 | 0,800 |

As it is possible to state in accordance with the table above, all the scales have proven to be internally consistent, with values greater than or equal to 0,8. It is therefore possible to say that the items used are reliable and conceptually point in the same direction.

Considering that the higher the score, the more reliable the generated scale is, highly reliable.

There are sufficient correlations between items because for the majority of them the correlation values are greater than or equal to 0.30. Therefore, each item of the scale is consistent.

The validity of the scale has been tested, with a positive outcome. The construct validity has been verified, checking what construct or characteristic the scale was actually measuring. The convergent validity has been ascertained, verifying that every item positively correlates with the others.

Table 3.5.2: Correlations in multi-item n°1

| | | | | | | | |
|---------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Pearson corr. | ,734 | ,651 | ,286 | ,298 | ,378 | ,518 | ,624 |
| Sign. | ,000 | ,000 | ,021 | ,016 | ,002 | ,000 | ,000 |

Table 3.5.3: Correlations in multi-item n°2

| | | | | | | | |
|---------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Pearson corr. | ,391 | ,390 | ,290 | ,340 | ,287 | ,286 | ,540 |
| Sign. | ,017 | ,002 | ,045 | ,034 | ,045 | ,056 | ,000 |

Table 3.5.3: Correlations in multi-item n°3

| | | | | |
|---------------|------|------|------|------|
| Pearson corr. | ,737 | ,736 | ,453 | ,284 |
| Sign. | ,000 | ,000 | ,001 | ,037 |

3.6 Results and hypothesis verification

In this paragraph the aim is to test the research hypotheses that have been presented in the previews chapter. Two different statistical methods have been deployed in order to establish whether there was or not a statistically significant evidence of the theoretical constructs that have been raised in this research.

For testing what has just been said, analyzing the sample available, a confidence interval of 95% were adopted; it means considering acceptable a margin of error α at a maximum level of 5% (0.05). Put differently, using a 95% confidence level means that repeating the experiment 100 times following the same procedures but on 100 different samples, in 95 cases the real value of the population will result within the confidence interval selected in our sample. The same logic can be applied to a confidence level of 90%, that assumes higher margin of error, precisely a threshold of 0.10 for α .

For the first and the second hypotheses (H1 and H2) we used the independent-samples t for comparing the means of the engagement measuring scales. Remembering that the questionnaire was designed as a sequential monadic, meaning that the respondents have been exposed only to a scenario for each hypothesis, this allows us to consider each sample as independent. The conditions for the application of the independent samples t-test are the presence of two independent groups with associated means to be tested.

In the independent samples t-test the null hypothesis affirms that the means of the two sample groups are equal, thus there are not differences. This in essence means that our hypotheses expressed above would not be demonstrated statistically. Starting with the first hypothesis (H1) that is: “Images representing a typical usage scenario have the ability to get more closely involved prospects in respects to product centric images”.

The null hypothesis in this case can be summarized as: “Images representing a typical usage scenario don’t have the ability to get more closely involved prospects in respects to product centric images”.

H0: The engagement of customers exposed to a product image in product “usage scenario” is NOT higher than customers exposed to a product centric image ($\mu_{\text{scenario}} \leq \mu_{\text{static}}$)

H1: The engagement of customers exposed to a product image in product “usage scenario” is higher than customers exposed to a product centric image ($\mu_{\text{scenario}} > \mu_{\text{static}}$)

First of all, in samples t-test we need to check the Levene’s test in order to evaluate if we are working with equal or unequal variances.

So, Levene’s test inform us if the variances of the two groups are equal or not.

H0: Equal variances ($\sigma^2_{\text{scenario}} = \sigma^2_{\text{static}}$)

H1: Unequal variances ($\sigma^2_{\text{scenario}} \neq \sigma^2_{\text{static}}$)

Table 3.6.1: Independent samples t-test: Levene’s Test for equality of variances

| Levene’s Test | F | Sig. |
|---------------|-------|------|
| | 2,734 | ,100 |

Since $p=0.100 > .05$, then we cannot reject H0, thus variances are constant for engagement for usage scenario/static. Thus, we should use t-test with equal variances to make conclusions.

Table 3.6.2: Independent samples t-test: Group Statistics

| Scenario | Mean | Std.Dev. |
|----------------------------|--------|----------|
| Usage (1) | 3,9594 | ,07078 |
| Static/Product centric (2) | 3,6351 | ,09598 |

If p-value of data (calculated p) is smaller than 0.05 (α), we reject H0 (i.e H1 is confirmed)

If p-value of data (calculated p) is not smaller than 0.05 (α), we do NOT reject H0

Table 3.6.3: Independent samples t-test

| df | Sign. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference |
|---------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| 146 | ,007 | ,32433 | ,11880 |
| 133,259 | ,007 | ,32433 | ,11926 |

The product image representing the product in its typical usage scenario was evaluated as being significantly more engaging for customers than a product image representing the product in a static, product centric way. ($M_{\text{scenario}} = 3.96$, $SD = 0,071$; $M_{\text{static}} = 3.64$ $SD = 0,096$; $t = 2.734$, $p < 0.05$). Therefore, we rejected H_0 (i.e. H_1 is confirmed). The product images representing the product in its usage scenario have a positive impact on the generation of involvement in prospects toward the product.

We can finally state that as it was thought the product images play an important role in the engagement of the users during the navigation and specifically that a product in its usage scenario is statistically more engaging for our sample and allegedly for the entire population. Thus, H_1 is confirmed.

Continuing our analysis with the second hypothesis (H_2) that is: “Using the texts for spreading the storyline about the product will increase in costumers the perceived engagement toward the e-commerce”. The null hypothesis in this case can be summarized as: “The use of text for spreading the storyline about the product don’t have the ability to create more engagement in customers”.

H_0 : The engagement experienced from customers exposed to a product description that includes a complete storyline about the product is NOT higher than customers exposed to a more synthetic and devoid of storyline product description

$$(\mu_{\text{storyline}} \leq \mu_{\text{simple}})$$

H_1 : The engagement experienced from customers exposed to a product description that includes a complete storyline about the product is higher than customers exposed to a more synthetic and devoid of storyline product description

$$(\mu_{\text{storyline}} > \mu_{\text{simple}})$$

First of all, in samples t-test we need to check the Levene’s test in order to evaluate if we are working with equal or unequal variances.

So, Levene’s test inform us if the variances of the two groups are equal or not.

H0: Equal variances ($\sigma^2_{\text{storyline}} = \sigma^2_{\text{simple}}$)

H1: Unequal variances ($\sigma^2_{\text{storyline}} \neq \sigma^2_{\text{simple}}$)

Table 3.6.4: Independent samples t-test: Levene's Test for equality of variances

| Levene's Test | F | Sig. |
|---------------|--------|------|
| | 18,394 | ,000 |

Since $p=0,000 < .05$, then we reject H0, thus variances are not constant for engagement for storyline/simple. Thus, we should use t-test with equal variances not assumed to make conclusions.

Table 3.6.5: Independent samples t-test: Group Statistics

| Scenario | Mean | Std.Dev. |
|---------------------------|--------|----------|
| Storyline Description (1) | 4,0500 | ,55128 |
| Simple Description (2) | 3,5333 | ,86849 |

If p-value of data (calculated p) is smaller than 0.05 (α), we reject H0 (i.e H1 is confirmed)

If p-value of data (calculated p) is not smaller than 0.05 (α), we do NOT reject H0

Table 3.6.6: Independent samples t-test

| df | Sign. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference |
|---------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| 145 | ,000 | ,51663 | ,12054 |
| 126,015 | ,000 | ,51663 | ,11949 |

The product description that includes a complete storyline about the product was evaluated as being significantly more engaging for customers than a product description more synthetic and devoid of a complete storyline. ($M_{\text{storyline}} = 4.05$, $SD = 0.551$; $M_{\text{static}} = 3.53$ $SD = 0.868$; $t = 4.32$, $p < 0.05$). Therefore, we rejected

H0 (i.e. H1 is confirmed). The product description that includes a complete storyline about the product have a positive impact on the generation of engagement in prospects toward the product.

We can finally state that as it was thought the product description plays an important role in the engagement of the users during the navigation and specifically that a product description that includes a complete storyline about the product is statistically more engaging for our sample and allegedly for the entire population.

Thus, H2 is confirmed.

Continuing our analysis with the last two hypotheses (H3 and H4) that were analyzed together, and which are: “An explicit customer’s base increases the perceived trustworthiness toward a product” (H3) and “A larger customer’s base increases the perceived trustworthiness toward a product” (H4). The null hypotheses in this case can be summarized as: “Making explicit the customer’s base do NOT increase the perceived trustworthiness toward a product” and “A larger customer’s base do NOT increase the perceived trustworthiness toward a product”.

For the last two hypotheses the three means of the respective scenarios have been compared, following the hypotheses:

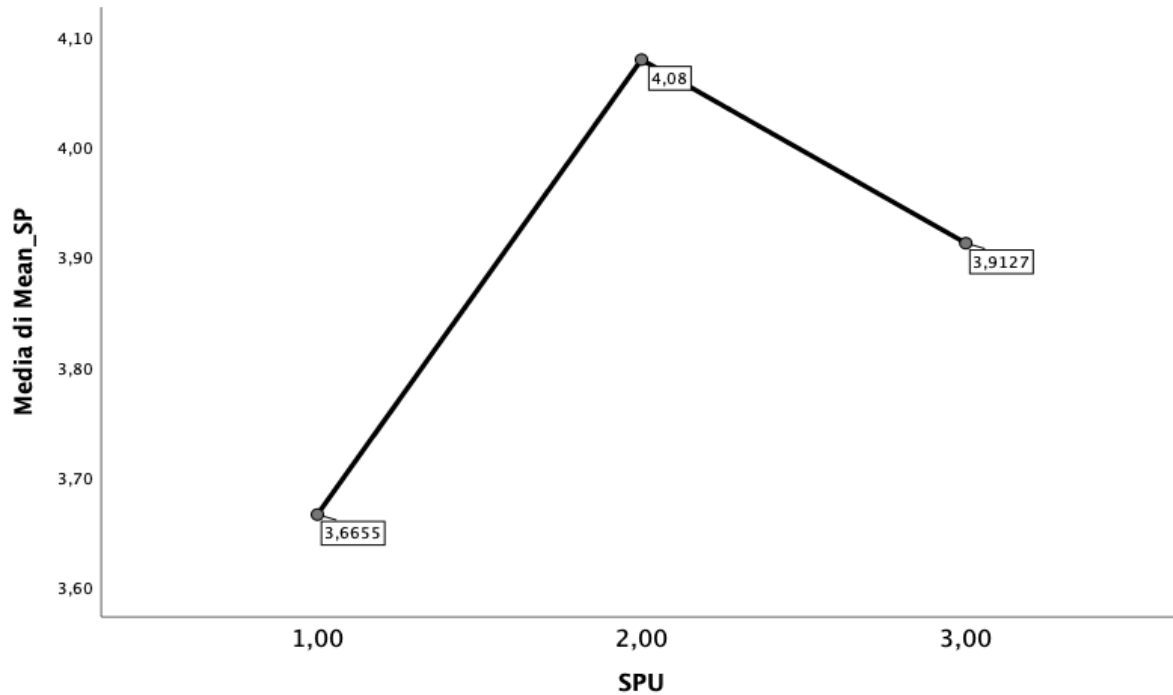
H0: The perceived trustworthiness toward a product is NOT increased consequently to an explicit customer’s base ($\mu_{\text{normal}} = \mu_{\text{minor}} = \mu_{\text{major}}$)

H1: The perceived trustworthiness toward a product is increased consequently to an explicit customer’s base (at least one differs, $\mu_i \neq \mu_j$)

To verify these assumptions, One-Way ANOVA has been deployed. In fact, the analysis of variance is a procedure that tests to determine whether differences exist between two or more population means.

The null hypothesis is that all means are equal; the technique analyzes the sample variances (total variation in the DV). The metric dependent variable in our analysis is the parameter: trustworthiness toward the product.

The categorical independent variables, also called factors, are the three scenarios, respectively: normal (scenario 1, with reviews as the only WOM source), minor (scenario 2, with the additional social proof in a smaller extent) and major (scenario 3, with the additional social proof in a larger extent).

Table 3.6.7: ANOVA Means Plot**Table 3.6.8: ANOVA Descriptives**

| | Mean | Std. Dev. | Std. Error | 95% Confidence Interval for mean | | Minimum | Maximum |
|---|--------|-----------|------------|----------------------------------|-------------|---------|---------|
| | | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound | | |
| 1 | 3,6655 | ,81473 | ,10986 | 3,4452 | 3,8857 | 1,40 | 5,00 |
| 2 | 4,0800 | ,63051 | ,09969 | 3,8784 | 4,2816 | 2,80 | 5,00 |
| 3 | 3,9127 | ,66082 | ,08911 | 3,7341 | 4,0914 | 2,00 | 5,00 |

Table 3.6.9: ANOVA Test of Homogeneity of Variances

| | Levene Statistic | df1 | df2 | Sig. |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|-----|---------|------|
| Based on Mean | 1,784 | 2 | 147 | ,172 |
| Based on Median | 1,506 | 2 | 147 | ,225 |
| Based on Median and with adjusted df | 1,506 | 2 | 137,550 | ,225 |
| Based on trimmed mean | 1,707 | 2 | 147 | ,185 |

By the use of the Levene's test the homogeneity of variances could be verified.

The hypotheses for the Levene's test are the following:

H0: variances of groups are equal

$$(\sigma^2_{\text{normal}} = \sigma^2_{\text{minor}} = \sigma^2_{\text{major}})$$

H1: variances of groups are not equal

$$(\sigma^2_{\text{normal}} \neq \sigma^2_{\text{minor}} \neq \sigma^2_{\text{major}})$$

Levene statistic: 1,784; P-value: 0,172 > $\alpha=0.05$; Do not reject H0. Thus, variances of groups are equal.

The assumption is verified.

Proceeding in the interpretation of the output, here below the output of the ANOVA table and F-test:

Table 3.7.1: ANOVA Table and F-test

| | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|------|
| Between Groups | 4,164 | 2 | 2,082 | 4,084 | ,019 |
| Within Groups | 74,929 | 147 | ,510 | - | - |
| Total | 79,093 | 149 | - | - | - |

Remembering the hypotheses:

H0: Group means are equal ($\mu_{\text{normal}} = \mu_{\text{minor}} = \mu_{\text{major}}$)

H1: At least one group mean differ ($\mu_i \neq \mu_j$)

By analyzing the results, it is possible to reject H0. Thus, group means are significantly different (F (2,147) =4.084, $p<0.05$). The additional social proof component of the word of mouth has differential impact on trustworthiness.

Looking at the Post-Hoc Comparisons (pairwise independent t-tests) the aim is to verify the difference in trustworthiness between the three different scenarios. Here below the outcome:

Table 3.7.2: ANOVA Post-Hoc Comparisons (pairwise independent t-tests)

| (I) | (J) | Mean Difference (I-J) | Std.Error | Sig. | Lower Bound | Upper Bound |
|------|------|-----------------------|-----------|------|-------------|-------------|
| 1,00 | 2,00 | -,41455* | ,14836 | ,018 | -,7738 | -,0553 |
| | 3,00 | -,24727 | ,13614 | ,214 | -,5770 | ,0824 |
| 2,00 | 1,00 | ,41455* | ,14836 | ,018 | ,0553 | ,7738 |
| | 3,00 | ,16727 | ,14836 | ,784 | -,1920 | ,5266 |
| 3,00 | 1,00 | ,24727 | ,13614 | ,214 | -,0824 | ,5770 |
| | 2,00 | -,16727 | ,14836 | ,784 | -,5266 | ,1920 |

Mean differences between:

Scenario 1 (Normal) and Scenario 2 (Minor): $3,6655 - 4,0800 = -0,41455$; $p = 0,018 < \alpha = 0.05$

Scenerio 1 (Normal) and Scenario 3 (Major): $3,6655 - 3,9127 = -0,24727$; $p = 0,214 > \alpha = 0.05$

Scenario 2 (Minor) and Scenario 3 (Major): $4,0800 - 3,9127 = 0,16727$; $p = 0,784 > \alpha = 0.05$

Taking into consideration these findings it is possible to state that there are no differences in trustworthiness between the scenario which has no additional components for the word of mouth (Normal) and the scenario with the major social proof (Major). Equally, there are no differences in trustworthiness between the scenario which has the minor social proof (Minor) and the scenario with the major social proof (Major).

However, it is possible to statistically confirm the influence of the social proof component on trustworthiness because there are differences in trustworthiness between the scenario which has no additional components for the word of mouth (Normal) and the scenario with the minor social proof (Minor).

Therefore, we rejected H_0 (i.e. H_1 is confirmed). The group means are not equal.

We can finally state that as it was thought the additional component of word of mouth consisting in the social proof “already purchased x times”, plays an important role in the trustworthiness toward the product. Thus, H_3 is confirmed. Nevertheless, it is not possible to confirm H_4 , the scenario with the major social proof (Major) even if it has a “trustworthiness average value” greater than the scenario with no additional components (Normal) the gap it is not statistically significant.

Discussions and Conclusions

This research had a twofold aim: on one side to bridge some gaps in the literature and on the other to validate some guidelines for managers in the areas of e-commerce and more generally in digital marketing. The original intent was to identify and verify some key drivers for customers during the navigation on a hypothetical product page of an online store. Doing this, the focus was on collecting insights regarding the user's perception on two main areas: engagement and trustworthiness. The first strategic assets involved were related to the content management of the online stores, more specifically related to product images and product descriptions. The second strategic assets analyzed have been some additional components of the word of mouth, more specifically the social proof indication of the number of products already sold.

Starting from general considerations, it is possible to state that the current general trends of e-commerce, marketplace and online retail shops proved to be statistically validated from this research.

Users prefer online stores rich in information, both visual and textual. Demangeot and Broderick (2016) empirically showed the relevance of the concept of engagement in the digital world, successfully providing validated items and specific explanations of the related phenomena; however, with this study another fundamental touch point, which consists in the product page, has been analyzed in its contribution to generate engagement and trustworthiness. Regarding the product images this research is functional to statistically confirm the effectiveness of the widespread practice to show the products in their usage scenario; the evidence is that this kind of approach has the capacity to get users more closely involved, generating a higher engagement. Thus, managers should consider investing in this kind of content creation.

Regarding the product descriptions this research is functional to statistically confirm the effectiveness of a text which includes a more detailed storyline about the product. Consequently, managers should not underestimate the need for written information of the prospects. The evidence of this research has demonstrated that, in order to achieve a higher engagement in users, it is functional to leverage a proper storyline, even in the product description, and not just an objective declaration of its characteristics.

With regard to trustworthiness, this is considered one of the main factors influencing an online customer journey. Considering the primary importance of word of mouth in this perspective, the present research has investigated an additional component of the reviews, that is the indication of the number of products already sold. This latter is extensively used by some renowned marketplaces with the goal to reassure the prospects creating a sort of "crowd effect". In fact, in this study, it has been statistically proven that the trustworthiness toward the product grew significantly as a result of the use of this strategic asset. The only not confirmed assumption was related to the variation in trustworthiness resulting from an increased magnitude of the social proof itself. Objectively, respondents exposed to a scenario devoid of additional social proof components, totaled a lower average score than the respondents exposed either to the smaller or to the bigger size social proofs; nevertheless only the sample which has been subject to the smaller social proof has turned out to be

statistically significant, opening the way to further researches that should investigate issues such as the credibility or the reliability of the social proof. This study exhibits several implications for digital marketing managers, first of all it proved the importance of the strategic use of contents and their potential consequences on engagement; secondly, the evidence in this study invites managers to reconsider the word of mouth in all its components and not just the reviews. On the side of academic research, this work has opened the way to other possible topics that deserve further investigation. Firstly, as just mentioned, it may be worthwhile to understand the reasons that did not allow us to confirm the fourth hypothesis. Subsequently, it could be important to reproduce the same research with related findings in other contexts/markets. Besides this study has been based on a sample from Beretta eStore customers, which focusing on technical outdoors clothing and power parts, implies a specific target and not the average consumer. Other studies could gather and verify additional insights about the effect that some variables, considered as moderators (such as the age, the gender and the degree of loyalty toward the online store or the brand) could generate on the outcome. Lastly, it might be interesting to verify these assumptions for the category of business to business e-commerce. The very fast growth of e-commerce is transforming the way of doing business and consumers are changing their behaviors, their preferences and their expectations about shopping. Until recently it was essential for businesses to be prepared for digital transformation but nowadays things are different. Businesses are no longer simply required to look at digital just as a competitive advantage but as a substantial asset for their survival. Therefore, practitioners and academics are now, more than ever, called to give a further boost to the development of effective and constantly adapting techniques and strategies which have become vital new ways of doing business.

APPENDIX

- Appendix 1
- Independent Sample t-test 1

Statistiche gruppo

| | Scenario | N | Media | Deviazione std. | Media errore standard |
|-----------------|----------|----|--------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| Engagement_text | 1,00 | 72 | 4,0500 | ,55128 | ,06497 |
| | 2,00 | 75 | 3,5333 | ,86849 | ,10028 |

Test campioni indipendenti

</

- Appendix 2
- Independent Sample t-test 2

Statistiche gruppo

| | Scenario_image | N | Media | Deviazione std. | Media errore standard |
|------------------|----------------|----|--------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| Engagement_image | 1,00 | 75 | 3,9594 | ,61298 | ,07078 |
| | 2,00 | 73 | 3,6351 | ,82007 | ,09598 |

Test campioni indipendenti

| | | Test di Levene per l'eguaglianza delle varianze | | Test t per l'eguaglianza delle medie | | | | | Intervallo di confidenza della differenza di 95% | |
|------------------|------------------------------|---|-------|--------------------------------------|---------|--------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|--|-----------|
| | | F | Sign. | t | gl | Sign. (a due code) | Differenza della media | Differenza errore standard | Inferiore | Superiore |
| Engagement_image | Varianze uguali presunte | 2,734 | ,100 | 2,730 | 146 | ,007 | ,32433 | ,11880 | ,08954 | ,55912 |
| | Varianze uguali non presunte | | | 2,720 | 133,259 | ,007 | ,32433 | ,11926 | ,08845 | ,56022 |

- Appendix 3
- One-way ANOVA

Descrittive

| Medio | Deviazione std. | Errore std. | 95% di intervallo di confidenza per la media | | Minimo | Massimo |
|--------|-----------------|-------------|--|------------------|--------|---------|
| | | | Limite inferiore | Limite superiore | | |
| 3,6655 | ,81473 | ,10986 | 3,4452 | 3,8857 | 1,40 | 5,00 |
| 4,0800 | ,63051 | ,09969 | 3,8784 | 4,2816 | 2,80 | 5,00 |
| 3,9127 | ,66082 | ,08911 | 3,7341 | 4,0914 | 2,00 | 5,00 |
| 3,8667 | ,72858 | ,05949 | 3,7491 | 3,9842 | 1,40 | 5,00 |

Test di omogeneità delle varianze

| | | Statistica di Levene | gl1 | gl2 | Sig. |
|---------|---|----------------------|-----|---------|------|
| Mean_SP | Basato sulla media | 1,784 | 2 | 147 | ,172 |
| | Basato sulla mediana | 1,506 | 2 | 147 | ,225 |
| | Basato sulla mediana e con il grado di libertà adattato | 1,506 | 2 | 137,550 | ,225 |
| | Basato sulla media ritagliata | 1,707 | 2 | 147 | ,185 |

ANOVA

Mean_SP

| | Somma dei quadrati | df | Media quadratica | F | Sig. |
|----------------|--------------------|-----|------------------|-------|------|
| Tra gruppi | 4,164 | 2 | 2,082 | 4,084 | ,019 |
| Entro i gruppi | 74,929 | 147 | ,510 | | |
| Totale | 79,093 | 149 | | | |

Test post hoc

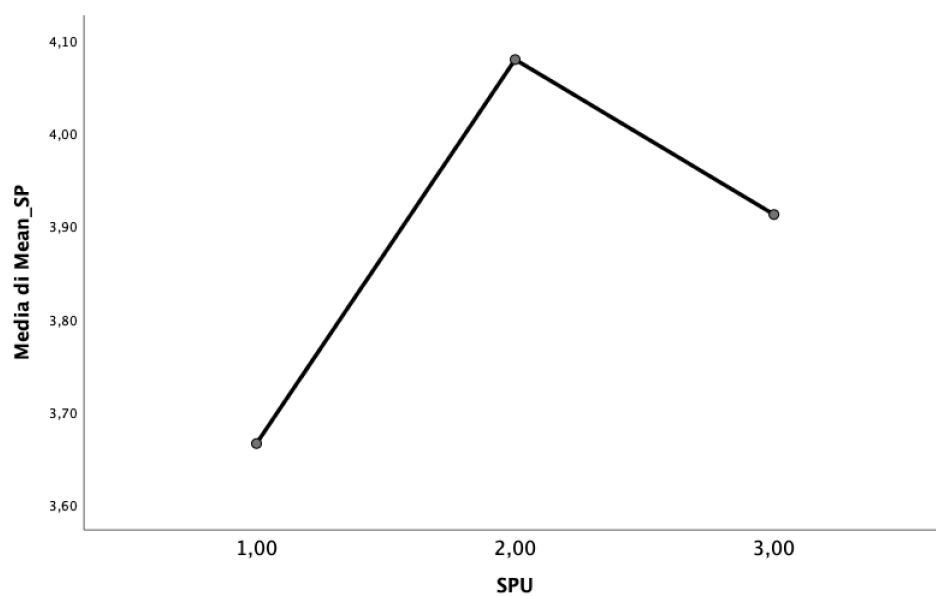
Confronti multipli

Variabile dipendente: Mean_SP

Bonferroni

| (I) SPU | (J) SPU | Differenza della media (I-J) | Errore std. | Sig. | Intervallo di confidenza 95% | |
|---------|---------|------------------------------|-------------|------|------------------------------|--------|
| 1,00 | 2,00 | -,41455* | ,14836 | ,018 | -,7738 | -,0553 |
| | 3,00 | -,24727 | ,13614 | ,214 | -,5770 | ,0824 |
| 2,00 | 1,00 | ,41455* | ,14836 | ,018 | ,0553 | ,7738 |
| | 3,00 | ,16727 | ,14836 | ,784 | -,1920 | ,5266 |
| 3,00 | 1,00 | ,24727 | ,13614 | ,214 | -,0824 | ,5770 |
| | 2,00 | -,16727 | ,14836 | ,784 | -,5266 | ,1920 |

*. La differenza della media è significativa al livello 0.05.



- Appendix 4
- Descriptive statistics

Frequenze

| Statistiche | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|--|--|--|---|---|--|--|--|---|---|------|
| | Leggi le seguenti affermazioni e indica quanto sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con esse: da 1 (fortemente in disaccordo) a 5 (fortemente d'accordo) – La mia prima impressione del prodotto è positiva | Leggi le seguenti affermazioni e indica quanto sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con esse: da 1 (fortemente in disaccordo) a 5 (fortemente d'accordo) – La qualità del prodotto sembra soddisfacente | Leggi le seguenti affermazioni e indica quanto sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con esse: da 1 (fortemente in disaccordo) a 5 (fortemente d'accordo) – Mi fido della qualità del prodotto | Leggi le seguenti affermazioni e indica quanto sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con esse: da 1 (fortemente in disaccordo) a 5 (fortemente d'accordo) – Vorrei scoprire di più sulle caratteristiche del prodotto | Leggi le seguenti affermazioni e indica quanto sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con esse: da 1 (fortemente in disaccordo) a 5 (fortemente d'accordo) – Vorrei controllare le recensioni di questo prodotto | Leggi le seguenti affermazioni e indica quanto sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con esse: da 1 (fortemente in disaccordo) a 5 (fortemente d'accordo) – La mia prima impressione del prodotto è positiva | Leggi le seguenti affermazioni e indica quanto sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con esse: da 1 (fortemente in disaccordo) a 5 (fortemente d'accordo) – La qualità del prodotto sembra soddisfacente | Leggi le seguenti affermazioni e indica quanto sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con esse: da 1 (fortemente in disaccordo) a 5 (fortemente d'accordo) – Mi fido della qualità del prodotto | Leggi le seguenti affermazioni e indica quanto sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con esse: da 1 (fortemente in disaccordo) a 5 (fortemente d'accordo) – Vorrei scoprire di più sulle caratteristiche del prodotto | Leggi le seguenti affermazioni e indica quanto sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con esse: da 1 (fortemente in disaccordo) a 5 (fortemente d'accordo) – Vorrei controllare le recensioni di questo prodotto | |
| N | Valido | 55 | 54 | 54 | 54 | 54 | 40 | 40 | 40 | 39 | 40 |
| | Mancante | 95 | 96 | 96 | 96 | 96 | 110 | 110 | 110 | 111 | 110 |
| Media | | 3,49 | 3,37 | 3,61 | 3,96 | 3,94 | 3,98 | 3,98 | 4,18 | 4,13 | 4,18 |
| Modalità | | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 4 ^a | 4 |
| Deviazione std. | | 1,069 | 1,069 | 1,106 | ,889 | 1,017 | ,800 | ,768 | ,874 | ,833 | ,747 |

a. Esistono più mode. Viene visualizzato il valore più piccolo

| Leggi le seguenti affermazioni e indica quanto sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con esse: da 1 (fortemente in disaccordo) a 5 (fortemente d'accordo) – La qualità del prodotto sembra soddisfacente | Leggi le seguenti affermazioni e indica quanto sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con esse: da 1 (fortemente in disaccordo) a 5 (fortemente d'accordo) – Mi fido della qualità del prodotto | Leggi le seguenti affermazioni e indica quanto sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con esse: da 1 (fortemente in disaccordo) a 5 (fortemente d'accordo) – Vorrei scoprire di più sulle caratteristiche del prodotto | Leggi le seguenti affermazioni e indica quanto sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con esse: da 1 (fortemente in disaccordo) a 5 (fortemente d'accordo) – Vorrei controllare le recensioni di questo prodotto | Leggi le seguenti affermazioni e indica quanto sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con esse: da 1 (fortemente in disaccordo) a 5 (fortemente d'accordo) – La mia prima impressione del prodotto è positiva | Leggi le seguenti affermazioni e indica quanto sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con esse: da 1 (fortemente in disaccordo) a 5 (fortemente d'accordo) – La qualità del prodotto sembra soddisfacente | Leggi le seguenti affermazioni e indica quanto sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con esse: da 1 (fortemente in disaccordo) a 5 (fortemente d'accordo) – Mi fido della qualità del prodotto | Leggi le seguenti affermazioni e indica quanto sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con esse: da 1 (fortemente in disaccordo) a 5 (fortemente d'accordo) – Vorrei scoprire di più sulle caratteristiche del prodotto | Leggi le seguenti affermazioni e indica quanto sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con esse: da 1 (fortemente in disaccordo) a 5 (fortemente d'accordo) – Vorrei controllare le recensioni di questo prodotto |
|--|--|---|---|--|--|--|---|---|
| 40 | 40 | 39 | 40 | 55 | 54 | 54 | 54 | 54 |
| 110 | 110 | 111 | 110 | 95 | 96 | 96 | 96 | 96 |
| 3,98 | 4,18 | 4,13 | 4,18 | 3,84 | 3,80 | 4,09 | 4,00 | 3,91 |
| 4 | 5 | 4 ^a | 4 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 4 |
| ,768 | ,874 | ,833 | ,747 | ,877 | ,919 | ,896 | ,869 | 1,051 |

Leggi le seguenti affermazioni e indica quanto sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con esse: da 1 (fortemente in disaccordo) a 5 (fortemente d'accordo) – La mia prima impressione del prodotto è positiva

| | | Frequenza | Percentuale | Percentuale valida | Percentuale cumulativa |
|----------|------------------------------|-----------|-------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Valido | 1 (Fortemente in disaccordo) | 2 | 1,3 | 3,6 | 3,6 |
| | 2 | 7 | 4,7 | 12,7 | 16,4 |
| | 3 | 19 | 12,7 | 34,5 | 50,9 |
| | 4 | 16 | 10,7 | 29,1 | 80,0 |
| | 5 (Fortemente d'accordo) | 11 | 7,3 | 20,0 | 100,0 |
| | Totale | 55 | 36,7 | 100,0 | |
| Mancante | Sistema | 95 | 63,3 | | |
| Totale | | 150 | 100,0 | | |

Leggi le seguenti affermazioni e indica quanto sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con esse: da 1 (fortemente in disaccordo) a 5 (fortemente d'accordo) – La qualità del prodotto sembra soddisfacente

| | | Frequenza | Percentuale | Percentuale valida | Percentuale cumulativa |
|----------|------------------------------|-----------|-------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Valido | 1 (Fortemente in disaccordo) | 3 | 2,0 | 5,6 | 5,6 |
| | 2 | 8 | 5,3 | 14,8 | 20,4 |
| | 3 | 16 | 10,7 | 29,6 | 50,0 |
| | 4 | 20 | 13,3 | 37,0 | 87,0 |
| | 5 (Fortemente d'accordo) | 7 | 4,7 | 13,0 | 100,0 |
| | Totale | 54 | 36,0 | 100,0 | |
| Mancante | Sistema | 96 | 64,0 | | |
| Totale | | 150 | 100,0 | | |

Statistiche

| | | Leggi le seguenti affermazioni e indica quanto sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con esse: da 1 (fortemente in disaccordo) a 5 (fortemente d'accordo) – La mia prima impressione del prodotto è positiva | Leggi le seguenti affermazioni e indica quanto sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con esse: da 1 (fortemente in disaccordo) a 5 (fortemente d'accordo) – Il prodotto sembra eccitante | Leggi le seguenti affermazioni e indica quanto sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con esse: da 1 (fortemente in disaccordo) a 5 (fortemente d'accordo) – La presentazion e del prodotto è stimolante | Leggi le seguenti affermazioni e indica quanto sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con esse: da 1 (fortemente in disaccordo) a 5 (fortemente d'accordo) – Vorrei scoprire di più sui prodotti Beretta | Leggi le seguenti affermazioni e indica quanto sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con esse: da 1 (fortemente in disaccordo) a 5 (fortemente d'accordo) – Vorrei vedere altri prodotti su Beretta eStore | Leggi le seguenti affermazioni e indica quanto sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con esse: da 1 (fortemente in disaccordo) a 5 (fortemente d'accordo) – Vorrei scorrere scorrere verso il basso e/o continuare la navigazione su Beretta eStore | Quanto accattivante risulta questa descrizione del prodotto? | Quanto ti piace o non ti piace la descrizione di questo prodotto? | Quanto risulta adatta al prodotto la descrizione? |
|-----------------|----------|--|---|--|--|---|--|---|--|---|
| N | Valido | 68 | 67 | 68 | 67 | 68 | 68 | 69 | 69 | 69 |
| | Mancante | 82 | 83 | 82 | 83 | 82 | 82 | 81 | 81 | 81 |
| Media | | 4,29 | 3,93 | 3,99 | 4,10 | 4,18 | 4,16 | 3,94 | 4,10 | 4,25 |
| Modalità | | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| Deviazione std. | | ,692 | ,785 | ,680 | ,741 | ,897 | ,725 | ,765 | ,667 | ,673 |

Leggi le seguenti affermazioni e indica quanto sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con esse: da 1 (fortemente in disaccordo) a 5 (fortemente d'accordo) – Mi fido della qualità del prodotto

| | | Frequenza | Percentuale | Percentuale valida | Percentuale cumulativa |
|----------|------------------------------|-----------|-------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Valido | 1 (Fortemente in disaccordo) | 2 | 1,3 | 3,7 | 3,7 |
| | 2 | 7 | 4,7 | 13,0 | 16,7 |
| | 3 | 14 | 9,3 | 25,9 | 42,6 |
| | 4 | 18 | 12,0 | 33,3 | 75,9 |
| | 5 (Fortemente d'accordo) | 13 | 8,7 | 24,1 | 100,0 |
| | Totale | 54 | 36,0 | 100,0 | |
| Mancante | Sistema | 96 | 64,0 | | |
| Totale | | 150 | 100,0 | | |

Leggi le seguenti affermazioni e indica quanto sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con esse: da 1 (fortemente in disaccordo) a 5 (fortemente d'accordo) – Vorrei scoprire di più sulle caratteristiche del prodotto

| | | Frequenza | Percentuale | Percentuale valida | Percentuale cumulativa |
|----------|--------------------------|-----------|-------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Valido | 2 | 4 | 2,7 | 7,4 | 7,4 |
| | 3 | 10 | 6,7 | 18,5 | 25,9 |
| | 4 | 24 | 16,0 | 44,4 | 70,4 |
| | 5 (Fortemente d'accordo) | 16 | 10,7 | 29,6 | 100,0 |
| | Totale | 54 | 36,0 | 100,0 | |
| Mancante | Sistema | 96 | 64,0 | | |
| Totale | | 150 | 100,0 | | |

Leggi le seguenti affermazioni e indica quanto sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con esse: da 1 (fortemente in disaccordo) a 5 (fortemente d'accordo) – La qualità del prodotto sembra soddisfacente

| | | Frequenza | Percentuale | Percentuale valida | Percentuale cumulativa |
|----------|--------------------------|-----------|-------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Valido | 2 | 1 | ,7 | 2,5 | 2,5 |
| | 3 | 9 | 6,0 | 22,5 | 25,0 |
| | 4 | 20 | 13,3 | 50,0 | 75,0 |
| | 5 (Fortemente d'accordo) | 10 | 6,7 | 25,0 | 100,0 |
| | Totale | 40 | 26,7 | 100,0 | |
| Mancante | Sistema | 110 | 73,3 | | |
| Totale | | 150 | 100,0 | | |

Leggi le seguenti affermazioni e indica quanto sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con esse: da 1 (fortemente in disaccordo) a 5 (fortemente d'accordo) – Mi fido della qualità del prodotto

| | | Frequenza | Percentuale | Percentuale valida | Percentuale cumulativa |
|----------|--------------------------|-----------|-------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Valido | 2 | 2 | 1,3 | 5,0 | 5,0 |
| | 3 | 6 | 4,0 | 15,0 | 20,0 |
| | 4 | 15 | 10,0 | 37,5 | 57,5 |
| | 5 (Fortemente d'accordo) | 17 | 11,3 | 42,5 | 100,0 |
| | Totale | 40 | 26,7 | 100,0 | |
| Mancante | Sistema | 110 | 73,3 | | |
| Totale | | 150 | 100,0 | | |

Leggi le seguenti affermazioni e indica quanto sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con esse: da 1 (fortemente in disaccordo) a 5 (fortemente d'accordo) – Vorrei scoprire di più sulle caratteristiche del prodotto

| | | Frequenza | Percentuale | Percentuale valida | Percentuale cumulativa |
|----------|--------------------------|-----------|-------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Valido | 2 | 1 | ,7 | 2,6 | 2,6 |
| | 3 | 8 | 5,3 | 20,5 | 23,1 |
| | 4 | 15 | 10,0 | 38,5 | 61,5 |
| | 5 (Fortemente d'accordo) | 15 | 10,0 | 38,5 | 100,0 |
| | Totale | 39 | 26,0 | 100,0 | |
| Mancante | Sistema | 111 | 74,0 | | |
| Totale | | 150 | 100,0 | | |

Leggi le seguenti affermazioni e indica quanto sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con esse: da 1 (fortemente in disaccordo) a 5 (fortemente d'accordo) – Vorrei controllare le recensioni di questo prodotto

| | | Frequenza | Percentuale | Percentuale valida | Percentuale cumulativa |
|----------|--------------------------|-----------|-------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Valido | 3 | 8 | 5,3 | 20,0 | 20,0 |
| | 4 | 17 | 11,3 | 42,5 | 62,5 |
| | 5 (Fortemente d'accordo) | 15 | 10,0 | 37,5 | 100,0 |
| | Totale | 40 | 26,7 | 100,0 | |
| Mancante | Sistema | 110 | 73,3 | | |
| Totale | | 150 | 100,0 | | |

Leggi le seguenti affermazioni e indica quanto sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con esse: da 1 (fortemente in disaccordo) a 5 (fortemente d'accordo) – La mia prima impressione del prodotto è positiva

| | | Frequenza | Percentuale | Percentuale valida | Percentuale cumulativa |
|----------|--------------------------|-----------|-------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Valido | 2 | 3 | 2,0 | 5,5 | 5,5 |
| | 3 | 17 | 11,3 | 30,9 | 36,4 |
| | 4 | 21 | 14,0 | 38,2 | 74,5 |
| | 5 (Fortemente d'accordo) | 14 | 9,3 | 25,5 | 100,0 |
| | Totale | 55 | 36,7 | 100,0 | |
| Mancante | Sistema | 95 | 63,3 | | |
| Totale | | 150 | 100,0 | | |

Leggi le seguenti affermazioni e indica quanto sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con esse: da 1 (fortemente in disaccordo) a 5 (fortemente d'accordo) – La qualità del prodotto sembra soddisfacente

| | | Frequenza | Percentuale | Percentuale valida | Percentuale cumulativa |
|----------|--------------------------|-----------|-------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Valido | 2 | 4 | 2,7 | 7,4 | 7,4 |
| | 3 | 17 | 11,3 | 31,5 | 38,9 |
| | 4 | 19 | 12,7 | 35,2 | 74,1 |
| | 5 (Fortemente d'accordo) | 14 | 9,3 | 25,9 | 100,0 |
| | Totale | 54 | 36,0 | 100,0 | |
| Mancante | Sistema | 96 | 64,0 | | |
| Totale | | 150 | 100,0 | | |

Leggi le seguenti affermazioni e indica quanto sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con esse: da 1 (fortemente in disaccordo) a 5 (fortemente d'accordo) – Vorrei scoprire di più sulle caratteristiche del prodotto

| | | Frequenza | Percentuale | Percentuale valida | Percentuale cumulativa |
|----------|--------------------------|-----------|-------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Valido | 2 | 1 | ,7 | 1,9 | 1,9 |
| | 3 | 17 | 11,3 | 31,5 | 33,3 |
| | 4 | 17 | 11,3 | 31,5 | 64,8 |
| | 5 (Fortemente d'accordo) | 19 | 12,7 | 35,2 | 100,0 |
| | Totale | 54 | 36,0 | 100,0 | |
| Mancante | Sistema | 96 | 64,0 | | |
| Totale | | 150 | 100,0 | | |

Leggi le seguenti affermazioni e indica quanto sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con esse: da 1 (fortemente in disaccordo) a 5 (fortemente d'accordo) – Vorrei controllare le recensioni di questo prodotto

| | | Frequenza | Percentuale | Percentuale valida | Percentuale cumulativa |
|----------|------------------------------|-----------|-------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Valido | 1 (Fortemente in disaccordo) | 2 | 1,3 | 3,7 | 3,7 |
| | 2 | 3 | 2,0 | 5,6 | 9,3 |
| | 3 | 11 | 7,3 | 20,4 | 29,6 |
| | 4 | 20 | 13,3 | 37,0 | 66,7 |
| | 5 (Fortemente d'accordo) | 18 | 12,0 | 33,3 | 100,0 |
| | Totale | 54 | 36,0 | 100,0 | |
| Mancante | Sistema | 96 | 64,0 | | |
| Totale | | 150 | 100,0 | | |

Statistiche

| | Leggi le seguenti affermazioni e indica quanto sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con esse: da 1 (fortemente in disaccordo) a 5 (fortemente d'accordo) – La mia prima impressione del prodotto è positiva | Leggi le seguenti affermazioni e indica quanto sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con esse: da 1 (fortemente in disaccordo) a 5 (fortemente d'accordo) – Il prodotto risulta accattivante | Leggi le seguenti affermazioni e indica quanto sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con esse: da 1 (fortemente in disaccordo) a 5 (fortemente d'accordo) – La presentazione e del prodotto è stimolante | Leggi le seguenti affermazioni e indica quanto sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con esse: da 1 (fortemente in disaccordo) a 5 (fortemente d'accordo) – Vorrei scoprire di più sul prodotto | Leggi le seguenti affermazioni e indica quanto sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con esse: da 1 (fortemente in disaccordo) a 5 (fortemente d'accordo) – Vorrei vedere altri prodotti su Beretta eStore | Leggi le seguenti affermazioni e indica quanto sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con esse: da 1 (fortemente in disaccordo) a 5 (fortemente d'accordo) – Vorrei scorrere verso il basso e/o continuare la navigazione su Beretta eStore | Quanto risulta accattivante la presentazione e del prodotto? | Quanto ti piace o non ti piace la presentazione e di questo prodotto? |
|-----------------|--|--|--|---|--|--|--|---|
| N | Valido | 70 | 65 | 65 | 66 | 65 | 63 | 74 |
| | Mancante | 80 | 85 | 85 | 84 | 85 | 87 | 76 |
| Media | | 3,87 | 3,54 | 3,52 | 3,73 | 4,15 | 4,06 | 3,57 |
| Modalità | | 4 | 4 | 3 ^a | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| Deviazione std. | | 1,102 | 1,047 | 1,017 | ,937 | ,852 | ,801 | 1,117 |

a. Esistono più mode. Viene visualizzato il valore più piccolo

Leggi le seguenti affermazioni e indica quanto sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con esse: da 1 (fortemente in disaccordo) a 5 (fortemente d'accordo) – La mia prima impressione del prodotto è positiva

| | | Frequenza | Percentuale | Percentuale valida | Percentuale cumulativa |
|----------|------------------------------|-----------|-------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Valido | 1 (Fortemente in disaccordo) | 2 | 1,3 | 2,9 | 2,9 |
| | 2 | 8 | 5,3 | 11,4 | 14,3 |
| | 3 | 11 | 7,3 | 15,7 | 30,0 |
| | 4 | 25 | 16,7 | 35,7 | 65,7 |
| | 5 (Fortemente d'accordo) | 24 | 16,0 | 34,3 | 100,0 |
| | Totale | 70 | 46,7 | 100,0 | |
| Mancante | Sistema | 80 | 53,3 | | |
| Totale | | 150 | 100,0 | | |

Leggi le seguenti affermazioni e indica quanto sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con esse: da 1 (fortemente in disaccordo) a 5 (fortemente d'accordo) – Il prodotto risulta accattivante

| | | Frequenza | Percentuale | Percentuale valida | Percentuale cumulativa |
|----------|------------------------------|-----------|-------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Valido | 1 (Fortemente in disaccordo) | 1 | ,7 | 1,5 | 1,5 |
| | 2 | 11 | 7,3 | 16,9 | 18,5 |
| | 3 | 18 | 12,0 | 27,7 | 46,2 |
| | 4 | 22 | 14,7 | 33,8 | 80,0 |
| | 5 (Fortemente d'accordo) | 13 | 8,7 | 20,0 | 100,0 |
| | Totale | 65 | 43,3 | 100,0 | |
| Mancante | Sistema | 85 | 56,7 | | |
| Totale | | 150 | 100,0 | | |

Leggi le seguenti affermazioni e indica quanto sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con esse: da 1 (fortemente in disaccordo) a 5 (fortemente d'accordo) – La presentazione del prodotto è stimolante

| | | Frequenza | Percentuale | Percentuale valida | Percentuale cumulativa |
|----------|--------------------------|-----------|-------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Valido | 2 | 12 | 8,0 | 18,5 | 18,5 |
| | 3 | 20 | 13,3 | 30,8 | 49,2 |
| | 4 | 20 | 13,3 | 30,8 | 80,0 |
| | 5 (Fortemente d'accordo) | 13 | 8,7 | 20,0 | 100,0 |
| | Totale | 65 | 43,3 | 100,0 | |
| Mancante | Sistema | 85 | 56,7 | | |
| Totale | | 150 | 100,0 | | |

Leggi le seguenti affermazioni e indica quanto sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con esse: da 1 (fortemente in disaccordo) a 5 (fortemente d'accordo) – Vorrei scoprire di più sul prodotto

| | | Frequenza | Percentuale | Percentuale valida | Percentuale cumulativa |
|----------|------------------------------|-----------|-------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Valido | 1 (Fortemente in disaccordo) | 1 | ,7 | 1,5 | 1,5 |
| | 2 | 5 | 3,3 | 7,6 | 9,1 |
| | 3 | 19 | 12,7 | 28,8 | 37,9 |
| | 4 | 27 | 18,0 | 40,9 | 78,8 |
| | 5 (Fortemente d'accordo) | 14 | 9,3 | 21,2 | 100,0 |
| | Totale | 66 | 44,0 | 100,0 | |
| Mancante | Sistema | 84 | 56,0 | | |
| Totale | | 150 | 100,0 | | |

Leggi le seguenti affermazioni e indica quanto sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con esse: da 1 (fortemente in disaccordo) a 5 (fortemente d'accordo) – Vorrei vedere altri prodotti su Beretta eStore

| | | Frequenza | Percentuale | Percentuale valida | Percentuale cumulativa |
|----------|------------------------------|-----------|-------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Valido | 1 (Fortemente in disaccordo) | 1 | ,7 | 1,5 | 1,5 |
| | 2 | 1 | ,7 | 1,5 | 3,1 |
| | 3 | 10 | 6,7 | 15,4 | 18,5 |
| | 4 | 28 | 18,7 | 43,1 | 61,5 |
| | 5 (Fortemente d'accordo) | 25 | 16,7 | 38,5 | 100,0 |
| | Totale | 65 | 43,3 | 100,0 | |
| Mancante | Sistema | 85 | 56,7 | | |
| Totale | | 150 | 100,0 | | |

Leggi le seguenti affermazioni e indica quanto sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con esse: da 1 (fortemente in disaccordo) a 5 (fortemente d'accordo) – Vorrei scorrere verso il basso e/o continuare la navigazione su Beretta eStore

| | | Frequenza | Percentuale | Percentuale valida | Percentuale cumulativa |
|----------|--------------------------|-----------|-------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Valido | 2 | 1 | ,7 | 1,6 | 1,6 |
| | 3 | 15 | 10,0 | 23,8 | 25,4 |
| | 4 | 26 | 17,3 | 41,3 | 66,7 |
| | 5 (Fortemente d'accordo) | 21 | 14,0 | 33,3 | 100,0 |
| | Totale | 63 | 42,0 | 100,0 | |
| Mancante | Sistema | 87 | 58,0 | | |
| Totale | | 150 | 100,0 | | |

Quanto risulta accattivante la presentazione del prodotto?

| | | Frequenza | Percentuale | Percentuale valida | Percentuale cumulativa |
|----------|-------------------------|-----------|-------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Valido | Molto accattivante | 6 | 4,0 | 8,1 | 8,1 |
| | Accattivante | 14 | 9,3 | 18,9 | 27,0 |
| | Abbastanza accattivante | 18 | 12,0 | 24,3 | 51,4 |
| | Non molto accattivante | 29 | 19,3 | 39,2 | 90,5 |
| | Per niente accattivante | 7 | 4,7 | 9,5 | 100,0 |
| | Totale | 74 | 49,3 | 100,0 | |
| Mancante | Sistema | 76 | 50,7 | | |
| Totale | | 150 | 100,0 | | |

Quanto ti piace o non ti piace la presentazione di questo prodotto?

| | | Frequenza | Percentuale | Percentuale valida | Percentuale cumulativa |
|----------|----------------------------|-----------|-------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Valido | Mi piace molto | 2 | 1,3 | 2,7 | 2,7 |
| | Mi piace | 10 | 6,7 | 13,5 | 16,2 |
| | Né mi piace né mi dispiace | 17 | 11,3 | 23,0 | 39,2 |
| | Non mi piace | 34 | 22,7 | 45,9 | 85,1 |
| | Non mi piace per niente | 11 | 7,3 | 14,9 | 100,0 |
| | Totale | 74 | 49,3 | 100,0 | |
| Mancante | Sistema | 76 | 50,7 | | |
| Totale | | 150 | 100,0 | | |

Leggi le seguenti affermazioni e indica quanto sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con esse: da 1 (fortemente in disaccordo) a 5 (fortemente d'accordo) – Il prodotto sembra eccitante

| | | Frequenza | Percentuale | Percentuale valida | Percentuale cumulativa |
|----------|--------------------------|-----------|-------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Valido | 2 | 3 | 2,0 | 4,5 | 4,5 |
| | 3 | 14 | 9,3 | 20,9 | 25,4 |
| | 4 | 35 | 23,3 | 52,2 | 77,6 |
| | 5 (Fortemente d'accordo) | 15 | 10,0 | 22,4 | 100,0 |
| | Totale | 67 | 44,7 | 100,0 | |
| Mancante | Sistema | 83 | 55,3 | | |
| Totale | | 150 | 100,0 | | |

Leggi le seguenti affermazioni e indica quanto sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con esse: da 1 (fortemente in disaccordo) a 5 (fortemente d'accordo) – La presentazione del prodotto è stimolante

| | | Frequenza | Percentuale | Percentuale valida | Percentuale cumulativa |
|----------|--------------------------|-----------|-------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Valido | 3 | 16 | 10,7 | 23,5 | 23,5 |
| | 4 | 37 | 24,7 | 54,4 | 77,9 |
| | 5 (Fortemente d'accordo) | 15 | 10,0 | 22,1 | 100,0 |
| | Totale | 68 | 45,3 | 100,0 | |
| Mancante | Sistema | 82 | 54,7 | | |
| Totale | | 150 | 100,0 | | |

Leggi le seguenti affermazioni e indica quanto sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con esse: da 1 (fortemente in disaccordo) a 5 (fortemente d'accordo) – Vorrei scoprire di più sui prodotti Beretta

| | | Frequenza | Percentuale | Percentuale valida | Percentuale cumulativa |
|----------|--------------------------|-----------|-------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Valido | 3 | 15 | 10,0 | 22,4 | 22,4 |
| | 4 | 30 | 20,0 | 44,8 | 67,2 |
| | 5 (Fortemente d'accordo) | 22 | 14,7 | 32,8 | 100,0 |
| | Totale | 67 | 44,7 | 100,0 | |
| Mancante | Sistema | 83 | 55,3 | | |
| Totale | | 150 | 100,0 | | |

Leggi le seguenti affermazioni e indica quanto sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con esse: da 1 (fortemente in disaccordo) a 5 (fortemente d'accordo) – Vorrei vedere altri prodotti su Beretta eStore

| | | Frequenza | Percentuale | Percentuale valida | Percentuale cumulativa |
|----------|------------------------------|-----------|-------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Valido | 1 (Fortemente in disaccordo) | 2 | 1,3 | 2,9 | 2,9 |
| | 2 | 1 | ,7 | 1,5 | 4,4 |
| | 3 | 7 | 4,7 | 10,3 | 14,7 |
| | 4 | 31 | 20,7 | 45,6 | 60,3 |
| | 5 (Fortemente d'accordo) | 27 | 18,0 | 39,7 | 100,0 |
| | Totale | 68 | 45,3 | 100,0 | |
| Mancante | Sistema | 82 | 54,7 | | |
| Totale | | 150 | 100,0 | | |

Leggi le seguenti affermazioni e indica quanto sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con esse: da 1 (fortemente in disaccordo) a 5 (fortemente d'accordo) – Vorrei scoprire di più sui prodotti Beretta

| | | Frequenza | Percentuale | Percentuale valida | Percentuale cumulativa |
|----------|--------------------------|-----------|-------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Valido | 3 | 15 | 10,0 | 22,4 | 22,4 |
| | 4 | 30 | 20,0 | 44,8 | 67,2 |
| | 5 (Fortemente d'accordo) | 22 | 14,7 | 32,8 | 100,0 |
| | Totale | 67 | 44,7 | 100,0 | |
| Mancante | Sistema | 83 | 55,3 | | |
| Totale | | 150 | 100,0 | | |

Leggi le seguenti affermazioni e indica quanto sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con esse: da 1 (fortemente in disaccordo) a 5 (fortemente d'accordo) – Vorrei vedere altri prodotti su Beretta eStore

| | | Frequenza | Percentuale | Percentuale valida | Percentuale cumulativa |
|----------|------------------------------|-----------|-------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Valido | 1 (Fortemente in disaccordo) | 2 | 1,3 | 2,9 | 2,9 |
| | 2 | 1 | ,7 | 1,5 | 4,4 |
| | 3 | 7 | 4,7 | 10,3 | 14,7 |
| | 4 | 31 | 20,7 | 45,6 | 60,3 |
| | 5 (Fortemente d'accordo) | 27 | 18,0 | 39,7 | 100,0 |
| | Totale | 68 | 45,3 | 100,0 | |
| Mancante | Sistema | 82 | 54,7 | | |
| Totale | | 150 | 100,0 | | |

Leggi le seguenti affermazioni e indica quanto sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con esse: da 1 (fortemente in disaccordo) a 5 (fortemente d'accordo) – Vorrei scorrere scorrere verso il basso e/o continuare la navigazione su Beretta eStore

| | | Frequenza | Percentuale | Percentuale valida | Percentuale cumulativa |
|----------|--------------------------|-----------|-------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Valido | 2 | 1 | ,7 | 1,5 | 1,5 |
| | 3 | 10 | 6,7 | 14,7 | 16,2 |
| | 4 | 34 | 22,7 | 50,0 | 66,2 |
| | 5 (Fortemente d'accordo) | 23 | 15,3 | 33,8 | 100,0 |
| | Totale | 68 | 45,3 | 100,0 | |
| Mancante | Sistema | 82 | 54,7 | | |
| Totale | | 150 | 100,0 | | |

Quanto accattivante risulta questa descrizione del prodotto?

| | | Frequenza | Percentuale | Percentuale valida | Percentuale cumulativa |
|----------|-------------------------|-----------|-------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Valido | Accattivante | 2 | 1,3 | 2,9 | 2,9 |
| | Abbastanza accattivante | 16 | 10,7 | 23,2 | 26,1 |
| | Non molto accattivante | 35 | 23,3 | 50,7 | 76,8 |
| | Per niente accattivante | 16 | 10,7 | 23,2 | 100,0 |
| | Totale | 69 | 46,0 | 100,0 | |
| Mancante | Sistema | 81 | 54,0 | | |
| Totale | | 150 | 100,0 | | |

Quanto ti piace o non ti piace la descrizione di questo prodotto?

| | | Frequenza | Percentuale | Percentuale valida | Percentuale cumulativa |
|----------|----------------------------|-----------|-------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Valido | Né mi piace né mi dispiace | 12 | 8,0 | 17,4 | 17,4 |
| | Non mi piace | 38 | 25,3 | 55,1 | 72,5 |
| | Non mi piace per niente | 19 | 12,7 | 27,5 | 100,0 |
| | Totale | 69 | 46,0 | 100,0 | |
| Mancante | Sistema | 81 | 54,0 | | |
| Totale | | 150 | 100,0 | | |

Quanto risulta adatta al prodotto la descrizione?

| | | Frequenza | Percentuale | Percentuale valida | Percentuale cumulativa |
|----------|-------------------|-----------|-------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Valido | Abbastanza adatta | 9 | 6,0 | 13,0 | 13,0 |
| | Non molto adatta | 34 | 22,7 | 49,3 | 62,3 |
| | Per niente adatta | 26 | 17,3 | 37,7 | 100,0 |
| | Totale | 69 | 46,0 | 100,0 | |
| Mancante | Sistema | 81 | 54,0 | | |
| Totale | | 150 | 100,0 | | |

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Introduction

On the web, one of the favorite occupations for many users is shopping: it is accessible, easy and satisfactory to use. E-commerce became possible in 1991 (“History of Ecommerce,” n.d.) when internet extended its use to commercial uses, generating an attractive marketplace for companies.

At the very beginning, e-commerce meant only the activity of executing a commercial transaction via internet, using the net as a means for exchanging documentation about the trade. Afterwards, nearly four years later, the security protocols have been created, which permitted a rapid access to internet and a reliable connection to the World Wide Web. Rapidly some companies of the United States and Western Europe set up their own marketplace online. The cyber business changed, and the term e-commerce started to refer to the process of purchase available items on internet, making use of settled connections concurrently with an electronic payment method. In 2001 the most successful e-commerce operated into the B2B market, while the B2C was rising more slowly; this was mainly due to the complete absence of the internet connection in many households or in other cases to the lack of knowledge in the field. The majority of consumers started to glimpse the potential of e-commerce only later, with the birth of important platform like Amazon or eBay; those events laid the foundations of the digital transformation in many businesses.

The digital transformation is one of the most characterizing changes brought by the historical period in which we are living: more than an evolution it is usually considered a revolution. Since the advent of the internet a lot of progresses have changed the habits of human beings, facilitating and improving their existences. This transformation involves deep mutations, mainly from the technological point of view, contributing to “digitalize” many activities, behaviors and more widely many aspects of our lives.

But this is not enough for considering this as a revolution, in fact what makes it so, is the consequent advancement in cultural, organizational, social and managerial aspects of the human society.

Moreover, we cannot ignore the fact that while this research was being written, we were in the center of the storm caused by an ongoing worldwide pandemic of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). This emergency situation has further changed the perspective for online stores, since the panorama was drastically driving all the global population to change their point of view about the online shopping.

The first chapter of this research is divided into two main blocks: the first part, regarding the general situation of e-commerce worldwide considering the statistics, case studies and the managerial literature in this field, while the second part will consider a deep analysis into “Beretta eStore” case study in order to understand the relevance of this study in a real business environment. In the second chapter the literature review and the theoretical background will be presented. Lastly, in the third chapter the research method and the relative results will be described, introducing the tools deployed and the research design. In the last section of this study discussion and conclusions will provide managerial implications and suggestions for further studies in this field.

1. E-commerce: from birth to the state of the art

It is possible to state that e-commerce and marketplaces are gaining ground in their competition with offline shops, as reported in an article from Harvard Business Review (“To Compete with Amazon, Big-Name Consumer Brands Have to Become More Like It,” 2018): “Over the last decade, e-commerce has imposed a painful profit squeeze on big-box retailers, resulting in layoffs, store closings, mall reconfigurations, and even bankruptcies. With no reprieve in sight for retailers, the online world is poised to do the same to brand-name consumer products companies.”

The main reasons are under the public eye, first of all e-commerce (EC from now) can provide an always-on service associated with a deeply targeted content for every different user, thing that is way less easy for their offline counterparts.

This is possible thanks to a massive use of data, in fact, collecting and analyzing information through software permit managers to know the preferences and the habits of their customers developing the best solutions for them. This modus operandi typical of online shops turns into greater levels of satisfaction, connection and loyalty in customers. Moreover, an effective use of artificial intelligence and machine learning permits managers to reduce the human components in the relationship with users; the touchpoints with the customers are rising dramatically, suffice it to say that the customer journey is complex as never before and to keep managing effectively the relationship with consumers, it is key to exploit this technological tools. So, what are the reasons that make online shopping so impactful on customers? We will try to depict some strategical guidelines in this study that company should follow in order to be competitive; but let's start reporting some findings from other studies. As the previous cited article from Harvard Business Review stated, it seems that online retailers are able to generate levels of engagement that is hard to reach for offline shops. The main advantages that the digitalization brought are the improvements in the activities of measuring and monitoring consumers. Nowadays it is possible to acquire and manage fundamental insights for e-commerce, like for instance one of the most important variable: the source of the traffic.

Understanding the source of traffic is one of the core activities that managers need to accomplish in order to assess the right channel to reach the audience effectively. According to Statista, on average, 35% of traffic for EC is generated from Google organic researches, one remaining 23% is generated from Google not through an organic source but from an adv. In Italy it is estimated, for example, that nearly 37.8 million of consumers shop online, which represents the 78% of the total population; according to the report published by Statista (E-commerce in Europe, October 2019) on average nearly 668 euros are spent on online stores in Italy per person each year. According to the just mentioned statistic, online shopping is no longer utilized by the younger generation, actually the largest increase has occurred among older individuals: statistics show that e-commerce has become attractive even for the generation 65-79. This is probably due to the raised user-

friendliness that technology has brought in the last few years; another reason is the possibility to shop with different devices, from tablet to smartphone passing through voice-recognition tools such as Alexa and Google.

In the next years many companies will radically transform their distribution and commercial channels, an innovative approach will be necessary no longer just for big or particularly innovative companies, but for much more businesses. Then in all likelihood, groceries stores, perfume shops or wine shops are just some example of stores that will face new necessities of supplies, delivery and shopping behavior in customers.

Suffice it to say that an application like the Italian app Winelivery has grown in the last month of the 50% in northern Italy and of the 25% throughout Italy. In the near future, this way of behaving could become a consolidated habit in customers that first had to experience the service in a situation of necessity, then got used to it and finally became advocates of it.

Accordingly, it is important for the businesses that are pursuing a strategy, which is even today, completely based on the offline channels (or that are little concerned about the new challenges that they have to face) to reconsider their opportunities and threats for the imminent future.

The companies usually elaborate their own *modus operandi*, mixing a theoretical approach based on proven methods from the literature with the best practice coming from a first-hand experience in their market.

Dealing with a relatively new field, having a starting point or some guidelines is usually crucial for the management permitting to be more effective and efficient. Even though the preferences of users are continually in changes, there are some key points which increase the performance of an online store.

One of the biggest dilemmas in e-commerce consists in the strategic decisions about the contents: this research will examine the outcomes of some tactics and the possible implementations.

An online store, exactly as in the offline world, is not just made up of products but many other factors are involved in the consumer experience. The aesthetics of the web pages, the UX design, the facility, the payment process and many other aspects have to be considered. A well-designed web site has the ability to raise the conversions, transforming a visit into a purchase and boosting the traffic.

It is well known that one of the most important KPI to be monitored is in fact the traffic, because the web site is the biggest opportunity to deepen the relationship with the shopper, transmitting the values of the brand and letting him know more products and promotions. Having as much as possible visits to an online store is the lifeblood and the major priority of every digital marketer. But what makes a product page worthy enough of a visit? Of course, a store is composed of many web pages, typically the most important are the home page and the product pages. The first one is the one with the majority of visits, using a metaphor it probably represents the structure of the store but even the front door; customers usually produce evaluations about the quality, the value proposition and the heritage of the brand from the homepage. This latter has to be inspiring but at the same time rich of information about the brand, the products on it and the store itself.

In the early stages of online stores, the product pages were considered only as a shelf, showing the products with some minimal information. But as it is possible to see from many examples, the attention to the details

on the e-stores is increasing year after year, following the preferences of users that are in search now more than ever of an inspiring, engaging and “easy to take content”. In the “e-commerce environment” there are some factors that have the explicit role of nudging and facilitating the purchase: it is the case of the call to action that merely represents the last link in the chain but that does not represent the main strategic component to drive the conversions. It is different for an element such as the photos of the products, which represents a crucial strategic driver for conversions and deserve a particular attention.

Taking into account the increased processing speed for the contents online, the pictures have become more than a photographic representation (Desrochers, Léger, Fredette, Mirhoseini, & Sénécal, 2019), they impact on the idealization of the products, on the suggestions about the context of use and in the creation of a storyline for both the product and the brand. In this study, the market taken as main reference will be “Sports & Outdoor” in fact not only this is the market in which the “Beretta eStore” compete but it is one of the fastest growing market online. This positive return is reinforced by the positive outlook dictated by the demographic profile of the average user; indeed, this proves to be quite a young market. There are a number of factors influencing the conversions on e-commerce; for years both practitioners and academics have explored the components that encourage customers to make a purchase therefore one of the aims of this study is to group and analyze the main strategic levers employed by marketers in the digital world.

It must be specified that in the offline world, the understanding and the consciousness of these themes obviously go back a long way. On the contrary online, due to the relatively recent widespread diffusion of these digital businesses, the development of tactics to convince and persuade prospects, is the latest “state-of-art”. Nevertheless, the improvements and the refinements in this area of digital marketing are very rapid, firstly thanks to the deployment of specific analytical techniques that ensure a deep understanding of users, and secondly because many triggers, which were used offline, have been successfully adapted in the online world. It is correct to consider social proof as an extension of the eWOM; actually, we are used to consider reviews as the main component of the electronic word-of-mouth but despite this, if one considers the role of this latter, the connection is evident. The awareness of the number of customers that have already chosen the product, seems to be online, an effective game changer.

The case study in this research is brought by the Italian company Fabbrica d’Armi Pietro Beretta S.p.A, one of the global biggest players in the sector of weapons and guns. Beretta has launched his own business to consumer e-commerce in Europe in 2014. Even though the company operates at business to business level too, this research is focused only on the end-customer market. Despite the almost 500 years of business, the company has as its main strategic asset the ongoing research and the inventiveness. The company is part of the Beretta Holding, composed of 32 companies dedicated to hunting, sporting, military and personal defense. Over the years, the group has progressively expanded its range of products, especially developing new lines of clothing and accessories, characterized by the attention to quality and technology.

Traditionally the company sells its products via traditional physical retail channels, usually by relying on sporting goods retailers or armorers. Named “Beretta eStore”, the online store, is active on three main layers:

clothing, accessories and spare parts. This research will be focused on clothing and general accessories, considering out of the scope the analysis of gun accessories and spare parts.

2. Literature Review

This research is specifically referring to the selling activity of physical goods through a digital channel to a private end user; the purchases can be finalized via mobile or via a desktop. Instead, what is not taken into consideration is the digital distributed services, the resale of used goods and the sales between private persons. The coming of new channels, in fact changed profoundly the customers' preferences in purchase and opened the route for new possibilities. However, consumers showed to seek for efficient and valid new alternatives to their routine, this is crucial when EC represents an alternative and not the only channel for buying physical goods that normally are purchased in bricks and mortar stores.

In addition to efficiency and effectiveness, users are influenced by other factors, which themselves influence the activity of a cyber business. We have to split the focus on two separate dimensions: internal and external variables. For what concerns the internal factors the security of the system, the reliability, the ease of use and other variables have a strong impact: the e-commerce should create a strong sense of loyalty in customers able to generate commitment for the products and the brand. The ability of being in step with the time, is influential for key aspects like the structure of the user interface; this last-mentioned has an impact on the perceived quality of the products and has a link with the idea of quality on information available about the product on the website (Thatcher & Zhu, 2010). In light of what has been just written a cyber business, exactly like a classic brick and mortar, has to be renovated continuously following the trends and the preferences of users. A careful analysis of the insights and feedbacks from consumers are the two principal activities that permit firms to be competitive, gaining new customers and acquiring loyalty into repeat customers.

In an authoritative study in this field Dogerliogl and Cosgun (2012) tried to analyze the critical factors of success for an e-commerce. With critical factors of success, it is meant that when these variables are satisfactory the cyber business benefits of competitive performances and probabilistically this will bring to gain satisfied consumers. The objective of this research is to investigate on the components that affect the performances of online businesses. In the early stages of the phenomenon Srinivasan et al. (2002) conducted a study trying to depict the variables influencing the experience on EC: what they found is that interactivity, content and convenience are affecting the website satisfaction of users. In a more recent research, (D.Fornari, S.Grandi, & E.Fornari, 2018) those intuitions have been renewed in the current situation; with their study they analyzed the migration from physical stores in the retail market to what is called the E-grocery. They affirmed that the H24, 365 day-a-year and everywhere accessibility is an important plus for consumers, meaning from a strategic point of view, that the availability is a priority and any possible malfunction or delay could instill a negative sentiment in prospects.

Regarding the convenience aspect in the study of D.Fornari, S.Grandi, & E.Fornari (2018), it is pointed out that the real time comparison with other EC or other platforms is easier and instantaneous in respect to the offline environment. From a managerial perspective this means that the pricing activity could not be conducted

without a real activity of benchmarking, making analogies with competitors. This consideration on prices puts in light the key issue on margin for EC, in fact as D.Fornari, S.Grandi, & E.Fornari (2018) stated cyber business profit margins are significantly lower than store-based channel ones; strategically thinking this means that, it seems important to run a cyber business with lower cost, even though the lower margin on a single product could be an obvious downside. The main objectives of this research are shaped around the new possible implementation for EC strategies that permits to improve the performance and to deal with their on-line as well as off-line competitors. The majority of the literature explores the phenomenon from the demand side, understanding the reasons behind the choices and the preferences of consumers. This research is more focused on the offer point of view i.e. the firms, thinking about the users as co-producers of value and final beneficiaries. But since, as already said, the customers are the starting point of every strategy in EC as well as the end point, in the literature copious studies treated their role in the success of a cyber business strategy but not as many papers argued about the consequent implementation in respond to these behaviors. Like D.Fornari, S.Grandi, & E.Fornari (2018) have shown, many products like books and toys have an online sales shares of around 40% in the first case and 30% in the second, which is a significant amount; but this is not true for every industry. In the actual online context, due to the proliferative number of private labels, unknown brands, autonomous brands etc., prospects adapted their strategies to protect themselves against fraud or undesired products. As (Mróz-Gorgoń & Szymański, 2018) recently noted, the online clothing industry is within the others one of the slowest to reach, in volume and values, the physical channels. Citing Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) in their renowned paper, customers are in search for “fantasy, feeling and fun” through the consumption, so this concept drives the attention of academic and practitioners from consumption as a mere need satisfier to a more complex mixture of variables. This feeling-driven purchase behavior is common to many industries nowadays and is at the base of the creation of brand’s communities. The attachment to the brand nudge persons to impersonate the value of the brand and to behave like the rest of the brand community. Experience marketing has the advantage to enter in the personal sphere of users, evoking brand advocacy, loyalty and word of mouth (Smilansky, 2009). According to the research of Tynan and McKechnie (2009), value is not something that can be attached to products, or that a well-designed service can provide to the brand, value is including compulsorily the interaction of the customer in the entire process or in a relevant part of it. The concept of “fantasy, feeling and fun” called the “three Fs” was extended to include the “four Es” (Holbrook, 2000) of “experience, entertainment, exhibitionism and evangelizing”. Understanding how the product images and the product descriptions affect the customer engagement on the e-commerce represents the first aim of this study. To do so the conceptualization regarding the engagement from Demangeot and Broderick (2016) followed and the first two hypotheses have been formulated:

H1) Images representing a typical “usage scenario” have the ability to get prospects more closely involved increasing their engagement toward the product in respects to “product centric” images.

H2) Using the texts for spreading the storyline about the product will enhance in customers the perceived engagement toward the e-commerce.

There is a missing in the literature in this regard, the aim was to test if users, during the navigation, could experience an increased engagement being exposed to scenes that showed a real situation of usage of the products (H1). In addition, understanding if images can be exploited for developing the storytelling about the product, could help practitioners to give due weight both to images and product description on the product page (H2). The interaction and engagement of customers is the lifeblood of e-commerce, interaction gives rise to reviews that constitute the WOM on the products. In the same way reviews generate interest for the products in customers and help them to distress from the threat of a wrong purchase. What mostly affects the WOM is the outcome generated from the consumption of the product. The authors suggest that biggest e-commerce contains a larger amount of comments that contributes to corroborate the perceptions of customers and that are able to push sales for the products with better reviews, in terms of average stars rate and in terms of positive tone of voice in the written comment. Anyhow, some studies affirm that negative reviews are evaluated more impactful in respect to the positive ones (Yang & Mai, 2010) but that the effect of negative reviews is moderated by the user's base. According to the above-mentioned study a large user's base is perceived as a guarantee for the worth of the product, at least for what concerns experiential goods; in this research we will focus on one additional feature that nowadays is more and more common. Some EC deliberately started to show, among the reviews, the number of "already purchased" for their products, reporting on the product page the amount of SKU sold, assuming that this option should reassure prospects.

In the second part of this study, therefore, we analyzed the consequence of a "crowd effect" in prospects during the navigation on the e-commerce. In the previews cited literature, the effect of the user's base on the perception of the reviews has been widely treated, so our intent was to extend the investigation of those phenomena on the perceived trustworthiness of a product. Hence our third hypothesis:

H3) An explicit customer's base increases the perceived trustworthiness toward a product.

Thus, this hypothesis will show if the awareness of previews purchases will prompt a raised feeling of security in prospects, with the expectation of encouraging them toward the final purchase.

Direct consequence of this third hypothesis is the last hypothesis:

H4) A larger customer's base increases the perceived trustworthiness toward a product.

Ultimately, with this last hypothesis the goal is to test the incremental effect of a bigger number of customer base on users' trustworthiness toward the products. The concept is to extend the consideration made by Yang & Mai (2010) expanding their study to the "already purchased" feature.

They have shown that a wider user's base has an attenuating effect on the bad reviews, this takes us to assume that a wider customer's base could also have a mitigating effect for the perceived threat of the purchase. Understanding this, would help to identify the real potential into this new communication tool and possibly to provide managers a new way to optimize their customers satisfaction just letting them know their peers' behavior. In view of the above, the conceptual model to be proposed is presented in **Figure 1**.

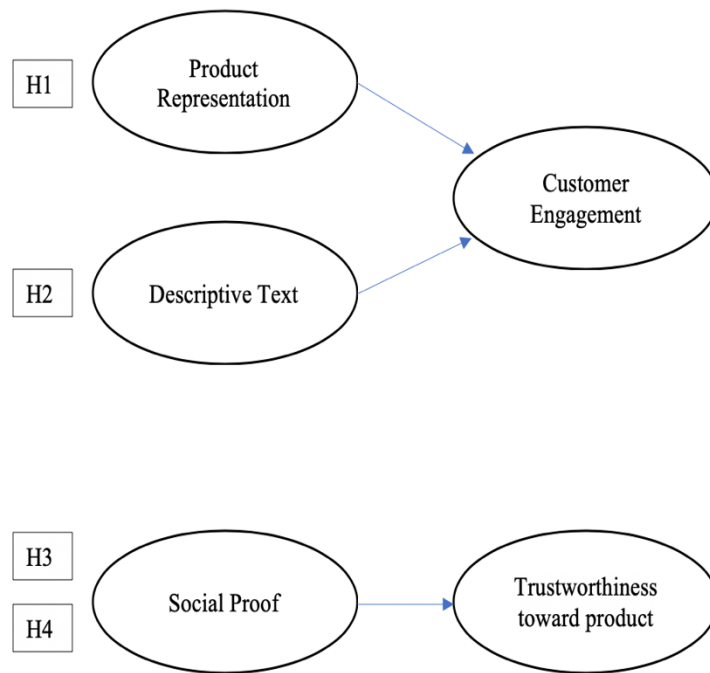


Figure 1: *The research model*

Source: *Created ad-hoc*

3. Data collection and empirical study

After presenting the hypotheses to be verified, the conceptual model and the research questions, the third chapter has deepened the methodological considerations, presenting the operative part of the study and analyzing the results obtained.

To confirm the hypotheses in this study, a questionnaire survey has been conducted, relying on items adapted for our scope. All the analysis is based on primary data gathered from the survey and collected to address the problem that was under investigation. Regarding the diffusion of the questionnaire, an online media has been adopted, exploiting the capability to reach more respondents. The necessity to have a reliable, valid and accurate research tool, made us opt for an adaptation of the items from already existing literature with small adjustments to the content of the questions. The questionnaire was created using Qualtrics Online Survey Software and it was administered to more than 240 respondents from Italy and other European countries. The online survey was distributed through a mailing list of registered customers owned by Beretta eStore by adding the link of the questionnaire in two different newsletters. In this research the constructs have been measured with a multi-item scale, in which different items have the role to measure different conjectures. All the scales have proven to be internally consistent, with alpha values (Cronbach's alpha) greater than or equal to 0,8. It is therefore possible to say that the items used are reliable and conceptually point in the same direction. The validity of the scale has been tested, with a positive outcome. The construct validity has been verified, checking what construct or characteristic the scale was actually measuring. The convergent validity has been ascertained, verifying that every item positively correlates with the others.

Table 1: Cronbach's Alpha Analysis

| Multi-Item n° | Alpha |
|---------------|-------|
| 1 | 0,811 |
| 2 | 0,926 |
| 3 | 0,800 |

4. Methodology and Results

Two different statistical methods have been deployed in order to establish whether there was or was not a statistically significant evidence of the theoretical constructs that have been raised in this research.

The construct that is measured first, proceeding according to the flow of the questionnaire, is the impact of the different layouts of the product image in respect to the resulting engagement of the customer or prospect toward the product. Exploiting the items from Demangeot and Broderick (2016) an adaptation was necessary in order to make them converge towards the goal of this research; further items were retrieved from the model “concept testing” by Qualtrics, the authoritative platform widely used for marketing research.

The second construct that is measured, following the flow of the questionnaire, it is the impact of the different layouts of product description in respect to the resulting engagement of the customer or prospect toward the product. Exploiting also in this case the items from Demangeot and Broderick (2016) an adaptation has become necessary in this scenario in order to assess the consequence of the product description on user engagement; further items were retrieved even in this case from the model “concept testing” by Qualtrics.

The third and last construct that is measured, is the impact of different additional components for word of mouth, specifically the use of different social proofs in respect to the resulting trustworthiness of the customer or prospect toward the product. The definition of trustworthiness describes qualities such as being well-intentioned, truthful and unbiased (Tseng and Fogg, 1999). Trustworthiness can have different meanings from discretion, reliability, competence, integrity to empathy (Sheppard and Sherman, 1998). The concept of trustworthiness has been adapted for the scope of this research, and in particular the objective was to measure consumer trust toward the quality of the product displayed.

By comparing the potentially diverse results obtained, it could be possible to evaluate the effects of the different social proofs. Two different items structure have been used in the research. In the first item type multiple statements have been shown to the respondent who was asked to indicate the degree of agreement or disagreement for each of that statement, using a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 stands for “strongly disagree” and 5 stands for “strongly agree”. In the second type of item a single question has been shown to the respondent who was asked to answer that question based on five alternatives: from an extremely negative response to an extremely positive response. To test what has just been said, analyzing the sample available, a confidence interval of 95% was adopted; it means considering acceptable a margin of error α at a maximum level of 5% (0.05). The first part of the quantitative analysis in this study includes a brief introduction of the dataset providing some descriptive statistics. More than the 90% of the respondents were men, their minimum age was 22 years of age. The maximum age was 87 while the average age was 51. Concerning the employment status nearly 50% of the respondents were paid employee while the majority of the others were self-employed or retired, respectively the 24% and the 20%. Noting that respondents could answer from 1 to 5 where 1 stands for completely disagree and 5 stands for completely agree with the questions and the statements in this study, on average the majority of the answers has totaled more than 3.5, which shows a general feeling of agreement.

For the first and the second hypotheses (H1 and H2) we used the independent samples t-test to compare the means of the engagement measuring scales. Remembering that the questionnaire was designed as a sequential monadic, meaning that the respondents have been exposed only to one scenario for each hypothesis, this allows us to consider each sample as independent. Starting with the first hypothesis (H1):

Table 2: Independent samples t-test: Group Statistics

| Scenario | Mean | Std.Dev. |
|----------------------------|--------|----------|
| Usage (1) | 3,9594 | ,07078 |
| Static/Product centric (2) | 3,6351 | ,09598 |

Table 3: Independent samples t-test

| df | Sign. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference |
|---------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| 146 | ,007 | ,32433 | ,11880 |
| 133,259 | ,007 | ,32433 | ,11926 |

The product image representing the product in its typical usage scenario was evaluated as being significantly more engaging for customers than a product image representing the product in a static, product centric way. ($M_{\text{scenario}} = 3.96$, $SD = 0,071$; $M_{\text{static}} = 3.64$ $SD = 0,096$; $t = 2.734$, $p < 0.05$). Therefore, we rejected H_0 (i.e. H_1 is confirmed). The product images representing the product in its usage scenario have a positive impact on the generation of involvement in prospects toward the product.

We could finally state that, as it was thought, the product images play an important role in the engagement of the users during the navigation and specifically that a product in its usage scenario is statistically more engaging for our sample and allegedly for the entire population. *Thus, H1 is confirmed.*

Continuing our analysis with the second hypothesis (H2):

Table 4: Independent samples t-test: Group Statistics

| Scenario | Mean | Std.Dev. |
|---------------------------|--------|----------|
| Storyline Description (1) | 4,0500 | ,55128 |
| Simple Description (2) | 3,5333 | ,86849 |

Table 5: Independent samples t-test

| | | Mean | Std. Error |
|---------|------------------|------------|------------|
| df | Sign. (2-tailed) | Difference | Difference |
| 145 | ,000 | ,51663 | ,12054 |
| 126,015 | ,000 | ,51663 | ,11949 |

The product description that includes a complete storyline about the product was evaluated as being significantly more engaging for customers than a product description more synthetic and devoid of a complete storyline. ($M_{\text{storyline}} = 4.05$, $SD = 0.551$; $M_{\text{static}} = 3.53$ $SD = 0.868$; $t = 4.32$, $p < 0.05$). Therefore, we rejected H_0 (i.e. H_1 is confirmed). The product description that includes a complete storyline about the product has a positive impact on the generation of engagement in prospects toward the product.

We could finally state that, as it was thought, the product description plays an important role in the engagement of the users during the navigation and specifically that a product description that includes a complete storyline about the product is statistically more engaging for our sample and allegedly for the entire population.

Thus, H_2 is confirmed.

To verify the last two hypotheses (H_3 and H_4), One-Way ANOVA has been deployed. In fact, the analysis of variance is a procedure that tests to determine whether differences exist between two or more population means.

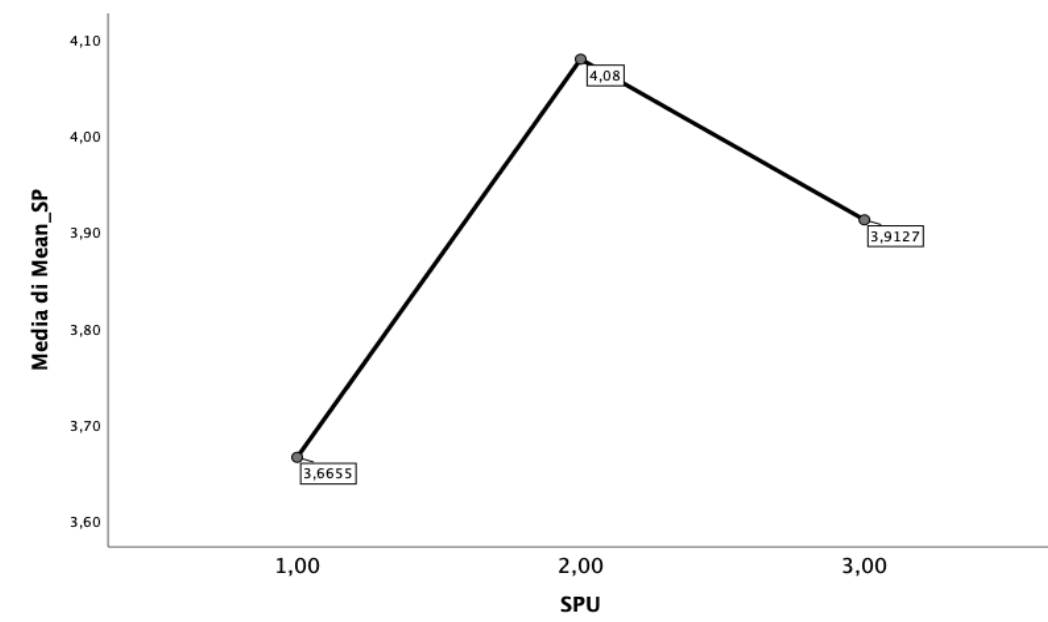
Graph 1: ANOVA Means Plot

Table 6: ANOVA Descriptives

| | Mean | Std. Dev. | Std. Error | 95% Confidence Interval for mean | | Minimum | Maximum |
|---|--------|-----------|------------|----------------------------------|-------------|---------|---------|
| | | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound | | |
| 1 | 3,6655 | ,81473 | ,10986 | 3,4452 | 3,8857 | 1,40 | 5,00 |
| 2 | 4,0800 | ,63051 | ,09969 | 3,8784 | 4,2816 | 2,80 | 5,00 |
| 3 | 3,9127 | ,66082 | ,08911 | 3,7341 | 4,0914 | 2,00 | 5,00 |

Table 7: ANOVA Table and F-test

| | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|------|
| Between Groups | 4,164 | 2 | 2,082 | 4,084 | ,019 |
| Within Groups | 74,929 | 147 | ,510 | - | - |
| Total | 79,093 | 149 | - | - | - |

Analyzing the results, it was possible to reject H0. Thus, group means are significantly different ($F(2,147) = 4.084$, $p < 0.05$). The additional social proof component of the word of mouth has differential impact on trustworthiness.

Looking at the Post-Hoc Comparisons (pairwise independent t-tests) the aim is to verify the difference in trustworthiness between the three different scenarios. Here below the outcome:

Table 8: ANOVA Post-Hoc Comparisons (pairwise independent t-tests)

| (I) | (J) | Mean Difference (I-J) | Std. Error | Sig. | Lower Bound | Upper Bound |
|------|------|-----------------------|------------|------|-------------|-------------|
| 1,00 | 2,00 | -,41455* | ,14836 | ,018 | -,7738 | -,0553 |
| | 3,00 | -,24727 | ,13614 | ,214 | -,5770 | ,0824 |
| 2,00 | 1,00 | ,41455* | ,14836 | ,018 | ,0553 | ,7738 |
| | 3,00 | ,16727 | ,14836 | ,784 | -,1920 | ,5266 |
| 3,00 | 1,00 | ,24727 | ,13614 | ,214 | -,0824 | ,5770 |
| | 2,00 | -,16727 | ,14836 | ,784 | -,5266 | ,1920 |

Mean differences between:

Scenario 1 (Normal) and Scenario 2 (Minor): $3,6655 - 4,0800 = -0,41455$; $p = 0,018 < \alpha = 0.05$

Scenario 1 (Normal) and Scenario 3 (Major): $3,6655 - 3,9127 = -0,24727$; $p = 0,214 > \alpha = 0.05$

Scenario 2 (Minor) and Scenario 3 (Major): $4,0800 - 3,9127 = 0,16727$; $p = 0,784 > \alpha = 0.05$

Taking into consideration these findings it was possible to state that there were no differences in trustworthiness between the scenario which had no additional components for the word of mouth (Normal) and the scenario with the major social proof (Major). Equally, there were no differences in trustworthiness between the scenario which had the minor social proof (Minor) and the scenario with the major social proof (Major).

However, it was possible to statistically confirm the influence of the social proof component on trustworthiness because there were differences in trustworthiness between the scenario which had no additional components for the word of mouth (Normal) and the scenario with the minor social proof (Minor).

Therefore, we rejected H_0 (i.e. H_1 is confirmed). The group means were not equal.

We could finally state that, as it was expected, the additional component of word of mouth consisting in the social proof “already purchased x times”, played an important role in the trustworthiness toward the product. Thus, H_3 was confirmed. Nevertheless, it was not possible to confirm H_4 . In fact, even though the scenario with the major social proof (Major) had a “trustworthiness average value” greater than the scenario with no additional components (Normal), the gap between the two was not statistically significant.

Discussions and Conclusions

This research had a twofold aim: on one side to bridge some gaps in the literature and on the other to validate some guidelines for managers in the areas of e-commerce and more generally in digital marketing. The original intent was to identify and verify some key drivers for customers during the navigation on a hypothetical product page of an online store. Doing this, the focus was on collecting insights regarding the user's perception on two main areas: engagement and trustworthiness. The first strategic assets involved were related to the content management of the online stores, more specifically related to product images and product descriptions. The second strategic assets analyzed have been some additional components of the word of mouth, more specifically the social proof indication of the number of products already sold.

Starting from general considerations, it is possible to state that the current general trends of e-commerce, marketplace and online retail shops proved to be statistically validated from this research.

Users prefer online stores rich in information, both visual and textual. Demangeot and Broderick (2016) empirically showed the relevance of the concept of engagement in the digital world, successfully providing validated items and specific explanations of the related phenomena; however, with this study another fundamental touch point, which consists in the product page, has been analyzed in its contribution to generate engagement and trustworthiness. Regarding the product images this research is functional to statistically confirm the effectiveness of the widespread practice to show the products in their usage scenario; the evidence is that this kind of approach has the capacity to get users more closely involved, generating a higher engagement. Thus, managers should consider investing in this kind of content creation.

Regarding the product descriptions this research is functional to statistically confirm the effectiveness of a text which includes a more detailed storyline about the product. Consequently, managers should not underestimate the need for written information of the prospects. The evidence of this research has demonstrated that, in order to achieve a higher engagement in users, it is functional to leverage a proper storyline, even in the product description, and not just an objective declaration of its characteristics.

With regard to trustworthiness, this is considered one of the main factors influencing an online customer journey. Considering the primary importance of word of mouth in this perspective, the present research has investigated an additional component of the reviews, that is the indication of the number of products already sold. This latter is extensively used by some renowned marketplaces with the goal to reassure the prospects creating a sort of "crowd effect". In fact, in this study, it has been statistically proven that the trustworthiness toward the product grew significantly as a result of the use of this strategic asset. The only not confirmed assumption was related to the variation in trustworthiness resulting from an increased magnitude of the social proof itself. Objectively, respondents exposed to a scenario devoid of additional social proof components, totaled a lower average score than the respondents exposed either to the smaller or to the bigger size social proofs; nevertheless only the sample which has been subject to the smaller social proof has turned out to be statistically significant, opening the way to further researches that should investigate issues such as the credibility or the reliability of the social proof. This study exhibits several implications for digital marketing

managers, first of all it proved the importance of the strategic use of contents and their potential consequences on engagement; secondly, the evidence in this study invites managers to reconsider the word of mouth in all its components and not just the reviews. On the side of academic research, this work has opened the way to other possible topics that deserve further investigation. Firstly, as just mentioned, it may be worthwhile to understand the reasons that did not allow us to confirm the fourth hypothesis. Subsequently, it could be important to reproduce the same research with related findings in other contexts/markets. Besides this study has been based on a sample from Beretta eStore customers, which focusing on technical outdoors clothing and power parts, implies a specific target and not the average consumer. Other studies could gather and verify additional insights about the effect that some variables, considered as moderators (such as the age, the gender and the degree of loyalty toward the online store or the brand) could generate on the outcome. Lastly, it might be interesting to verify these assumptions for the category of business to business e-commerce. The very fast growth of e-commerce is transforming the way of doing business and consumers are changing their behaviors, their preferences and their expectations about shopping. Until recently it was essential for businesses to be prepared for digital transformation but nowadays things are different. Businesses are no longer simply required to look at digital just as a competitive advantage but as a substantial asset for their survival. Therefore, practitioners and academics are now, more than ever, called to give a further boost to the development of effective and constantly adapting techniques and strategies which have become vital new ways of doing business.