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# CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

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A STUDY ON CONSUMER PURCHASING BEHAVIOR  
IN AN ONLINE BUYING PROCESS



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*MSc in International business economics*

A study on consumer purchasing behavior in AN ONLINE buying Process

Master thesis

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*I would like to thanks my parents for their support and endless love during this journey*

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Rana Mohammad

28/2/2019 Aalborg

## Abstract

This dissertation is aiming at getting more understanding of factors impacting the consumer behavior in the buying process with specific reference to the role of posted online information (Online review). Therefore, a research question has been devolved based on systematic literature review. *How can online posted information (Online review) impact the customer buying behavior in the online buying process?* A qualitative research approach has been selected for this thesis. Data have been collected through ten semi structured interviews. The data analysis has led to conclusion that the online review and posted online information about any product affect the customer differently depending on the value and type of the product.

Key words: online review, eWOM, impact on consumer behavior, purchasing behavior & buying process

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## Chapter one

*In this chapter the reader will be provided with an introduction to the main research topic followed up with problem statement, additionally a clear a research question will be formulated based on the discussion of a problem statement.*

### 1. Introduction

According to Pingjun & Rosenbloom (2005), in today's high competition markets most of companies searching for creative way to stay ahead of the market. A study by Chatura, McDougall and Bansal in (2005), has argued that there are different ways to keep ahead of the competition, nevertheless knowing your customer needs should always be priorities, because the customer needs or demand can change dramatically due to the high development in different market area. According to Solomon, Michael R., et al. (2018), in today's highly competitive market companies don't have many options to survive. Traditionally most of the companies were focusing on lowering the cost in order to be able to compete with low price, however this option may not be available for all the companies and it cannot be the only solution, therefore, a study by Vilasini & Khanna (2016) concluded that it is very important for business to focus on the customer needs and a customer behavior in the buying process. According to Ilyoo B (2015) it is very important for the enterprises to understand the cycle of buying process, because only through the buying process models' companies can understand their customer needs.

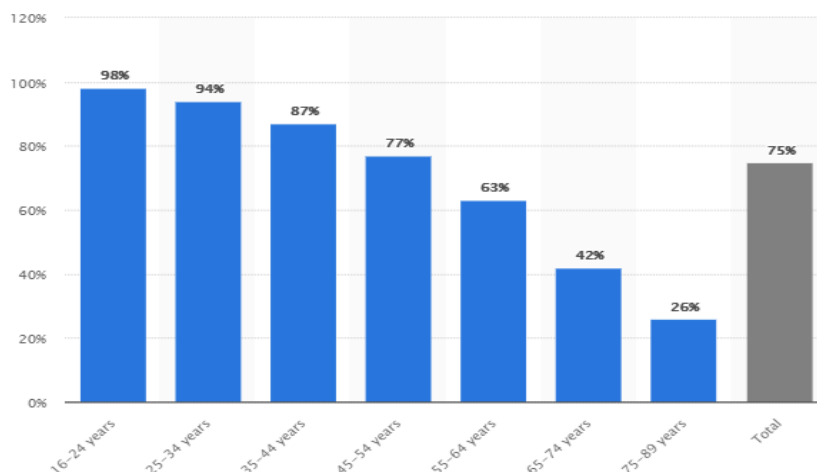
Nikolaos (2016) has argued that knowing your customer needs is one of the key solutions, but it is not enough to solve all the problems. Companies need to consider certain environment of information regarding its product. Pappas, Ilias, et al (2014), has argued that buying process has different steps, starting with identification of product needs and then going through different stages, however one of the most important stage of buying process is when customer ask for a recommendation from friends and families or when he/she decide to ask for the experience with a specific product, it can be argued based on the study by Karimi (2013) that more than 60% of the young generation are using online searching engine as the main source for finding information about a specific product (Karimi, 2013). Lukas (2013) argued that there is no doubt that internet has

changed a lot in the buying process and recently the social media platforms such as Facebook Twitter and others has greatly impacted the buying process behavior. Today you can rarely find a company which has no pages on social media platforms, because the social media platforms have become one of the important channels of communication with ending customers.

Kem ZK et al (2014) has argued that the social Media platform opened a new communication channels among customers themselves, because when a customer buys a product he or she can share or post their opinion and experience which gives possibilities to the others to comment and give an opinion. This kind of argument will absolutely have an impact on the customer buying behavior which ultimately influences the consumer buying decision in the buying process.

According to Allen et al (2014), one of the new concepts that has been argued in the literature in a relation to the internet and social Media platform is the electronic word of mouth (E-WOM). The electronic word of mouth can be defined as free communication channels with customers which has a great impact on customer buying decision. It is one of critical factors that influencing buying behavior, because through electronic word of mouth customers can evaluate the product and have an idea about the positive and negative aspects of the product which help to make his/ her final buying decision (Daugherty & Hoffman, 2014). It can be argued that customers can use the information on social media or internet about the product to reduce the risk and uncertainty in buying a specific product, however, the customer to customer communication has an important role in companies understanding of customers behavior and it impact on the buying process (Eun-Ju & Shin. 2014). As it can be

seen from the table below, people in Denmark within age group of 16-24 and 24-34 are using online information. According to Denmark statistic, these percentages will be higher in coming years. Source: Denmark statistic (2018)



There are different factors affecting the customer behavior in the online buying process, and it is imperative for the companies to capture these factors.

## **1.1. Problem statement**

A study by Adjei, Noble and Noble,( 2012), has argued how the interaction between customers on online platform such as Facebook Twitter YouTube and others become an important force of marketing, it can have both positive and negative impact on the company's product. According to Shariful (2015), a high involvement of the companies in social Media platform can also be very risky, because it can kill the company reputation if the customers are not satisfied with the product quality. The information that customer get from the internet regarding the products can play the main role of buying process. According to Adjei, Noble and Noble (2012), this topic has recently been discussed in the literature, however there is still a need for more investigation on the impact of the information collected from the internet and social Media platform on the customer behaviour in the buying process. Scholars such as. Do-Hyung & Kim (2008), Jumin & Ingoo Han (2008), Cheung (2005) and Dung H et al (2018) have argued that the different factors impacting the online buying process and regardless of extensive research on consumer behaviour and buying process, there is still need for further research and understanding on how online factors and online information can impact the consumer behaviour in the buying process

## **1.2. Aim of this study.**

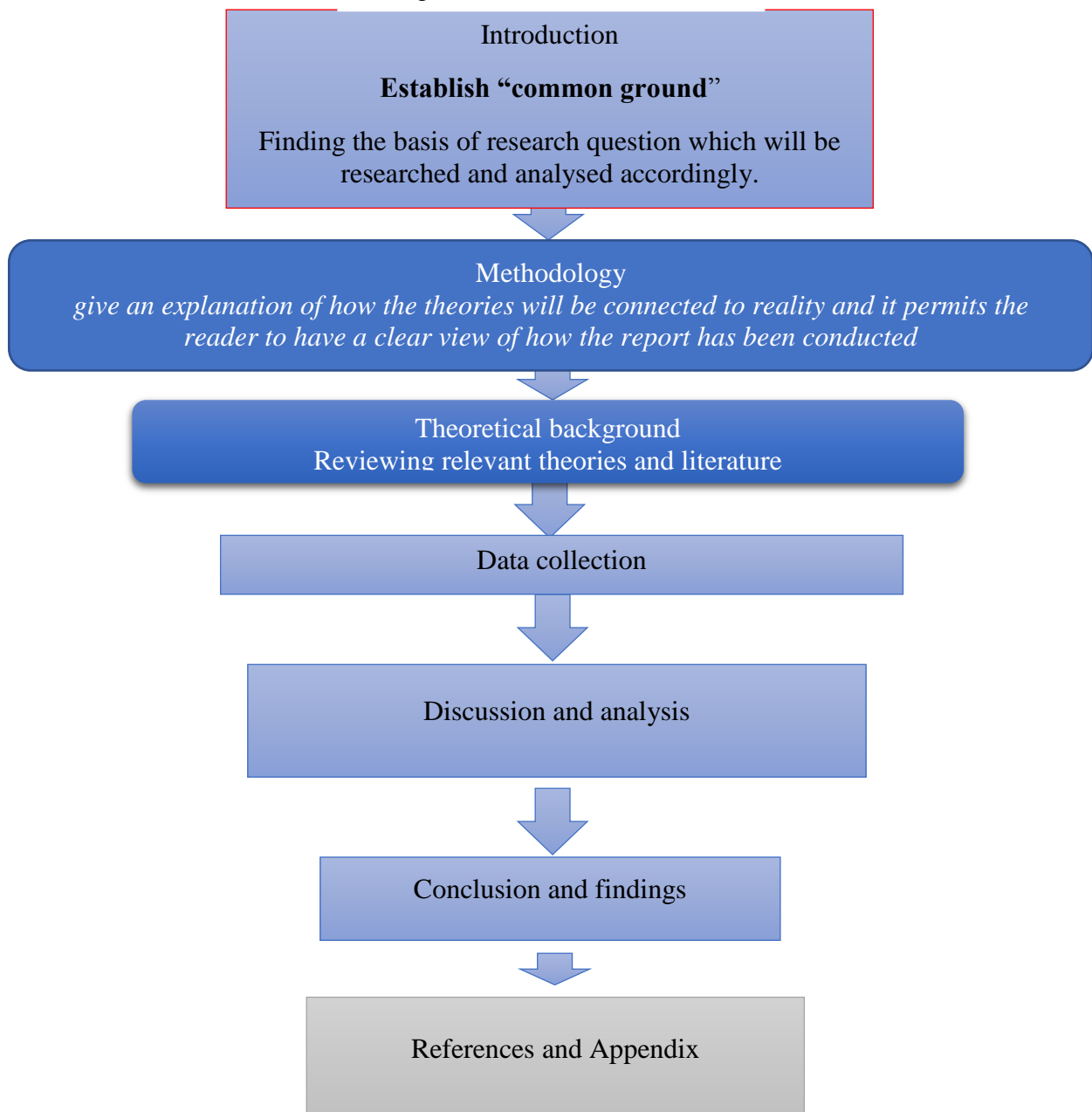
The aim of this dissertation is to get more understanding of the research topic which is about the online consumer and factors impacting the consumer behavior in the buying process with specific reference to the role of information posted and gathered online by customer in the buying process impact customers' behavior. This thesis will be beneficial for both an academia and practitioners. It will help the companies to understand the role of online information on customer behavior, and academically it will open new doors for a further research on how the online review can help to determine the consumer behavior.

## **1.3. Research question.**

*How can online posted information (Online review) impact the customer buying behavior in the online buying process?*

## 1.4. Research design

Figure 1: Research structure



## **Chapter two**

*In this chapter the author will describe the dissertation research method with focus on research approach and design, data collection method, data analysis and finally the validation of this study.*

### **2. Methodology**

According to Bryan and Bell 2011 there is no single research method that suit all research questions, but instead the phenomena that is under investigation and the theoretical context well drive the research to be formulated in a special way that can create a clear map of how the research must be conducted. Arbner and Bjerke (1997) has defined the methodology” *a set of ultimate ideas about the makeup of reality, the structure of science, and so on, that is important to methods, that is, to the guiding principles for creating knowledge*” (Arbner and Bjerke 1997p27).

*“The methodology be a strategy or a plan of action that guiding the writer to conduct a specific research, as there will always be a several options and methods for carrying out an academic research paper, but the choice would depend on how the researcher see the reality”* ( Kuada, Lecture note,2016).

#### **2.1. Research approach**

When writing academic paper, the writer always has two possible methods to use which qualitative and quantitative research are, however the research area and the research question will lead the writer to select a specific research method (Yin, 2015). Gopal and Jindoliya in (2016) have extended a literature review and concluded that most of the studies online consumer behavior and buying decision processes have used qualitative data because this kind of topics I've always been interpreted differently according to the collected data. This claim has been supported by other scholars such as Charles, Hannula & Väisänen (2006). however, based on the above argument and the type of the research question of this dissertation, the qualitative method will be used in this research, because the main purpose of the qualitative method is to get extend understanding of specific phenomenon characteristics as it is the case in this thesis.

The main goal of this dissertation is to get more understanding of the role of information posted and gathered online by customer in the buying process influence the consumer buying decision in the buying process, it is very important to mention here that the aim of this dissertation is not to generalize the findings but rather to get a deeper knowledge about the research area which has the impact of consumer buying behavior in the buying process.

## **2.2. Research design**

According to De Vaus (2001) the research design stage is one of the very important stage in the academic research process, because on this stage of research the writer will draw a map of the research which has a great influence on how the data should be collected and how it should be analyzed. On the research design stage, the researcher can have a clear plan for research activities that help to ensure that the research questions are answered, and the conclusion is reached (Creswell, 2014).

According to Bryman and Bell, (2011) there are several research design methods for example case study designs, experimental, longitudinal, cross-sectional, comparative design history and archival analysis and level of analysis. According to Yin (2009 – 2013) there are some factors which need to be consider when selecting a specific research strategy, these factors are: *“the research question, focus on contemporary events and control over behavioural events”* (Yin, 2003, P 8).

As it has been discussed in the previous chapter the main goal of this dissertation is to provide more understanding of the impact of consumer buying behaviour in the buying process, which means that this research aims for deeper understanding of a contemporary phenomenon and does not attempt to have a control over behavioural event. Therefore, it can be concluded that the case study research method is the most suitable research method for this dissertation. Yin, (2009, p. 18) has defined case study as it is an *“empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident”*.

As it has been discussed in the problem statement section that the dissertation aiming at answering *How-* question. According to Yin (2009) the case study research design is more appropriate when the research question start with “how” and “why”. Myers, (2009) argued that case study research method allow the researcher from *“people in real organizations to make an original contribution to knowledge”* (Myers, 2009, p. 73)

## **2.3. Data collection Method and Data analysis**

The conclusion and analysis of this dissertation are based on a collection of information and data from several resources which are viewed as a valid. When conducting academic research there is always two main type of data that can be collected which are primary and secondary data (Saunders, et al, 2007) According to Saunders, et al, (2007), the primary data or the data that can be collected directly through survey, observation, experiment, interviews questionnaire and focus group interviews. While the secondary data have been collected by other people, either quantitatively or qualitatively. These data are used as secondary sources of information by the writer of the research.

For the purpose of this dissertation both primary and secondary data have been used. The primary data has been collected through number of interviews and secondary data has been collected from different reports. It is important to mention here that there are several types of interviews which are:

1. Structured interviews: Using standardized questionnaires (Yin R; 2009).
2. Unstructured interview: Very informal structure with clear understanding of the subject (Yin R; 2009)
3. Semi-structured interviews: Using list of questions (Yin R;2009)

## **2.4. Sampling**

For the purpose of this thesis 10 interviews has been conducted by a certain group of people, this certain group of people has been selected based on the nature of the research question which focusing on the impact of the consumer behavior in the online buying process. The selected sample focused on certain category of people within specific age group from 15 to 30. A study by Findahl, (2013) argued that young people in an age of 15 to 30 are mostly using internet and social media to find info about any products. The study concluded that 80% of people in this age group who is internet users are engaging in a discussion about different online products. For the purpose of this dissertation 10 people were interviewed as it can be seen in the below table. I have posted the research topic on different Facebook pages such as, live in DK, International student in Denmark, DBA, buy and sell in Denmark, and many other groups. The topic was also posted on twitter pages as well, such as Denmark market, internal market in Denmark. My aim was to invite people to participate in the study. After 3 weeks of posting the topic there was around 926 comments, most of the comments have showing the willingness of people to participate in the research. However, it is

important to mention here that all the people who have comment or send a private message have been part of the first stage of filtration. Many people have been executed due to the difficulty of conducting interview because they were at the moment outside Denmark or they were willing to participate only in a written survey and not interview directly. It was not an easy process to select number of participants. the primary criteria for participant selection was the age group of 16 to 30 as it has been argued before the elite age group according to many researches are the most internet users and social media users. 826 people where who has comment where in this age group. on the second stage of filtration only 123 people wear willing to be interviewed, however, majority were students. In order to give broad discussion respondents selected were female male student and people who are working. Only 8 people were selected after using below criteria.

- 1- Located in Denmark
- 2- Willing to take face to face interview (or online)

However, I have also used offline sources to search for participant in my research, only few young people from Aalborg University have accepted to be interviewed and only 2 of them were selected after using the above criteria. However, it is important to mention here that all the respondents were asked to record the interview only 4 of them have rejected to record their voice, but I have of course taking notes for all the questions, all this one got a copy of the interview question and go out 3 days before the interview.

As its t can be seen from my thesis process (Figure 3) I have started with a broad idea then a comprehensive literature review and from my literature review and research question I have the developed a number of interview questions. The interviews were going on and I have considered only 10 people because I realized reputation in the answers, this was a single for me that I have enough data to answer my research question.

Table 1: List of participants (Interviews)

No	Occupation	Duration of interview	Age	Gender	Using online comment and review
1	Student	01:20	22	M	80%
2	Manager	40:00	27	F	70%
3	Student	25:00	23	F	80%
4	Student	45:00	23	F	80%
5	Sales man	25:00	19	M	95%
6	Accountant	35:00	29	M	90%
7	Teacher	01:55	25	F	85%
8	Teacher	01:10	24	F	80%
9	Worker	40:00	22	M	75%

10	Student	15:00	23	F	90%
The participants will be sort alphabetically. Participant number one will be give A, number 2 will be B and so on.					

When conducting qualitative research, the most appropriate data collection method is interviews (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2008). For the purpose of this dissertation the semi-structured interview method was used however it is important to mention here that all the participants where knowledgeable about the thesis topic. According to (Bryman and Bell, 2011), the semi structured interviews like any other type of interviews needs interview guide.

*Interview Design:* Kvale and Brinkmann (2008), argued that the interview guide can include several questions that will be asked in the interview setting including the objectives of research and research question must be considered. In this thesis, the relationship between RQ and data collection was the main point to be considered. However, the research question has been revised several times and the reformulation of question was an important step to achieve the goal of each interview. (Please see appendix for the interview guides)

Data analysis: According to Spens & Kovács (2006) The deductive method starts from theory to test theory assumption, while inductive method starts from empirical data to theory.

However, the table below by Spens & Kovács (2006) gives clear vision about data analysis method.

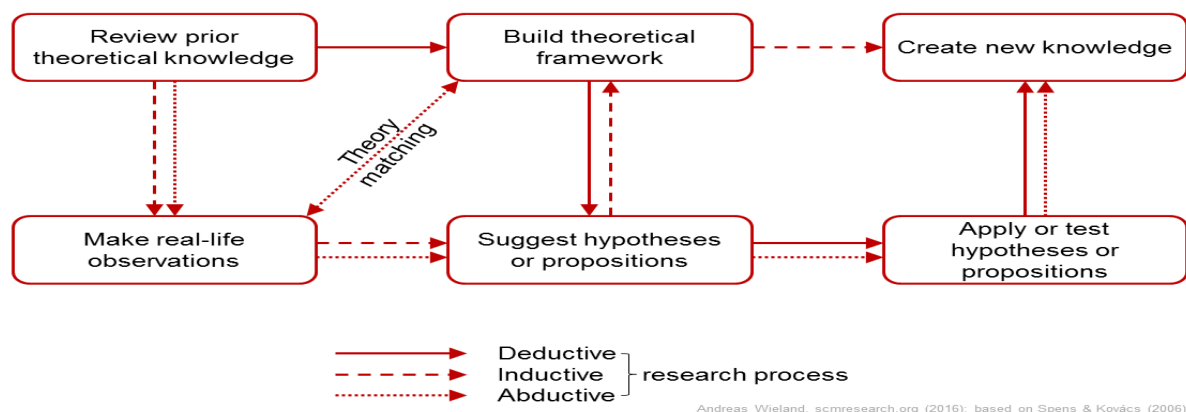
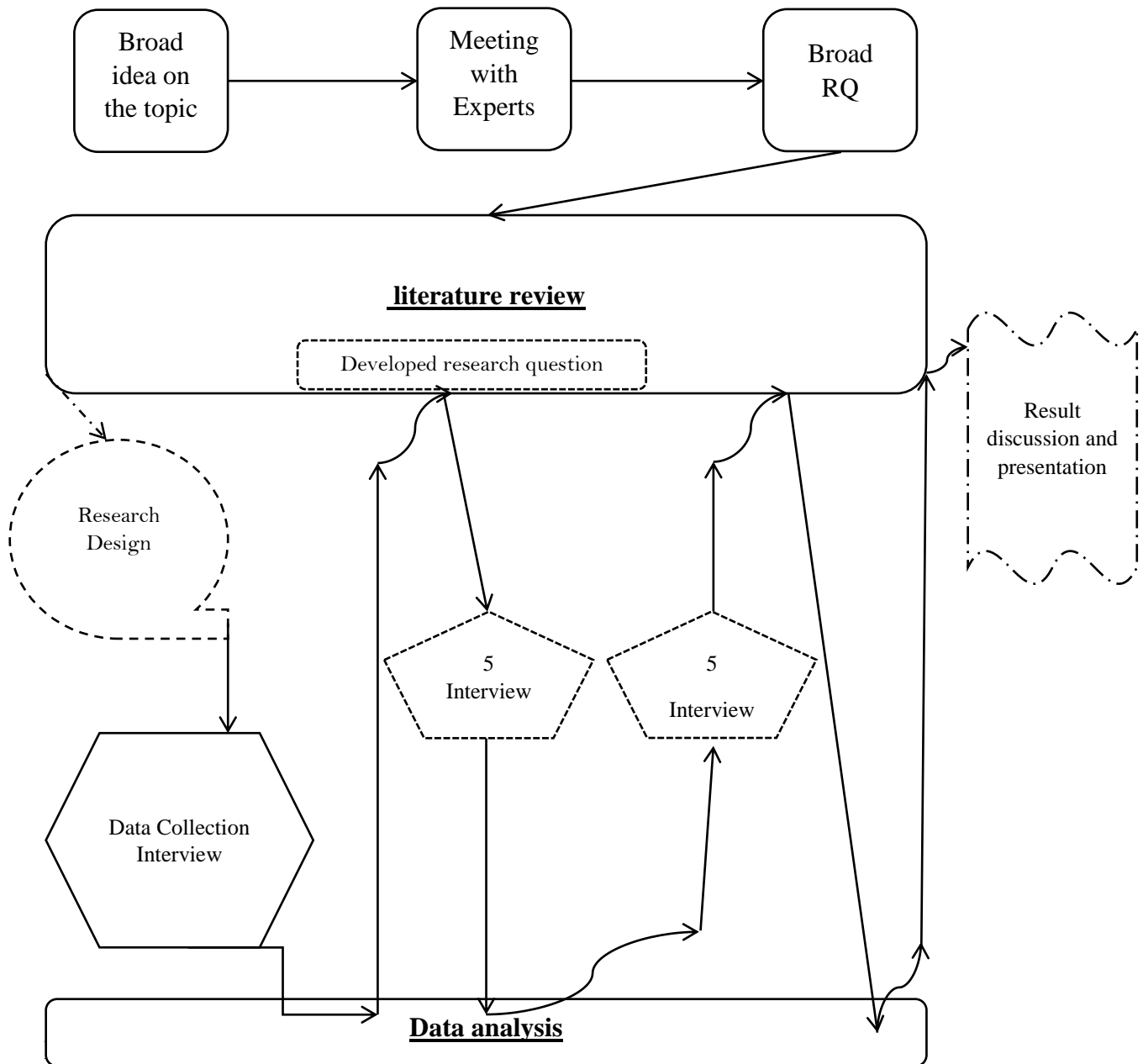


Figure 3: Thesis research process



The main drive for the conceptualization of my thesis. Principles of different theories of the consumer buying process, consumer behavior and the eWOM are considered this study. My data collection process went through to 2 stages as it can be seen in figure 3; the plan was to conduct all the interviews then starting the analysis. But during the first five interviews new concept and info was discussed with the participant, therefore it was important to analysis the collocated data before doing more interviews.

## **2.5. Validity of the study**

According to Alvehus (2013) when conducting research there are two main issues should always be considered which are reliability and validity. According to Golafshani (2003), when it comes to qualitative research method the validity is all about the appropriateness of the data collection method & tools, research processes, and finally the appropriateness of the question for the targeted outcome. Additionally, the selection of methodology approach for answering the research question, and how the design is valid for methodology, Lawrence (2015). The reliability will measure how reliable the findings of the research are, and it always can argue that the reliability of the research will be high if the same finding can be reached from independent research within the same subject and using the same method. the reliability was controlled through a data collection method as all the interviews were conducted after sending the interview question to the responders and a small discussion were taking a place sometimes before the interview conducted, in order to make sure that the respondents are aware of the topics and they were prepared for the interviews, however in this thesis I have used semi-structured interview which gives more space to the responders too freely comment on some questions.

## Chapter three

*In this chapter the reader will be provided with the previous research on the topic including define behavior customer to customer interaction the electronic word of mouth and buying process models.*

*An extensive systematic search on buying process and buying behavior has been conducted.*

### 3. Literature review

The literature on buying process, buying behavior, and online consumer has been found in different scientific journal. In this thesis the focus was on computerized databases, due to their efficiency and effectiveness. The research has been carried out mainly in the following electronic databases: Scopus, ABI/ Inform Global, EBSCOhost Source Premier (all databases), Web of Science, Emerald Insight. In all databases the search was limited to English language. The search strategy was devised having as a base the keywords and concepts ‘online review’, ‘buying process’, ‘buying behavior’ and ‘’, as the aforementioned terms are of interest for the literature review. Accordingly, the inclusion criteria were based on title, abstract, key word searching, Quality of journal, and empirical studies. The selected article can be seen in table 2. I will start with a discussion of buying process & buying behavior. The literature on the existing knowledge will be the background for this research conceptual framework. At the end of each section I will group the selected literature after considering two main criteria, such as journal quality and relation to the topic.

#### 3.1. Buying process

A comprehensive literature review by William K et al (2010), have presented a new argument of what is buying process in the most recent empirical literature, they have concluded that there is strong link between what customer can review online and buying decision. William K et al (2010) as many literatures have used the study by Engel, Kollat, and Blackwell's (1978), and Miniard's (1986), as background of their literature review studies. Chan et al (2017), has systematically collected and analyzed the most recent literature and concluded that online buying process goes through different stages and there are different factors impacting the buying decision online.

#### 3.2. Online buying process

Since the online sources provide critical information in purchasing decisions. Customers utilize online sources to find information about various brands, product and service before making a purchase decision. When customers have adequate information, about the products, they will evaluate the available alternatives and then decide whether to make a purchase online or in the

offline. Online as in the traditional purchase process the customers go through different stages to identify the problem and search for information. Evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and the post-purchase behavior. (Campo, K., & Breugelmans, E. (2015). The 5 stages which a consumer often goes through when they are considering a purchase, it also used in the Online buying processes

According to Kotler (2012) the need of recognition is an important stage for the companies, so the costumer will recognize the product. During the stage of information search the customer depends on the online sources in product research before making a buying decision.

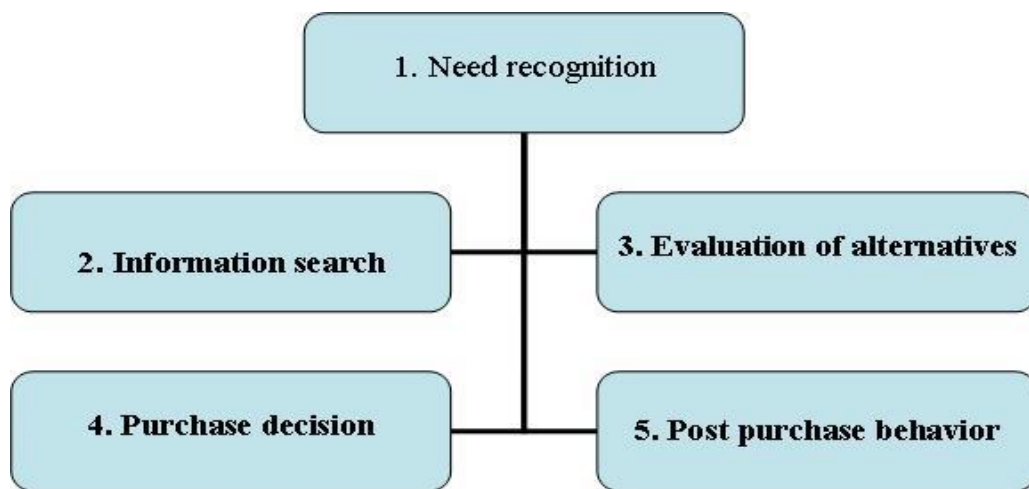


Figure 4: Decision Making Process (Kotler and Armstrong 2011, 152)

The third stage is the evaluation of alternatives at this stage as it helps customers to compare various options. With access to the purchase decision. The five-stage model in consumer behavior' Kotler (2012). The purchase decision stage, according to Kotler (2012), is the most important point when the customer decides whether to purchase online or in the store, Based on the product variety, sale services and information quality. At the end of the five-stage decision-making process for the consumer, according to Liao, S. et al, 2012) the post-purchase behavior will become more important after their online purchase. Because it indicates if the customer is interested in buying the same product and come back to make another purchase, based on whether the product meets the needs for the first time and whether the customer is prepared to leave product reviews online.

The fundamental research findings indicate that the Internet can be considered an essential source for information when customers go through the stages of the purchase process. At the purchase decision stage, the use of the Internet by customers was significant.

### 3.3. Consumer buying behavior

According to (Kotler, 2001) Consumer behavior refer to the study of how individuals are selected, buying or use and disposal of products, services, and how different experiences or ideas that meet consumer needs and wants. (Solomon, Michael R., et al. 2014) Indicate, that customer satisfaction is the total measurement of customers' experience after purchasing products or utilizing services.

Babu, M. G., Vani, G., & Panchanatham, N. (2010) described buying process in three steps which is pre-purchase, purchase and post-purchase. In Pre-purchase step when customers realize their needs, they search for information about a product or service provided by a company, it is therefore important that the company provides its customers with easy access to product information, where the consumers can use online media or word of mouth for obtaining information., in addition the Internet offers customers great opportunities to evaluate alternatives and compare product information.. At the step of purchase after collecting all the necessary information and comparing the product alternatives, the customer decides whether to buy. The last stage is post-purchase All the activities and experiences that follow pre- purchase and purchase are included in the post purchase behavior. Typically, it affects the information search and alternative evaluation stage. It depends on the customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction after making a purchase, it is common for customers to distribute their positive or negative feedback about the product or service. This might be through social media networks or word of mouth.

Another version of the consumer buying process is defined by Kotler's (2009) and it contains of: need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, Purchase Decision and Post-purchase Evaluation.

- 1- The first stage is **needed recognition**, is the realization that a product is needed or that there is a problem that needs to be solved. The customer realizes a problem that is generated by external or internal factors. The internal factor includes the most fundamental human needs such as feeling thirst and hunger. The external factor means the customer can make a need by longing for a specific product or service.
- 2- The second stage of the consumer decision making process relates to ***information search***. Once the customer recognized their needs or want a product they would research information about the available methods to satisfy the need. According to Kotler in 2009) the customer typically obtains product Information from a various source: person such as

family, friends. As it considers as most effective sources because the customer can be assured that the information is truthful and helpful in the evaluation of alternatives. It can also be commercial sources such as combination of advertising, packaging or sales promotions or public relations and publicity or mass media. Also experiment information such as handling or using the product is important (Kotler and Keller, 2009).

- 3- **Evaluation of alternatives:** The third stage of the consumer decision making process is evaluation of alternative process refers to consumers' evaluation of the various products available from the previous experiences which define beliefs and attitudes. Kotler suggests that the consumers will decide which product attributes are significant to them, based on their personal circumstance, priority, behavioral characteristics. In the other word customer's compares the various available alternatives and select one that meets their needs and solving the problem.
- 4- **Purchase Decision:** the purchase process is the fourth stage of customer decision-making Is the point which consumer wants to buy the product that will meet their needs after evaluating various available alternatives. According to Kotler, Keller, (2009), as the other stage, Purchase Decision also has some factors that influence the decision, such as negative or positive comments from other customers it influenced into buying a product. The second factor that effect on the final purchase Decision can be unexpected situations change in the customer's personal economy for instance sudden job loss.
- 5- The last stage of the consumer decision making process is **Post-purchase Evaluation:** after the customer purchasing and using the product, the customer Compare and evaluate the products with their previous perceptions, whether the product has met their expectations or not. These stages are therefore critical in maintaining customers. If the product meets the customer expectations the customer will be satisfied and distribute positive feedback, and if the product doesn't meet their need they will feels unsatisfied and distribute negative feedback. Therefore, it is significant for the company to achieve customer expectations with the product will determine whether the customer wants to buy back or not (Kotler, P., & Keller, K. L. (2009).

**Table 2: Concept and related studies**

Buying Process		
1	Understanding buying process	1- Puccinelli, Nancy M., et al. "Customer experience management in retailing: understanding the buying process." <i>Journal of retailing</i> 85.1 (2009): 15-30.
2	Buying stages. integrated framework	2- Darley, William K., Charles Blankson, and Denise J. Luethge. "Toward an integrated framework for online consumer behavior and decision making process: A review." <i>Psychology &amp; marketing</i> 27.2 (2010): 94-116.
3	-Information Search	- 3Keller, K.L., Kotler, P. <i>Marketing Management</i> , Prentice Hall, 2009 4- Panda, Tapan K. "Search engine marketing: Does the knowledge discovery process help Online retailers?." <i>IUP Journal of Knowledge Management</i> 11.3 (2013): 56.
4	Recognition problems	5- Keller, K.L., Kotler, P. <i>Marketing Management</i> , Prentice Hall, 2009 6- Lee, Ethel. "Impacts of social media on consumer behavior: decision making process." (2013).
5	Evaluation of Alternatives	7- Keller, K.L., Kotler, P. <i>Marketing Management</i> , Prentice Hall, 2009 8-Aruldoss, Martin, T. Miranda Lakshmi, and V. Prasanna Venkatesan. "A survey on multi criteria decision making methods and its applications." <i>American Journal of Information Systems</i> 1.1 (2013): 31-43.
6	Purchase Decision & Post-purchase	9- Consumer buying decisions models: A descriptive study International Journal of Innovation and Applied Studies 6 (3):2028-9324 · August 2014 10- Chauhan, Naliniben M. "Consumer behaviour and his decision of purchase." <i>International Journal for Research in Management</i> 2.5 (2013): 1-4. 11- Keller, K.L., Kotler, P. <i>Marketing Management</i> , Prentice Hall, 2009

### 3.4. Factors influencing online consumer

Dange and Kimar are professor's management, they have devolved online consumer model called FFF model (Factors and filtering element), it considers internal and external factors that online consumer behavior.

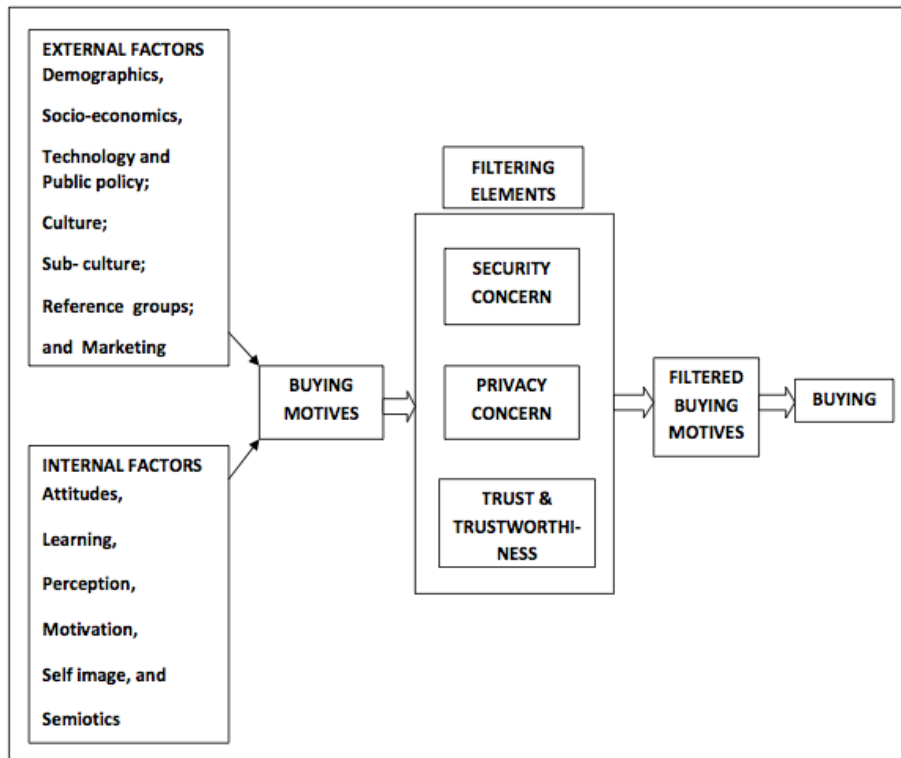


Figure5 : Kumar, Vinay, and Ujwala Dange. "A study of factors affecting online buying behavior: A conceptual model." (2012).

Kumar & Ujwala have identified a list of internal and external factors as first stage in their model. The motivation is defined as main factors, internally there are factors such as personal traits, behaviors, attitudes, learning, perception, motivation, self-image, and semiotics, while external factors include element such as, technology, and public policy; culture and reference groups. It is important to mention here that external factors are actually beyond the control of the customers.

The filtering elements in FFF model included element such as privacy, trust and security. Kumar and Ujwala (2012) have argued that this factor is prioritized when online customer takes buying decision. However, the online costumer can be impacted with other factors which are far from companies control and exchange information between each other's. This kind of exchanging information between customers knowing as **C2C** interaction (Huang, J., & Hsu, C. H. (2010). According to Huang et all (2010), C2C Interactions refers to when customer can freely exchange information with each other without limitation of time or region exchange information about brand, product, service in the online environment. According to their own experience and knowledge. This exchange of information can impact customers' behavior towards products. As well as the form of community between companies, customers and C2C interactions have changed since the customers

use various types of communication, as a virtual network to connect with other customers. Regarding to online communication (Nicholls, Richard (2010) describe that in online brand communities, C2C communication has a strong impact on customers purchasing decisions. Hence, companies can create a discussion forum on their websites through adding current product information ,in order to provide their customers an opportunity to exchange information and experience ,as well as the new kind of word-of-mouth through online community is becoming more popular when customers seek to find information about products ,because within these communities customers can produce, any types of positive or negative feedback according to their personal experiences or even general information about the products and brands. (Libai, Barak, et, all 2010) describes that customers are looking for product information to compare alternatives and to find opinions of other customers, thereby reducing the risk when making purchasing decisions.

According to Chen, Yubo, et, all. (2011) online consumer reviews have become a substantial, resource for consumers when search, information about product quality and service before making a purchase decision, where consumer is using and depending on opinions and experiences shared on online review sites by other consumers. Some authors Zhu, F., & Zhang, X. (2010) have argued that eWOM is seen by customers as a reliable source of information, and consumers rely almost on online reviews as they rely on personal recommendations. However, online reviews affect the purchase intentions or motives of consumers, where Online consumer reviews function as informants and as recommenders. Online consumer reviews are an informant because they supply, customers with additional product information. The online reviews play an important function as a recommender since the information and opinion that shared by the other customers contain either positive or negative information on the product and services. In addition, the online consumer review makes it possible for customers to review both information and recommendation, which they consider as a substantial element that customers search for, before making purchase decisions. For this reason, product information created by the seller can be more useful for more consumers, where this information can completely meet customers' needs and this in turn increasing the online sales. According to Fruth, A., & Neacsu, M. (2014) points out that some consumers rely on their own knowledge and experience to make quick buying decisions, but some other consumers may need more information and involvement. Therefore, the level of involvement reflects the consumer's interest and use of a product also the amount of information they need to make a decision. Low-involvement consumers depend more on the others opinion and knowledge in consumer reviews, before making purchase decisions. On the Other hand, High-involvement consumers have expertise

and knowledge in the field of products that can have an impact on consumer buying decisions by word of mouth.

Another perspective by Cheung, C. M. Y., Sia, C. L., & Kuan, K. K. (2012). Show that the effectiveness of customer evaluations highly increases consumer confidence in purchasing an online product, trust is one of the most significant factors affecting consumer decision to buy an online product, therefore the percentage of consumer reviews will create a confidence that reduces the risk of transaction and increases demand for the product. Moreover, Zhu, Feng, and Xiaoquan Zhang (2010) point out that, the quantity of reviews is more affected by low-involvement customers, while high-involvement customers, are influenced more by the quality of the reviews. Because it has proved that the product is popular, and many other people have purchased it. This in turn proves that both quality and quantity of consumer reviews and have a strong impact on consumer behavior and consumer purchase intentions.

### **3.4.1. Electronic word-of-mouth**

Word of mouth is considered as one of the oldest techniques of transferring information and due to the recent growth of online communication through social networks,, websites, blogs, etc. Customers increasingly use online communication for sharing their opinions, and exchange information about companies, products, brand and services. (Cheung, C. M., & Thadani, D. R. (2012). EWOM communications indicate to positive or negative opinion and experience. Shared by the customer about the product, company and service, Therefore, it affects customer buying behavior when seeking information before making a buying decision. In addition, some customers find the ewom more useful than traditional media such as TV advertising, radio, personal information.

According to (Amblee, Naveen, (2011) When customers facing a purchase decision, there is either positive or negative information in WOM, in addition to their own evaluation and experience, when it comes to the source of eWOM customers often depend on the experiences and recommendations from others. Before the development of the Web, customers acquired such information from friends and knowledge via word-of-mouth.

However, the web offers a new channel of communication for consumers to receive information about products of interest in this new type of online communication where it involves social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. The online communities allow users to use a variety of information sources, share preferences, and turn into effective participants through eWOM in social media.

According to Cheung, C. M., Lee, M. K., & Rabjohn, N. (2008). Point out reasons that consumer share information and their experiences to help other consumer where these opinions or information can then be utilized for decision making, and because consumers find this information more reliable than the company itself, in addition they trust what the other consumer says about their own experiences is true.' This known as "social evidence." eWOM has an essential influence on the purchasing decision of consumers; this influence could be positive or negative.

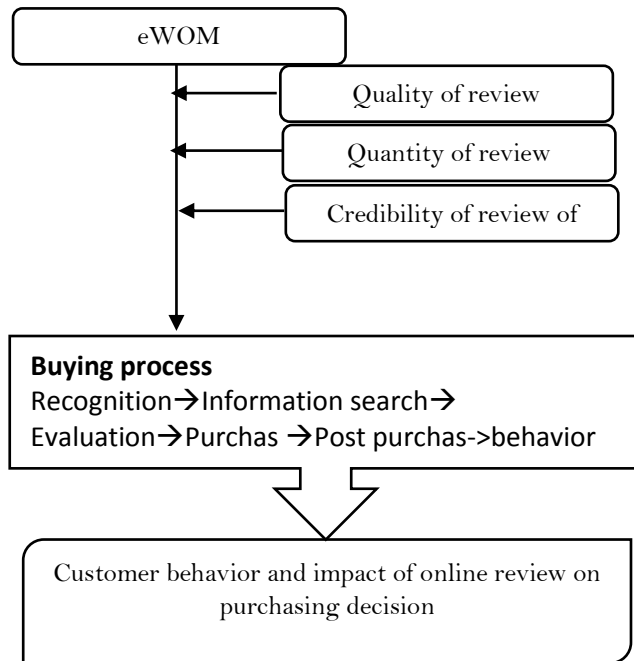
### **3.4.2. Online brand communities**

Brodie, Roderick J., et al (2013) Define the concept of online brand communities as a set of people who have similar interests in a brand to interact with each other to research, exchange information, experiences and share their opinions about the product, services and company through the brand platform offered by the company. To provide their customers an opportunity to search for product- and service information before making a buying decision. In addition, it is a new channel for companies to advertise and promote their products as well as to communicate with consumers to monitor the behavior of consumers.

According to Kim, J. H., Bae, Z. T., & Kang, S. H. (2008) Online brand communities are effective tools for influencing sales, loyalty, Brand trust and customer satisfaction. Such communities increase a company's ability to understand its customers' behavior when viewing the exchange of information. Moreover, C2C interactions in Online brand communities, help customers to reduce the risk of products and services and this in turn improving the ability of purchase decisions and enhancing the revenue for the organization. Further, the positive feedback of C2C interactions in OBCs would increase the purchase frequency, and customers loyalty as well as giving an opportunity for product and service marketing to create new product ideas and lower customer support costs. Due to the impact of C2C interactions on the brand image of organizations and customer satisfaction, there is also a possibility of negative results, which effect on organizations reputability, when the customers' share unsatisfied experiences with other customers.

Therefore Wirtz, Jochen, et al, (2013). Describes the importance of online brand communities, where it helps the administrator to learn how to reduce the negative influence and bringing a consumer closer to a positive buying decision. By building strong relationships with customers and involves them in the development of the product and service. As well as being an important platform for companies to differentiate itself and this in turn increase their competitive advantage. Recently online brand communities have gained considerable significance, in the communication strategies of brands and in the management of customer relationships.

Based on present literature in this chapter the below framework was developed. For details of framework, please see table 2 in chapter three.



## Chapter Four

### Analyses

*This chapter will be divided into 2 parts the first part will present the collected empirical data and the second part will analyze the collected data*

#### 4. 1 Usage of Online Reviews and Comments

As it has already been discussed in methodology chapter, the data were collected through interviews with 10 different people who are in age group of 16-30 and who are often buying products considering online information. The interviews have provided useful information which helps to answer the research question. Using online comment was one of the most important themes of collected data, as it can be seen from the table below, 100% of the participant have used online comment and other consumer review to make buying decision.

Table 3: Participants

No	Participant	Often using online review and comments in their purchasing decision
1	Student/ Male. 22 years.	<i>...” of course, I always ask friends on Facebook or Twitter if the product is too expensive “.</i>
2	Manager/ Female. 27 years	<i>...”it is useful to collect information on social media when making purchasing decision “.</i>
3	Student/ Female. 23 years	<i>...” I think I will search for information about the product, but I would also say it depends on what kind of product is that “.</i>
4	Student/ Female. 23 years	<i>...” absolutely writing or engaging in online review it's something I feel it is important for customer to customer development the best thing is that we have social media “.</i>
5	Salesman/ Male.19 years	<i>...” I use online review when it's about a cheap product but if it is an expensive or not I actually sometime involve myself in the comments to gain more information “.</i>
6	Accountant/ Male. 29 years	<i>...” well it depends on what kind of product is that because I don't think I will involve myself inner online review about daily used product but more in other kind of products “.</i>
7	Teacher /Female.25 years	<i>...” I have always been active on social media and commenting</i>

		<i>on products is important for me “.</i>
8	Teacher / Female. 24 years	<i>...” I am very active on social media and I'm always critical about online review ...yes I use it “.</i>
9	Worker/ Male. 22 years	<i>...” I use both comment and online review and I write and read when I decide to buy an expensive product “.</i>
10	Student/ Female.23 years	<i>...”my review is the only window Ware cast American Express honestly their opinion about the product so yes of course I used online review and comments about all kind of product “.</i>

## 4.2. Importance of Social Media

Malthouse, Edward C., et al. (2013) have argued and concluded, based on a compressive study on customer management relationship, that social media is playing a great role in improving the CRM, as there are more people who are relying on info from social media, therefore it is required for the companies to manage its information on social media. The costumer feels that the companies have no control over social media and therefore there is no advertisement goal behind the information.

*“When I post online any review about a product I bought, the company can’t change it and I think they will instead try to improve their product instead of ignoring my comments, social media is our area and I don’t think any company that has control over us as customer” collected data (B), (2018).*

Spencer, SC Tao, and Moon, (2015), have concluded, based on a systematic literature review that social media has revolutionized the life, and all products must some extend been affected, it is not easy for the companies to ignore the negative comments about its product anymore. Spencer, SC Tao, and Moon, (2015), have produced the most comprehensive literature review of social media research where they have included articles from 2002 to 2011 with more focused on empirical studies, they have argued also that customers have to be involved in the very early stage of production as they have an opinion on each small detail which was not a case before social media.

*“When I write comment about, or review, I know that my friends and family are taking advantage of that, so if they want to buy the same product, they have already some information” Collected data (F) (2018)*

According to Spencer, SC Tao, and Moon, (2015), the organization has realized that creating space for online review become something very important, through that area there will be a higher chance for the companies to control the review through quick response.

*“I think we are mostly reading online review about popular product to see how many have recommended and how many have just written negative comment, people are not wasting their time if the product is not expensive or there is low involvement” Collected data (c) (2018)*

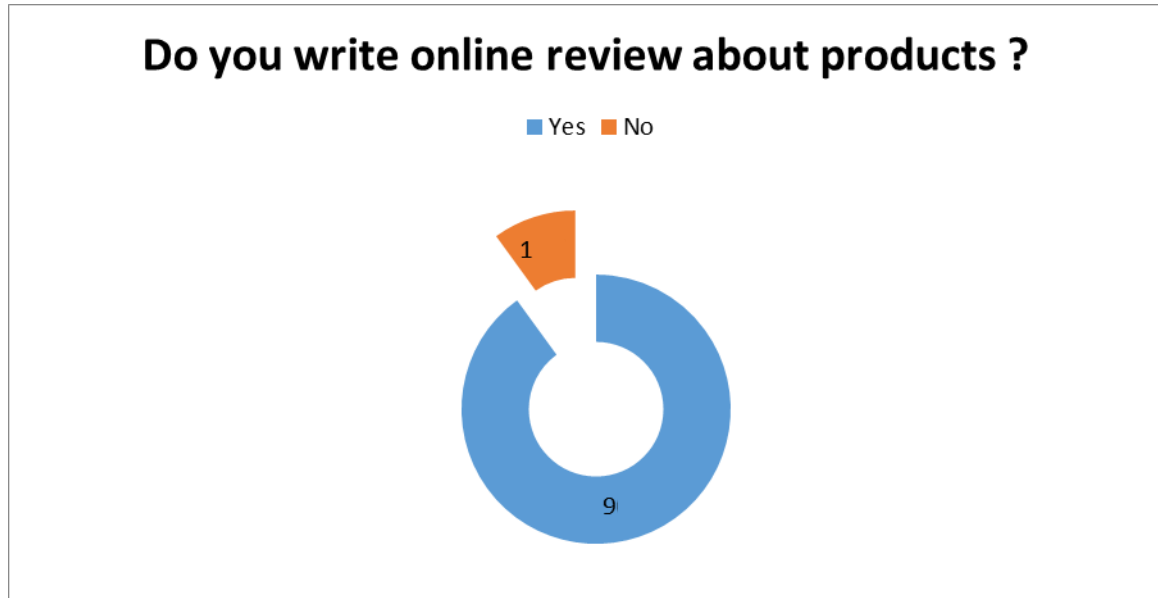
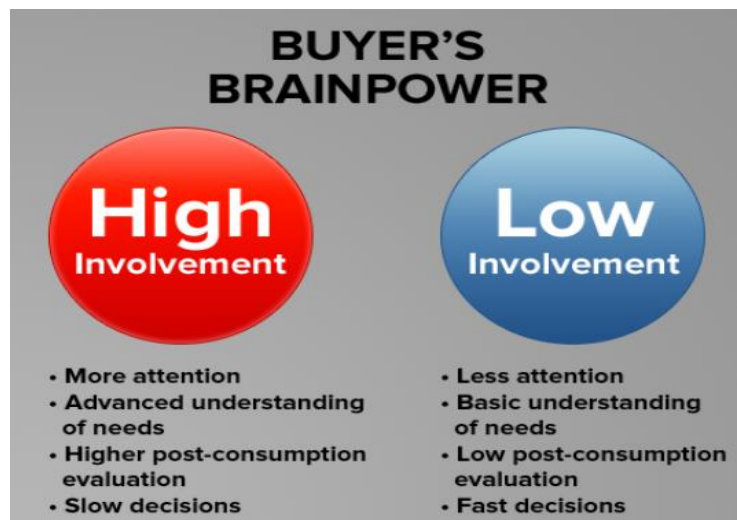


Figure 6: Writing online review

Source: Interview data

According to Gu, Bin, and Qiang Ye. (2014), people are always interested to read online review on social media or company's website about the products. People can trust each other experience more than any advertisements, and therefore, social media present a great area for all customers to share their experience freely. However, it is important to know that companies have realized the importance of social media and most of them have a strategy to market and control info about its product. Gu, Bin, and Qiang



Ye. (2014), argued that the importance of online review and comments on social media changes with the involvement degree of products, the low involvement product and less expensive products have less review and comments, while it is higher for the products which has a high degree of involvement and more expensive. We can also distinguish between low and high product involvement through the speed of buying decision, in low product involvement, normally the

customers take fast decision, while in high involvement product, customers take more time and it is considered as slow buying decision. However, if the product is for daily bases it requires fast decision, while some other product have high level on involvement and it is normally considering to be expensive, therefore it requires other people opinion to select one available alternative. We can also distinguish between low and high product involvement through the speed of buying decision, in low product involvement, normally the customers take slow decision, while in high involvement product, customers take more time and it is considered as slow buying decision. However, the degree of product involvement can be strongly be related to my thesis topic. The collected data show, that product with high involvement has more attentions and people are more willing to be involved in writing and reading comment about the product, while one out of 10 people have ensured that he can collected and trust the information about high involvement product from close friends and family members. The data of this thesis support the conclusion of a study done by Junyong and Gupta (2012), as the data of this study shows that nine out of time participant will not take the online review about a product which is consider as low involvement, while only one out of ten find it still relevant to write comment and review about low involvement product. Customer fined less risk in low involvement product and therefore less attention to the comment and review about this type of product. The high involvement product has higher risk and therefore more attention is paid to this type of product where nine out of ten will consider online review and comments about this type of product. The review and comment can be in different stages of decision process. When people are considering high involvement product they can review and comment on the product in different stages `.

*“I actually always see the reviews and comment about the product, then I can also post as a question about the product and people will share their experience, which is really useful for me”*  
*Collected data (B) (2018)*

The data of this study show that three of the participants will use more than one stage for review and comment about high involvement product and five will use just one stage, while only two will use reviews and comment depending on their needs to the products.

The data show that in total six of participant always use online review and comment in their buying decision, while only 1 out of ten have confirmed that she has never used online review when she wanted to buy something, however, she has confirmed that she trusts her family and friend's opinion about product when it is considered as high involvement



Figure 7. Data. High involvement product (Own collected data)

*“I have always used online review regardless of the involvement of product, I think in 2018, I would say most of the people are communicating their opinion about whatever we buy” Collected data (B) (2018)*



Figure 8. Low involvement product (Own collected data)

### 4.3. The importance of online review

The collected data show that all the responder has found the online review and comment to be useful in the purchasing decision. All of them find it useful to hear other people opinion and experience with the product they want to buy. Nine out of ten have mentioned the reduction of risk when they know more about the product through the online review and online comments. Seven out of ten participants have mentioned that the online review and comment can be useful to hear more about the product advantages and disadvantage. However, nine out of ten participants have agreed that online review about low involvement product can be less useful and they can trust their friend's opinion more, as not all comment can provide useful information.

*“... The online review and comment are for sure useful, because it reduces the uncertainty about the product, it also can change my mind about product if I had wrong idea about any product, I think online review and comment provides the true picture about the product, people say their experience honestly...” Collected data (A) (2018)*

How useful do you find online review and comments?	
A	...” It helps to give some <b>clarification</b> about the product” ....
B	...” for sure it reduces some <b>uncertainty</b> regarding the product....”
C	...” I think it is useful if I <b>feel</b> that the comment is honest...”
D	...”When you hear about something it is always <b>less risk</b> ...”
E	...” It <b>encourages</b> me more to make quick decision.”
F	...”Through the online review I <b>reduce the risk</b> in buying any product...”
G	... I can't trust all online review, so it is <b>not always useful</b> ...”
H	...”it is useful because it tells a lot about advantage <b>and disadvantage</b> ...”
I	...” one think is <b>more info</b> about product...”
J	...it is <b>useful</b> , and it depend of the type of product.”

As it has been found in the data, the participant always consents the usefulness and the use of online review to the type of product, in this thesis I have distinguish product from each other by identifying the degree of involvement of the product, low involvement and high involvement.

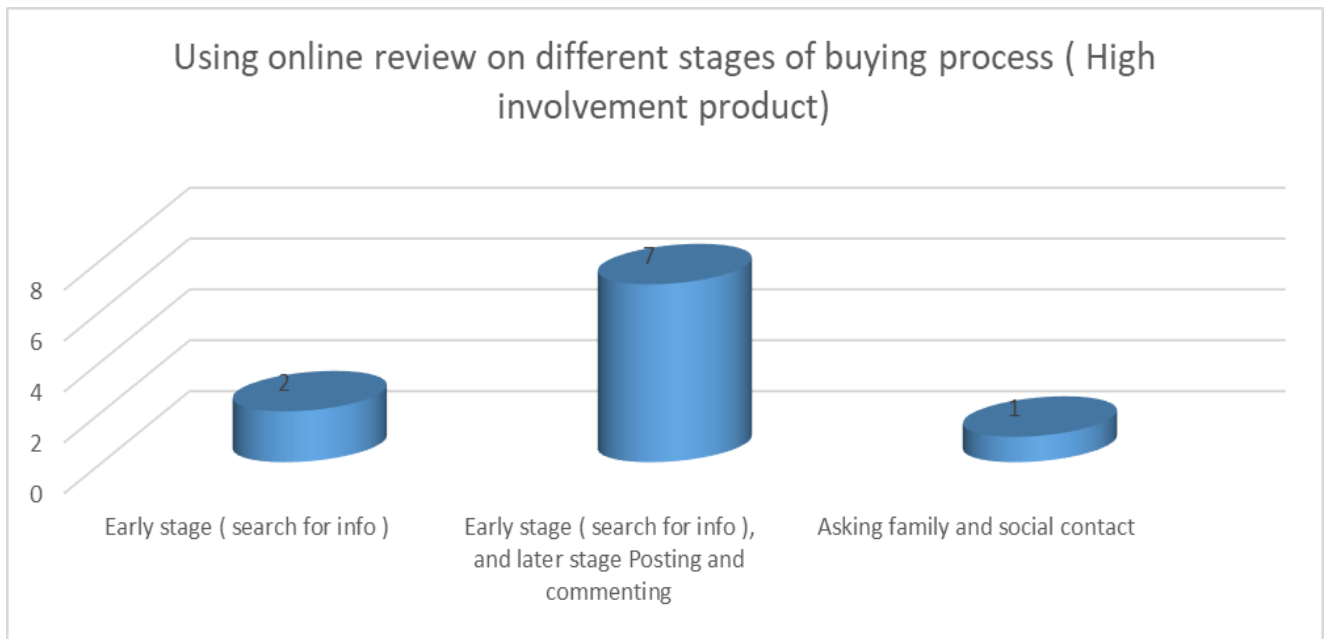


Figure 9. Using online review on different stages of buying process (High involvement product)

As it can be seen for the figure above, people are using online review in more than one stage of buying decision. According Efthymios and Holleschovsky (2016), the online review has great impact on buying decision and it affects the consumer buy behavior on different stages. However, 93% of people trust the online review and they are getting affected. They type of product is also important when we evaluate the power of online review and its impact on customer buying decision. The first stage of buying decision which is searching for information is considered very important because the customer make 50% of his decision if the information is encouraging.

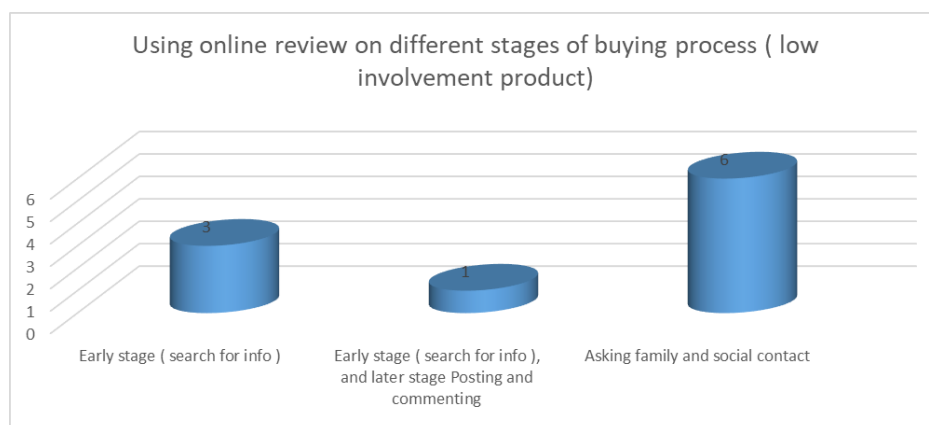


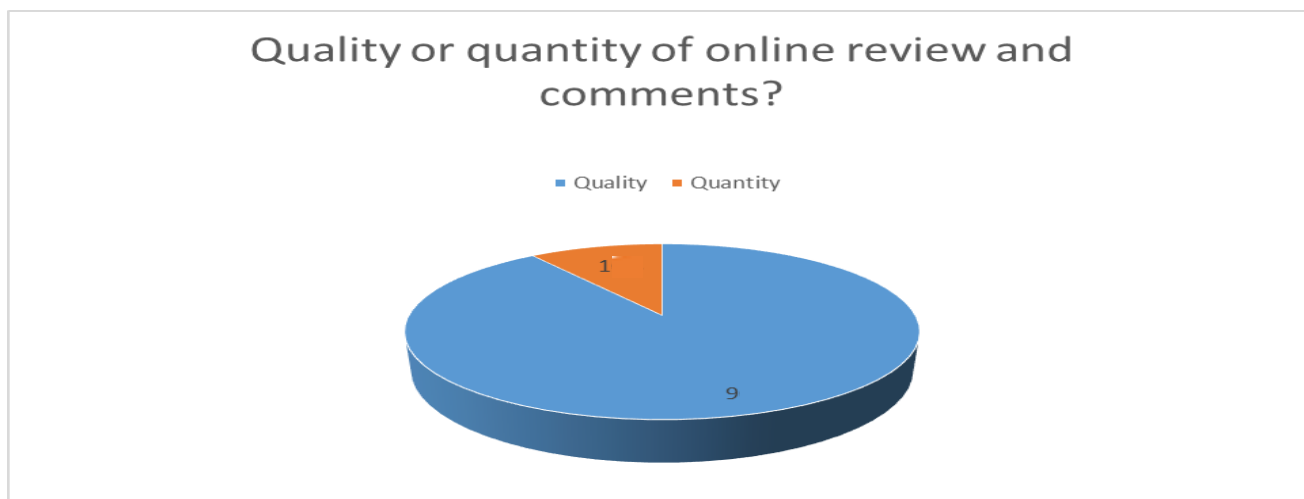
Figure 10. Using online review on different stages of buying process (low involvement product)

#### 4.4. Quality and validity credibility of online review and comments

According Efthymios and Holleschovsky (2016), customer is considering the credibility of the online review. Most people are considering quality of the comments and review, however some other still believe that the quantity of the comments and review are more important. The data collected in this thesis supporting the above-mentioned argument. 80 % of participant find the quality of online review as key driver, while 10% see it the quantity can give more trust and ultimately high affect, the final 10% also believe that it is important to combine both quality and quantity of the online review and comment. The When it comes to low involvement product, people were more interested in the quantity, while the high-level product people where more about quality.

Table 3: Collected data from interviews.

Quality or quantity of online review and comments?	
A	....” <i>It really helps to <b>compare</b> different product, so the <b>quantity</b> is really important</i> ” ....
B	...” It shows both the <b>positive</b> and <b>negative</b> aspect, to the <b>quality</b> is important....”
C	...” both <b>quality</b> and <b>quantity</b> give <b>extra info</b> about the product...”
D	...”WI think when people share one <b>true story</b> is better than large amount of review...”
E	...” <b>Quality</b> is always preferred.”
F	...” I think when it is published in <b>trusted</b> website is better than large comment...”
G	...” The <b>quality</b> of review on good website ...”
H	...” The <b>quality</b> of review can change my mind...”
I	...” The real <b>experience</b> from one person can be better, so the <b>quality</b> ...”
J	...”it is <b>useful</b> , and it depend of the type of product.”



The result was changed when we specify the type of product for the participant, people were more in to the quality of online review for the high involvement product, while more into quantity when it comes to low involvement product

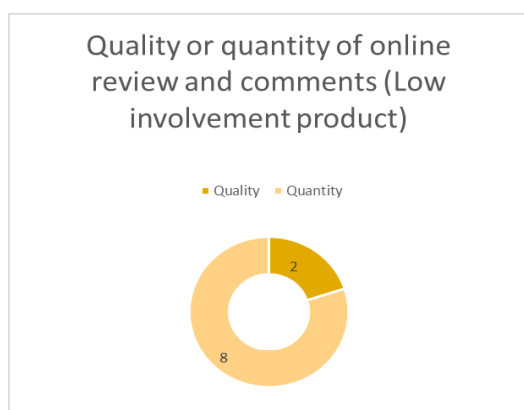


Figure12 Quality or quantity of online review and comments (High involvement product)

Figure13: Quality or quantity of online review and comments (Low involvement product)

The data show the participants care a lot about the credibility of comment, the credibility can be very high when it is posted on trusted website and it shows both positive and negative aspect of the product. .” *I really trust Price Runner, wish and Amazon; this kind of website is credible.*”  
*Collected data (H) (2018)*

The data show that people care about the credibility of both low and high involvement products.

## 4.5. Online review and buying process

Customers use online review on different stages of buying decision process; however, most of them use it on the search for information stage (Efthymios and Holleschovsky, 2016). The data of this

thesis has also show that four participants use online review and comment in the first stage of buying decision. The other six participant have confirmed that they read and compare the product to alternative after considering other people experience

It is important to mention here again that in this study I am considering the buying decision process model by ( Kotler , 2009; Comegys, et al 2006) where it start with need for recognition, search after info, evaluation, buying and post purchase behavior.

Using online review and comment on buying decision process	
F	<i>....” I would normally <b>read</b> all the <b>online review</b> about the product and <b>compare</b> its <b>price</b> with alternative” ....</i>
I	<i>...” I actually <b>read</b> the trusted <b>online review</b> in the very beginning and look at it at <b>Price Runner</b>... then I <b>write review</b>”</i>
C	<i>...” I consider the <b>online review</b> and all the relevant comment on <b>all</b> my buying decision <b>stages</b>, starting from searching for information until last stage...”</i>
J	<i>.” Before I read I use my <b>social contact</b> to make sure I am reading the online review on trusted website, then I <b>compare</b> it based on other people experience, that’s why I always <b>write review</b>”.</i>
A,B,D,E,H	<i>... <b>Reading review</b> ..... <b>Compare it to tohers</b></i>

The data of this study have shown that when it comes to buying low involvement product, the participant have different activities in buying decision process, five out of ten have confirmed that they are willing to write review of the product is for daily use and that other social contact can take advantage from that. All the participant has confirmed that they compare the price and product characteristics when it is about high involvement product, while only seven have confirmed that. To sum up, in high involvement product, participant normally have more interest to use online review on different stages of buying decision and will always consider comparing alternative and consider online review. While in low involvement product, participant is using review on either first stage or last stage and using social contact to know more about quality and prices.

## Chapter five

### Discussion

*In this chapter the author will provide discussion base collected data. The result in this chapter will be foundation for next chapter which is findings and conclusion*

The collected data spurt different previous research in online review and consumer behavior in purchasing decision. It is imperative to mention here the research question of this dissertation. *How can online posted information impact the customer buying behavior in the online buying process?* The collected data has shown the importance of the product type in such research, therefore product with high involvement has special online review characteristic and it is obviously different from low involvement product. According to Geva, Tomer, et al (2017), when customer buying high involvement product they need more clear information and they are willing to invest enough time in searching about reliable information before making the final purchasing decision. The data the collected data show that nine out of ten people are interesting to read more online review when they buy high involvement product, this is because of the high risk associated with this type of purchasing decision. A study by Filieri, Raffaele (2015), has argued those customer use different factors to evaluate different product, who are the common factors are quality, quantity and credibility. The data support the findings of the findings of Filieri, Raffaele (2015), as it has been discussed in chapter four (Table 3), the majority of participant have confirmed the quality, quantity and credibility factors.

#### 5.1. Data analysis summary

##### 5.1.1. Advantage of consumer reviews (The importance and usefulness of product information)

###### 1. High involvement product:

When customers search for information about a product, they are always hoping to find different alternatives. Online review and comments have become a trusted and easy access area for the customer to collect more information, especially when it come for high involvement product. Customers are mostly in a need for this kind of clear information in the first stage of buying decision (Mahsa, 2015). The collected data for these heaters supports the above argument as 9 out

of 10 people have confirmed the usefulness of the information in the very beginning stage of the buying process. Seven out of ten participants have confirmed that online reviews are always useful, while three participants have confirmed that they don't always find useful information in the online review.

## 2. Low involvement product:

According to Mahsa, (2015), customers are more interested to hear information regarding the low involvement products from social contacts and close friends. My collected data support the above argument as 9 out of 10 participants have confirmed that they are not reading online review and comments when it comes to low involvement product, because the online review and comments can vary too much and therefore lead to confusion. Only 1 out of 10 participants thought that, reading or live review is always useful regardless of the type of product because people are sharing their experience and thought about any product

### 5.1.2. Quality, quantity and credibility factors

#### 1. High involvement product:

According Lee, et al, (2013), the quality of review and comments are highly appreciated in the high involvement product. My data support the above argument as seven out of ten people have mentioned the quality of review in the High involvement product. All the participants ten out of ten have confirmed that they prefer well writing and logical review that is useful information, however, three out of ten participants have argued about the style of writing reviews and they were preferring reviews that has been written by professionals who has enough knowledge about the product and good experience with writing reviews and comments. Therefore, it is important that the review is written by a reliable person.

It is important to mention here is that some of the participants were more interested in the quantity of review rather than the quality of the review, they thought is that the quantity will always verify

the validity of reviews at least 3 out of 10 have focused on the quantity of reviews

According to Filieri, (2015), the electronic word of mouth can have both positive and negative information about the product which ultimately influences the customer purchasing decision (Fei, Zhou (2014). The collected data support a research finding of failure, (2015), as is eight out of ten people confirmed that they are normally influenced of reviews if there are many people have shared their experience and comment on the product both positively or negatively, the common factors in the answers of the participant was the reduction of risk in making wrong decision. However, it is important to mention here, and that the last two participants have always confirmed that the information that they collected from the social contact the family all related are more reliable than the online review.

The credibility of reviews and comments was one of the important factors for the participant, however a previous research done by several scholars such as (Lee et al, (2007-2015); Susan M and Schuff (2010) & Ethel, (2014)) have argued the important sea of the credibility of reviews and how customers are influenced by this review to make a bear final purchasing decision. These previous researches have shown at that customers normally believe that the credibility of the review is higher when many customers have left positive or negative comments about the product because. When many people have the same experience with the product that increases the validity of the review. The collected data in this thesis are supporting the above-mentioned argument as 9 out of 10 people believe is there the credibility of rugs you will be higher when more people have given the same comment, however 3 out of 10 participants have related the credibility issue with the website that the comments are on. So, the type of website or the social Media platform will help to increase the credibility of the review. However, all the participants have thought that the electronic word of mouth will be more reliable comparing to the traditional Media.

## 2. Low involvement product:

Previous research by scholars such as Lee et al, (2008); Feng &Zhang (2010), have argued that

customers are more influenced by the quantity of review when it comes to low involvement product especially when people share their experience regarding common issues related to the product. The collected data for these fetuses support the above argument as 9 out of 10 participants have confirmed that they are influenced by the online review when so many people discuss common issues of the product, while only one participant show more interest in the quality of the review rather than the quantity, he believes that when a trusted person write a review, he/she can be more helpful to make the final buying decision. The credibility matter for that low involvement product is not that different from the low involvement product. All participants have always mentioned about the credibility of the review is very important in the decision-making process. It is important to mention here that 7 out of 10 participants have always referred to the social media as a trusted platform for exchanging information regarding low involvement product, therefore there is always a trust in the electronic word of mouth more than traditional Media.

#### 5.1.3. Purchasing process and consumer reviews

Previous research by Kumar et al (2012) has argued the language of buying process in high and low involvement product and they have concluded is that the language of the buying process is Shorter in Low involvement product. Different internal and external factors will influence the buying decision process, it can be for example demographic and social economics or internal factors such as motivation, self-image, and both internal and external factors will have an impact on buying motivation which is one of the important stages in the buying process. The online review and comment can increase or decrease the motivation in buying specific products. The online ring you can speed up the process in buying a high involvement product if the reviews are positively describing other people experiences (William K et al, 2010). There are different activities in the buying process and effect of online review of these activities can slow down or speed up the buying process in the next section I will discuss these activities more details

#### 5.1.4. consumer review& activities in buying process & Post-purchase in

##### 1. High involvement product:

A previous research by Geva, Tomer, et al. (2015), argued that when customer want to buy a high cost product it normally takes time comparing to the time on buying cheap product. The data collected for this thesis has showing that there are more activities on buying high involvement product comparing to low-involvement product. 9 out of 10 participants have confirmed that they are normally spending more time on the very early stages to read reviews and find relevant information because in the high involvement product it is not easy to select a substitute as there might be a quality issue and other kind of risk associated with the decision. The data collected for these pieces have showed that there are more activities on buying high involvement product comparing to low involvement product, 9 out of 10 participants have confirmed that they are normally spending more time on the very early stages to read reviews and find relevant information because in the high involvement product it is not easy to select a substitute as there might be a quality issue and other kind of risk associated with the decision. The participant has confirmed that the recognition need is one of the important stages of buying decision. Because they threw their review they can collect more information about the product which helps them to understand the functionality of the product and possibly knowing reasons behind of the price. People are more willing to spend time on the very first two stage of buying decision when it comes to that high involvement product however the second stage will introduce the customers to criteria that they can use to evaluate alternatives, because on the second stage customers will have more information about the product price, characteristics and brand. Eight Out of ten participants have confirmed that it is easier to make the final decision when the reviews provide them with more details of the product characteristic.

2. Low involvement product: A previous research by Mona (2013) & Naliniben (2014), have argued the purchasing decision of low involvement product and they concluded that people are planning

live for low involvement product compared to the High involvement product it requires less time to make the final decision. The popularity and the quality of the product has always been the key for making the final buying decision in the low involvement product. Data of this thesis support the above argument as 8 of 9 people have confirmed that they take faster decision when it comes to low involvement product and with less activities comparing two high involvement products. The importance of review was less compared to High involvement products, but still only one participant has confirmed that he is considering their online review before he's making his final buying decision. The Importance you of a review in the very first two stages are still important for the low involvement product because participant is still considered to have a quick look at what people are saying regarding a specific product and only when they take a decision to buy an alternative product they are interested to hear other people experience especially if they are socially connected. Seven out of ten people have shown a willingness to write a review about a high involvement product but only one person confirm that you read and write reviews on social media platforms such as Facebook regardless of the involvement of the product and he believes that in the future this will be the duty for all customers. While nine out of ten participants confirm that they only write reviews when they have either very good or very bad experience with high involvement products, but they are still willing to write review when they do have a bad experience with the low involvement product preferably on social Media platform or interested website that can help the others to make a better buying decision

## **Chapter six**

*This Chapter will provide the conclusion of this study; it will also present the opportunities for further research*

### **Conclusion.**

This study aimed at answering the following research question *How can online posted information impact the customer buying behavior in the online buying process?* The collected data have shown that customers are influenced by the online review and other customers' experience. It can be concluded that customers who use online review and posted experiences by other customer as aid to make their final decision regarding product alternatives. The online review can positively or negatively influence any brand or product depending on the number of review and comments. The positive review of online comment can greatly influence customers buying behavior. As it has been discussed in chapter five, the data of this study has showed new detraction to answer the research question. The data show that customers influence by online review and comment depend on the type of product if it is high valuable (High involvement product) or less valuable product (low involvement product).

High involvement product: the customers are willing to invest more time for reading online review regarding high involvement product and finally getting influenced and changing their buying behavior. It is imperative to mention here that the quality and credibility of review are very important for this type of product. Therefore, it can be concluded that the buying process for valuable products are more complain and longer comparing to low involvement product. The data show that people are influenced also with family and social contact experience with the product.

When it comes to low involvement product, the costumer is influenced to some extend by the online review and comment when there is large amount of people negatively or positively wrote about the product and therefore changing their buying decision. The data have showed that most of the

participants are not willing to use their time for searching information about the product. Therefore, it can be concluded that low valuable product has shorter buying process and decision are taking faster with less information. The information from friends or family is highly trusted and can short cut the buying decision process.

*How can online posted information impact the customer buying behavior in the online buying process?* According to the data it can be concluded that the online review can impact the customers in different ways. It will always be depending on the type of product if it is expensive or cheap. It can impact the customer on different stage of buying process, it will mostly impact the final decision based on the very beginning stage which is collecting information stage. It can also impact the costumer buying behavior and help to know more about the product alternative.

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6.2.Appendix

## **Concepts**

Concept	Sources	Conceptual Definition
Consumer Buying Behavior	Han, Lee & Park (2007).	Related to the consumer's decision process, the explanation to purchase decisions. (Glock & Nicosia, 1964).
Consumer Buying Process		
Purchase Decision	Comegys, Hamma & Väisänen, (2006). Kotler, (2009).	Transaction between customer and company (Frambach, Krishnan & Roest, 2007).
Post-purchase	Comegys, Hamma & Väisänen, (2006). Kotler, (2009).	Evaluation of purchase and decision if to repeat purchase in the future (Frambach, Krishnan & Roest, 2007)
Information Search	Comegys, Hamma & Väisänen, (2006). Kotler, (2009).	External and internal search for product information (Solomon, 2013).
Consumer Buying Behavior-- C2C Interactions/ Electronic Word-of- Mouth	Curran, McCabe & Meuter, (2013). Han, Lee & Park (2007).	Customers share opinions and experiences of products and it can influence their attitude towards products. (Andreassen, Blazevic, Carl, Donthu, Garnefeld, Hammel, Keimigian & Rust, 2013).
High-involvement	Frequently purchased non-durable and	Han, Lee &
Products & Low-involvement	low-cost products with a low perception of risk. (Khare & Rakesh, 2011).	Park (2007).
Products		

## Interview guide and questions

Question regarding how customers' is impact of online post and review.

- When you buy product , how often do you search for information online?
- Do you consider the post regarding the product you want to buy?
- Do you trust the online argument regarding any product you want to buy?
- When you read posts regarding the products you want to buy, do you think your opinion is affected ?
- Do you think you can buy product without looking to what it has been says about it online?

Question regarding how customer select platform to ensure the product quality

- Do you think everything which been says about the product you want to buy is true?
- How can you make sure that everything which has been says about the product is true?
- Are you consider the online argument about all products?
- Do you think it is easy to understand why there is argument about a product online'?
- Have you ever changed your mind to buy product because you found out that the posted online info was not correct?
- Do you think the number of comments regarding any product increase the quality of the information about the product?
- If there are 50/50 (positive and negative) about a product, do you still buy it , or does the quantity of comments has role in take decision?

Social media platform the the quality of the info

- Where do you mostly find online review about a product you want to buy?
- How can you verify the credibility of info on social media platform? \_\_\_\_\_

- Have you ever positively or negatively shared your opinion about any product?
- What do you think will make you to share experience regarding any product?

#### Quality of product and online review

- Will you consider a negative comments reading a popular product?
- Will you change your mind about product if it is well known by you regardless of negative comment about the product and will you still buy it?
- How can the online info help you to understand the product?
- Will you still use social media if the info regarding the product is clear enough?

#### The final buying decision

- How do you make your final decision to buy product?
- To which extend can online review change your mined to buy altranative product?

#### Do you have anything to add ?

No	Occupation	Duration	Age	Gender	Often buying online
1	Student -	48:00	22	M	80%
2	Manager	40:00	27	F	70%
3	Student	25:00	23	F	80%
4	Student	45:00	23	F	80%
5	Sales man	25:00	19	M	95%
6	Accountant	35:00	29	M	90%
7	Teacher	40:00	25	F	85%
8	Teacher	01:00	24	F	80%
9	Worker	40:00	22	M	75%
10	Student	15:00	23	F	90%

The participants will be sorted alphabetically. Participant number one will be give A, number 2 will be B and so on.



The first Interview is shown here as an example, the rest of data are in separate file as appinex.

A)

Question regarding how customer is the impact of online post and review.

- When you buy a product, how often do you search for information online?

*Well, first of all, let me start by thanking you very much for this interesting research I have read the email you have sent it to me also with your interview guide I think this is a very important topic because the future will be for customer to customer. When I decide to buy a product it depends always on where I'm going to buy from but of course I always search for information, regardless of the type of product because you know I am using my money and I know that it is important for me to spend it in the right place and also with the right product so of course. I do search for information and I read a lot of reviews if it is an expensive product but if it is not that expensive you know something like me no like hundred kroner or little bit more .I don't spend that much time on searching about refuse but you know I am always liking to follow some of pages on Facebook tweeters and I also like to know you know the reviews on Amazon and other kind of websites are help pin me to collect some of my information but there at the end of the day is sometimes .I am collecting my information from family friends and the end you know some close friends that who already have experience with with that product but again I'm saying that if it is expensive product then of course .I am willing to spend even to 3 days going through the reviews because the quality of those reviews are also important for me and I would always search for information before I make my final buying decision*

- Do you consider the post regarding the product you want to buy?

*Yes, of course I do consider that the online review and all kinds of reviews on the product are also there that post and whatever has been written about that product, but once again, I would say that it would always depend on the type of product when I buy jewelry, for example, I will of course read reviews about the shop or the place that I'm going to buy from*

*and also the type of jewelry they sell and so on but when it is you know something that is that expensive as I have just mentioned. I will actually still read if it is something that will affect my life as you know it food for example, it said it's not that expensive, it's a routine that I have to buy every day, but still like if I see a post or a review about any kind of cheese or whatever kind of product that I use everyday I will of course consider it because I believe that people these days are writing the relevant reviews and you know. I mean I can always trust in the advertisement or even the organization information about the product so I read a lot of online reviews and if you are I think something very important for anybody who would like to make his final decision*

- Do you trust the online argument regarding any product you want to buy?

*well I think they're bored trapped has a lot of it meaning at least for me and therefore I cannot say that I trust all the reviews but if there are key that I can use in order to distinguish between a good review and Bad review and then say if I could trust it or not I mean I will trust a review if it is on a trusted website such as Amazon and others because I know what kind of website they always try to satisfy a customer instead of off producer so I would say that when for example of thousands of people have wrote the same experience as the same issue about the product and then I think I will trust that kind of you otherwise if it's coming from a close friend that I see him I met him before and he pulled something in the review of a product that I think I will trust that their product or that they do you know it would be always depending on the type of product that we talking about your expensive it would not be easy for me to trust their all the reviews I always go for the one which which is written by professionals and also by a reliable person.*

- When you read posts regarding the products you want to buy, do you think your opinion is affected ? this is actually very sensitive question if I am I getting influenced by the review or other people's opinion before I make my final decision well to be honest I have to say yes I

*have been influenced many times by people's opinion regarding a specific kind of product you know when you really want to buy something I think the more opinion you have sometimes it's more easy make it for you in order to make the final decision but sometimes it also make it very difficult because you start getting confused to make your final decision or not but two to summarise I will say yes im getting influenced by other people opinion let's say it's regarding again and expensive product and 10000 people have Road the video that kind of products is not really good then even so if it's a brand lights or Samsung or any of those very good brand I would still consider to search for more information before I make my final decision even so that I know those are very good so those days I don't think that there is anyone who makes his final decision on his own we are all affected either by a advertisement by media and other but I'm talking about myself I like somebody will affect my decision only when when it's a very you know like trust and person or person to me*

- Do you think you can buy product without looking to what it has been says about it online?

*Again I would say it depends on what kind of product you are talking about you know if I go buy a candy for example there is something really cheaper nobody has used it before and I will have to spend only 10:15 let's 100 krone on it I think yeah I mean I will buy that kind of product but if it's something a little bit more expensive than I have to consider what did he say about it just a few months ago I bought a car and of course before I make that final decision I have asked many people I've also reviewed many comments regarding the brand that I want to buy and I can tell you that I have changed my opinion from one branch to another branch only because people have explained to experience about that. I wanted to buy so you know it will always be dependent on what kind of thought I could talk about I will always categorising them as expensive or cheap product expensive I don't think I will buy it if I don't know what it has been said about it but for the cheaper if it is something you know the quality is good or not and then I will make the final decision so it is it is not easy*

*to take that decision without knowing a lot about the product I know many friends who are considering the reviews on even cheap products to say what happened about that you know today if we don't have a Blogger or a website or whatever we have a free media we have a social media so for example I'm leaving here in this molten Steel people are making pages where they sure did experience with anything and any kind of products even a place as people are still willing to share their experience*

Question regarding how customers select platform to ensure the product quality

- Do you think everything which has been said about the product you want to buy is true?

*I don't think that everything which will be said about the product it will be true sometimes I know friends they are buying product from one places and they getting annoyed for example from the shop or whatever they still writing bad comments about the product or the product itself was good but the service was bad so I don't think everything will be true in the reviews but it still there is a high trust in Windows reviews when it comes to expensive products because if 10000 people for example share the same experience and agree about the same issue then I think that kind of review you will be true. I know their competitors can write negative reviews about some product but I don't think that on social media people will right whatever on any product. I myself have many products and I've actually wrote many review about those product. to be honest I trust this review more than the advertisement or whatever has been promoted by the producer himself,*

- How can you make sure that everything which has been said about the product is true?

*you know sometimes the quantity of reviews are important in order to make sure that everything is written about a product is correct but still the quality of those review are also important I think when more than 10 reliable person right the same comment and agree about the same issue then you can really trust this kind of review today I will tell you that many people have full trust in this online review without knowing that it is written by*

*reliable person or not I can tell you if my parents are reading or live with you from their neighbours about any product they fully trust that and I may be that something is unique and it's only in Denmark because we trust each other but if I would like to buy something on Amazon that people from China Japan or anywhere else have Read many comments you know I still will think about the quality of those review but when it is expensive again have to make sure that the quality is more important than the quantity of refuse then you can make sure whatever has been said about the product is true.*

- Are you considering the online argument about all products?

*of course I do you know I read many articles about how to be useful in your Society in and I think that through engaging yourself in short reviews and comments about product you are helping your society you are helping the other customer to make correct decision so yeah I mean I'm always willing to write and read reviews if it is something going to have a positive impact on me and also my friends and colleagues and others*

- Do you think it is easy to understand why there is argument about a product online'?

*there are many people who are writing reviews about any kind of products in order to help others to not make the same wrong decision as they did I'm talking about the people whose writing negative comments about products and some other they are writing a positive comment and I think those people are also want to share their experience so other people can take advantage and by the same product it is really a great job from those people who are writing the reviews because it helps others to make a better decision today is customer help customer I think we can always make a correct decision there might be some clam argument in the reviews which is not relevant because some others can connect those reviews with some kind of political issues or where the product come from I have come across a lot of reviews which provide a relevant information regarding the product only because the producer his located in some places that was not favorable by bad guys who*

*ride there if you however I think it is not very easy to understand why all people right there with you but if there is a majority which are focusing on a specific aspect of the product then it becomes little bit more easy to understand that people would like to show that this product has this negative and the positive side otherwise it is so difficult to understand why people are so angry with one product and very happy with another product if they connect that with other issues some I have explained it for your life political sometimes social sometimes religion sometimes you know the ingredient of that product because it affects the environment or any other things but I've been in the reviews are very from each other's that means it will not be easy to understand it but for me when it is related to how valuable property then it's working to understand because people cannot drive just anything because they didn't like the product they have to specify what kind of acid and that is helping me to understand the characteristics of the product and finally make it better decision*

- Have you ever changed your mind to buy product because you found out that the posted online info was not correct?

*Yes, many time you know as I told you when I read this online review I am changing my mind sometimes about the product but one time I have changed my mind to buy an elf Trinity product because love people have recommended it was ok it was better according to their opinion but then after I bought the product I found out that that was not correct because the quality of the alternative product actually was not comparable to the product that I used to buy therefore I think yes I do change my mind because people are writing reviews about the product but it is not always I would say it's a possible because the reliability of those review and very difficult to verify because you know it's not always about the price it's also sometimes about the quality of the products I would say that reviews are very useful when it come to very expensive product because you know then you know that had relatives are not always a solution but for them I would say cheap product sometimes*

*you might change your mind and buy a lower quality products only because of the price so changing the mine I think I'm not the only one who changed his mind I know that my friends and some family members have changed their mind to share from one product that they used to buy it for many years to another, so the loyalty to the product also changed because of this review people are today writing almost about everything*

- Do you think the number of comments regarding any product increase the quality of the information about the product?

*yes I agree that the majority can change my mind if all of them have given the same comment or at least explain the same issue so I think the quality is really really important when you want to find out about the trust ability of the product but there are a lot of exception you know even though if the majority have said negative comments about the product you still can find the post comments are not true if the reviews are on not trustable web.*

- If there are 50/50 (positive and negative) about a product, do you still buy it , or does the quantity of comments has role in take decision?

*I mean the quantity of reviews and the same comments about the product can always change your mind but you know when it is 50/50 of course it's were confusing at the end of the day you have to find your own way why do you really want to buy this product you know it becomes really more difficult when is the case of 50/50 because I don't think that that will happen in the reality but you know if it happens then it is very confusing well the quantity will always change your mind and I don't think I'm the only one will be infected by the larger man up reviews on a specific product I would like to give you an example here recently I wanted to buy a very expensive product and there were so many negative comments about that product however negative comments was regarding the functionalities of that product in a certain environment and you know I was not going to use that product in*

*that environment so regardless of how many negative comments were there you know I still will buy the product but it was very good to know that those negative comment what about the product so another friends wanted to buy the same product and I have shown him the reviews in the comments about the product he actually spend more than two weeks searching for the information about the product and when he saw the roof you and he was going to use that product in that setting environment so he has changed his mind and he bought a substitute so you know if the quantity was really important but the quality also was important because we found out that many reliable people have wrote those comments*

Social media platform the the quality of the info

- Where do you mostly find online review about a product you want to buy?

*I normally look for reviews of course starting from Google and also looking to websites attract website and also blockers but I think social media also are very useful platforms to find relevant reviews so if I would like to look for the reviews of for the product I first go to Facebook to see if anybody have wrote about that product if not then I search for reviews on Amazon or other websites I also look for it in YouTube sometime it depends on what kind of product is that if it's really expensive product then you have to search for very reliable website I sometimes check the website called the trusted products in Denmark*

- How can you verify the crdability of info on social media platform?

*once again the credibility of the reviews and comments would always come from the 20th off reviews and comments and also the quality of the review and comments if it's written as I have been mentioning before maybe more than one time that if it's written by a reliable person then it is highly credible otherwise you have to trust the quantity of recuse it's not always easy to verify those comments and why they have been written in that specific way because they might be different reasons for why people would like to go against their*

*products so the credibility would always come from the reliability of the person and how professional they are and how much knowledge do they have about the product*

- Have you ever positively or negatively shared your opinion about any product?

*oh yeah many time to be honest I'm reading more abuse than writing but I have shared men experience you know what special when I buy product and then I see that is not true what it has been said about it in the organisational information is then I start showing and talking about the products because I think today is the producer will cheat the customer by providing a fake information about the bar we have a chance to write about the product and I think that is alright as a customer always show experience tell each other about what you have found out in that products because that will always increase the product quality so to summarise on this question yes I do actually share my experience but as I said again I'm mostly reading, I might be talking too much when you ask me the question so I will try to be more precise and straightforward to the point sorry to taking too much time*

- What do you think will make you to share experience regarding any product?

*if I feel better I have been cheated by the producer then I think I will post or write a review about that product again if I know that that products was slightly cheaper than a train abuse and has higher advantage comparing to the others I think it's one of any human duty is to write a post or review about the product then maybe if I see and read this review I also changed my mind and by the other products so what makes me feel to write this product is the first of all the experience that I gave you the product second of all I would like also said that my Society take advantage of my opinion and experience with the product*

#### Quality of product and online review

- Will you consider a negative comments reading a popular product?

*I think that every product has a dark side so I will not be surprised if some people write online with you or comments about a popular product and criticise the product because*

*there is always a space for a criticism. answer your question yes I will consider any review regarding a popular product you know I know that there are many popular product those days with the high-quality Brand and other things but still people are writing negative comment about the product so I have one time I changed my mind after I found out as surprising new things in a very popular product that I would have never knew that if I didn't read that trip you so to answer your question yes I will do considering it.*

- Will you change your mind about product if it is well known by you regardless of negative comment about the product and will you still buy it?

*you know I would say that reviews are important to me to some extent especially when it comes to the expensive product but feel the quality of those review are also important I might change my mind about any popular brand if I will be surprised about the new functions or a new negative fixing the products I used to use a very expensive products and I buy it online recently have found out the damages that these products bring to the environment I would say if you comment about the products but to me it was a big surprise because the producer have never ever mentioned this one like he thinks that people don't care about the environment therefore I think that negative comments or positive about a popular product is always useful but you know you have to go back to their credibility of the review.*

- How can the online info help you to understand the product?

*it help a lot I don't think that producer will ever come to the point where he clearly explain all the aspects of his product because they were always be hiding some kind of information not be the purpose it might be because they don't want to take too much time from people reading this information or they think it is irrelevant so I think the review are quite important to many people those days so far more about different products.*

*...am I taking so much time or is this is oK...*

- Will you still use social media if the info regarding the product is clear enough?

*of course I will use that because as I have been mentioned many times in this interview is that social media to some extent I would say it's free comparing to other traditional Media channels because people are still able to write their own experience and their own opinion about the product without having a high control on it of course social media is not something very new to the company's companies are already aware that people are trusting this channel of information too much so they have their own strategy on the social media so even even though I have enough information about the product I would still really prefer to get more info on a social media if the product is too expensive you know it's where to spend your time again you know I'm always referring to the type of products because I would not spend 2 hours of my time searching about you know info regarding cheese or any kind of product that I use and it is cheap.*

The final buying decision

- How do you make your final decision to buy product?

*the final decision I normally consider it when I know that I got enough information about the products so I can make my mind and take a decision to buy or not or to choose another substitute so I would say that I go through different stages but the most important stages for me is to clarify that I got all the relevant information and then the reviews are provided me with enough clear information regarding the functionality of the product the product characteristics also enough information about the price*

- To which extent can online review change your mind to buy alternative product?

*to a very high extent because when owner review tells you something that you have never heard about the products and of course you change your mind you go for a friend of use if I know that I can get a similar product with the same functions and also with the same quality and end of the day with the cheaper price of course I will go with a cheaper price however price cannot be everything if everything is equal then price is of course a matter but if everything is not equal for example the quality is not saying and the price is different than you know of course I would still be thankful to the online review but still I will make my decision and buy the product which has the highest quality*

Do you have anything to add ?

*I don't have that much time to share but still I would like to say a few words regarding the online review it is always useful for me to read all my reviews before making my final decision so I think this should be a duty for all people in the future in order to help each other right comments it might*

*take a few seconds but it can help so many other people so thank you for this interesting information*

The above interviews was an example of how the data where transcribed. ( All data can be find in word file named appendix )