

**UNIVERSITY OF VAASA  
FACULTY OF BUSINESS STUDIES  
DEPARTMENT OF MARKETING**

Veronica Perotti

**THE MULTICHANNEL AND OMNI-CHANNEL APPROACH CONCERNING  
INTERNATIONAL BORN ONLINE SHOPS.  
The Influence of the Customer Experience.**

Master Thesis in International Business

**Vaasa 2017**



<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	<b>page</b>
<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>11</b>
1.1. Study background and motivation	11
1.2. Research question and objectives	15
1.3. Delimitations	16
1.4. Research gap	17
1.5. Main concepts and definitions	18
1.6. Structure of the study	20
<b>2. THE SHOPPING EXPERIENCE</b>	<b>23</b>
2.1. Conceptualizing experiential marketing	23
2.2. Literature review of the experience	25
2.3. The customer experience	27
2.4. AIDA model in online and offline purchasing decisions	31
2.4.1. Online consumers' behaviour	32
2.4.2. Decision making process	34
2.5. In-store shopping: Zero Moment of Truth and Research Online	
Purchase Offline.	38
2.6. Experience perceived in online and offline	41
2.7. Summary	42
<b>3. MULTICHANNEL AND OMNICHANNEL APPROACH</b>	<b>44</b>
3.1. Conceptualizing multichannel approach	44
3.2. Conceptualizing the omni-channel approach	48
3.3. Multichannel and omni- channel customers	52
3.4. Multichannel and omini-channel retailing and marketing	55
3.5. Summary	60
<b>4. METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>63</b>
4.1. Methodological approaches	63
4.2. Sample and data collection	65
4.2.1 Data collection technique	65
4.2.2. Sample	67



4.3. Customers questionnaire and interviews	70
4.4. Firm's semi-structured interview	73
4.5. Data analysis	75
4.6. Validity and reliability of the study	76
<b>5. EMPIRICAL RESULTS</b>	<b>78</b>
5.1. The relevance of the experience for international customers	78
5.2. Multichannel and omni-channel: experience significance in the purchasing channel identification	83
5.3. The importance of the customer experience for a company	89
5.4. Multichannel firm: Glassing case	91
<b>6. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS</b>	<b>94</b>
6.1. Summary of the findings	94
6.2. Summary of the theoretical contributions	99
6.3. Managerial implications	100
6.4. Limitations and future research suggestions	101
<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>103</b>
<b>APPENDIX I – CUSTOMER QUESTIONNAIRE QUESTIONS</b>	<b>123</b>
<b>APPENDIX II – CUSTOMER QUESTIONNAIRE SPSS ANALYSIS</b>	<b>126</b>
<b>APPENDIX III – CUSTOMERS' INTERVIEWS PARTICIPANTS</b>	<b>131</b>
<b>APPENDIX IV – FIRM INTERVIEW</b>	<b>132</b>



## LIST OF FIGURES

<b>Figure 1.</b> Modification Of Ansoff's Product-Market Matrix	12
<b>Figure 2.</b> Consumer Behaviour Model (Kotler And Armstrong, 2009).	34
<b>Figure 3.</b> Circular Decision Making Process (Mckinsey, 2009).	37
<b>Figure 4.</b> “What Is The Zmot” (Winning The Zmot, Lecinski 2011)	40
<b>Figure 5.</b> Summary Chapter 2	43
<b>Figure 6.</b> Sample Wiggly Line Paths Of Buyers Through The Buying Cycle (Arikan, 2008:8)	47
<b>Figure 7.</b> Omni-Channel Definition	48
<b>Figure 8.</b> The New Retail Equation (K. Allard)	51
<b>Figure 9.</b> Omni-Channel Customers (Ventana Research, 2014).	55
<b>Figure 10.</b> Marketing Integration (Keller, 2010:1)	58
<b>Figure 11.</b> Omni-Channel Retailing (David Sealey)	59
<b>Figure 12.</b> Purchasing Process (Cook, 2014).	60
<b>Figure 13.</b> Research Onion (Saunders Et Al., 2007).	64
<b>Figure 14.</b> Coming To A Device Near You (Nielsen Commerce Report, 2016:3)	68
<b>Figure 15.</b> Sample Of The Interviewees' Nationalities	70
<b>Figure 18.</b> Ropo Results From The Questionnaire	84
<b>Figure 19.</b> Physical Store Relevance Questionnaire's Results	88

## LIST OF TABLES AND SCHEMES

<b>Table 1.</b> Brand Experience Scale (Schmitt And Zarantonello, 2009).	31
<b>Table 2.</b> Shoppers Categories According To Their Omni-Channel Retailing Intensity (Lazaris Et Al. 2014:3)	53
<b>Table 3.</b> Omni-Channel Shopping Behavior (Pantano, 2015:158)	54
<b>Table 4.</b> Multichannel Vs. Omni-Channel (Verhoef Et Al., 2015:176)	61
<b>Table 6.</b> Topics Of The Questionnaire	72
<b>Table 7.</b> Topic Of Company Interview: Glassing	74



**Scheme 1.** Logical Sequence (Carù And Cova. Source: Same And Larimo, 2012). 27

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

ROPO: research online, purchase offline

ZMOT: zero moment of truth

AIDA: attention, interest, desire, action

SEM: Strategic Experiential Modules

BES: brand experience scale



**ABSTRACT**

---

**UNIVERSITY OF VAASA****Faculty of Business Studies****Author:**

Veronica Perotti

**Topic of the Thesis:****Supervisor:**

Prof. Jorma Larimo

**Degree:**

Master's Degree in International Business

**Department:**

Department of Marketing

**Major subject**

International Business

**Program:**

Master's Degree program in International Business

**Year of Entering the University**

2015

**Year of Completing the Thesis**

2017

**Pages:133**

---

**ABSTRACT**

Despite in the literature there is no a unique definition of Multichannel and Omni-channel, these approaches and strategies have been taken into account with an essential role within the modern marketing. Nevertheless, all definitions interpret them according to the different use and degree of integration of many different channels for the communication and the distribution. The presented work investigates on the reasons why born-online stores approach the multichannel, or omni-channel, strategy by opening bricks-and-mortars shops.

On the basis of the above mentioned choice it is considered the influence of the customer experience. The referred concept is taken into account to understand if companies are customer oriented and if they want to improve the satisfaction of the clients, with the decision of opening physical stores. In addition, the experience is considered from customer's point of view to understand if, and how, it could be an important element in the selection of the purchasing channel.

The study is based on the analysis of both customers and firm. Therefore, consumers are analysed according to qualitative and quantitative methods: 25 customers' semi-structured interviews and 255 customers' online-base questionnaire are presented in the research. The firm, Glassing, allowed the researcher to have a semi-structured interview with one of the two owners. In both cases, costumers' and firm's ones, are asked about the online and offline shopping, customers' experience and satisfaction, the channel selection and the channel integration. Final results and findings show that the bricks-and-mortars stores are still playing a fundamental role for both customers and the company. Albeit their relevance, it has emerged that the possibility to touch and try the products resulted to have a great relevance on customers' purchasing channel decision.

---

**KEYWORDS:** Experience, Marketing, Online Shopping, Multichannel, Omni-channel



## 1. INTRODUCTION

The chapter is aimed at introducing the main topic and motivation of the study. The study will follow the presented structure: the first part is where the background of the study will be presented, followed by the research question and objectives of the thesis. It will be concluded with the presentation of the main used concepts defined by the existing literature.

### 1.1. Study background and motivation

According to A.T. Kearney (2015) “*Retail e-commerce has grown nearly to US\$840 billions in 2014 surpassing the sales of US\$695 billions in year 2013 and it was estimated to increase to US\$1506 billions in 2018*”. The digital scenario is in continuous changing. It, constantly, puts new challenges for the multichannel and links between the physical world and the digital one. In this context the customer can be seen as the first who benefits from the use of industrial activities’ technologies, while the firm can be able to measure the consumer’s behaviour and needs. The digital advent brings a great number of business activities to invest into new technologies. In fact, bricks-and-mortars adopted different tech-channels. However, a great number of born-online activities undertook the decision of getting closer to the traditional sales channel: the physical stores. Even though this decision can appear in contrast with the new trends, it represents a management choice of different business activities with the aim to follow the multichannel, or omni-channel, strategy.

Nieschlag et al. (1994: 900) have created matrix, based on the Ansoff’s one, in which are under lighted the *types of online retailers and their approaches to use the Web for sales purposes* (Schmidt, 2000: 50).

		Product	
		EXISTING	NEW
Market	E	<b>Penetration</b> Pure internet retailers; Physical retailers; Manufacturers; Cataloguers	<b>Product Expansion</b> Pure internet retailers; Physical retailers
	N	<b>Market Expansion</b> Pure internet retailers; Manufacturers	<b>Diversification</b> Pure internet retailers

**Figure 1.** *Modification of Ansoff's Product-Market Matrix* (Nieschlag et al., 1994: 900)

The Ansoff's matrix is used as a marketing management tool to explain and underline the types markets a firm wants to reach and with which products. It, in fact, can be called also "Product/Market Opportunity Matrix" and *identifies four different alternatives for the marketing strategies which can be adopted in order to maintain o increase the sales of a business unit or of a product* (Ferrandina, 2004: 26). Usually the companies look at their major strength to establish their strategy within the matrix: if they have a competitive product their first step is with a market penetration or a product development; vice versa if they are able to control a great market share they can choose to be oriented to a market progress. In the era of the technology, of the internet development, but, moreover, in the times of the online shopping increased all over the world, I would like to analyse how born-online- shops decide to internationalize themselves by using the multichannel approach, or the omni-channel one. The multichannel, by definition of Fernandez (2007: 27), is a *parallel insertion of several channels of distribution*. The omni-channel, on the other hand, is defined by Carroll (2013: 4) as a *synchronized operating model in which all of the company's channels are aligned and present a single face to the customer*. It seems, probably, a little bit contradictory that, to expand the business horizon beyond the national borders, companies decide to use the "world of the concreteness" next to the use

of the well-known, easy-accessible and biggest “online channel”. The multichannel approach is, nowadays, beginning to be taken into account as an important method to follow the customers’ needs in the decision making and purchasing process of a product, in fact *“the 90% of customers begin the online purchasing process on the web, but it will be ended in a physical shop”* (Scott Zalaznik, 2014). The study of 2014 on Local Search Behaviour has discovered that the half of customers who go online, within the day after will visit the store.

It can be said that the physical store can be seen in different ways depending from the type of customers, but it is becoming, once again, more and more important.

The online activity has an influence on the offline behaviours and as stated by Bridget Dolan (2015) there has to think about the digital tools as attracting elements to let the customers go in the stores. By using the online approach, the customer is able to find out a great number of information that can be difficult to find in a physical shop. The most used tool in this case is the customer’s mobile phone.

One has to think about the online world as a shopping-window in which the customer is able to find by himself/herself all the needed information in order to continue his purchasing process inside the real shop. For this reason, the literature offers the theory of the Zero Moment of Truth (ZMOT) (Lecinski, 2011), and of the Research Online Purchase Offline (ROPO) (Rutigliano, 2013). It can be seen, from what it follows, that between 2008 and 2016 different types of born online shops decide to integrate their strategy by opening physical stores. It can be thought about Amazon.com, initially born as an online-book shop in 1995, became in “a big” in 1999. In the autumn of 2015 has opted for a multichannel strategy by opening a physical book shop in Seattle, which is going to open other three in this year. In addition, AmazonGo seems to be the biggest revealing of the year: a physical, but digital interactive, supermarket, in the following 2017. Internet Book Shop (IBS.it), an Italian book store, was born online and, after the joint with Altair, has opened in 2012 its first physical book shop.

In the field of fashion can be mentioned Shoes of Prey, an Australian 2009 accessible-luxury-born-online shop in which the customer can give space to the imagination to

create, completely from the beginning, the perfect shoes. In the 2013 it opens a physical store in Sidney and six other stores in the United States. Focusing on the fashion world, once again, Chiara Ferragni, initially born as a fashion blogger, became an online-luxury-brand (Chiara Ferragni Collection) in 2012 and in 2016 it has been open a pop-up store in Los Angeles. A different story, but with the same ending, was “written” by Sophia Amoruso. In 2006 she founded Nasty Gal, an eBay vintage-clothing shop. In 2007 decided to open real stores in California.

On the other hand, born in 2010, Glassing, was created by two Italian guys, Alessandro Forte and Stefano Ottone who decided to start their business exclusively online and after the success of the e-commerce they opened the first flagship store in Milan, followed by different others around Italy and the World.

The trend seems not to be stopped: in fact, Kylie Cosmetics, the beauty collection of Kylie Jenner, opened its online store at the beginning of 2016. The brand was such a success thanks to its customized products, kit and worldwide shipments that the owner lets her dream came true: a physical store in the USA the 9.12.2016. Similar footprints were signed by Michelle Phan, a young girl who was born as a make-up artist on YouTube in 2007. She became very popular and in 2011 created her own cosmetics’ line: IPSY. The new CEO creates customized products such as her *Beauty Box*. The store, finally, is opened in California.

Nespresso Capsule-Caffè, at the end, can be taken into account as another example. In fact, the brand, born as producer of coffee machines, started the *capsule caffè* business at the end of the ‘80s in Switzerland. In 1998 it has been created the website [www.nespresso.com](http://www.nespresso.com) with the aim to sell their product online. Nowadays it has opened a great number of sell point, but only in the big cities. The aim is to create an unforgettable experience in which the customer can feel as a member of the club Nespresso (Nespresso.com, 2017).

## 1.2. Research question and objectives

The study aims to identify the background motivation that brings international born-online shops to expand their horizons by using the multichannel approach. In fact, all the cases that will be analysed will be taken into consideration because they are actually using both online and offline stores to attract their clients.

The starting point of the research question will be the influence of the experiential marketing and the perception that the customers have on it.

For this reason, the research question proposed is the following:

*Why born online shops are now using the multichannel and omni-channel approach with opening physical stores? Is the customer experience one of the main influencing factors which affect the decision?*

The following sub-objectives of the study can be analysed under both the theoretical and empirical point of views. In fact, from the theoretical point of view will be based on the concepts of:

- Experiential marketing, a literature review based on the most relevant concepts and definition.
- Customer experience, based on the general knowledge of the existing literature and discussing the most important aspects needed for the following study looking for differences in online and offline world.
- Multichannel approach, seen as an opportunity for international firms to attract new clients and improve the loyalty by letting them experience a new customer journey.
- Omni-channel strategy as a substitute of the multichannel strategy. The main difference of these two approaches, is about the level of channel integration. The multichannel approach is a strategy in which every channel is a part from the others, while the omni-channel approach requires strong links between them.

The empirical side of the study will be based on the following objectives:

- Understand why *born-online* stores decide to open bricks-and-mortars stores;
- Understand if the *customer experience* and the *experiential marketing* may have an influence on the above mentioned decision, by looking at the customers' questionnaire and interviews.

In order to achieve the research goals, it has been used three different types of data collection. To analyse the customers point of view online-based questionnaire and interviews have been carried out, while, for what concerns the firm, it has been conducted an interview to one of the company's owner. The selected methods were used in order to reach the objectives of having as much as information as possible by having different types of questions concerning the experience and the multichannel-ness and omni-channel-ness.

### 1.3. Delimitations

The importance of delimitations is of primary relevance. They, in fact, allows to set boarders of the question and of the objectives, giving the possibility to be focused on the needed and prefixed goals. In the chosen research the delimitations are almost easy to be forecasted, since that, form the literature point of view there are no a lot of sources, while form the practical point of views, such as business cases, there is a huge amount of possible case studies.

According to the literature review, the study will be delimited in the research of the possible already answered questions, even if, for what I was able to find by now, the motivation has been given only for the inverse process: physical shops decide to expand themselves and growing by opening online shops. I will try to bridge existing literature and try to explore it for a new, under-researched topic. There will be conducted survey, to understand the background motivation of the beginning of the process of internationalization by going in the "opposite direction". In particular, I would like to focus the attention on the *experiential marketing* and on the *customer journey* in online

shops, to better understand what leads to the decision making.

Concerning the case studies, or business case, I will take into consideration international company that are exclusively born-online. To be more focused, in addition, the company, has to put attention on the importance of the experience: the product or the service has to be identified as unique and, if possible, customizable in order to let the customer to be able to say that he has lived an experience. The above mentioned delimitation is presented as the one of primary importance since that, nowadays, it appears more used the opening of the online stores instead of the offline ones. This is the greatest delimitation of the master's thesis since that will limit the research of the company to the ones born exclusively online. Thinking about a population segmentation, I would like to take into account international both *young* and *old* generations, giving a range from 18-60 years old, to better understand if the motivation on the background are matters of lack of knowledge, confidence, trust or of something more specific and concrete.

#### 1.4. Research gap

The chosen topic and the consequent chosen research, was taken into consideration by the researcher because of the huge lack of studies in this particular field. In fact, the majority of the found studies, were aimed to analyse the opposite event: why do firms use the world of the web to internationalize themselves. The considered research question presents, in addition, a limited literature availability. Most of the documents, are in fact based on web article, since the topic can be considered as a new one. All of the existing studies, consider as a crucial starting elements, the consumer behaviour, the customer experience and the buying environment. On this last, in my opinion crucial, element I would like to be focused. Based on these data, such as the marketing experience, the already conducted studies and the lack of the needed studies, the proposed topic represents, in my opinion, a great phenomenon to be studied and examined deeply, even if it has to be said that the up-side- down event is more frequent. I would like to take in consideration the globalization influence on this internationalization process: thanks to it,

firms have the possibilities to expand their horizons more actively and more personally. In fact, it has to be said that the importance of the infrastructure development, communication and low barriers has permitted the growth of a lot of brands.

To sum up I would like to go deeper in the research of the internationalization phenomenon of born online shops that decide to expand their borders by opening physical shops. I would like to understand what is behind this decision and how much is important the customer influence on the decision making process. I choose the above mentioned event because fashion and online world are of my particular interest, together with the experiential marketing, that in my assumption, is on the basis of the decisions of the firms to have a mix of marketing strategies.

### 1.5. Main concepts and definitions

In the following work there are going to be used different concepts which are summarised in this section of the chapter 1.

Customer Journey: is a systematic approach designed to help organisations understand how prospective and current customers use the various channels and touchpoints, how they perceive the organisation at each touch point and how they would like the customer experience to be. This knowledge can be used to design an optimal experience (Nenonen et al., 2008:6).

AIDA: Attention of the existence of a product or service, Interest in paying attention to the product's benefits, Desire for the product, Action, that is to say buying of the product. In the marketing communication was created by American advertising and sales pioneer Elias. St. Elmo Lewis in 1800s. The model is about the different steps through which the customers goes before going to but a product or service. (Ebenezer, 2014)

Multichannel: it refers to the practice by which companies interact with customers via multiple channels, both direct and indirect, in order to sell them goods and services. (Rouse, 2016)

Brick-And-Mortar: existing as a physical building, especially a shop, rather than doing business only on the internet (Cambridge Dictionary).

Multichannel: The use of a wide variety of marketing methods as well as a variety of ways for consumers to purchase the particular product or service that is being offered. Typically, each of the channels that are chosen by the marketer will help to reinforce the other channels in the mix (Business dictionary). It can be defined as the parallel insertion of several channels of distribution (Fernandez, 2007: 27).

Omni-channel: it is a multichannel *integrated* approach to sales, meaning that all the channels are working together. It seeks to provide the customer with a seamless shopping experience whether the customer is shopping online from a desktop or mobile device, by telephone or in a bricks and mortar store (Rouse, 2016). “Omni” is a Latin word meaning “all”, “universal”. This new term originates from business practitioners, but recently also gained attention among academia (Lazaris, 2014: 1)

One-to-one marketing: is a form of direct promotion where a business representative communicates directly with a targeted or interested consumer. The typical one-to-one marketing dialog will involve the representative or sales person listening to what the customer requires and then proposing services or goods they can offer to meet those requirements (Business Dictionary).

ROPO: Research Online, Purchase Offline. It is the practice of looking at products on the internet before buying them in a shop (Swerdlow, 2012).

ZOMOT: Zero Moment of Truth. It refers to the point in the buying cycle when the consumer researches a product, often before the seller even knows that they exist (Hanington, 2012).

SEM: Strategic Experiential Modules. They represent the different types of purchasing experiences and the relationship between the individual and the object. Knowing these modules, the manager can define the objectives and the communication, marketing and positioning strategies (Same, 2013).

BES: Brand Experience Scale. It can be conceptualized as sensations, feelings, cognitions and behavioural responses evoked by brand-related stimuli (Brakus, 2009).

## 1.6. Structure of the study

The structure of the study is presented as follow:

Chapter 1 will present a general topic background and motivation together with the fixed goals exposed with the research question, research objectives (both empirical and theoretical).

Chapter 2 is made up by the theory based on the *Experiential Marketing* and *Customer Experience*. The theories are presented and discussed by starting from the very beginning of the theoretical frameworks, arriving until today. In the chapter there will be a conceptualization of the experience within the *online* and *offline* shops. Furthermore, in this chapter, there will be presented a brief interview that I conducted in the month of January at Google company in order to have a clear explanation of the theory carried out by the firm.

Chapter 3 will be dedicated at presenting the concepts of *multichannel* and *omni-channel approaches*. The two theories are singularly presented in order to better understand the empirical part that will follow. This final theoretical chapter is useful to carried out a conclusion which will present a summary of the different theories studied in the previous and present chapters.

Chapter 4 is the part focused on the applied methodology of the presented work. It will describe the design of the research, the used approaches and methods. The reader will understand the applied techniques of the data collections between customers and firm.

Chapter 5 is dedicated to present, analyse and discuss the collected data in order to build empirical results of the study. The analysis was, at first, divided into customers and firm's parts in order to better understand the collected and examined data.

Chapter 6 will be the ending part of the thesis in which the work is going to be summarized. The presented sub-chapters are divide for the results of the empirical analysis and the ones of the theoretical framework, presented in the previous chapters of the research. Finally are going to be presented the managerial implications, limitations of the work and future research suggestions.



**Figure 2.** *Structure of the Study*

## 2. THE SHOPPING EXPERIENCE

The purchasing process is a challenge between decisions and sensitive impulses in which the customer has an unconscious brand perception.

The following chapter is aimed at taking into consideration the experiential marketing, and the related customer experience. There are going to be presented concepts, definitions and studies of the topic within the existing literature. In fact, the second part will be focused in the literature review. More in details, the customer experience will be analysed under the literature point of view and, since there are not a lot of specific studies on the online stores, there is going to be analysed the customer journey, decision making pre and post purchasing by conceptualizing in deep the AIDA in the online and offline world. To summarize the second chapter, at the end, there will be made an analysis of the differences, if there is any, between the online and offline customers.

### 2.1. Conceptualizing experiential marketing

The modern firms, nowadays, are facing different contexts due to two new main challenges of the market: the globalization, in which there have to be aware of world-wide competitors, and the technology improvement of the whole society: the spread of internet, used as the channel that delete every kind of distances all over the world and as the tool to find information. The traditional marketing, the McCarthy (1960) one, of the “*Four Ps*” (Product, Price, Place, Promotion), it is easy to see, that is becoming more and more obsolete in the daily context. Firms have understood the changes and, consequently, they are adapting their strategies being helped by some theoretical paradigms which have contributed to shift from the traditional to experiential marketing. There can be identified three different types of basis: *marketing concept*, *customer satisfaction* and *customer relationship management (CRM)*.

As stated by Schmitt (2006) the first two paradigms are, relatively, product oriented and customer oriented, but they both have some limitations: the first theory does not take into account the *irrationality* of the customers. It is assumed that people are satisfied only in

the moment in which they are able to compare the product and their expectation, both taking in consideration only the final result.

The Customer Relationship Management is the model that precedes the experiential approach. It, in fact, aims to register and analyse customers' transaction data by using a specific software. However, the above mentioned approach, is not entirely satisfying for the firms, because the obtained data are not used in a right and coherent way.

The experiential marketing is the first approach that takes in consideration the final customer in the whole decision making and purchasing process, including the *pre* and *post* purchasing.

It can, in fact, be said that experiential marketing was born from the inability, of the traditional marketing, to explain the customers' hedonistic behaviour.

The main characteristic of the approach is the attention to the clients and their experience. As from definition (Addis, 2007) the experience is meant to be the *creation of a positive interaction with the customer and let him to activate his cognitive and emotional processes, i.e. being involved, in order to interpreted what he is living in the interaction moment.*

The experience can be defined, in addition, as an event able to involve, in a memorable way, the consumers including their feelings and both affective and personal components. *The experience is strictly personal and implies the customer's involvement at different levels rational, emotional, sensorial, physical and spiritual. Its evaluation depends on the comparison between a customer's expectations and the stimuli coming from the interaction with the company and its offering in correspondence of the different moments of contact or touch-points* (Gentile et al.,2007).

Schmitt (2010) stated that the experiences are far away from attitudes. These last ones are in fact defined as *evaluation based on beliefs*, while, on the other hand, the experiences are about *feelings and sensations, motivation and involvement*.

## 2.2. Literature review of the experience

The word *experience* in the history of the literature is dating back to the early '60s with the theory of Maslow, more precisely in 1964. However, different connotations and meanings were given to this word, because of multiple focus of the authors (Same and Larimo, 2012). The evolution of the concept has touched the years of the '80s, with Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) and the early '90s, by Arnould and Price (1993) and Carbone and Haeckel (1994) until arriving to be applied more specifically in the business area as a *strategy*. In fact, at the end of the '90s, the experiential marketing was able to find a new and wider application field. It has been applied to some studies fostering customer experience management, starting with Carbone & Haeckel (1994).

Arnould et al. (2004) has categorised the consumption experience in four main customer/product interaction moments:

1. *Pre-purchasing experience*, it is the phase in which the consumer starts to build expectations based on the found information.
2. *Purchasing experience* in which the customer starts to face stimuli. In this phase the firm should be able to transmit positive feelings and emotions.
3. *Consumption experience* that starts immediately after the purchasing; the customer is in a direct relation with the product.
4. *Memory of the experience* which is the phase that is able to influence new behaviours.

The author defined the experiences as the products or services' impressions to people, i.e. the perception of the *feelings information*. Their definition was under the point of view of the engineering of the customer experience. In 1998, Pine and Gilmore have defined the experience as an *event* in the macro field of *experience economy* starting to look at this model as a marketing approach.

In contrast to these definitions, Schmitt (1999) presented the experiential marketing as a new approach *driven by the experience* that is going to replace the most traditional approaches. This theory is based on the presence of three main aspects:

- a. Information technology

- b. Communication
- c. Entertainment and supremacy of the brand

From these three first theories, can be deduced that the experiential marketing is based on four key concepts, such as the customer experience focus, analysis of the consumer situation, recognition of both rational and emotional consumption drivers and the application of managerial methods. However, it has to be taken in consideration that this first model was criticised a lot. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, Holbrook (2000) gave negative opinions about the SEM and, as stated by Same and Larimo (2012), *the marketing planning tool is tactical, not strategic*.

LaSalle and Britton (2003), after four years from Schmitt, have developed a new marketing approach: the experiential marketing. As a fundamental element of this new approach there is the planning and the management of the customer experience. The key element can be seen as the result of the interaction between the customer and the firm. Their theory was based on the possibility of the firms to create *priceless experiences by combining the three main components of the value mix*:

1. *Product*
2. *Service*
3. *Environment*

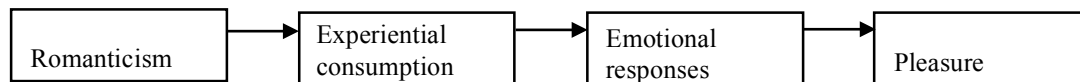
It can be affirmed that, if well managed, this could be a great advantage for the firm, that is able to express its value. The firm should be aware that they are no more selling only the product, but, moreover, they are offering an experience to the customer. In fact, all the moments of the purchasing and consumption have to be taken into account (LaSalle and Britton, 2003; Shaw and Ivens, 2005). As Pine and Gilmore (1998) stated, the experience, in order to be more effective, should have a high level of customization.

As suggested by the scientific literature of LaSalle & Britton (2003) and of Spiller (2005), a great, and complex, quantity of elements and variables have to be considered when deciding to give a “non traditional” offer. The firm should look for the actors, that are needed to design the final value proposition, by using the supply-chain. Taking in consideration the 3 base elements of the supply-chain, supplier, producer and distributor,

it can be seen that the elements needed to define the offer can be found under different actors' control.

In the same year, Carù and Cova (2003) came out against Schmitt (1999) promoting Holbrook model of *the logical sequence* in which the sensations are on the basis.

**Scheme 1.** *Logical Sequence (Carù and Cova. Source: Same and Larimo, 2012).*



For Thomson et al. (2005), Park et al. (2006; 2010) the experience is influenced by the effect of emotions faced by the customer in the brand. The experiential marketing was, in addition, defined as a customer *needs' identification and satisfaction process and aspiration profitability* (Smilansky, 2009).

In the same year Yang (2009) find out *the correlation between repurchase intention and customer satisfaction*. It follows, in fact, that Ming (2010) stated, thanks to a test on the effects of the experience on customer satisfaction, that the customers' loyalty can be improved also by using the experiential marketing. Jain and Lohia (2014) stated that experiential marketing *serves as intermediary for the sustenance of positional gains and influences the stimulus of market and competitive conditions on the formation of the marketing mix*.

### 2.3. The customer experience

The customer experience can be found, in the literature, with different meanings and importance, based on the analysis perspective. It, in fact, starts with the concept of consumer behaviour, service management and marketing. There can be identified the

three main basic studies of *consumer behaviour, experiential shopping and customer experience management*, Resciniti (2005).

Analysing the first key-study, consumer behaviour, it can be found in the early '80s, when Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) defined "*the experiential view as an approach, complementary to the information processing view, focused on the symbolic, hedonistic and esthetical nature of the consumption*" based on the concept of the consumption experience as an activity for researching feelings and sensations. The authors have, in fact, defined the *experiential factors* (Same and Larimo, 2012).

Firstly, the customer experience was seen as an application of the *drama metaphor to the social behaviour* (Grove & Fisk, 1992). In developing their analysis, the authors have identified that the services are seen as a theatre play.

The "Service Experience" has been analysed, in fact, with drama's concept, taking into consideration the customers' satisfaction; this last point has been considered as a proper interaction between *actors, audience and theatrical performance*.

Other authors, such as Richins (1994) discovered that a rational and functional component, and emotional and hedonistic one, are both key existing factors in the consumer decision making. These above mentioned elements are considered as influencing factors not only in the decision process, but above all in the satisfaction feelings. Ratner et al. (1999) stated that when a customer is involved in shopping he is more willing to buy *less-pleasing* products because it *leads to a better memory of the experience*. It can be said, as affirmed by Dholakia (2010) that the customer behaviour inside a shop will influence his memory of the experience. The memory can be distinguished in two different types:

1. *Human*
2. *Virtual. If the consumer wants to maximize the experience memory he will use channels that allows him to have a long-lasting one, such as online stores* (Kahneman, 2003).

The consumer's process of buying can be seen as a complex procedure based, mostly, on preferences. This key factor, in fact, leads to difficulties in the satisfaction of the needs. The change in customer needs and demand lead, consequently, to changes in the industry offers to the market (Kotler & Keller, 2005). In fact, as stated by Firat and Venkatesh already in 1993, and then after until 1997 by Firat and Shultz, the notion of experience of consumption represents itself the relationship demand/offer and the interaction between the customer and the external environment. Schmitt (1999) has identified five experiential marketing approaches based on different *strategic experiential modules* (SEM): *Sense, Feel, Think, Act, Relate*.

Each of these strategies is able to attract the customer by using different methods. The *Sense* is able to influence the consumer with the use of the five senses (touch, taste, sound, sight and smell); the *Feel* uses the leverage of the emotions aimed at awakening feelings in the customers. This module can be defined as the most complex one, because most of the emotions are taking place during the consumption phase. The *Think* is based on the cognitive strategy and problem solving that are able to put the consumer in the centre of the scene. The *Act* is focused on the customers' lifestyle influence by calling the customers to take part to something that does not belong to them. The *relate marketing* looks at individuals' needs and create customized experiences by using all of the four above mentioned modules. In order to be more efficient, however, the customer experience, since it is based on consumers' feelings and emotions, has to take into account the types of emotion that a customer is able to feel.

Berry et al. (2002) have identified two different categories of *clues* which create the customer experience:

1. *Actual functioning of the good or service* related to the logic. For the author it is extremely important to provide it in the right way, because the customer will create a value concerning it.
2. *Emotions* concerning the use of the five senses. It is, in fact, related to the *non-monetary* side of the product.

Dubè and LeBel (2003) have identified four *pleasure dimensions*: *Emotional, Intellectual, Physical, Social*.

These four elements, and the five stated by Schmitt (1999), at the end, have been improved by Gentile et al. (2007), who have seen the customer experience as an *evolving relationship between the customer and the company*, have distinguished six main elements: *Sensorial, Emotional, Cognitive, Lifestyle, Relational, Pragmatic*.

It can be noticed that, in other words, Gentile et al. have added, to the existent models, the *pragmatic* component, but it was never empirically tested. The above mentioned model has identified, by taking the results of a survey, that the module of the *sense* is the one that can be seen as the most important component. However, to conclude their study, Gentile et al. (2007) stated that each component plays a fundamental role, since that they are not working independently. In this way it is created a *complex experience* that is stated as involving more than one of the six modules. In 2009, Schmitt (1999) was re-taken into consideration by Brakus et al. who have reinterpreted the brand experience as *subjective internal consumer responses* by looking at the previous model as *behavioural outcomes*. By revisiting the model, they have modified the dimensions of the experience: *Sensory, Affective, Behavioural, Intellectual*.

It has been created the so called *Brand Experience Scale* (BES, Table 1) that was used then by Schmitt et al. (2009) in order to “*clusterise*” the customers’ profile under five different clusters: *hedonistic consumer, action-oriented consumer, holistic consumer, inner-directed consumer* and *utilitarian consumer*.

**Table 1.** *Brand Experience Scale (Schmitt and Zarantonello, 2009).*

<i>SENSORY</i>	<i>The brand makes a strong impression on visual, or other, senses. Find the brand interesting under a sensorial point of view. The brand does not appeal any senses</i>
<i>AFFECTIVE</i>	<i>The brand creates, or not, feelings and emotions. Emotional, or non-emotional, brand</i>
<i>BEHAVIOURAL</i>	<i>Engagement, or not, of physical and behavioural actions when using the brand.</i>
<i>INTELLECTUAL</i>	<i>The brand involves the thinking when faced. It stimulates, or not, the curiosity or problem solving</i>

#### 2.4. AIDA model in online and offline purchasing decisions

The AIDA framework is a *progressive model enabling the classification of behavioural phases related to the act of purchase, indicating the different maturity levels related to this act* (Petit et al., 2011). Lewis (1898) was the first developer of the AIDA model who has defined it as a *sales model*; the definition was later developed expanding the concept to the point of view of the *purchasing act of the customer* (Ferrel et al., 2005). This new way of seeing the model brought to the development of four steps answering different questions:

1. *Attention*: are you talking to me?
2. *Interest*: what are you saying to me?
3. *Decision*: good idea, but do I really need it?
4. *Action*: what will I have to do to get it?

Since that it has been defined as a *progressive way of dividing the actions* during the purchasing phase, the way to lead the consumer to follow step by step can be realized by the advertising. The role of the salesman, however, plays a fundamental part as well: he has to monitor the customer forward the achievement of the four steps.

Petit et al. (2011) criticized the model as an *incomplete one, since that log term effects are not taken in consideration: brand attitude, brand advertising, or brand awareness*. The authors, in addition, do not agree about the order of the four steps: they stated that, usually, the Interest can be rise before the Attention. In this case the model would be IADA. Their critics arise from the influence of the theory of Barnham (2008) who rejected the AIDA model. The alternative that came out from his research was the one of the *instantiation* with the focus on the customer's interpretation of the advertising experience.

The decisional processes between two different types of customers, online and offline ones, are close to each other. However, it has to be said that great differences can be found in the purchase environment and in the marketing communication. Taking into account the decision-making model (Gerald Häubl, 2000) of the traditional consumer i.e. "*The process for concluding which decisions need to be made and how to find alternatives for each decision*" (Business Dictionary), *the decision to buy starts with the awareness, the needs and the information research to continue, subsequently, with the buy decision and the post-purchase behaviour*.

#### 2.4.1. Online consumers' behaviour

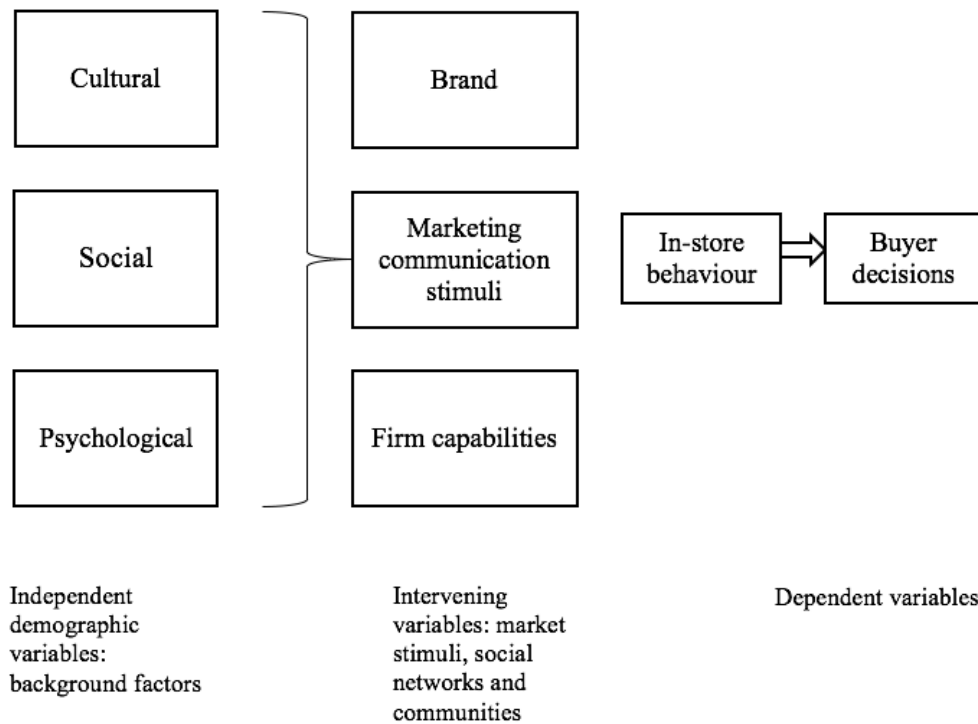
Focusing the attention more on the online behaviours, of both online and offline customers, it can be seen, by experiencing surfing the net, in the social networks and blogs, that the online communication is based on banner and web promotion. They catch the consumer's attention and whet the appetite in some particular products. At this point, the information research phase starts.

In 2011 Google has carried out a research on 5.000 customers and emerged from it that both online and online shoppers are used to consult the web in order to obtain as much in formation as possible related to the product: *the 84% of them stated that the ZMOT* (Chapter 2.5), *i.e. the online research for information phase, has been of primary importance to take the decision* (Google, 2011). The consumer, in fact, could be able to compare the available information, look for feedbacks or other customers' shared

experiences. However, for the consumer it is important to have a reliability of the sources and high quality information. A fundamental role, in the “Looking for information” phase, is played by the structure, design and user-friendly website. These factors are extremely important to influence the consumer’s decisions in buying the firm’s products. This, in fact, can be considered the key factor to let the purchase cycle starts. It has not to be forgot the *positive digital marketing, a way of doing experiential marketing focused on the creation of positive experiences by transforming each positive messages in a real experience through the digital channel* (Zen, 2016).

It can be said, to conclude, that the research process is a significant element of the online-consumer’s behaviour where he/she is influenced by the messages and feedback, even if it has to be said that not all the buying decisions require information research. For this reason, is worth to cite Assael (2003), who stated that there are nine main factors that influence the customer to look for information online before the purchasing: *involvement, perceived risk, product uncertainty, limited knowledge of the product, clear objectives, time availability for the choice, variety of product, low-cost information research.*

In fact, all of the phases that an online customer has to face with, are characterised by the influence of external factors, such as the risk management and the trust-built. The first, above mentioned, phase (information research and evaluation) is the one in which the risk is more intrinsic. In fact, it has to be considered that websites’ feedback or information may contains some mistakes or errors; some blogs, the most used channel to look for information, require a registration. In this case the risk is about the *privacy* of the consumer. This important emerged risk is followed by the one which rises due to the impossibility to control, check and evaluate the product before the purchasing. The *trust*, here, is the essential object. This important element is fundamental, as well, for the online payment method, where the customer is required to give personal and private information to an unknown system. Kotler and Armstrong (2009) has developed a *general model of consumer behaviour* that can be represented as follow:



**Figure 3.** *Consumer Behaviour Model* (Kotler and Armstrong, 2009).

Once that all the purchase-phase's risks are faced, the online consumer is exposed to other types of risk of the post-purchase moment. The customer, in fact, has to wait for the product to be delivered and he has to pay attention that the released private information are not used in a wrong way.

#### 2.4.2. Decision making process

The decision making process can put the consumer to take decisions about the product, about how to behave, how to buy it and what to do. Schiffman et al. (2009) defined the decision as a *selection of an option from two or more alternatives*. The decision making process, is, in fact, taken in consideration by Peter et al. (1998) who define it as a model made up of *five stages: need, recognition, search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase and post-purchase*.

In fact, as stated by Senecal et al. (2005) consumers *can either decide not to consult information, consult and follow it, or consult and not follow it*. Howard et al. (1969) drawn the decision making model of the customer and Dholakia et al. (2010) based their own model for the interaction between channels and customers:

1. *What customers bring*
2. *What they encounter*
3. *What they do during their choice or interaction with retailing channels*

The *own-based decision making process* (Olshavsky, 1985) is carried out when the customer decide to take decisions by himself basing on his own knowledge and information. *Other-based decision making process*, on the other hand, is when the consumer decide to consult and follow the available information and suggestions where the *final brand decision comes from a recommendation source* (Solomon, 1986).

From my point of view, the latter decision making process is the one which fits better to the presented study. It, in fact, seems to follow the Research Online Purchase Offline customer purchasing journey as explained in the introduction and further in the Sub-Chapter 2.5. In addition to this, Senecal and Nantel (2002) can be taken into account since they have divided three different types of sources categories of recommendations: *other consumers*, the one which can be taken into account for the study, since can be linked to the importance of the social networks, blogs and *channel ownership structure* (Dolakia et al., 2010. Chapter 3.4); *Human experts*; *Expert systems*, are a more recent topic taken into account within the research. They are useful to guide the customers in the decision making (Senecal et al., 2002: 1601).

In the same year, Grandinetti (2002), basing on the model stated by Peter (1994), has categorized different phases of the consumers by recognizing *five different steps* of the customer behaviour in the decision-making process:

1. *Need recognition*
2. *Look for information* to satisfy the need. This phase is the one linked to the memory of the customer which may came out from a previous experience (Solomon et al., 2004; Backwell et al., 2006; Baron et al., 2006; Cant et al., 2006;

Hoyer et al., 2007). It can be divided in two different sub phases (Park et al., 2005; Schiffman et al, 2007):

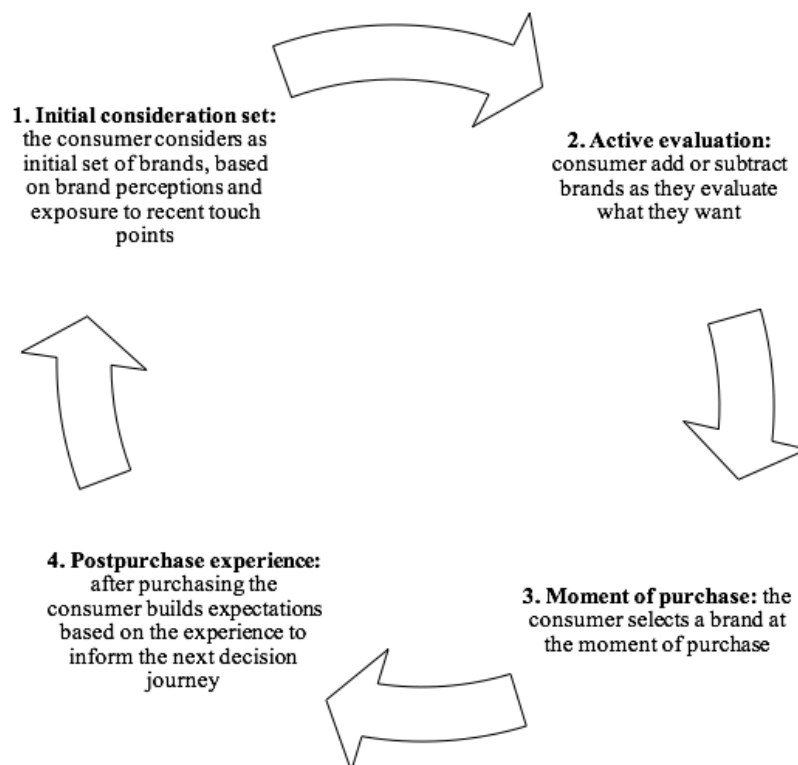
- a. *External search*
- b. *Internal search*, usually is carried out by a customer when the previous experience was relevant (Schiffman et al. 2007).
3. *Alternatives evaluation*
4. *Purchasing*
5. *Post-purchasing behaviour*

Laudon and Traver (2009; 2016) have developed a model concerning the offline decisional process. They suggest that the general consumer's behaviour concept should be edited in order to take into consideration other important factors, especially for the online on. In fact, for the online customer journey, it has to be taken into account the website characteristics as factors to express the capability and identity of the firm. The determinants of the model are mainly marketing communication systems and customer's competences in getting information. However, it can be said that, with the creation of a new general model of the customer journey, online and offline worlds are merging.

The Zero Moment of Truth (ZMOT) model, presented in the introduction and then further in the sub-chapter 2.5 is, in fact, taken into account to explain the reason why there could be only few differences between the online and offline customers' decision making process. The most relevant diversity has been analysed by Alba et al. (1997) and it has been revealed to be the difficulty of the online channel to create a unique customer experience and the impossibility for the buyer to see the physical product. Childers et al. (2001), however, has introduce the importance of the technology to create a more realistic online store: the 3D technology, in fact, has helped to fill the lack of the physicality element. In addition, the technology can be seen useful to bridge the lack of experiences: the author has stated that the customer can use as an *entertainment tool*.

It has to be analysed that the customer decision making process is highly influenced by these, above mentioned, factors.

Trust and decisions are mainly based on the site characteristics: such as the level of user-friendly interface, the speed of the navigation, the safety of the website. Online shops should provide a positive experience, as well as in offline shops, in order to achieve the customer loyalty or build a trust relationship. *“An online website should understand the customers’ purchasing behaviour in order to build and maintain the good relationship with customers”* (Kim & Hong, 2010). An important method is the *The Clickstream*, (Chuanfu Chen and Ronald Larsen, 2014) considered as one of the main system used in order to obtain data and information concerning customers. Bucklin et al. (2002) have firstly defined the *clickstream as the path a consumer takes trough on or more websites*. In addition, the online research enables the firm to receive more information: *by analysing data, the firm could be able to determine the duration of the client life and the value of the marketing strategies on the products. It could provide information on how renew the website* (De Bortoli, 2009). Court et al. (2009) improved the existent model of Grandinetti (2002) defining the decision making process as a *circular journey with four phases*:



**Figure 4.** *Circular Decision Making Process* (McKinsey, 2009).

To conclude, it has to be said that the psychology of the customer is of extreme importance. It can be controlled in order to understand the general and common behaviours of online consumers in order to monitor the online purchase environment, as it can be done in an offline shop. The psychological side of the buyer, in fact, is important, not only to understand in which direction the firm should go, but also to improve the used methods by understanding the main influencing factors for online purchases. *Visibility, safety and perceived usefulness* (Marenco, 2009) can be considered as the most important elements of purchase's influence, together with *convenience, variety, fewer expenses, prices' comparison, crowds, compulsive shopping and discreet purchases* (Miller, 2012). Ultimately, it should be taken in consideration the theory of Neslin et al. (2006) who seen a *substitution effect of online and offline channel*. The study was discussed a lot: Wang (2013) discovered that, especially within the *search phase* (Peter et al., 1994; Gradinetti, 2002), there is a *negative influence on the choice of channel*: the customer has to chose online or offline. However, Blattberg et al. (2008) stated that the integration of channels can help to reduce the substitution effect (Neslin et al., 2006).

## 2.5. In-store shopping: Zero Moment of Truth and Research Online Purchase Offline.

The percentage of customers who buy from a physical shop, on average once a week, is closed to 40%, while, on the other hand, the online customers are representing only the 27% (PwC's consumer survey 2015). It can be affirmed, looking at the mentioned results, that not everyone is that confident in buying online. Chad Brooks (2015) stated that there are many different reasons why customer decide to go in a concrete store, instead of buying from their place whenever they want, even if physical shops are closed. The author finds out that the 65% of the consumer decide to buy offline "*To avoid delivery fees, while more than 60% said it allows them to have the item immediately*". In fact, in the world of the web can be considered both pros and cons: for the customer there are non transportation and time costs, but it is required a high *cognitive challenge* in order to find information to conclude the operations; it is easier to find a lot of information at the same time and to make comparisons. The firm, on the other hand has no costs of sales personnel since that the face-to-face relationship is absent, as there is no presence of a

physical store. For both of the subjects the web is the only tool able to eliminate distance's barriers.

In 2011, Lecinski introduced the theory of the *Zero Moment of Truth* (ZMOT) that changed the way of doing shopping and purchasing of the traditional customer. In fact, it differs from the AIDA model as well. It can be generally said that before the creation of this new model, the steps faced by a consumer were made up by: *Stimulus, First Moment of Truth*, or *Shelf* (Procter and Gamble model, 2005), *Second Moment of Truth*, or *Experience*.

During the interview, carried out January, 25<sup>th</sup> 2017, to Doc. Laura Coccorempas, Industry Manager of Google offices in Milan, I could achieve a better understanding of the developed Google model. The ZMOT can be defined as a *four-steps circular, or casual, model* in which the "look for information" step is considered the key element for the customer, who is carrying out, simultaneously, comparisons between products using a *multichannel approach*. It has to be defined as a pull strategy since that the customer has the power of decision. In addition, it has to be said that the ZMOT still considers the other three existing elements of the previous model as essential ones. In other words, ZMOT was defined as *a new decision-making moment that takes place a hundred million times a day on mobile phones, laptops and wired devices of all kinds* (Lecinski, 2011).

Five main characteristics build the ZMOT:

1. *It happens online*
2. *It happens in real time at any time of the day*
3. *The consumer is in charge pulling information*
4. *It is emotional*
5. *The conversation is multi-way*



**A BUSY MOM IN A MINIVAN**, looking up decongestants on her mobile phone as she waits to pick up her son at school.



**AN OFFICE MANAGER AT HER DESK**, comparing laser printer prices and ink cartridge costs before heading to the office supply store.



**A STUDENT IN A CAFE**, scanning user ratings and reviews while looking for a cheap hotel in Barcelona.



**A WINTER SPORTS FAN IN A SKI STORE**, pulling out a mobile phone to look at video reviews of the latest snowboards.



**A YOUNG WOMAN IN HER CONDO**, searching the web for juicy details about a new guy before a blind date.

**Figure 5.** “*What Is the ZMOT*” (Winning the ZMOT, Lecinski 2011)

Google started developing the model because it was able to see changes in customers’ behaviours due to the development of the web. Was, in fact, stated that the way of perceiving marketing stimuli started to be different: *they are no more useful to determine the purchase decision making, but they are used as stimuli to look for more information (usually on the web)*. In other words, the message that a firm wants to send to the customer should be more similar to a *conversation* in order to better understand what the customer is looking for.

Byron (2011) stated that *in-store sales begin at home*. With this statement it is easy to understand the above mentioned model of the ZMOT and to continue with the following *Research Online Purchase Offline* (ROPO). It *indicates the value of the products purchased in a physical store after having searched information by surfing the net* (Il sole 24 ore, 2016). Bartolini (2014) has studied from a survey that *for each online purchasing there are, at least, three which start online but are concluded in a real shop after having compared prices and individualized the nearest shop*.

Google, as well, in partner with Görtz has discovered that *for every 1 dollar of sales generated online, another 0.93 is generated offline*. The ROPO can be said that contributes to the influence that the web has on the purchasing decisions. To conclude it can be said that the ZMOT, and then, obviously, the ROPO, are emotional phases of the customer decision making one linked to another.

## 2.6. Experience perceived in online and offline

Luo et al. (2011) tested the interaction of virtual experiential marketing and consumers' buying intention and loyalty by looking at five main concepts: *Sense, Pleasure, Flow, Interaction, Community relationship*. In order to achieve an answer from the purposed model was conducted a survey within customers: it has emerged that four, out of five (all excluding the *sense*), elements are influencing ones during the *browse and purchase by supporting the online experiential marketing and customer loyalty*. In addition, was discovered that the *design of an online site helps at reinforcing the above mentioned concepts*. As already discussed in Sub-Chapter 2.4, the customer is able to achieve a great quantity of information about the product thanks to the accessible web, i.e. that the customer is able to create his own understanding and opinion of the brand, as mentioned in the Subheading 2.3.2 by Senecal et al. (2005). The conversation, mentioned in the ZMOT model, it can be said that it is not going to finish with the purchase, but with the lived experience. In this case it can be appropriated to adapt the famous quotation of Maya Angelou *people will forget what you said, will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel*, to the customers.

As emerged from the results of Google, paragraph 2.5, the majority of the customers start the purchasing phase by looking for information online and finishing it in a physical store. For this reason, online and offline customer can be positioned on the same level: they perceive the experience in the same way. The *web-rooming* phenomenon is, therefore, of extreme importance.

## 2.7. Summary

To conclude the presented chapter, it can be said that the experience concept has faced different steps which brought it to become a marketing strategy used by many firms and later a tool for other marketing operations. For the purposed work there was taken into account a set of theories which the researcher thinks are more suitable for the work.

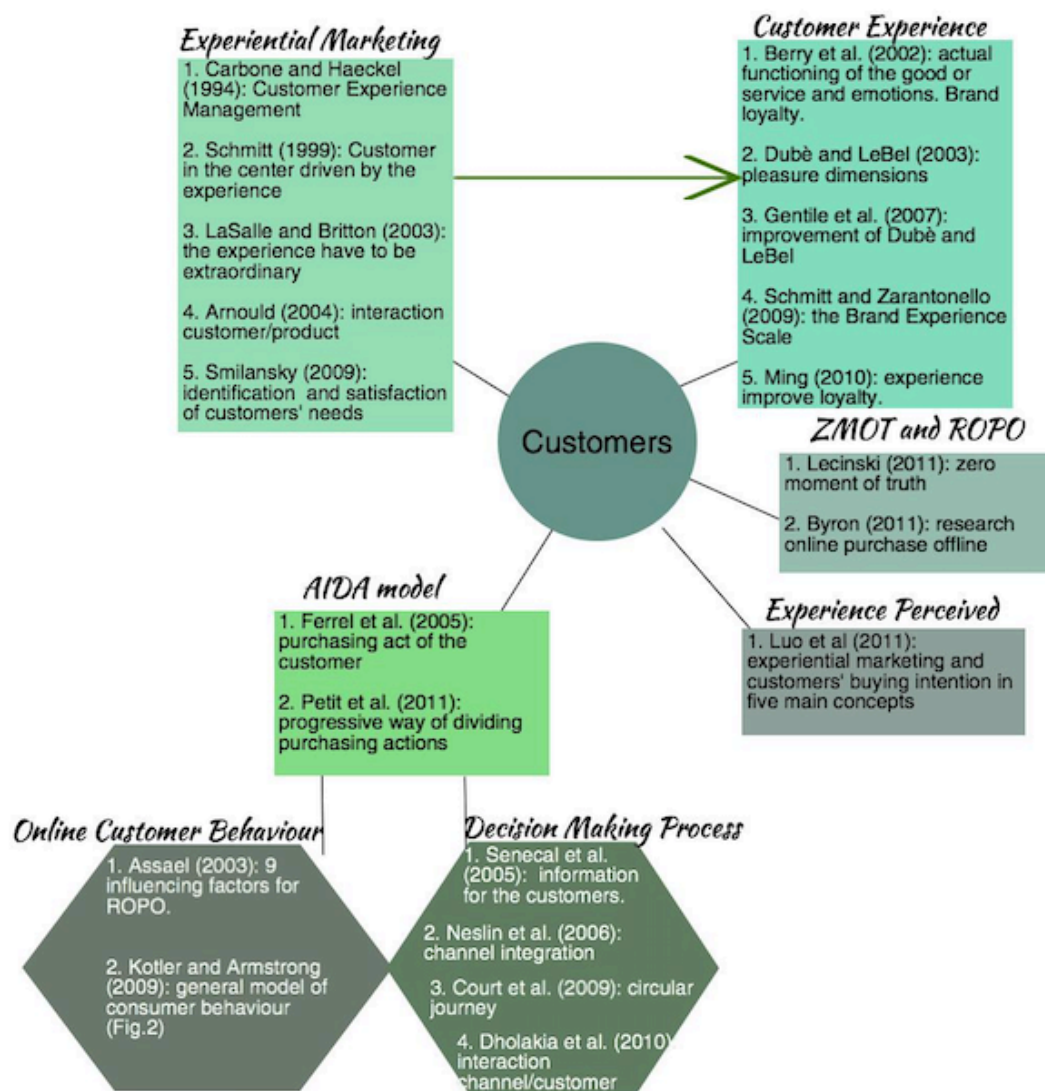
In fact, starting from Carbone and Haeckel (1994) the concept of Customer Experience Management was carried out with the intent of explaining that the *experience is the takeaway impression formed by people's encounters with products, services, and business-a perception produced when humans consolidate sensory information* (Carbone and Haeckel, 1994:8). In the following years Schmitt (1999) affirmed his theory by stating that the customer can be considered as an individual driven by the experience. For this reason, the author talked about the *experience co-creation from customer and firms*. LaSalle and Britton (2003) increased the concept of Schmitt about the use of the senses, by stating that the experience should be *extraordinary* which can strengthen the interaction between the firm and the customer (Arnould, 2004) and affects the loyalty behaviour (Berry et al., 2002; Ming, 2010).

The concept of customer experience of Carbone and Haeckel (1994) was than later reformulated by Gentile et al. (2007), seen also as an improvement of Dubè and LeBel (2003), who stated that the *customer experience originates from a set of interactions between a customer and a product, a company, or a part of its organization, which provoke a reaction. This experience is strictly personal and implies the customer's involvement at different levels (rational, emotional, sensorial, physical and spiritual). Its evaluation depends on the comparison between a customer's expectations and the stimuli coming from interaction with the company and its offering in correspondence of the different moments of contact or touch-points* (Gentile et al., 2007: 397).

Smilansky (2009) was selected to be taken into account since that the author has introduced the experience within the world of the web. It was stated that the web can be seen as *an accessible and effective tool for creating and staging experiences* (Kavaratzis et al., 2014:95). In fact, the customer experience can be based on four different factors:

sensorial, affective, behavioural, intellectual as stated by Schmitt and Zarantonello (2009).

Finally, it can be said the the AIDA model, the ZMOT and the ROPO were all taken into account for the study since they are one the basis for the other one. The concepts are, in fact, one related to another and are useful to better understand the following Chapter 3 about the multichannel and omni-channel approaches. The above mentioned selected theories can be found in the Figure 5 presented below.



**Figure 6.** Summary Chapter 2.

### 3. MULTICHANNEL AND OMNICHANNEL APPROACH

In this chapter there will be conceptualized the meaning and definition of the multichannel approach, the difference with the omni-channel strategy and the born of a new customers and marketing profiles. Nowadays users are increasingly using different channels in their purchasing process, by applying more and more frequently the ROPO effect. As above mentioned, the ROPO is the way in which the customer uses the web as first source in order to chose what to buy, comparing the prices and to buy, finally, in the physical shop (Swerdlow, 2012). Analysing more deeply this concept it can be easily reached the conclusion that the users are using different channels before completing the purchasing. In the last years, with the arise of new business models, the attention has been focused on how to create a multichannel experience. This experience has to optimize the convenience and has to give to the customer the possibility to choose how to buy, try and return the product. This is an appealing “vision”, but the firms have to know exactly what to do and how to develop the strategy.

The differences between the concrete and digital worlds are quickly disappearing. Customers are more and more *connected* and they are looking for *experiences*. They want to use different channels in the same time, with the possibility to interchange and complement them in order to well-complete their *customer experience* and *brand experience* (Deloitte, 2013).

#### 3.1. Conceptualizing multichannel approach

Moriarty et al., already in 1990, have studied that the *multichannel strategies* were used by the firms to attract and appeal their customers basing their approach looking at what the customer needs and build their *channels based on the needs of customers*. The ‘90s’ model was wrecked by the emergence of the Internet in three different manners: *Lower costs and more effective ways to contact customers*; *Enlargement of distribution via internet*; *Customers are using multiple channels to communicate with the firm*.

DeVincentis et al. (1996), consequently, stated that internet became the *standard channel for Business to Business (B2B) firms* (Meyers et al, 2004; Armitt, 2005; Hughes, 2005). Friedman et al. (2003) distinguished two different concepts of multichannel: the *channel mix*, i.e. the availability of different channels, in order to reach and communicate with the customers, taken as stand-alone unit, and *channel integration* which requires a *synergistic combination of channel functions* (Görsch, 2000). Kumar (2005) have studied that *multichannel users buy more from the firm* compared to non multichannel ones. Firms which use multichannel strategy appeal the customers with a mix of different formats of channels where the objectives are dispensed, in order to maximize profits, to satisfy the customers' needs (Moriarty et al., 1990; Montoya et al. 2003). Initially, in the early '90s, the *multichannel approach* was seen as a *dynamic capability* used within the *international expansion* and (Grant, 1996; Luo, 2000; Griffith et al., 2001). During the same period the Internet channel became to be taken into account more specifically as one of the most important channel of the approach (Rindova et al., 2001; Wheeler, 2002; Wilson et al., 2003; Hackbarth, 2004). Stone et al. (2002) have, in the meanwhile, fostered a *checklist and strategies* for the multichannel approach implementation. The *checklist* can be seen as a formulation of tips for the firms in order to develop an efficient multichannel strategy, based on seven main concepts: *Strategy, Understanding customer behaviours and needs, Channel costs, Implementation, People and organization, Measurement, Business case and roadmap*.

In addition, in their developed theory, there is a keyword, especially important for this study: *Customer Experience*. In fact, the paper stated that *Customer experience should be the starting point for defining required channel functionality* (Stone et al., 2002, p.44). However, it has to be consider that different channels draw the attention of different types of customers (Slater et al., 2002; Dholakia, 2005). Flint et al. (2001) have developed a *five-stage model* to develop an efficient multichannel strategy: *Create a customised multichannel strategy; Determine the relative positioning and priority for the channels; Organise for multichannel operations; Adopt the best practices for integrating the new with old*.

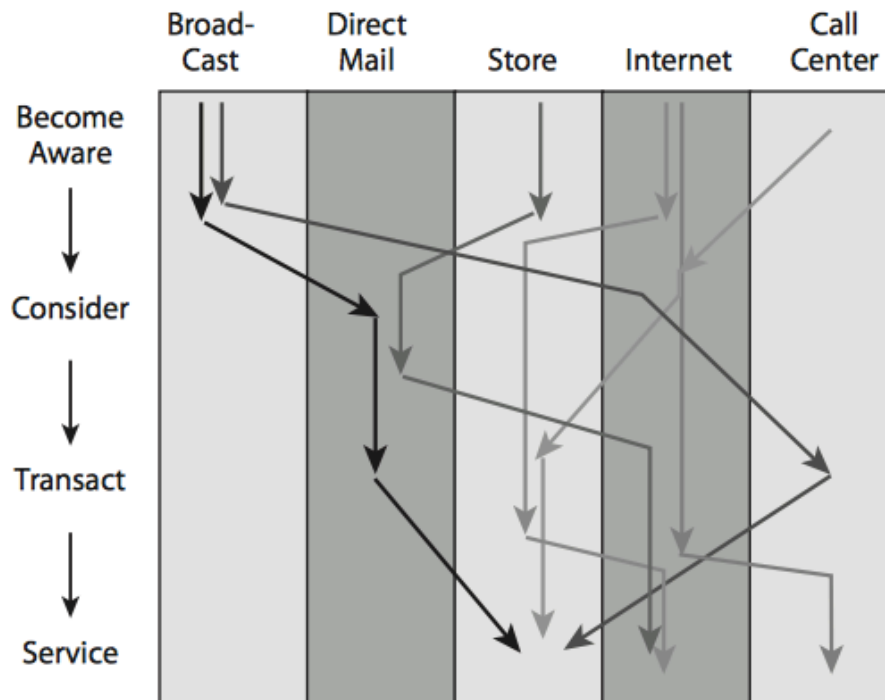
Neslin et al. (2006: 96) can be considered one of the most influential researcher of the multichannel approach. They, in fact, have defined the *multichannel* under the customer point of view, describing *the multichannel customer management as the design, deployment, coordination and evaluation of channels to enhance customer value through effective customer acquisition, retention and development*.

Wilson (2007) developed a new *five-stage model*:

1. *Analyse the industry structure*
2. *Define channel chains to describe how to combine them*
3. *Compare the value proposition*
4. *Set channel strategies*
5. *Determine channel tactics*

The same authors, according also to Coelho et al. (2003), in fact, have stated that it is important to consider more the *channels mix*, than the *quantity of channels*, in order to integrate, coordinate and define the customers' decisions. Rosenbloom (2007) has identified some obstacles in the development of a multichannel strategy. The first issue could be that the approach can be viewed by the participants as a *Zero Sum Game (ZSG)* i.e. that *if one channel gains customers, the other one must have lost customers*. This factor can be, therefore, avoided by using a *well-designed* multichannel strategy as stated by Wilson (2007), or, when it is not possible to manage it in this way, it can be looked at the *behavioural approaches*, or problems can be managed by using the technology such as the *Distribution Relationship Management (DRM)* software (Rosenbloom, 2007).

Arikan (2008) mentioned that the multichannel approach can be seen as a possibility to conduct a *cross-sell in the store*, i.e. that the customer that may have bought the product online and wants to pick it up in the physical store, may ends the purchasing process by adding additional products with the use of *buy online, pick-up in store*. The author has designed a graphic which represents the different customers' journey through a multichannel cycle (ibidem, 2008) in which there can be identified the use of the Research Online, Purchase Offline process (Chapter 2.5):



**Figure 7.** *Sample Wiggly Line Paths of Buyers through the Buying Cycle* (Arikan, 2008:8)

Thanks to the Multichannel Retail Report (2001), the author discovered that *cross channel shoppers spend 50% more- and visit stores 70% more frequently- than the average shopper* (Arikan, 2008: 12). Serra (2016) stated that multichannel approach is referred to a model through which firms use a combination of one or more integrated channels. The author, in addition, has identified the point of view of the customer in relationship with the firm: with the multichannel strategy the customer uses a variety of online and offline channels during his purchasing process. In fact, the multichannel offers a great number of different marketing tools to walk through the pre, post and purchasing processes with the customers (Dholakia et al. 2010). To sum up, the multichannel can be seen as an integration between the firm and the consumes through a great number of channels. Three main advantages have been identified:

1. Clarify how the online channel is used as an information tool by the customer
2. Allows the incentives of a different product purchasing by using coupons
3. It constitutes a tool to know the clients.

The multichannel customer can be defined as a consumer who uses different channels before completing the purchasing process. He can look for information online and then purchase in the physical shop, accomplishing the *Web-rooming action*. To conclude, it has to be said, however, that the *multichannel concept* is rapidly evolving into the *omni-channel* one, since that is required a well design and management of the channel structure. As above mentioned, firms have to review their structure within the management and internal processes in order to let the customer to have a logical relationship with the firm's channels.

### 3.2. Conceptualizing the omni-channel approach

According to the Oxford Business Dictionary *omni-channel* concept denotes a type of retail which integrates the different methods of shopping available to consumers.

Rigby (2011: 4) defined the omni-channel retailing *an integrated sales experience that melds the advantages of physical stores with the information-rich experience of online shopping*.



**Figure 8.** *Omni-channel definition*

Already in 2000, Degeratu et al. have distinguished different ways to integrate the channels by distinguishing in: *Total synchrony* in which each channel shows the same offer with similar format, or connectable to each other; *Total asynchrony* which is based on a low integration level of availability of product within channels. There is a separation between products, prices and communication.

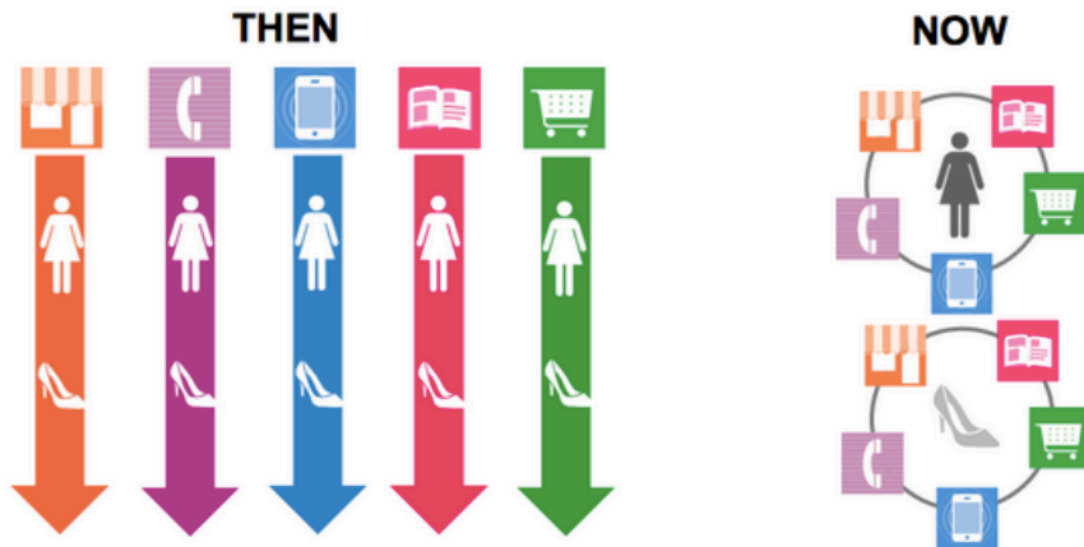
Blocher et al. (2005) have based their theory on Degeratu's one by stating that a *high level of synchrony reassures the customers*. Rangaswamy et al. (2005) stated that, under a systemic point of view, the *omni-channel model* is able to catch in the same time both physical and digital touch points. On the other side, in the same year Blocher et al. (2005) affirmed that the digital channels were playing only to support the *research phase* while the physical shops are more focused on the sells. However, under the point of view of the researcher, the customer journey between online and offline can be seen in a different way, in contrast to the version of Blocher et al. (2005). In fact, nowadays, the offline shops, better called *brick-and-mortars*, are always more used to be in touch with the clients, to establish a trust relationship, to increase the brand awareness and loyalty (Konus et al., 2008; Luo et al., 2011).

Rigby (2011:4) was the starter of the omni-channel concept by defining it as *an integrated sales experience that melds the advantages of physical stores with the information-rich experience of online shopping*". Consequently, following Riby theory, Yu et al. (2011) stated that the background reason of the *omni-channel strategy* is to let the customer living a *seamless experience*, meaning not to have interruptions within different segments of the road of the customer journey, i.e. that the customer is *unaware* of the transitions between segments. Neslin et al. (2014) stated that the omni-channel environment is able to emphasize in the interaction between channels and brands and that the transformation from the traditional shopping, the traditional marketing, to the *multichannel*, and then to the *omni-channel* approach, makes the marketers focused no more on only one type of marketing, but rather in a position which allows them to understand the importance of the experience and of the customers Newman (2014). The author defined the omni-channel as *a reflection of the choice that consumers have in how they engage the brand, and therefore is best represented as how brands enable their clients and customers to use*

*these channels to engage with them.* Bowden (2014), in addition, defined both *multi* and *omni channel*. Concerning the first one it has been defined as *an operational view* in which the customer is able to complete the purchasing through each channel. *Omni-channel*, on the other hand, is defined as *viewing the experience through the eyes of customer and anticipates that the customer may start in one channel and move to another as they progress to a solution.*

In the same year, Confcommercio (2014), have presented a guide “The shop in the Internet Era” in which are explained both the online and offline strategies in order to improve the marketing in the shops. Looking at the guide, it said that the *web can be a competitive advantage and cost reduction tool* also for the physical shop. Internet can be seen as a window to attract customers, to tell the the characteristics of the brand, to build a relationship and stimulate the willingness to go in the physical shop where the purchasing can be concluded.

Serra (2016) have defined the *omni-channel approach* as the evolution of the multichannel which represents the introduction of the customer experience through all the possible shopping channels. In this definition emerged that the online and offline consumers can be seen as a unique customer who uses different channels without making any distinction. In the same article the author stated, more precisely, that the *omni-channel is the interaction, other than the integration, between the traditional, mobile and online store*. It defines a new figure of the buyer: the *omni-channel customer*. To sum up it can be said that the omni-channel is the evolution of the multichannel strategy since that the usage of the channels happens simultaneously.



**Figure 9.** *The New Retail Equation* (K. Allard, 2016).

In the same article, as well as for the multichannel approach, the author has identified the main advantages of the omni-channel approach:

1. *New customer, new retail: “omni-channel retailing”*
2. *There is emphasis of the interpersonal relationship benefits with the aim to have a customer motivated to buy.*
3. *Possibility to draw a precise picture of the users and to build up strong relationship*
4. *It brakes down geographical barriers*
5. *The “omnipresence” allows to offer the customers product in the interest moment and to sell it in the decision moment*

On the other hand, it has to be shown the main disadvantage, the most significant one: the omni-channel reduces the possibility to let the customer to impulsively buy, since that he his able to collect as much information as possible. In this case it can be said that the coherence and the integration between the channels plays a fundamental role: they have to propose to the customer a complex experience in which the can use the networks having the sensation to communicate with the firm.

### 3.3. Multichannel and omni- channel customers

Multichannel and omni-channel consumers are a brand new topic considered in the field of marketing. It can be thought about a radical change from the traditional marketing concepts, but, however, there are no established research which declare that the basis of the classical theories has been delated and no more used. For this reason, the Rust et al. (1996) study can be mentioned. The authors stated that the new technologies' advent didn't change radically the customer behaviour and the consumers' shopping approach. Burke (2002) has, consequently, affirmed that the marketing with new technologies can help to create an added value, but there is always to be considered the importance of the centrality of the consumers: customers' needs can be satisfied in a better way thanks to the help of a great number of different technologies (Rust et al., 1996). Saunders (2002) discovered that 66% of the customers are used to visit at least one channel before completing the purchase process in another one. Reda (2002) has, consequently, defined the above mentioned types of customers as *multichannel shoppers*. Harrison, chief omni-channel for Macy's, discovered that omni-channel customers are *eight times more valuable than those who shop in only one channel: they can finish their purchase at any moment*. Thomas et al. (2005), following the study of Saunders (2002), studied that multichannel customers, as for example dual or triple channel ones, are more inclined to visit the retailer more frequently than single-channel customers. Balasubramanian et al. (2005) stated that different channels are used by different customers in order to achieve a satisfaction of five different purposes: *Economic goal*, earlier taken into account by Brynjolfsson et al. (2000); *Self affirmation goals*, to demonstrate themselves the ability to be able to shift from channel to channel; *Symbolic meaning goals*; *Socialization and experiential goals*; *Routine or script maintenance goals*, linked to the second one.

Konus et al. (2008) identified three *multichannel customers' segments*:

1. *Multichannel enthusiasts*, characterized by being innovative and open to innovations, by seeing the shopping as an experience;
2. *Store-focused consumers*, more focused on the importance of *brick-and-mortar stores* and characterized by a high level of brand loyalty;

3. *Uninvolved shoppers* who are customers not well focused on the shopping experience and low interest in any of the purposed channels.

The presented segments of customers are taken into consideration since that from both the customer questionnaire and interviews could appear different customer's identity which can affect the behaviour within the online, or offline, shopping.

Following the same footprints of Saunders (2002) and of Thomas et al. (2005), Pauwels et al. (2011) has discovered that online visitors are used to spend more money in offline stores. Nowadays, people can see no more differences in online and offline shopping, since that with the omni-channel approach all the devices are well integrated in both online and offline stores (Krueger, 2015). In fact, as can be found in the research carried out by Lazaris et al. (2014), there is always more and more a merger between online and offline shopping environment. The study discovered that *more than 50% of offline purchases took place after having searched online* and vice versa (Lazaris et al., 2014:2). The research is perfectly meeting the previous stated theory of Verhoef (2007). The authors, in addition, find out different customers' categories within the omni-channel environment:

**Table 2.** *Shoppers Categories According to Their Omni-channel Retailing Intensity* (Lazaris et al. 2014:3)

Group Labels	Group Classification Characteristics/Criteria	%
Group #1: Full Omnishoppers	These shoppers have mobile Internet access within the store and use it to compare prices (i.e. for negotiations or for free-riding) and search for product information (i.e. presentations and reviews/comments for products)	23%
Group #2: Partial Omnishoppers	These shoppers have mobile Internet access within the store and use it <u>either</u> to compare prices (i.e. for negotiations or for free-riding) <u>or</u> search for product information (i.e. presentations and reviews/comments for products)	21%
Group #3: In-Store Internet Users and Potential Omnishoppers	These shoppers have Internet access within the store but they don't use it for comparing prices and search for product information. However, they report that they are willing to use it for the previous purposes if their mobile phones supported this function	10%
Group #4: In-Store Internet Users but Omnishopping Avoiders	These shoppers have Internet access within the store but they are not interested to use it for performing the previous tasks	26%
Group #5: Non In-Store Internet Users but Potential Omnishoppers	These shoppers don't have Internet access within the store but they are willing to have, in order to perform the previous tasks	6%
Group #6: Omnishopping Avoiders	These shoppers neither have Internet access within the store, nor they are willing to have, in order to perform the previous tasks	14%

Related to the customer profiles, Pantano (2015) researched that the omni-channel consumers' behaviours are about shifting from online to offline channels. The used ways can be brick and mortars, mobile applications, email and catalogues. The theory is built up based on the *shopping process* phase, in which have been taken into account the phases expressed in the ZMOT theory (Chapter 2). The customers are studied in three different stages (Pantano, 2015: 161): *Online and offline shopping behaviour*; *Channel usage during the shopping process*; *Omni-channel shopping behaviour*. In her research, the author came out with different customers behaviours when looking at the omni-channel shopping as presented in Table 3 below.

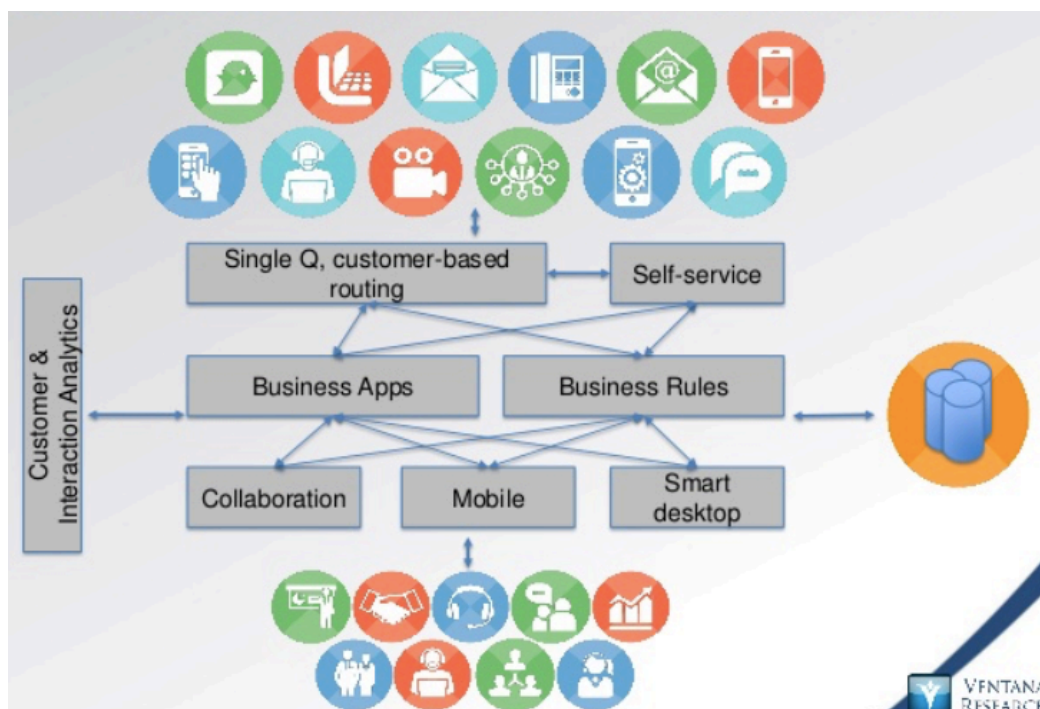
**Table 3.** *Omni-channel Shopping Behavior* (Pantano, 2015:158)

Use of Channel While in a Brick and Mortar Shop	Advertisement Leaflets	Magazines	Social Media	Websites	Applications
Yes (%)	58	14	6	16	12

Chen (2015), in the research, has identified two main areas, of the multichannel environment, in which the consumer has to accept the channel (*channel acceptance*) and has to behave in relation to it (*consumers' behaviour in multichannel environment*). The conducted research affirmed that the acceptance of the channel, and the relative perception of the latter, may has a high influence on the customers' behaviour. The author considered different *perception attributes* (Chen, 2015: 14):

1. *Privacy and security*, seen as the first key element for the customer;
2. *Web design* that may influence the willingness of the customer to use the online channel (Bart et al., 2005);
3. *Community and social feature* that may affects the customer trust (Toufaily, 2013);
4. *Credibility, informativeness and entertainment*, linked to the mobile channel.

It can be concluded that Hoffman (2015) stated that *customers aren't just multichannel, they are cross-channel as they use a variety of touch points to find information about product and services*. In fact, as stated by Burke (2002), the customers who face the multichannel, or omni-channel, environment are attracted by using the offered different options of channels, instead of choosing only one of them. This happens because the customer realizes to have the possibility to approach the company, the brand and the product in different ways, collecting as much information as possible.



**Figure 10.** *Omni-channel customers (Ventana Research, 2014).*

### 3.4. Multichannel and omni-channel retailing and marketing

Marketers have the ability to influence consumer-channel interactions through a variety of strategies and tactics (Thomas et al., 2005). In the same year, Rangaswamy et al. (2005:6) have stated that the multichannel approach is important, for the firms, in order to create and maintain lasting relationships with their customers. The authors were the

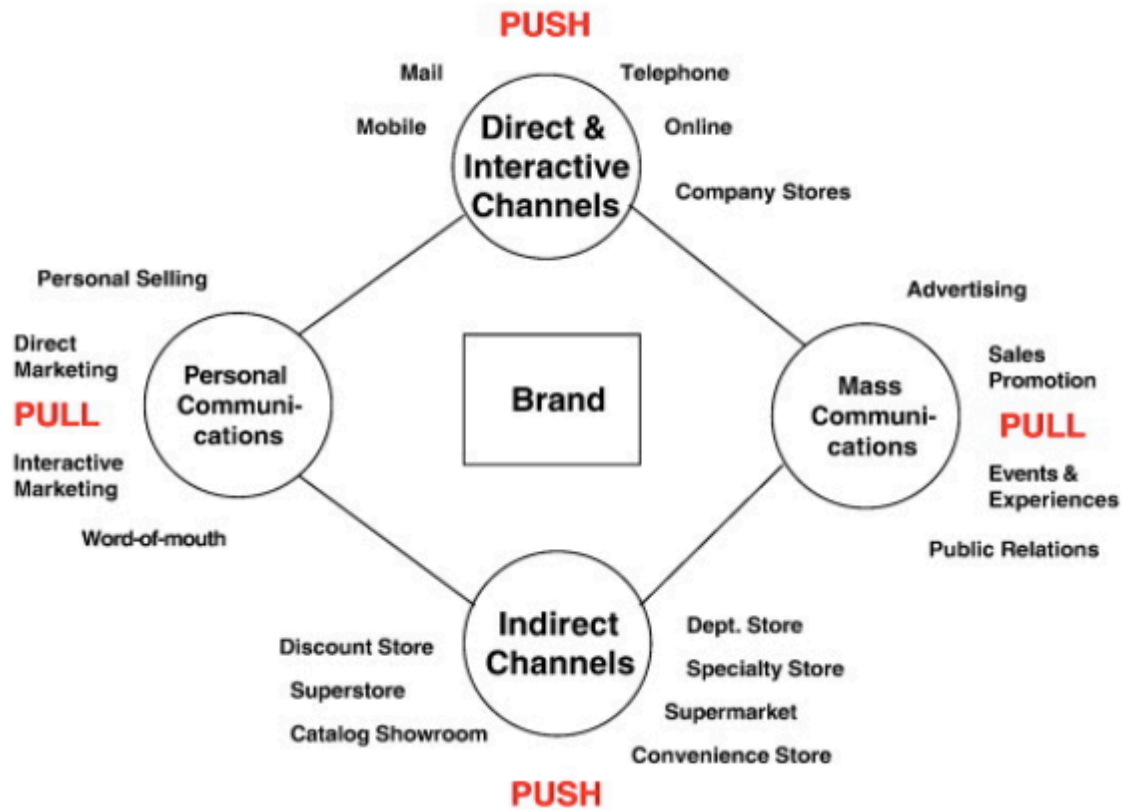
first one who introduced the closest explanation of multichannel strategy to the omni-channel one. In fact, they stated that the multichannel has to be distinguished from the multiple marketing channel marketing, since that the multichannel is the use of different channels in order to achieve a great number of similar customers: *the use of multichannels has as a goal to reach the same kinds of consumers by means of different channels* (Rangaswamy et al., 2005:7). In their theory has been stated that the multichannel marketing allows the customers to select one or more preferred channels and it has to be the starting point to reach the customer satisfaction. However, Neslin et al. (2009) developed a theory for which the multichannel marketing should achieve three main concepts: *Efficiency; Segmentation; Customer satisfaction*, in which the segmentation is taken into account as a part of the multichannel strategy. In contrast with Rangaswamy (2005), in fact, the customer satisfaction is not coming directly from the customer. The theory which can be considered as the clearest one is the one of Langerak et al. (2003) which divided the strategies of the multichannel marketing in economical and customer oriented ones. It is possible, in addition, to say that the customer satisfaction is not the only costumer-oriented motivation (Falk et al., 2007; Montoya-Weiss et al., 2003; Sultan et al., 2004). In fact, Balasubramanian et al. (2005) and Frambach et al. (2007) detected the *utility of the multichannel*, while Van Noort et al. (2012) under-lighted the importance of the customer experience and the customer engagement through channels in which there can be found a customization, such as social media (De Vries et al., 2012; Singh et al., 2012).

Riva (2007) defined as one of the most critical multichannel dimensions the physicality and the virtuality since that, thanks to the technological development, there is an increase of the channels' physicality. Parente et al. (2014: 408) have stated the origin of the *omni-channel concept* starting from the multichannel definition. By definition, omni-channel approach was born in order to increase the customer experience that was difficult to find in the multi-channel strategy. According to Parente et al. (2014), with the omni-channel concept, the customer is able to use different channels in different environment: the shopper has the possibility to find online information while he is in the store. It is a model in which the online and the offline worlds *provides synergy to the sales*.

Within a multi or omni-channel approach, the marketers have the possibility to influence the interactions between customers and channels, that is the reason why the above mentioned approaches can be seen as strategy related to the marketing. The customers, in fact, expect to find coherent messages and conversations within all the different channels. Dholakia et al. (2010) identified four different dimensions:

1. *Extent to which a marketer filters, moderates or manipulates the information transmitted within a channel*
2. *Channels ownership structure.* There can be taken as an example *nikonians.org*, a photography forum owned by the customers, but it is controlled, filtered and moderated by the company
3. *Degree of assortment offered by marketers via a channel*
4. *Level of assistance provided*

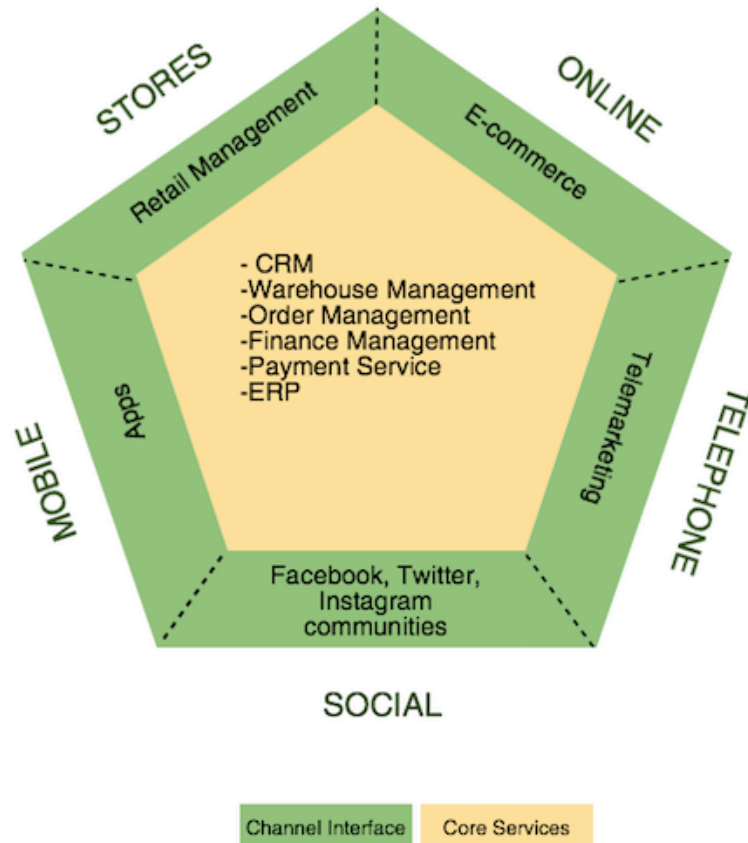
Keller (2010) affirmed that the firms use multi or omni-channel approaches in order to implement the number of sales and to increase the quantity of the customers. However, the marketers need to pay attention to *design and implement channel and communication options to obtain synergistic effects*. However, according to Kotler et al. (2012:449), distribution channels should be build up for different target of customers and to share different types of messages. Their theory agrees with the one of Dholakia et al. (2010). It, in fact, emphasizes the importance of the multichannel approach in order to reach a bigger number of different shoppers.



**Figure 11.** *Marketing Integration* (Keller, 2010:1)

In fact, marketing in *multi* and, lately and deeply, *omni-channel* approaches have to start with a Fully Engaged strategy in which the channels need to be integrated, the routine has to be based on customer-related rules, in which the business units collaborate systematically and where there is a complete view of the customers, including journey maps (Snow, 2014.). Brynjolfsson et al. (2013) have forecasted the importance of the technology and of the customization within the omni-channel strategy. The customer journey needs, in fact, to be redesigned by *mapping touch points* (Sealey, 2015.). Lazaris et al. (2015), in their research, stated that *beyond the previous research studies, it is obvious that omni-channel behaviour inside a physical store involves the application of online practices and technologies within the physical context*. The above mentioned research was based on the one of Burke (2002) who has looked for the customers required technologies: *assistance and customer service, digital and info, availability and pricing provision, support, payments and checkout among others*. The research was then

followed by Ahn et al. (2004) who firstly identified the needs to integrate both online and offline tools and methods.



**Figure 12.** *Omni-channel Retailing* (David Sealey)

To sum up it can be said that omni-channel marketing uses different channels in different and customized ways in order to achieve a single and precise goal. It is based on the customers' point of view in order to reach them in the way they expect it to be: an omni-channel experience and communication.

Thanks to the above mentioned approaches, the company should be able to measure any variables, such as how long the customer journey lasts, in which devices there is more attention and when and where they complete the purchase process. The key element of

the omni-channel marketing is the *consistency*: the customer needs to understand that he is always looking at the same product, brand and company. *It improves the customer experience and the brand image* and the benefits are based on (Flaherty, 2016): *Familiarity and Confidence; Learnability; Efficiency; Trust*. It can be concluded that the key difference between a multichannel and an omni-channel strategy is that the omni-channel marketing is focused on the *personalization*: it can be a customization of the experience, of messages within the channels and a unification of the journey in all of the devices. The omni-channel can be said to be a *one-to-one marketing* i.e. a *customer relationship management strategy emphasizing personalized interactions with customers* (Peppers et al., 1996).

### 3.5. Summary

To sum up the theoretical framework presented in the previous two chapters, it can be said that the classic *purchasing process* has not changed significantly, even if the way in which shopping is conducted by customer is completely different. It is, in fact, based on the *research, test and try, purchase, collect or deliver and after sales services*.



**Figure 13.** *Purchasing Process* (Cook, 2014)

However, it has to be said that multichannel and omni-channel customers are different from one-channel ones: *they are better informed, make use of technology and demand more from those retailers they do business with* (Cook, 2014: 266). The omni-channel customer experience exists both in online and offline: they should be integrated and complementary. In addition, it has been experimented that channel integration (omni-channel approach= *leads to channel synergies rather than channel cannibalization*

(Verhoef et al. 2015: 178). For this reason, it has to be made a distinction between multichannel and omni-channel. While the multichannel is an “old” concept based on the importance of being present in several channels, that are accessible only one per time, in order to achieve different types of customers, on the other hand, the omni-channel is focused on the importance of the client who has to be able to use different channels at the same time, since that they are *interconnected*. In other words, the omni-channel approach is more and better *customer-oriented*, compared to the multichannel one. Firms have to be able to understand customer needs and to actively operate in order to offer them the opportunity to have what they are looking for.

**Table 4.** *Multichannel vs. Omni-channel* (Verhoef et al., 2015:176)

	<b>MULTICHANNEL MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>OMNI-CHANNEL MANAGEMENT</b>
<b>CHANNEL FOCUS</b>	Interactive channels only	Interactive and mass-communication channels
<b>CHANNEL SCOPE</b>	Retail channels: store, online website and direct marketing	Retail channels: store, online website, direct marketing, mobile channels, social media, customer touch-points
<b>SEPARATION OF CHANNELS</b>	Separate channels with no overlap	Integrated channels providing seamless retail experiences
<b>BRAND VS. CHANNEL CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP FOCUS</b>	Customer-retail channel focus	Customer-retail-brand focus
<b>CHANNEL MANAGEMENT</b>	Per channel	Cross-channel objectives
<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	Channel objectives	

To conclude, it is possible to say that there are no more differences between online and offline customers and marketing, since that in the omni-channel strategy both of them have to be placed on the same level.

The existent theory was of great influence in the formulation of the question presented during the interviews and questionnaire. For the latter data collection, the quantitative method, in fact, were defined different hypothesis:

**H1:** The gender is an element which affects the perception of the shopping experience of a customer.

**H2:** The selection of the purchasing channel varies with the changing of the customer's gender.

**H3:** The selection of the purchasing channel varies with the changing of the customer's nationality.

**H4:** The selection of the purchasing channel varies with the changing of the customer's age.

## 4. METHODOLOGY

The aim of this chapter is to describe and explain the applied method of the whole study. There will be presented the research approach, the data collection techniques, the sample and the data analysis. To conclude the chapter there will be provided the validity and the reliability of the research.

### 4.1. Methodological approaches

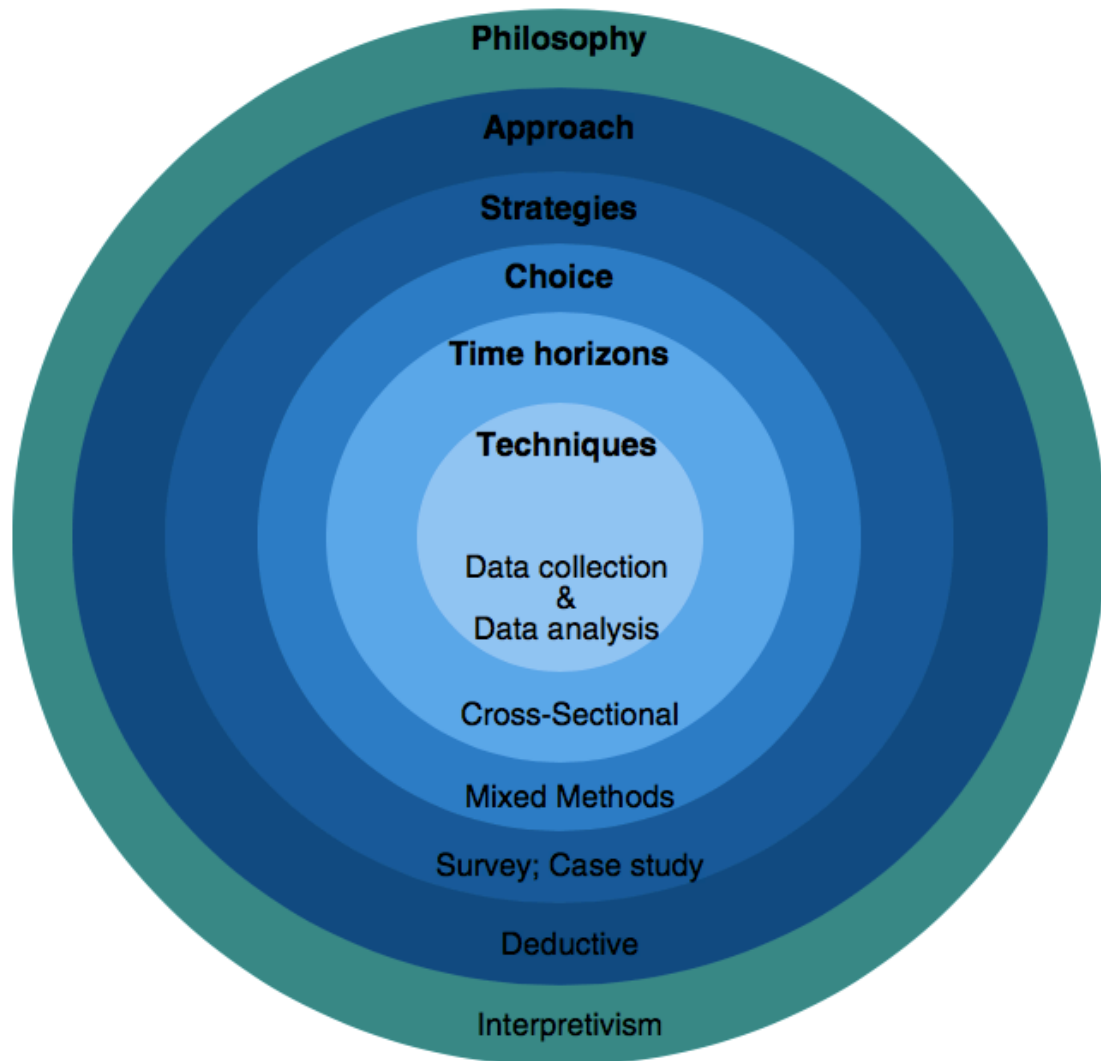
The presented research is aimed to understand the background motivation that pushes the born-online stores to open physical shops basing the business strategy on a *multichannel* or *omni-channel* approach and focusing on the influence of the *customer experience*.

The research approach follows a deductive perspective in order to achieve the goal of understanding the answer of the research question. As stated by Saunders (2009) the deductive approach starts with the principles created by the existing theories moving to the collected data. With this approach there is the need to present and explain relationship between variables.

For what concerns the investigation method, it will be used an exploratory approach since that, as stated by Malhotra et al. (2007), the *aim of an exploratory research is to provide insights into and an understanding of the marketing phenomena*. The above mentioned method results, in fact, appropriated for the presented work thanks also to the possibility, that it gives, to access to further information and to understand the possible relationship between variables. This method is considered by Saunders et al. (2007) as the one used *“to assess a phenomenon with a new light”*. In the study it will be used to find out a possible relationship between the omni-channel approach and the creation of the customer experience in the firms’ decision making of applying a new strategy.

The presented work will follow a mixed method of data collection, i.e. both qualitative and quantitative ones. According to Saunders et al. (2007) the qualitative data collection has no need to obtain numerical results, since everything can be obtained by using

dialogues, such as interviews, and so, to say it in an easy way, through words. Consequently, the presented study will follow a qualitative method, for what concerns the company and customers interview, since that between the objectives, the most relevant one is to understand what leads the firms to mix the marketing strategy with online and offline world, and the research gap is relevant, a qualitative research appears to be the most usable and suitable research method for the above mentioned part. On the other hand, in order to collect a great sample of data, a quantitative approach was used in the customers' questionnaire. According to Saunders et al. (2007) a *quantitative research is appropriate when variables to be used and examined are clear*.



**Figure 14.** *Research Onion* (Saunders et al., 2007).

## 4.2. Sample and data collection

Robson (2002) defines case study as *a strategy for doing research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life*. In this study, the phenomenon being studied is the role of the customer experience in the decision of born-online stores to apply a multichannel or omni-channel approach becoming present even in the bricks-and-mortars world.

The customer experience and the application of multi or omni-channel approaches will be limited to international born-online firm. In fact, the interviewed company has the characteristics of having opened both online and, afterwards, offline stores within an international context, and, moreover, has used the online channel as the first tool to let the world knowing the brand. In addition, international customers have been asked to express their own point of view basing their answers on the perception of physical and virtual stores.

The study will be limited to customers with an age range between eighteen and sixty-four (18-64) and both male and female, since that the different behaviours, point of view and internet knowledge can be different from generation to generation and from gender to gender. In fact, Bertolotti (2015) has identified four different types of users who match three distinguished generation brackets:

1. *Z-Generation*, or iGen, which identifies people who belongs to 1995-2010 years;
2. *Millennials*, or Y-Generation which includes people who were born between 1980 and 2000;
3. *X-Generation*, to which people born between 1960 and 1980 belong to;
4. *Baby Boomer*, which takes in consideration who were born from 1946 and 1964

### 4.2.1 Data collection technique

In the presented study a mix of data collection methodology was used. In fact, were collected qualitative data, in order to achieve the goal of understanding the motivations that push born-online firms to use multichannel, or omni-channel, approaches with the

aim to create a more significant customer experience, with a large set of information (Saunders et al., 2007:34). With the qualitative analysis is important to understand that both frequent and rare cases are taken into account at the same importance level.

In order to ensure reliability and validity of the above mentioned collected data, there have been used two different techniques of data collection: two types of interviews to both company and customers aimed at *corroborating the findings* (Saunders et al. 2007: 154).

Furthermore, quantitative data were collected by using an online customer questionnaire. A sample of 255 customers has been collected and analysed through the transformation of the qualitative information into quantitative ones by using the Likert scale method: in doing it, was used SPSS program. The questionnaire was divided in different sections and for each answers was evaluated the scale of importance of each element. The highest grade is represented by the number 3 and the smallest by the number 1. The decision was not arbitrarily taken, but it has been made basing on the literature review explained in the previous Chapters 2 and 3. In fact, greater importance was given to the **experience** and to the **multi/omni-channel**. In addition, in the answers in which there was the request to respond the frequency of some actions, were attributed to the possibilities the following values in a crescent scale, since that the Likert scale is a linear method: Never = 1; Rarely = 2; Often = 3; Always = 4.

Successively, the gender was valued with 1 for the male and 2 for the female, while the nationality was distinguished in Italian (1) and Foreign (2). In addition, secondary data were taken into account and collected through web information, blogs and forums and, afterwards, compared with primary ones as suggested by Saunders et al. (2007), in order to broaden the research. The research was empirically carried out with primary qualitative and quantitative data. Data were collected by using an online-launched structured questionnaire for international customers and, taking a sample of the participants, semi-structured interviews in order to obtain more detailed information, answers and point of views since that the interviewees have been able to build their own reply. By using two different types of approaches with the customers, it has been easy to access to the understanding of some of the questionnaire's answers given by the consumers and,

successively, analyse them. Feelings were evident in face-to-face interview with them and this was relevant for the understanding of different behaviours between, especially, gender. With the customers' interview it has grown the possibility to let them thinking about the importance of the customer experience and not to take it for granted or underestimate this important factor. This lead to the possibility to look at the research topic from a different point of view (Saunders et al., 2007).

Firm's interview has been carried out during March, 21<sup>st</sup> 2017 in order to obtain a different point of view, from the one of the customers, concerning the same topic presented of the consumers during the questionnaire and interviews, with the aim of crossing data and reach the final goal of having a better idea of the possible managerial implications, since that the multichannel and the omni-channel strategies are concerning both the firm and customer decision and experiences.

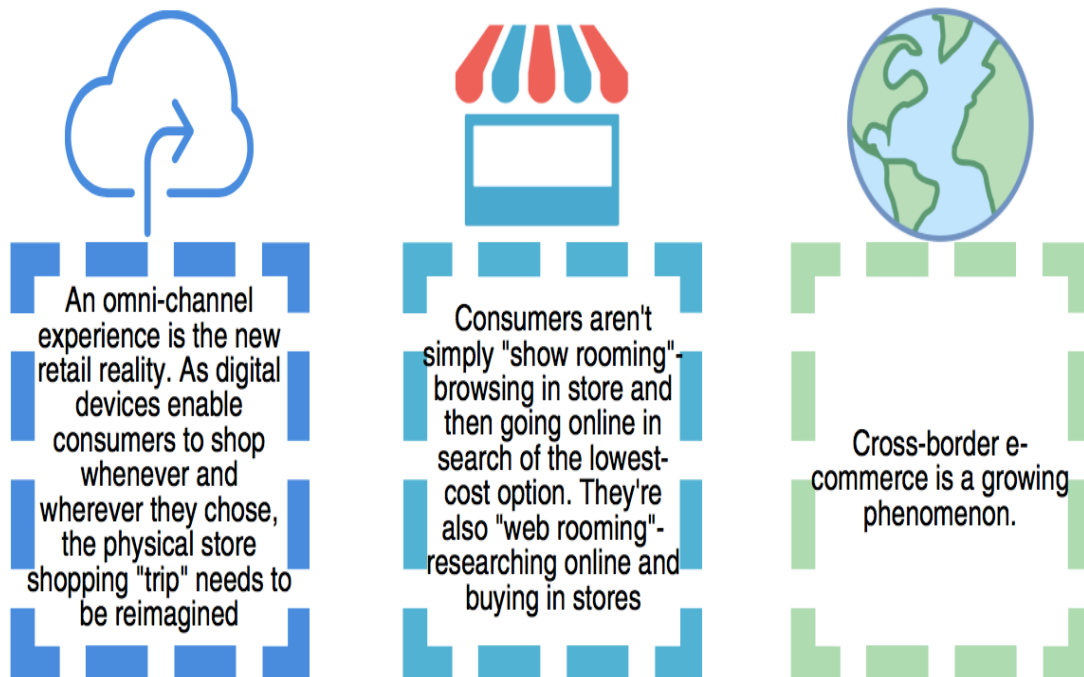
#### 4.2.2. Sample

*Multichannel retailing is moving to omni-channel retailing. This is an important next development in retailing and will affect how retailers operate* (Verhoef, 2015). As Rigby stated, the future of shopping is the *omni-channel retailing* i.e. *an integrated sales experience that melds the advantages of physical stores with the information-rich experience of online shopping*. In fact, channels have to be integrated in order to create a customer experience and establish a communication with the consumer (Solomon, 2015).

Thereafter the beginning of the E-commerce era, the *multi-channel* shopping started to play a significant role in the purchasing journey offering to the customer the possibility to interface with different and separated channels (Figure 14). As the evolution of the multichannel approach, the omni-channel method is catching on. In this case the customer will follow a flow of experiences, without being able to notice the switch from one channel to another. It appears evident that the *tomorrow shopping experience will be a hybrid one, between online and offline* (Russi, 2014). It has been found, in fact, that it is always more common the *reverse showrooming* element, that take into account the ROPO

theory (Chapter 2.5). Nowadays phone apps, social media and high-technology tools help the firm to build up a real shopping a customer experience.

Taking in consideration international firms (exclusively born-online) and international customers, this study will take in consideration both genders and an age range which starts from eighteen arriving to sixty-four years old customers, since that the minimum should be “legally required” in order to ultimate a purchasing online and the latter is to compare if there are any differences in purchasing behaviours within different generations.

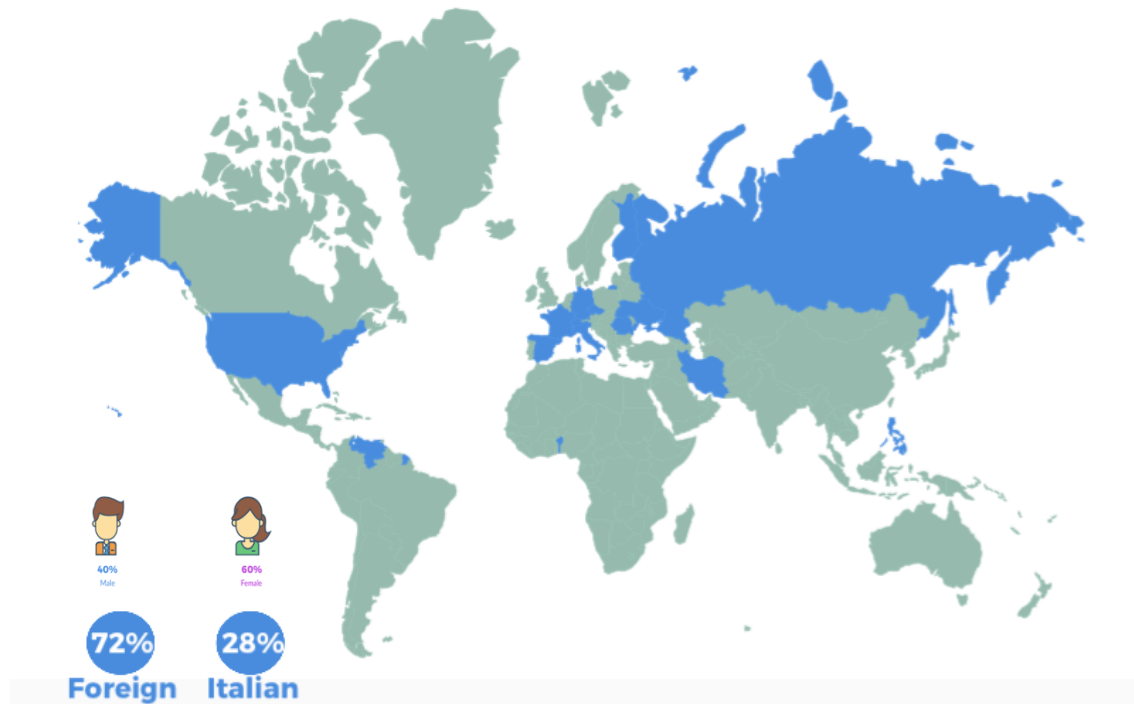


**Figure 15.** *Coming to a Device Near You* (Nielsen Commerce Report, 2016:3).

The presented study is based on both primary and secondary qualitative and quantitative data. Primary quantitative data are collected by the researcher by creating a customer questionnaire which was answered by 255 people of different nationalities, gender and age. Primary qualitative data are collected through customers' face-to-face interview

(taking randomly 25 people who answered the questionnaire) and face-to-face international born-online firm's interviews. In order to have a large sample, the delimitations for the customer were not so strict and, as above mentioned, the age range was established in order to cover three different generations of people all over the world. Face-to-face customers interview sample was collected basing the selection on convenience and self-selection (Saunders et al., 2007). The chance to take part in the questionnaire and interviews was publicized via social networks, such as Facebook and LinkedIn and via interpersonal relationships to different types of consumers: students, professionals (such as Doctors, Lawyers, Financial Analysts, Google suppliers, etc.) and mothers, considering that these two categories are the ones that should have less time to dedicate to do shopping, and, then, other random categories within the established age range and of different nationalities. The possibility to take part to face-to-face semi-structured interviews was accepted, and consequently collected, by twenty people with whom individual meeting were arranged.

Other five people, at the end, were interviewed with *blind interviews*, without knowing, at the beginning, that the answers would have been useful for the research and this peculiarity was explained only at the end of the meeting while was asked for the permission to use the collected data. This latter method was used in order to not influence the person to think about the possible "right answers" having the possibility to express their own opinion in a normal conversation.



**Figure 16.** *Sample of the Interviewees' Nationalities and Genders*

#### 4.3. Customers questionnaire and interviews

As stated by Saunders et al. (2007), collecting interviews can build a great advantage in obtaining extra data when is presented a large number of questions to be answered, such as the questionnaire ones. In the study, twenty-five customers' interviews have been collected in order to add more data, to the quantitative research, in qualitative way.

Before collecting face-to-face interviews results, two-hundred-fifty-three, 255, customers were asked to fill a short questionnaire made up of ten questions with multiple-choice answers. At the end of the paper they were asked to indicate their gender, their age and their nationality. The questions of the questionnaire were principally based on the importance of both online and offline shops, shopping and purchasing behaviours.

The questionnaire was opened the 26<sup>th</sup> of January 2017 and closed one month later, while the related interviews were carried out during the same period and finished the 19<sup>th</sup> March 2017.

The questionnaire was created through Google application for questionnaire and the answers were following a random position each time the file was opened. All the answers have been collected in an anonymous way in order to respect the privacy of the respondents. The file was created in both English and Italian languages and was sent in those two different versions to all the Italian participants, while in English to all of the international people. The questions of the questionnaire were based on closed-answers and, for some of them, there was the possibility to answer with a multiple choice.

The questionnaire was created with the aim to understand how people use and approach the online and offline shopping, what are the main decisions that customers take and what are the main motivations. The questionnaire structure was based on different main topics (Table 6.).

In order to not annoying the people, the questionnaire length was timed and was decided to be no longer than five minutes, trying to keep the person always concentrated on the asked questions. The results have been saved as PDF file in both Italian and English versions. A list of nationalities and ages was finally written in a separate paper in order to understand if the data collection could have been said to be international and within the previous selected age-ranges. The questionnaire's results have been finally analysed through a descriptive statistic after having transformed all the qualitative data into numbers, by using the Likert scale method.

**Table 5.** *Topics of the Questionnaire*

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Information</b>	<b>Link to the theory</b>
Introduction	Presentation of the topic; Justification of the research and of the questionnaire	
Online shopping	Frequency Motivations	Senecal et al. (2005); Howard et al. (1969); Dholakia et al. (2010); Senecal and Nantel (2002); Grandinetti (2002); Laudon and Traver (2009; 2016)
ROPO	Attitudes Motivations Frequency	Byron (2011); Bartolini (2014)
Web-rooming Showrooming	Frequency Motivations	Lecinski (2011)
Brick-and-Mortars Experiences Multichannel Omni-channel	Importance Relevance Motivations	Luo et al. (2011); Moriarty et al. (1990); DeVincentis et al. (1996); Friedman et al. (2003); Kumar (2005); Görsch (2000); Grant (1996); Rindova et al., 2000; Flint et al. (2001); Wilson (2007); Rosenbloom (2007); Arikan (2008); Rigby (2011); Degeratu et al. (2000); Blocher et al. (2005); Rangaswamy et al. (2005); Newman (2014); Neslin et al. (2014); Yu et al. (2011); Saunders (2002); Reda (2002); Thomas et al. (2005); Balasubramanian et al. (2005); Brynjolfsson et al. (2000); Konus et al. (2008); Hoffman (2015); Riva (2007); Dholakia et al. (2010); Snow (2014); Sealey (2015); Verhoef et al. (2015);
Conclusion	Gender Age Nationality	

#### 4.4. Firm's semi-structured interview

The decision of using a single case study was undertaken for different reasons. The first main influencing factor is that there are only little cases of companies which were born online and then have decided to expand their horizons offline. Moreover, the decision to research a company which bases the business on accessible-luxury accessorizes, glasses, seemed to be the most suitable case to understand the importance of being physically present. The above mentioned motivations let Glassing appears the most appealing company to be examined in the research. The case strategy is an empirical investigation involvement of conducting a research (Robson, 2016: 150).

Qualitative data research was the chosen method to collect firm's information, since that it permits to obtain rich and great information that are going to be explored as close as possible to the reality (Robson, 2002). The researcher has created a structure of all the possible questions to ask, even if the order and the answers could vary because of the nature itself of the typology of the interview. In addition, the questions were open-ended ones in order to gain as much as information and longer answers as possible (Saunders et al., 2007). The interview was organized on March, 21<sup>st</sup> at the company's main shop in Milan and the questions were mainly based on the previous stated theory issues of Balasubramanian et al. (2005), Neslin et al. (2009), Keller (2010), Parente et al. (2014), Verhoef (2015) and Bartolini (2014).

The company, Glassing, was called in the month of February 2017 and the interview was organized in the month of March. The first contact with Glassing was through email in which was explained what the researcher was looking for and for what purpose, asking for a meeting to carry out the interview.

**Table 6.** *Topic of Company Interview: Glassing*

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Information</b>	<b>Theoretical link</b>
Introduction	Name; Role in the firm; Age	
Firm's info	Story of Glassing; Competitors; Country of Operation; Stores	
Multichannel/Omni-channel	Importance of online and offline stores; Purpose of different channels; Relevance of each channel	Degeratu et al. (2000); Saunders (2002); Balasubramanian et al. (2005); Ranganwamy et al. (2005); Neslin et al. (2009); Dholakia et al. (2010); Verhoef et al. (2015)
Customer Experience	Position of the customer for the firm; Relevance and importance of the experience	Dholakia (2010)
ROPO and ZMOT	Customer journey; Final purchases	Byron (2011); Lecinski (2011); Bartolini (2014);

The interview was conducted in Italian, mother tongue of the respondent: one of the two owners of the company, Alessandro Forte. The answers were audio-recorded, transcribed and translated in English just after the interview was finished. At the same day of the interview was also asked for the permit of include in the study both the name of the company and the name of the interviewee.

#### 4.5. Data analysis

Yin (2003) stated that the organization and the use of existing theoretical framework will help in the formulation of the research question, objectives and in the management of the data collection analysis. For this reason, the questionnaire and interviews questions were based on the previous presented literature of chapter two and three, as presented in the **Table 5. Topics of the Questionnaire** and **Table 6. Topic of Company Interview: Glassing** As well, the explained theories will be used to explain the findings of the research. Saunders et al. (2007: 482), in the same way, stated that the presentation of the results of the qualitative data collection analysis have to be *condensed, grouped or restructured as a narrative support meaningful analysis*. The master thesis, in addition, follows an analytical process for the results collection. In fact, there is a forecasting of the intended results already explained within the literature reviews (Saunders et al., 2007).

Looking at the quantitative side of the research it can be said that it has been used a non-probability method, i.e. the purposed selection of the units from the population ((Maylor et al., 2005:195). The chosen population is made up of people between 18 and 54 years old of different nationalities, gender and professions. To the participants was asked to answer an internet-based questionnaire that was delivered and collect. It means that *the questionnaire was handed out to respondents and later returned by them* (Maylor et al., 2005:186). The file was sent to 500 people, while the received answers were 255. It is important to achieve a high response rate in order to obtain representativeness of the sample (Bryman et al., 2011). There were presented two different types of questionnaire, one in English and one in Italian, in order to avoid misunderstanding concerned to the language.

For what concerns the firms' data, both primary and secondary qualitative data was collected. Secondary data came from the different companies' annual reports, corporate publications and working diaries. Primary data, on the other hand, were collected by interviewing the co-owner of the company in the month of March, 2017. The empirical data were collected by using a semi-structured interview, conducted in Italian, method in order to guide the interviewee in the needed direction of the study, but, at the same time,

to achieve a higher number of additional information. As stated by Easterby-Smith (1991: 74) the semi-structured method, as well used for the customers' interviews, is *suitable for a logical approach to the issue under the study*. In all of the cases of data collection of the study, the theory base was used in order to create the questionnaire and the interviews. Furthermore, the theory was used as the base of the analysis of the empirical results (Chapter 5).

#### 4.6. Validity and reliability of the study

Saunders et al. (2007) stated that the validity and reliability of a research project define its quality. Concerning to this study it can be said that the quality is assured by the ability of having collected both primary and secondary data. Furthermore, the data were collected under a quantitative and qualitative method. This factor let the researcher to achieve results by looking at different points of view of both customers and firm in order to have a comparisons of the findings.

Malhotra et al. (2007) have identified both the validity and the reliability and have provided an explanation for each concept. The validity is seen as *the extent to which a measurement represents characteristics that exist in the phenomenon under investigation*. The validity of the proposed questionnaire was ensured by taking into account previous research questions, PwC one. This factor, as stated by Malhotra et al. (2007) can be seen as an assurance of the validity requirement of a research. It can be added that, in addition, the presented questionnaire and interviews were carried out in two different languages, Italian and English, in order to ensure a better understanding of the topic and of the questions.

On the other hand, the authors have stated the reliability concept as *the extent to which a scale presents consistent results when being reutilized for the same purpose* (Malhotra et al. 2007: 313). In the presented study, the reliability was assured by asking to the participants to participate to a short questionnaire in an anonymous way in order to avoid *participants' errors* and *participants' bias* (Robson, 2002). The possible *observant error*

(Robson, 2002) were avoided by structuring the interviews' questions to both customers and firm.

## 5. EMPIRICAL RESULTS

The following chapter is aimed at presenting the research findings. The collected data were analysed through the previous stated methodology in order to achieve the prefixed goals of the research question and objectives. Customers' questionnaire, consumers and firm interviews are presented in this section together with a comparison analysis of the results and of the presented theory.

### 5.1. The relevance of the experience for international customers

The assumption of the study was characterized by the influence of the customer experience in the decision of the born online stores to become *Multi* or *Omni* channel. Since that the decision can be directly influenced by the consumers, the first part of the research was conducted by asking to the shoppers their perceptions through a questionnaire and interviews. During the data collection the researcher was able to face with different point of view, both positive and negative for what concern the importance of experiencing the shopping process. However, it was revealed that the starting assumption plays an important role in the *pre*, *post* and *purchasing* phases. It can be affirmed, then, that customer experience is a relevant motivation for both customers and firms, but it is not the only one.

The first impression was that customer think, as first relevant element, about the possibility to save time by doing shopping via web and the chance to touch the product through the offline channel. Different interviewees, in fact, started to talk about the experience just after reminding them this element as, for example, the interviewee number 21:

*“Actually I prefer offline shopping when I have free-time, maybe during the weekend. Usually I check the availability on the company website and, during the spare time, I*

*go in the shop. I prefer to touch the product and try it (...) I love the type of shops in which you go inside and you can feel an **atmosphere**".*

Another motivation of the offline shopping after having searched for information was given by the respondent number 10:

*"I prefer much more to buy the product directly in the shop, especially if we are talking about accessorizes or dresses, because I need to see them, to try them and to feel the satisfaction of going out from the place with the bags: I am convinced that this is a wonderful experience of both purchasing and post-purchasing phase! (...) I am used to look the online catalogues to have an idea of what I will buy, to have more information about the product... I usually behave like this when talking about bags and shoes of a luxury brand".*

On the other hand, the respondent number 7 underlined the irrelevance of the experience compared to the comfort of the online world:

*"Since the day in which I discovered the online shopping I can't manage without it: I can buy everything in every moment, I don't have to face with crowded places and salesman who are trying to let you buying everything you try!".*

The consumer number 14 revealed the same concept:

*"I do prefer the online shopping because, even if I have to wait some days, I don't have to waste my time going out for shopping in my free time".*

However, there are some respondents, as the number 1, 5, 13, 17, 22 and 23 who declared that they are more oriented in doing online shopping for some specific products, as books, high-technology items, home accessorizes and cosmetics, while for others they prefer to verify the quality of the product by touching them and to have the "*feeling of satisfaction of having bought something*" (Interviewee number 13).

Up to now it seems that the importance of the decision of the buying channel is determinate by the satisfaction of the customer and the possibility to directly approach the product.

One of the respondents, the number 2, affirmed that the importance of the experience in a shop is due to the level of the product that the customer is buying:

*“I like to think about living an experience in a shop which sells luxury goods, or at least non-fast-fashion products. I like to associate the article that I bought to the experience that I lived in the store, as for example at Tiffany”.*

The researcher could notice the relevance of the experience for the customer as a factor of non-primary importance:

*“If I like the product I do not really care about the shopping experience because I already know what I am going to buy. However, I would like to say that if I have to chose between two new brands of which I know only a few, or nothing at all, I would choose the one in which shop there is a particular interest to the client”* (Interviewee number 6).

*“The experience is of secondary importance to me. I would prefer a high quality product sold in a shop with no atmosphere at all than a good of low quality. By the way I would say that if I can have both the high quality and the experience I will probably be more loyal to the brand, because they make me feel important, as it happened at Hermes”* (Interviewee number 9).

It is possible to notice the importance of the brand positioning and of the products that the customer is approaching. The experience could make the difference in terms of choice and of brand-loyalty, as already stated in the theoretical framework, presented in the Chapter 2, Ming (2010).

*“The price is the key influencing element who guides me in the decision of where to buy the product. It, often, happens to be in a shop and to take my smartphone to compare the in-store and online price of the good, or to look for it online. If there is no price difference, or I have no discount voucher, I usually buy the product offline for payment safety reasons”* (Interviewee number 24).

Going further to the quantitative analysis conducted on the questionnaire, it has to be said that it revealed other different perceptions. The asked question, related to the one of the interview, was about the “Relevance of the physical stores” and the respondents were required to answer if it still plays an important role. The majority of the participants give back positive feedback and, for this reason, they were asked to explain the motivation of the answer, by choosing one or more sentence from the followings:

1. The physical store still plays an important role because there is more attention to the client
2. The physical store still plays an important role because I can live an experience
3. The physical store still plays an important role because I am satisfied in having the product immediately
4. The physical store still plays an important role because I like to see the product and try it

The above mentioned possibilities were, later, converted, by using the Likert scale, into numerical values in order to conduct the analysis. The smallest value, 1, was attributed to the possibility to “touch and try the product”, followed by the “satisfaction of having it immediately” represented by the number 2 as well as the “attention to the client”, while to the “experience” was given the value 3, since it is one of the main content of the research. In the presented answer, the 58.7% of the respondents justified the importance of the offline store with the value 1, i.e. touch and try the product. The given answers are in line with the one given by the respondents during the interviews as, for example the interviewee number 21.

The questionnaire analysis was then conducted by distinguishing Italians and Foreigners, the gender difference and age discriminant. Italian respondents showed a similar sample's

behaviour with a more pronounced frequency (61%), while, on the other hand the foreigners' sample resulted to be more in line with the general one. However, it has to be said that the mean and the variance of the non-Italian participants is higher than the one of the Italian:  $M_f = 1,6442$  and  $Var_f = 0,5462$  showing high frequencies in the answers to which were attributed the value 1 and 2.

In addition, the same question was analysed under the gender difference which did not flash any particular difference. In fact, the two different samples, distinguished between *male* (1) and *female* (2) have both shown a Mean equal to 1.52 and a low variance: in fact, the 61% of the women answered that the physical shop is still important in the shopping phase and justified the answer by emphasising the relevance of touching and trying the product. Only the 14% stated that the experience is the main motivation. The same relevance grade is attributed by the *male* with a 52% of frequency. To conclude, the age difference, seems not to be a discriminant element of the question's possible answers, since that it follows exactly the entire sample.

Looking at the presented answers, especially in the qualitative ones, it seems to be an important difference in the perception of the experience, in the motivation of the channel choice and in the importance of not wasting time between male and female consumers. However, the difference can't be found in the main motivation, represented by the sample of 255 respondents of the quantitative data, of trying and touching the product. The presented behaviours can be taken into account in the research: both of the gender have shown the importance of the contact, eye-contact and physical-contact, with the product that is resulted to be the main motivation of why people think that the real stores are still important. Nevertheless, when the respondents were asked to answer where do they prefer to do shopping, the difference in the gender appears. The conclusion is that both male and female, Italians or foreigners, think that the non-virtual store is important, but when they have to face with the real decision of where to buy a product they behave in different ways, depending on their working and familiar situations.

To conclude it seems that, from what has appeared by this first analysis of the findings, just a small sample of customers care about the experience in the offline shops, and the

majority of them did it depending on the product. Most of the consumers still believe in physical stores, but when they face the reality they behave in the more comfortable way according to their gender, job and familiar status.

## 5.2. Multichannel and omni-channel: experience significance in the purchasing channel identification

Starting from what has emerged in the previous sub-chapter 5.1, the following one is aimed at understanding the influence that the needed product has on the decision of the channel for the customer. The shopper can, in fact, decide whether to buy it online or offline.

Basing the analysis on the customer interviews and questionnaire, it can be seen that the majority of the shoppers decide the buying channel depending on the product they have to buy:

*“Where do I usually do shopping? It depends on the type of product: if I have to buy a book I usually buy it online, since it is often cheaper than buying it in a book shop, the same happens if I have to purchase some sport’s wear. I would say that I rather buy high price products directly from an online store: if I buy it it is because I saw it before in a physical store, actually I don’t know why, but visit the store makes me feel safer, that is why most of the times I check it online and then I go to buy it in a real store”* (Interviewee number 2).

*“I prefer much more to buy the product directly in the shop, especially if we are talking about accessorizes or dresses (...) I usually behave like this when talking about bags and shoes of a luxury brand”* (Interviewee number 10).

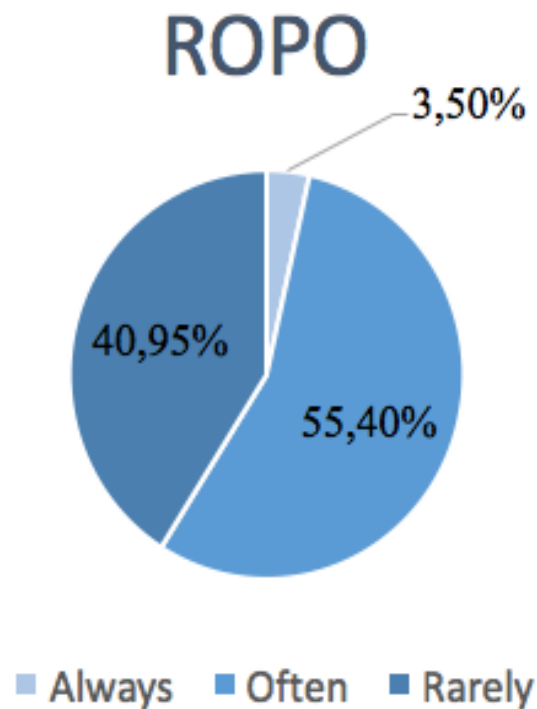
*“I like doing shopping. I buy from a store everything that gives me the satisfaction to buy, as, for example, dresses, shoes, bags, jewels, etc. because I love trying them, it gives me the feeling of being properly satisfied. On the other hand, if I have to buy some technological items I usually prefer to buy them from an online store, since that*

*I am not an expert. In fact, by buying them online I have the possibility to have a lot of information from the web blogs and forums” (Interviewee number 13).*

The presented answers can be linked with the quantitative analysis conducted on the questionnaire’s one: “Does it ever happen to use the online channel only to have information about the product and then go to the store to buy it? And vice versa?”.

The first question, inspired by the part of the ROPO’s literature review, has received the 80% of positive answers.

To the mentioned percentage of participants was asked to answer the frequency with which it usually happens. The possibility to respond never was not appositely contemplated within the possibilities, since it was taken in consideration only the portion of people who stated that the ROPO happens to them. The *mean* of the sample is equal to 2.65, i.e. between “rarely” and “often”, to which correspond, respectively, the values 2 and 3. The mode is, in fact, equal to 3, answer in which there is the greatest frequency.



**Figure 17.** *ROPO Results from the Questionnaire*

The *female* gender, in addition, answered that the research online, purchase offline happens “often” represented by the 47.7% of the women who responded that it happens in the previous question.

On the other hand, there are different push factors which influence a shopper to buy online or offline such as the familiar status and the career, as can be seen from these two presented interviews’ answers:

*“I am used to buy a lot of products by using the online shops: I am passionate of technology and the most of the products are impossible to be found in a shop, or, better, are very expensive and I have a very short range of choice. When I am buying online I am, then, used to buy other goods, not necessarily related one to each other, in order to complete the shopping in only **one delivery** (if I am buying on Amazon, for example)”* (Interviewee number 15).

*“I would say that I use both online and offline channel. I am used to use the online channel to do the shopping on the supermarket’s website, so I don’t have to go with **my two children** to buy food or water. It is very comfortable and useful to have the possibility to do so nowadays. If then I have to buy something not strictly related to the bare necessities, I can go out for a walk and do shopping during the free time”* (Interviewee number 17).

The above presented statements put under light the discriminants of the interests, the prices, the products and the familiar and career status. In fact, the two respondents declared of having different private life status. The respondent 15 is not married and has no child and his job is in line with his passions. The respondents 17 has a family and a full-time job which is not related to the motivation of particular products.

In this part of the research it is worth to spend some words on two secondary data, collected on the companies’ websites, related to different actual situations: GameStop and

Amazon. These two global companies, operating under a multichannel and omni-channel strategy, are now facing two different moments in the same period.

GameStop was born in 1984 under the name of Babbage's in the USA. It was, later in 1999, sold to Barnes and Noble which a year later merged with Funco, Inc. that has definitely changed the name in the today's one. In 2002 the initial public offering on the New York Stock Exchange was completed and it became the World's most famous game store: it counts more than 6.000 shops all over seventeen countries. It has opened, as well, online stores and in 2011 it added the digital PC game distribution to its **multichannel** offerings. During 2016 the company, however, has faced with a decrease of the total sales of -19,3% for the software and -29,1% for the hardware part (Armental, 2017). Therefore, the company decided to close 150 stores. The Wall Street Journal stated that the decision of closing could have been influenced by the *digital downloads*. It seems, in fact, that the majority of the customers prefer to *buy games in digital delivery* (Armental, 2017).

Amazon, that can be considered the main competitors of GameStop, on the other hand, is facing an opposite situation concerning different typologies of products. Amazon is the biggest e-commerce company which was born in Seattle in 1994 under the name of Cadabra.com. It started as a book e-store, but it, immediately, enlarged the horizons to a great variety of different products such as DVD, videogames, high-tech products, accessorises, fashion, furniture, etc. It entered the NASDAQ stock market in 1997 and nowadays has a world-wide cover. In 2011 was launched Amazon AppStore for Android in which shoppers can buy products directly from the app. In 2015 the company decided to increase its **omni-channel** approach by opening the first physical store: Amazon Books store in which occur both physical and virtual customer approaches. The decision of becoming present in the real world may appear to be the opposite of the traditional Amazon's business policies. However, the physical store is able to offer to the customer-base 5.000 book titles chosen from the customers' online requests. In order to avoid the channel cannibalization, the prices are the same as the online platform's ones. The bookstore is, in fact, a perfect match between the online one and a real bookshop: customers are able to browse books, read the comments and feedbacks about the product, try amazon items as Kindle and Tablet Fire, and to scan the barcode of the product to

obtain more information or, indeed, buying the product by logging in the online platform. In addition to this, in 2016 the company has opened, at the moment only to its employees, AmazonGo, a physical grocery store in which it is possible to observe and to face with all of the existent advanced technologies. The purchasing process ends, in fact, with the exit of the shopper without approaching the cash, but only passing through a barrier of which sensors identified the bought products and charges the bill on the personal Amazon account (Amazon, 2017). For this reasons, Amazon can be said to use, in an excellent way, the **omni-channel** approach since that in every channel all the possible technologies are well integrated and structured, in order to *speed up the shopping experience* (Amazon, 2016).

The comparisons of the above mentioned firms is useful to understand how the product can affect the performance of a shop and, moreover, how the integration of the channels can improve the quality of the service. In fact, at the same time, it is witnessed two opposite strategic decisions: the first one is the closure of a big portion of the physical stores (3%) due to the growth of relevance of the online stores, while, on the other side, the born online store decide to approach the customer in a physical manner, after having lead to the closure different bookstores and malls. Jennifer Cast, Amazon vice-president, says that they wanted to exploit twenty years of experience within the sector in order to come up with the benefit of online and offline shopping. In my opinion this can be seen as a perfect example of non-cannibalization of the channels (Verhoef et al. 2015, Chapter 3.5) that has happened, however, to GameStop company.

It can be deducted that, compared to the possibility of touching and seeing product, the experience can result of being of less relevance for the channel selection. In fact, looking at the questionnaire answers' analysis, it can be seen that the possibility to face directly with the product and try it is of greater importance.

### Relevance of physical store



**Figure 18.** *Physical Store Relevance Questionnaire's Results*

However, it has to be said that the more integration between channels the greater is the possibility to achieve a great number of customers without facing the cannibalization of the channels which has bring GameStop to the decision of closing a lot of brick-and-mortar stores.

To conclude it can be seen that the product makes the difference in the channel decision during the purchasing phase, but also the situation around the individual customer. The experience can be said of being a *plus* for which the customers, most of the time, is not looking for, but if they are able to face with it they are glad to deal with.

### 5.3. The importance of the customer experience for a company

The second part of the research was conducted by interviewing one of the two owner of the selected firm for the business case: Glassing company. Glassing was born from an idea of Alessandro Forte and Stefano Ottone in 2010 in Ibiza. The glasses line was made of only one type of model and it immediately became viral in the social networks, in which 2.000 fan were tagging the brand. The glasses, thanks to above mentioned social network, in particular Facebook, became a symbol of the parties in the Mediterranean Island. In fact, the online-brand expand their horizon by patenting glasses-vending-machines located inside the discos in which were sold the model in many different colours for 20€. The clients were enthusiast of the new chance, given by the new brand, of feel part of a *community* thanks to the new way of buying and to the social network. Alessandro Forte thinks that by using social networks they had the possibility of growing faster than opening a store, since that Glassing was only a start-up: new type of sun-glasses were created and launched in the web. *This gave us the possibility of being present in the private-life-time of an individual, since that customers are able to buy our product while sitting on their sofa* (A. Forte, 2017).

Glassing main competitors are luxury-sunglasses brands as Mykita, a Berlin-based label which is graced in a great number of star's faces; Retro Super Future an Italian brand sported by VIP as well. The design and the prices of these brands are similar to Glassing ones. In fact, the prices changes from state to state reaching the maximum in New York boutiques, located in the 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, in which the prices start from 500\$, while in Europe they do not exceed 400€.

The force-points of Glassing is the *made in Italy* and the *innovation* in both materials and shapes. Glassing, in fact, for the design side, collaborates with one of the most famous Fashion Institute in the world, Marangoni of Milan, while for the production they are focused on the importance of the "hand-made-in-Italy". The design is wholly created by the two founders who are

*Thinking about what they would like to wear and buy, without being commercial. We do like think that the customer has to recognize his/herself in the brand and not blend in. The **experience**, within our brand, has to start in the moment the customer wants to buy a pair of sun-glasses and chose Glassing or by chance while out for a walk, or by decision (Forte, 2017).*

In 2017 Glassing counts the online store, ten flagship stores located in Milan, Portofino, Forte dei Marmi, Taormina, Capri, Catania, Naples, Cannes, Dubai and one yacht store. Moreover, the brand is distributed in 1500 selected shops and luxury boutique all around the World. The selected locations are chosen for different reasons: high-level touristic location, selected after an accurate market analysis in which is evaluated the economic potential of the people, because

*When people are on holidays they will buy everything they like without thinking too much. High-targeted touristic places give the possibility of letting the brand goes around the world and, in addition, give us the chance of continuously meeting new people, potential buyers, every day and every hour (Forte, 2017).*

In addition, as stated in the previous analysed literature, if the customer is able to face with an extra-ordinary shop is more orientated to the purchasing:

*The atmosphere of the store has to help the customer of feeling in a world in which everything is possible. The loud music, the sea-oriented furniture, as the raw stones, and sales-personnel who is caring of telling you our story, since that I am persuaded that is very interesting, helps the sales.*

To sum up the first part of the interview it can be said that Glassing is a customer oriented firm which cares about letting the customers of being able to live an experience. During the interview, in addition, emerged that in some locations, for example Capri, they have a show room in the most famous hotel of the island, in which in every room is dedicated a Glassing television channel which gives the possibility of booking a private sale directly

in the suite of the luxury accommodation. Therefore, the customer is in the centre of the business, suffice is to say that the owners only produce what they would buy to be *unique*.

#### 5.4. Multichannel firm: Glassing case

*Glassing is not born with the intent of being only an e-commerce. Starting online was mainly to let the world know who we were, both through social network and the online-shop. The web is our **visiting card** that individuals and firms can easily find to look for information, to be updated about news and to see who is wearing it: a lot of movie and music global stars are wearing Glassing. If we had been only online present it would have been missing the base: the offline store makes the people confident that we are real and this helps us to be their trusted brand (Forte, 2017).*

It can be seen, by the statement of Alessandro Forte came out during the interview, that the online world is mainly used by the company as a *showcase for the world*. The company, in fact, recognizes the need that people have to touch and try the product and the chance that they deserve to have as much information as possible before buying it, starting from the material, the price and the importance of the brand. The multichannel approach of Glassing can be identified as a well structured one: it can not be said that it is an omni-channel strategy because there is not the perfect integration between the online and offline channels (as for example the possibility of buying through the phone while in the store). However, all the channels in which the brand exist are selected for the same reason: being a world's shop window.

*It often happens that people do not buy the glasses immediately in the shop: they try it and, after having received all the information about the brand by going on the social networks, their purchasing journey ends in the online store. However, most of the time, the research happens at the same time the customer is inside the shop (Forte, 2017).*

The *showrooming* and the ROPO are co-existing in Glassing business and customer relationship. That is the main reason why all the flagship stores are designed with the intent of catch the customer's attention. In fact, Alessandro Forte says that

*We still are at the beginning and the online store does not give the assurance of what it can be and how the product is, while the bricks-and-mortars improve the possibility of sales since that the customer has already touched and tried it. Here is the role of the experience: increasing the chance of purchasing by positively shocking the customer.*

The online store is useful since it is defined to be *more than one shop at the same time*, but there have to be understood the customer behaviour within it. The check out proof is usually done and Forte has noticed that usually a customer, before definitely buy the product in the e-commerce, enter the web site around three or four times.

Glassing's owner said that, especially at the beginning, the online channel helps the brand to be recognized from both Italian and international customers and today it still helps: people who still don't know the company have the possibility of seeing who is wearing it and discovering a brand recognition.

*Our idea is to be a luxury brand that can be found in luxury locations. We absolutely do not want to be a commercial brand. We want to complete the look of the people and we want to be recognized at the same level of luxury brand dresses and accessorizes: our goal is that people will wear Glassing sunglasses within a luxury outfit.*

The long term orientation of Glassing can be identified in being geared towards the building of a strong brand which is completely recognized all over the world. The company is working hard to achieve the goal, in fact, is soon opening the third store in Dubai followed by the first one in Naples in the middle of the shopping street, just near two of the most famous luxury brand.

*Our customer's target is in fact of high level, since we do not want to be recognized as a commercial brand. Our glasses design is not conventional, our materials and*

*processing are innovative: we look for people who can wear them. This is why our motto is “**MADNESS IS AN ART**”.*

It can be concluded with a sentence of the interviewee during our meeting. It sums up the main concepts:

*The online channel is everything, since that without it everything would be slower and slower, but the offline one is essential, because allows the brand to be solid through the solidity of the bricks-and-mortars. People can not live a real experience without touching it. Therefore, the multichannel presence can be seen as a “plus” for our firm: it helps us to increase revenues-thanks for example to the advertisement on social networks- and increase customer benefits-who can decide where to buy our glasses- and customer satisfaction-because we are always in the first line to help them in any occasion: in the e-store we have a direct chat in which they can ask for all the information they need and the answer is immediate-.*

## 6. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The following chapter provides the summary of the findings and the link with the theoretical contributions on the research. It is going to be presented the role of the experience emerged in the analysis of the results and other important elements not considered during the study which can be taken into account in future research. In addition, managerial implications and suggestions are presented as final conclusion of the whole work.

### 6.1. Summary of the findings

The research question of the study has been presented in the Chapter 1 and is the following: *“Why born online shops are now using the multichannel and omni-channel approach with opening physical stores? Does the customer experience may influence the decision?”*. The presented subchapter aims at presenting the summary of the empirical part’s findings, presented also in the Table 7. above. At the beginning of the research, research objectives, both theoretical and empirical, and delimitations were settled. For what concerns empirical delimitations, there have been interviewed 25 international customers of different ages and genders, it has been asked to participate to an online questionnaire to 500 international individuals, of which only 255 have participated, and finally an Italian born-online company’s owner was interviewed since it has opened many different bricks-and-mortars afterwards.

Concluding the study, it is logical to start from the results achieved by the customers’ analysis, which have been approached in both qualitative and quantitative ways. The starting point of the research was the experiential marketing and the customer experience influence on the decision, of a firm, of adopting a multi or omni-channel strategy by opening bricks-and-mortars. However, the customers’ data collected identified some other elements of particular interest which were not taken into account in the research. This factor can be, later, seen as both a limitation and a starting point for future research.

During the analysis of the answers of both interviews and questionnaire, it has emerged that the customers are looking and asking for the same things in both online and offline stores: good prices, trust relationship and utility comfort seen from the point of view of a user-friendly web-site and a well organized store. The buying process of the majority of the customers have to be based on a tactile approach since it has emerged that the main motivation of the importance of a bricks-and-mortars is the possibility to touch and try the product. The above mentioned approach revealed that it is followed for different types of goods: electrical, fashion, accessorizes and home products. The customer requires a touching and visual test to understand how it can fit, how it works and what are the product performances. It can be said, in addition, that the more expensive is the product, the more is the necessity of the individual to apply the above mentioned purchasing process.

The presented results can be generalized since 255 people participated at the questionnaire and, deeper answers, were then confirmed by other 25 consumers to whom were asked more specific questions about the purchasing process and the importance of the offline store and the experience perception. On the other hand, it has to be said that the international generalizability is restricted by the small number of international participants to the questionnaire: there was the participation of only 48 non-Italian respondents and a small sample of the qualitative part is restricted on a total of 25 participants of which 72% were international ones.

The results have been affected, especially, by the additional environmental variable since the research was, then, conducted with an Italian company. This aspect limits the possibility of extend the analysis but it does not undermine the contribution of the research.

The interviewed firm has declared that the experience is an important element for the company in order to improve sales and performances, linked to the presence within different channels. As stated in the literature by Mathwick et al. (2001) the experience has to be both a *utility experience* and a *hedonic experience*. Glassing, stated that being present in different channels helps them to let international customers to meet the brand. Furthermore, was added by the owner that the multichannel strategy not only gives them

the possibility to increase sales and improve the reputation, but also helps the customers to decide where they want to buy the product: the channel non-cannibalization is, in fact, an essential element to take into account while deciding to be present in more than one channel. The target of the company, defined as an accessible-luxury one, can help the research question of the research to be answered: in fact, as previously stated by the literature, affirmed by the majority of the interviewees and confirmed by the revenues results of the interviewed company (the majority of them came from the offline store), allows the researcher to understand the customers and company preferences. In fact, the offline store is the one in which the purchasing process is concluded in case of high-priced products. It can be said, for the above mentioned reason, that the product and its price makes the difference in the choice of the buying channel. The experience resulted to be a “*plus*” for a company, especially if it has to refer to a high target client base and as well non-essential one which can drastically affect the purchasing channel decision. For these reasons the hypothesis, stated in the Chapter 3.5 have been rejected, since that it has not appeared any significance differences in the perception of the experience between genders (H1), and it did not appear any particular changes in the purchasing-channel decisions within age differences, genders and nationalities (H2; H3).

To sum up it can be said that the “multichannel-ness”, or “omni-channel-ness” are of great relevance for both the customers and the firms. In fact, the complexity of the information that have to be transmitted, the heterogeneity of the customers which companies face, result in the needs of having different channel presence. In fact, as stated in the theoretical part, the multichannel requires a strong customer relationship based on the communication, identification of the target, identification of the right channels and the experience (Keller, 2010; Rigby, 2011; Yu et al., 2011; Van Noort et al., 2012). The result of the multichannel-ness, or omni-channel-ness, can be called *Bricks-and-Clicks*, i.e. the complementary integration between online and offline channels (Giovinazzo, 2003). Can be said, finally, that different channels are not only sales-channels, but moreover communication ones in which are transferred flows of information from the market to the company and vice versa. In the previous Chapter 5 was analysed, both quantitatively and qualitatively, the ROPO customer’s behaviour which appeared to be of great relevance. This result confirms the central role of the web in the every-day-life.

The multichannel strategy is extremely important for both of the players, the customer and the firm, but the online presence appeared to be essential for both of them since it is, primarily, a tool to receive information. In this case, being both physical and virtual, i.e. hybrid, for a firm, means to have the “tactile advantage” offered to the client, who, as seen in the previous analysis of the Chapter 5.2 is of primary importance. By adopting a multichannel strategy, a company can offer a higher quality service to the customer and to increase the market presence.

Table 7. Summary of the Findings

	Customers Questionnaire	Customers Interviews	Glassing Interview
Experience	14% of the respondents affirmed that the experience plays a fundamental role in the purchasing channel decision.	The majority of the participants affirmed that the relevance of the experience depends on the type and price of product. They expect a higher customer orientation in luxury or high prices products.	The firm affirmed that the experience is of primary importance in order to achieve the brand loyalty and to compete with the competitors. The idea of the company results to be in line with the target which came out from the customers' interviews.
Multichannel/Omnichannel	The possibility of choosing where to buy a product is a great opportunity for the customer.	The purchasing channel selection resulted to be of great relevance for the customers. It appeared linked to the type of the selected product.	The multichannel strategy of the company allows it to have different showcases for the world. Each channel has, in addition to the possibility of buy, the scope to give information to the clients and to receive information by them. The possibility of being both online and offline gives a great solidity to the brand.
Product	N.A.	The product resulted to be the main discriminants of the channel selection. In fact, both the type and the possibility of trying and seeing the goods came out as important elements.	The company understood the needs that the customer has of touching and trying the product. Being it taken for granted, the additional experience in the stores allows the product to achieve more importance to the client.
ROPO	80% of the customers stated that the ROPO is usually applied.	The majority of the participants affirmed that the research online, before concluding the purchasing phase, is very important.	The company could affirm that the ROPO is a usual customer's behaviour. It has been checked from the online store.

## 6.2. Summary of the theoretical contributions

In order to definitely answer the research question, a combination of the above mentioned empirical findings and the theoretical concepts, presented in the Chapter 2 and Chapter 3, has to be presented. In the proposed work the relevance on the decision of companies to adopt a multichannel, or omni-channel, approach was focused on the role of the customer experience influence on the choice of the firms, since that, in the literature it is stated to be one of the key element (Rigby, 2011; Yu et al., 2011; Van Noort et al., 2012; Neslin et al., 2014; Newman, 2014; Parente et al., 2014; Serra, 2016). On the other hand, the product's characteristics and prices and the possibility, for the customer, of touching and trying the product resulted to be relevant elements. In particular, their role came out in the empirical part of the study and, therefore, was not taken into account in the presented theoretical frameworks.

Especially for what concerns the company point of view, the experience resulted to be an element able to improve the customer's loyalty and brand reputation (Berry et al., 2002; Ming, 2010). Glassing can, in fact, be considered a customer-oriented firm present both in online and offline channels. The "multichannel-ness" has allowed, then, the firm to be recognised all over the world, even if, it has to be said that, in addition to being an online company, it is an international one which started the business outside of the owners' home country. The offline presence of the multichannel strategy, has to be said of being of great help for what concerns the loyalty of the client base as the starting point for the creation of the offered experience (Konus et al., 2008; Luo et al., 2011). In fact, even if for the respondents the experience is not considered of primary importance, they consider it as a "*plus*" that can make the difference in the purchasing channel decision-making. As suggested by Nielsen Commerce Report (2016:3), in the era in which the omni-channel can be considered as the best strategy for retailing, the importance for the company of thinking about how to appears and how to attract the customers, differently from the competitors, has to be carefully taken into account. In fact, nowadays customers are both showrooming and web-rooming: not only the price could make the difference, but also the experience. On the other hand, as already mentioned, the impact of the visual and tactile test and the products distinction was not carried out during the research and it is

difficult to analyse, without any particular data on it, how it can affect the purchasing channel selection for a customer and the multichannel presence for a company

### 6.3. Managerial implications

The findings of the research can bring to a conclusion for what concerns the influencing factors of applying a multichannel, or omni-channel strategy. At the time that the results were studied, both looking at primary and secondary data, it could be seen that a great number of born online companies already applied the multichannel, or omni-channel approach, with the intent of letting the customer to be able to leave an experience in the same time he/she wants to touch and try the products. Nonetheless, sometimes happens that by applying the multichannel strategy the channels are not well integrated and it gives origin to the channel cannibalization. For this reason, the integration of the whole set of channels can result to be essential in order to achieve better goals on the sales and brand recognition performance, as well as the experience which can be faced by the customer. In fact, the experience should be present, and it has to be coherent, in every sales channel. It has to be the recognition that it is easy to think about that the physical store is useful, for the customer, in order to have a tactile and visual approach to the product, but the experience can give one more motivation to go in a physical store in the purchasing phase of a customer. It finally can be suggested to the companies to invest on the store design and atmosphere by offering to the client another important reason why to buy in a physical store. The same should be done in the online store, since it has resulted to be the first visited place during the customer's journey: as already state by the literature, it is important to have a conversation with the customer (Lecinski, 2011). To conclude, it can be said that, in order to not face a cannibalization of their own multiple channels, companies have to find a way to integrate them to follow the customer from the ZMOT till the post-purchasing phase.

#### 6.4. Limitations and future research suggestions

The limitations of the research were presented in the Chapter 1 and, since that the customers' and the company's interviews allowed to collect only a small sample of data, it can be said that the results can not be generalized to all type of customers and companies. The first main limitation, in fact, was about looking exclusively for born-online companies which have different sales channels, multichannel or omni-channel, completely excluding only bricks-and-mortars, or only online ones. In particular, the decision to take into account only born-online company has made the research more challenging, given that the majority of the existing studies are about the bricks-and-mortars stores which decide to use the multichannel, or omni-channel strategy, by opening online. On the other hand, the customers' questionnaire allowed the researcher to collect an amount of data that can be said to be generalizable, but not at an international level, since that the majority of the respondents resulted to be Italians. A deeper multinational research could, in fact, shows different results of customers' behaviour within the purchasing process between online and offline stores.

For the above mentioned limitations, it could be suggested, for future research, to investigate on the influence that the product may has on the customer's purchasing channel decision-making, in order to better understand where the companies can apply a good integration within the existing channels. Future studies could, then, focus on the importance of the store atmosphere and the online experience in order to discover where the relationship between the customers and the company can be addresses to. In fact, an analysis of the customer's preferences could result very useful since that a firm which adopt the multichannel strategy is customer oriented. On the other hand, the analysis of the difficulties and risks of approaching a multichannel method, should be taken into account. In addition, the showrooming and web-rooming phenomenon can be deeper taken into account as an understanding of the ZMOT and ROPO customer's behaviours. Furthermore, future works can consider the specificity of the industry sector and target, i.e. not only the consideration of the product, but also the place in which the brand is positioned within the market. It has appeared, in fact, that the higher is the price of the

product, the higher is the average of offline purchasing. The luxury market should be, finally, taken into account.

Finally, in order to obtain an international application of the results, a quantitative and qualitative analysis should be conducted on the customers and companies with the aim of understanding the influence of the culture and country.

## REFERENCES

Addis, M. & Morris, B. Holbrook (2001). *On The Conceptual Link Between Mass Customisation and Experiential Consumption: An Explosion of Subjectivity*. Journal of Consumer Behaviour. 1,1, 50-66. Available at:

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/cb.53/abstract>

[Cited: 31.01.17, h. 11:06]

Alba, J., J. Lynch, B. Weitz, C. Janiszewski, R. Lutz, A. Sawyer & S. Wood (1997). *Interactive home Shopping: Consumer Retailer and Manufacturer Incentives to Participate in Electronic Marketplaces*. Journal of Marketing. Vol. 61, Issue 3, 38-53. Available at:

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/242377185\\_Interactive\\_Home\\_Shopping\\_Consumer\\_Retailer\\_and\\_Manufacturer\\_Incentives\\_to\\_Participate\\_in\\_Electronic\\_Marketplaces](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/242377185_Interactive_Home_Shopping_Consumer_Retailer_and_Manufacturer_Incentives_to_Participate_in_Electronic_Marketplaces)

[Cited: 14.03.2017, h. 15:50]

Amazon history. Available at <https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon.com>

[Cited: 24.01.17, h. 11:38]

Arikan, A. (2008). *Multichannel Marketing*. Wiley Publishing, Inc., Indianapolis, Indiana. ISBN-13: 978-0-470-23959-9

Armental, M. (2017). *GameStop Closing at Least 150 Stores Amid Sales Decline*. Wall Street Journal. March, 23<sup>rd</sup> 2017. Available at: [wsj.com](http://wsj.com)

[Cited: 24.03.2017, h. 12:50]

Arnould, E.J, L. Price & G.M. Zinkhan (2004). *Consumers*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. McGraw-Hill. ISBN-10: 0071214267

Assael, H. (2003). *Consumer Behaviour: A strategic Approach*. Cengage Learning, 1<sup>st</sup>

Edition. ISBN: 0618222154

Balasubramanian S., R. Raghunathan & V. Mahajan (2005). *Consumers in a Multichannel Environment: Product Utility, Process Utility, and Channel Choice*. Journal of Interactive Marketing. 19, 2, 12-30.

Balckwell, R.D., P.W Miniard & J.F. Engel (2006). *Consumer Behaviour*. 10<sup>th</sup> Edition. South-Western College. ISBN: 0324271972

Barnham C. (2008) *Instantiation. Reframing brand communication*. International Journal of Market Research. 50, 2, 203–220.

Baron, R.A., D. Byrne & N.R. Brandscrombe (2006). *Mastering Social Psychology*. Pearson. ISBN: 0205495893

Bart, Y., V. Shankar, F. Sultan & G.L. Urban (2005). *Are The Drivers and role of Online Trust the Same for All Web Sites and Consumers? A Large-scale Exploratory Empirical Study*. Journal of Marketing. Vol. 69, 133-152. Available at: <http://ebusiness.mit>  
[Cited: 12.03.2017, h. 12:35]

Bartolini, M. (2014). *Rilanciare Il Negozio Ai Tempi Di Internet*. Il sole 24 ore.

Berry, L.L., L.P. Carbone & S.H. Haeckel (2002). *Managing the Total Customer Experience*. Mit Sloan Review, Vol. 43, Issue 3. Available at: <http://sloanreview.mit.edu/issue/spring-2002/>  
[Cited: 7.02.17, h. 11:52]

Bertoletti, C. (2015). *I Trend Dello Shopping Online Per Tipologie Di Utenti*. Markup, Marketing E Consumi.

Blatberg, R.C., B.D. Kim & S.A. Neslin (2008). *Database Marketing: Analyzing and Managing Customers*. Springer publisher, International Series in Quantitative Marketing.

ISBN: 1441903327

Blocher, J., K. Shanker & M.A. Venkataramanan (2005). *Online/In-Store Integration and Customer Retention*. Journal of Service Research. 313-327

Brakus, J. J., B. H. Schmitt & L. Zarantonello (2009). *Brand experience: What is it? How is it measured? Does it affect loyalty?* Journal of Marketing 73, 52–68.

Brooks, C. (2015). *Shopper Still Prefer In-Store Over Online Shopping*, Business News Daily, Available at: <http://www.businessnewsdaily.com/7756-online-shopping-preferences.html>

[Cited: 6.12.16, h. 14:37]

Bryman, A., E. Bell (2011). *Business Research Methods*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. Oxford University Press. ISBN 0-19-958340-9.

Brynjolfsson, E., M.D. Smith (2000). *Frictionless Commerce? A Comparison of Internet and Conventional Retailers*. Management Science. 46, 4, 563-585.

Brynjolfsson, E., Y.J. Hu & M.S. Rahman, (2013). *Competing in the Age of Omi-channel Retailing*. MIT Sloan Management Review. Vol. 54, Issue 4, 23-29. Available at: [mitsloan.com](http://mitsloan.com)

[Cited: 28.02.2017, h. 19:00]

Burke, R.R. (2002). *Technology and the Customer Interface: What Consumers Want in the Physical and Virtual Store*. Journal of Academy of Marketing Science. 30, 4, 411-432. Available at: [sciencedirect.com](http://sciencedirect.com)

[Cited: 10.03.2017, h. 16:56]

Byron, E. (2011). *In-Store Sales Begin at Home*. The Wall Street Journal. Available at: <https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052748703907004576279253672899290>

[Cited: 8.02.17, h. 11:25]

Campestro, G. (2016). *Commerce: si torna offline*. Quotidiano on line dell'economia digitale e dell'innovazione. Available at: [http://www.corrierecomunicazioni.it/it-world/20605\\_e-commerce-contrordine-si-torna-offline.htm](http://www.corrierecomunicazioni.it/it-world/20605_e-commerce-contrordine-si-torna-offline.htm)

[Cited 10.01.17, h. 12:26]

Cannenterre J, N. Mou, S. Moul, M. Bernadac & A. Ghor (2012). *How do Companies innovate and Attract Consumers Through Experiential Marketing?* International Conference of Scientific Paper Afases 2012, ( 29-38)

Cant, M.C., A. Brink & S. Brijball (2006). *Consumer Behaviour*. Juta and Company. ISBN: 0702171255

Chen, S. (2015). *Multichannel Marketing: A generalized Framework and the Antecedents and Consequences of Its Implementation*.

Childers, T.L., C.L. Carr, J. Peck & S. Carson (2001). *Hedonic and Utilitarian Motivations for Online Retail Shopping Behaviour*. Journal of Retailing. 77, 4, 511-535.

Available at: [sciencedirect.com](http://sciencedirect.com)

[Cited: 13.03.2017, h. 15:53]

Collesei, U., F. Casarin & T. Vescovi (2011). *Internet e i cambiamenti nei comportamenti di acquisto del consumatore, in "Micro & Macro Marketing"*. 33-50. Available at: <https://www.rivisteweb.it/doi/10.1431/2878>

Cook, G. (2014). *Customer Experience in the Omni-Channel World and the Challenges and Opportunities This Presents*. Journal of Direct, Data and Digital Marketing Practice. 15, 4, 262-266

Court, D., D. Elzinga, S. Mulder & O.J. Vetvik (2009). *The consumer decision journey*. McKinsey Quarterly Article. Available at: <http://www.mckinsey.com/business->

functions/marketing-and-sales/our-insights/the-consumer-decision-journey

[Cited: 6.02.17, h. 11:58]

Customers Interviews, from 1<sup>st</sup> February to 19<sup>th</sup> of March. Duration average 30 minutes for interview.

De Carvalho, J.L.G. (2014). *Multichannel at Retail and Omni-Channel: Challenges for Marketing and Logistics*. Business and Management Review. 4, 3. Available at: <http://www.businessjournalz.org/bmr>

[Cited: 10.03.2017, h. 18:46]

De Vries, L., S. Gensler & P.S. Leeflans (2012). *Popularity of Brand Posts on Brand Fan Pages: An Investigation of the Effects of Social Media Marketing*. Journal of Interactive Marketing. Vol. 25, 83-91. Available at: [sciencedirect.com](http://www.sciencedirect.com)

[Cited: 13.02.2017, h. 11:32]

Degeratu, A.M., A. Rangaswamy & J. Wu (2000). *Customer choice behaviour in online and traditional supermarkets: The Effects of Brand Name, Price, and Other Search Attributes*. International Journal of Research in Marketing.

Deloitte (2013). *The Digital Transformation of Customer Services: Our Point of View*. Available at: <https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/nl/Documents/consumer-business/deloitte-nl-the-digital-transformation-of-customer-services.pdf>

[Cited: 20.03.2017, h. 11:58]

Dholakia, U.M., B.E. Kahn, A. Rindfleisch, D. Stewart & E. Taylor (2010). *Consumer Behavior in a Multichannel, Multimedia Retailing Environment*. Journal of Interactive Marketing. 24, 2, 86-95.

Dubé, L., J. L. LeBel (2003), 'The content and structure of lay people's concept of pleasure'. Cognition and Emotion 17, 263–296. Available at:

<https://philpapers.org/rec/DUBTCA-3>

[Cited 30.01.17, h. 11:56]

Easterby-Smith, M., R. Thorpe & A. Lowe (2002). *Management Research: An Introduction*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Sage Publications Ltd. ISBN: 0761972854

Ebenezer, S. (2014). *The AIDA Model*. Communication Theory. Available at: <http://communicationtheory.org/aida-model/>

Falk, P., C. Campbell (1997). *The Shopping Experience*. SAGE Publications India Pvt Lt, New Delhi. ISBN0 7619 5067 2 (pbk).

Falk, T., J. Schepers, M. Hammerschmidt, & H.H. Bauer (2007). *Identifying Cross-Channel Dissynergies for Multicaannel Service Providers*. Journal of Service Research. 10, 2, 143-160. Available at: <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1094670507306683>  
[Cited: 10.03.2017, h. 17:28]

Fernandez, M.J. (2007). *Analysis of Selected Aspects of the Multi-Channel International Distribution System*. Diplomica Verlag. ISBN: 383665556X.

Ferrandina, A. (2004). *Marketing Tools. Modelli e Strumenti per il Marketing Planning*. Ipsoa Editore, Metodi e Strumenti. ISBN: 8821719669.

Ferrell, O.C, M.D. Hartline (2005). *Marketing strategy*. 5th edition. Thomson South-Western. ISBN-13: 978-0538467384

Flaherty, K. (2016). *Consistency in Omni-Channel Experience*. Nielsen Norman. Available at: <https://www.nngroup.com/articles/omnichannel-consistency/>  
[Cited: 1.03.2017, h. 12:34]

Flint, D., G. Spieler (2001). *Multichannel Retailing: Bringing the New Into the Old*. Gartner.

Forte, A. (2017). *Glassing Company Interview*. 21<sup>st</sup> March 2017 from 10:00 to 13:00, Vigevano.

Frambach, R.T., H.C. Roest & T.V. Krishnan (2007). *The Impact of Consumer Internet Experience on Channel Preference and Usage Intentions Across the Different Stages of the Buying Process*. Journal of interactive Marketing. Vol. 21, Issue 2, 26-41. Available at:

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/229787132\\_The\\_Impact\\_of\\_Consumer\\_Internet\\_Experience\\_on\\_Channel\\_Preference\\_and\\_Usage\\_Intentions\\_Across\\_the\\_Different\\_Stages\\_of\\_the\\_Buying\\_Process](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/229787132_The_Impact_of_Consumer_Internet_Experience_on_Channel_Preference_and_Usage_Intentions_Across_the_Different_Stages_of_the_Buying_Process)  
[Cited: 12.03.2017, h. 10:39]

GameStop History. Available at: GameStop.com

Gentile, C., N. Spiller & G. Noci (2007). *How to Sustain the Customer Experience: An Overview of Experience Components that Co-create Value with the Customer*. European Management Journal, 25 (5), 395-410.

Gilon Miller (2012). *8 reasons consumers like to shop online*. Upstream Commerce. Available at: <http://upstreamcommerce.com/blog/2012/02/14/8-reasons-consumer-likes-shop-online>  
[Cited: 6.12.16, 13:52]

Giovinazzo, W. (2003). *Internet-Enabled Business Intelligence*. Prentice Hall Professional Editor. ISBN: 0130409510  
Glassing history. Available at: [www.glassing.it](http://www.glassing.it)

Grant, R.M (1996). *Toward a Knowledge Based Theory of the Firm*. Strategic Management Journal. Vol. 17, 109-122.

Hanington, J. (2012). *The Zero Moment of Truth: What Is It and Why Should You Care?* Google: think with Google. Available at: <http://www.pardot.com/blog/moment-truth-care/>

Holbrook, M.B, E.C. Hirschman (1982). *The Experiential Aspects of Consumption: Consumer Fantasies, Feelings, and Fun*. Journal of Consumer Research. Vol. 9, Issue 9, 132-40.

Howard, J.A., J.N. Sheth (1969). *The Theory of Buyer Behavior*. Journal of the American Statistical Association Wiley, New York. Available at: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/235361430\\_The\\_Theory\\_of\\_Buyer\\_Behavior](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/235361430_The_Theory_of_Buyer_Behavior) [Cited: 10.02.2017, h. 11:32]

Hoyer, W.D., D.J. MacInnis (2007). *Consumer Behaviour*. 4<sup>th</sup> Edition. Houghton Mifflin Co. ISBN: 0618643729

Iacobelli, G. (2010). *Fashion Branding 3.0 La multicanalità come approccio strategico per il marketing della moda*. Franco Anngeli Editore. ISBN: 8856823993

IBM white paper on Multi-Channel Customer Management: The Benefits and Challenges.

Jain, S., S. Lohia (2014). *Experiential Marketing: Emerging Issues and Suggestions*. Journal of Advances in Management and Economics. 3, 2, 197-203. Available at: [www.managementjournal.info](http://www.managementjournal.info) [Cited: 30.01.17, h. 16:25]

Kahneman, D. (2003). *Maps of Bounded Rationality: Psychology for Behavioral Economics*. American Economic Review. 93, 1449.

Kavaratzis, M., G. Warnaby & G. Ashworth (2014). *Rethinking Place Branding:*

*Comprehensive Brand development for Cities and Regions*. Springer Editor, Illustrated edition. ISBN: 3319124242.

Keller, K.L. (2010). *Brand Equity Management in a Multichannel, Multimedia Retail Environment*. Journal of Interactive Marketing. 24, 58-70.

Kim, J., S. Forsythe (2007). *Hedonistic Usage of Product Virtualization Technologies in Online Apparel Shopping*. International Journal of Retail and Distribution management. 35, 6, 502-514. Available at: sciencedirect.com  
[Cited: 15.03.2017, h. 9:56]

Konus, U., P.C. Verhoef & B. Neslin (2008). *Multichannel Shopper Segments and Their Covariates*. Journal of Retailing. 84, 4, 398-413.

Kotler, P.T., K.L. Keller (2014). *Marketing Management*. 14<sup>th</sup> Edition. Prentice Hall. ISBN: 0132102927

Krueger, J. (2015). *Omni-channel Shoppers: An Emerging Retail Reality*. Think with Google. Available at: <https://www.thinkwithgoogle.com/articles/omni-channel-shoppers-an-emerging-retail-reality.html>  
[Cited: 1.03.2017, h. 11:21]

Kun, C.L, K. Soonjae (2008). *Online Shopping Recommendation Mechanism and Its Influence on consumer decision making*. Expert Systems with applications. Vol. 35, Issue 4, 1567-1574.

La Salle, D., T.A. Britton, (2003). *Priceless: Turning ordinary products into extraordinary experiences*. Harvard Business School, Press, Boston.

Langerak, F., P.C. Verhoef (2003). *Strategically Embedding CRM*. Business Strategy Review. 14, 4, 73-80. Available at:  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/229937520\\_Strategically\\_embedding\\_CRM](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/229937520_Strategically_embedding_CRM)

[Cited: 11.03.2017, h. 16:25]

Laudon, K.C, C.G. Traver (2016). *E-Commerce 2016, Business, Technology, Society*. 12<sup>th</sup> Edition, Pearson Editor. ISBN: 0133938956

Lazaris, C., A. Vrechopoulos (2014). *From Multichannel to Omni-Channel Retailing: Review of Literature and Calls for Research*. E-Business Centre.

Lee, M.S., H.D. Hsiao & M.F. Yang (2010) *the study of the relationships among experiential marketing, service quality, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty*. International Journal of Organizational Innovation, 352-378.

Lecinski, J. (2011). *Winning the Zero Moment of Truth*. Google.

Lewis, J., P. Whysall & C. Foster (2014), “*Drivers and technology-related obstacles in moving to multichannel retailing*”, International Journal of Electronic Commerce, 18, 4, pp. 43-67.

Luo, Y. (2000). *Dynamic Capabilities in International Expansion*. Journal of World Business. 35, 4, 355-378.

Luo, M.M., J.S. Chen, R.K. Ching & C.C. Liu (2011) “*An examination of the effects of virtual experiential marketing on online customer intentions and loyalty*.” The Service Industries Journal, 31, 13, 2163-2191.

Malhotra, N. K., D. F. Birks (2007). *Marketing Research: An Applied Approach*. 3rd European Edition. Essex: Pearsons Education Limited.

Mathwick, C., N. Malhotra & E. Rigdon (2001). *Experiential value: conceptualization, Measurement and Application in the Catalog and Intrnet Shopping Environment*. Journal of Retailing. 77, 1. Available at: sciencedirect.com

[Cited: 11.04.2017]

Maylor, H., K. Blackmon (2005). *Researching Business and Management*. Palgrave Macmillan Publisher. ISBN 0333964071.

McCarthy, E.J. (1960). *Basic Marketing: A Managerial Approach*. Irwin Editors. Indiana Univeristy

Ming C.Y. (2010). “*Study on the impacts of experiential marketing and customers’ satisfaction based on relationship quality.*” The International Journal of Organizational Innovation. 3, 1, 189- 209.

Montoya-Weiss, M.M., G.B. Voss, D. Grewal (2003). *Determinants of Online Channel Use and Overall Satisfaction with a Relational, Multichannel Service Provider*. Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science. 31, 4, 448-458. Available at: <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0092070303254408>  
[Cited: 13.03.2017, h. 19:04]

Nenonen, S., H. Rasila, J.H. Junnonen & S. Kärnä (2008). *Customer Journey: A Method to Investigate User Experience*. Proceedings of the Euro FM Conference Manchester. Available at: <http://www.irbnet.de/daten/iconda/CIB8909.pdf>  
[Cited: 20.03.2017, h. 10:30]

Neslin, S.A., D. Grewal, R. Leghorn, S. Venkatesh, M.L. Teerling, J.S. Thomas & P.C. Verhoef (2006). *Challenges and Opportunities in Multichannel Customer Management*. Journal of Service Research. 9, 2, 95-112.

Neslin, S.A., V. Shankar (2009). *Key Issues in Multichannel Customer Management: Current Knowledge and Future Directions*. Journal of Interactive Marketing. 23, 1, 70-81. Available at: [sciencedirect.com](http://sciencedirect.com)  
[Cited: 13.03.2017, h. 16:22]

*Nielsen Commerce Report* (2016). Available at: <https://www.nielsen.com/content/dam/nielsen/global/jp/docs/report/2016/Nielsen-Global-Connected-Commerce-Report-January-2016>.

[Cited: 8.04.2017, h. 10:42].

Newman, D. (2014). *The Omni-Channel Experience: Marketing Meets Ubiquity*. Forbes, July. Available at: <http://www.forbes.com/sites/danielnewman/2014/07/22/the-omni-channel-experience-marketing-meets-ubiquity/#39d04f946487>

[Cited: 18.02.2017, h. 16:31]

Nielsen Commerce Report (2016). *Global Connected Commerce: Is E-Tail Therapy the New Retail Therapy?* Available at:

<https://www.nielsen.com/content/dam/nielsenglobal/jp/docs/report/2016/Nielsen-Global-Connected-Commerce-Report-January-2016>

[Cited: 4.03.2017, h. 11:39]

*Omnichannel definition*. Oxford dictionary.

Available at: <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/omnichannel>

*Online Research Driving Offline Purchase, Insights from a multi-channel study with Görtz*. Google/Görtz (2011). Available at: [https://ssl.gstatic.com/think/docs/online-research-driving-offline-purchase-for-gortz\\_case-studies.pdf](https://ssl.gstatic.com/think/docs/online-research-driving-offline-purchase-for-gortz_case-studies.pdf)

[Cited: 8.02.17, h. 12:22]

Pantano, E. (2015). *Successful Technological Integration for Competitive Advantage in Retail Settings*. Business Science Reference, IGI Global. ISBN: 9781466682986

Parente, J., E. Barki (2014). *Gestao e Estrategia*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Bookman Editora.

Park J., L. Stoel (2005). *Effect of Brand Familiarity, Experience and Information on Online Apparel Purchase*. International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management. 33. Available at:

<http://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/full/10.1108/09590550510581476>

[Cited: 15.03.2017, h. 15:44]

Park, C. W., D. J. MacInnis (2006), '*What's in and what's out: Questions over the boundaries of the attitude construct*'. Journal of Consumer Research. 33, 16–18.

Park, C. W., D. J. MacInnis, J. Priester, A. Eisingerich & D. Iacobucci (2010), '*Brand attachment and brand attitude strength: Conceptual and empirical differentiation of two critical brand equity drivers*'. Journal of Marketing, 74, 1–17.

Pawels, K., P. Leeflang, M.L. Teerling, K.R.E Huizingh (2011). *Does Online Information Drive Offline Revenues?* Journal of Retailing. 87, 1, 1-17. Available at: sciencedirect.com

[Cited: 10.03.2017, h. 19:53]

Peppers, D., M. Rogers (1996). *The One to One Future*. Crown business. Paperback, 464. ISBN: 0385485662

Peter, J.P., J.C. Olson (1998). *Consumer Behaviour and Marketing Strategy*. 5th Edition. McGraw-Hill. ISBN: 0256261903

Petit, C., C. Dubois, A. Harand & S. Quazzotti (2011). *A New, Innovative and Marketable IP Diagnosis to Evaluate, Qualify and Find Insights for The Development of SMEs IP Practices and Use, Based on AIDA Approach*. World Patent Information. 33, 42-50. Available at: sciencedirect.com

[Cited: 1.02.17, h. 11:26]

Pine, J., B.H. Gilmore (1999). *The experience economy: work is theatre and every business a stage*. Harvard Business School. Available at: hbr.com

[Cited: 30.01.17, h. 11:32]

Rangaswamy, A., G.H. Van Bruggen (2005). *Opportunities and Challenges in Multichannel Marketing: An Introduction to the Special Issue*. Journal of Interactive Marketing. 1-7

Ratner, R.K., B. Kahn & D. Kahneman (1999). *Choosing Less-Preferred Experiences for the Sake of Variety*. Journal of Consumer Research. 26, 1-15.

Reda, S. (2002). *Active Multichannel Shoppers May Be a Liability, Less Loyal Than Other Online Shoppers*. Stores, 84, 78-82

Rigby, D. (2011). *The Future of Shopping*. Harvard Business Review. 89, 12, 64-75. Available at:

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/265118174\\_The\\_Future\\_of\\_Shopping](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/265118174_The_Future_of_Shopping)

[Cited: 3.03.2017, h. 18:16]

Rinnova, V.P, S. Kotha (2001). *Continuous Morphing: Competing Through Dynamic Capabilities, Form and Function*. Academy of Management Journal, 44, 6, 1263-1280.

Riva, G. (2007). *Virtual Reality and Telepresence*. Science. 318, 1241-1242.

Robson, C. (2002). *Real World Research*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Oxford, Blackwell.

Robson, C., K. McCartan (2016). *Real World Research*. John Wiley and Sons publisher, 4<sup>th</sup> Revised Edition. ISBN: 111874523X

*ROPO Definition*. Cambridge Dictionary. Available at:

<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/rope>

Rosenbloom, B. (2006). *Multichannel Strategy in Business to Business Markets: Prospects and Problems*. Industrial Marketing Management 36 (2007) 4-9. Available at: sciencedirect.com

[Cited: 12.02.2017, h. 15:06]

Rouse, M. (2016). *Multichannel Marketing Definition. IT Channel Sales and Marketing Strategy for The Digital Era*.

Available at: <http://searchsalesforce.techtarget.com/definition/multichannel-marketing>.

[Cited: 14.02.2017, h. 10:49]

Rouse, M. (2016). *Omni-channel Marketing Definition. IT Channel Sales and Marketing Strategy for The Digital Era*.

Available at: <http://searchsalesforce.techtarget.com/definition/multichannel-marketing>

Rowley, J. (2001). *Remodelling Marketing Communications in an Internet Environment*. Internet Research. 11, 203-212. Available in: scopus.com

Russi, V. (2014). *Benvenuti nel Negozio di Domani*. Corriere Innovazione. 4, 14.

Rust, R.T., S. Varki (1996). *Rising from the ashes of advertising*. Journal of Business Research. 37, 173-181. Available at: sciencedirect.com

[Cited: 13.03.2017, h. 12:27]

Rutigliano, D. (2013). *E-commerce Vincente. Avviare a Promuovere Il Proprio Business Online*. Hoepli Editore, WebPro. ISBN: 8820359103

Samaat, S. (2014). *The 3 new realities of local retail*. Available at: [https://storage.googleapis.com/think-v2-emea/docs/article/3-new-realities-of-local-retail\\_articles\\_9.pdf](https://storage.googleapis.com/think-v2-emea/docs/article/3-new-realities-of-local-retail_articles_9.pdf)

[Cited: 24.01.17, h. 11:00]

Same, S., J. Larimo (2012) Marketing Theory: *Experience Marketing and Experiential Marketing*. 7th International Scientific Conference “Business and Management 2012”.

Available at:

[http://leidykla.vgtu.lt/conferences/BM\\_2012/international\\_economy/480\\_487\\_Same.pdf](http://leidykla.vgtu.lt/conferences/BM_2012/international_economy/480_487_Same.pdf)

[Cited: 30.01.17, h. 15:40]

Same, S. (2013). *Understanding Experience Marketing: Conceptual Insights and Differences from Experiential Marketing*.

Saunders, C. (2002). *Multiple Channel Buyers Worth Pursuing*. Internet Advertising Report, Jan. 28.

Saunders, M., P. Lewis, A. Thornhill (2007). *Research Methods for Business Students*. 5<sup>th</sup> Edition, Harlow: Prentice Hall.

Saunders, M., P. Lewis, A. Thornhill (2009). *Research Method for Business Students*. Prentice Hall, 5<sup>th</sup> edition. ISBN-10: 0273716860 (127-614).

Schiffman, L.G., L.L. Kanuk (2009). *Consumer Behaviour*. 10<sup>th</sup> Edition. Pearson Education. ISBN: 0135053013

Schmitt B. (1999). "Experiential Marketing". *Journal of Marketing Management*. 15, 53-67

Schmitt, B. (2010). *Experience Marketing: Concepts, frameworks and consumer insights*. 5, 2 55-112

Sealey, D. (2015). *Omnichannel Retailing for Digital Marketers*. Available at: <http://storm81.com/marketing/omnichannel-retailing-for-digital-marketers>.

[Cited: 1.03.2017, h. 11:44]

Senecal, S., P.J. Kalczynski, J. Nantel (2004). *The Influence of Online Product Recommendations on Consumers' Online Choices*. *Journal of Retailing*. 80, 2; P. 159-169

Senecal, S., P.J. Kalczynski & J. Nantel (2005). *Consumers' Decision Making Process and Their Shopping Behaviour: A Clickstream Analysis*. *Journal of Business Research*, 58, 11; p. 1599-1608.

Serra, F. (2016). *Strumenti di marketing e strategie multicanale: multicanalità e*

*omnicanalità*. Available at: <https://www.link2me.it/articoli/850/strumenti-di-marketing-e-le-strategie-multicanale-multicanalita-e-omnicanalita.html>

[Cited: 24.01.17, h. 12:19]

Sharma, A., A. Mehrotra (2006). *Choosing an optimal channel mix in multichannel environment*. Industrial Marketing Management 36 (2007) 21-28. University of Miami, U.S. Available at: [sciencedirect.com](http://sciencedirect.com)

[Cited: 7.02.17, h. 14:31]

Singh, S., S. Sonnenburg (2012). *Brand Performances in Social Media*. Journal of Interactive Marketing. 26, 189-197. Available at: [sciencedirect.com](http://sciencedirect.com)

[Cited: 11.03.2017, h. 8:56]

Shoes of prey history. Available at <https://www.shoesofprey.com>

[Cited 24.01.17, h. 11:46]

Snow, R. (2014). *Three Waves of customer Experience*. Ventana Research. Available at: <https://www.slideshare.net/Salesforce/ventana-3-waves-webinar-final>

[Cited: 1.03.2017, h. 11:31]

Solomon, M.R., N.J. Rabolt (2004). *Consumer Behaviour in Fashion*. Prentice Hall. ISBN: 013091122X

Solomon, M.R (2015). *Omnichannel Customer Experience: Expert Systems, 360 Degree Views and AI*. Forbes April 8<sup>th</sup>. Available at:

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/micahsolomon/2015/04/08/omnichannel-customer-experience-how-a-360-degree-view-of-customer-care-can-help/#2b88030eb764>

[Cited: 4.03.2017, h. 10:50]

Stocker, M. (2014). *The Definition of Omni-Channel Marketing. Interview to John Bowden*. Marketo. Available at: <http://blog.marketo.com/2014/04/the-definition-of->

omni-channel-marketing-plus-7-tips.html

[Cited: 13.02.2017, h. 16:38]

Stone, M., M. Hobbs & M. Khaleeli (2002). *Multichannel Customer Management: The benefits and Challenges*. Journal of Database Marketing. 10, 1-39, Henry Stewart Publications 1350-2328.

Sultan, F., A.J. Rohm (2004). *The Evolving Role of the Internet Marketing Strategy: An Exploratory Study*. Journal of Interactive Marketing. 18, 2, 6-19. Available at: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/229463720\\_The\\_Evolving\\_Role\\_of\\_the\\_Internet\\_in\\_Marketing\\_Strategy\\_An\\_Exploratory\\_Study](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/229463720_The_Evolving_Role_of_the_Internet_in_Marketing_Strategy_An_Exploratory_Study)

[Cited: 13.03.2017, h. 15:56]

Swerdlow, F. (2012). *How Retailers Measure Up On “Research Online Purchase Offline” Capabilities*. National Retail Federation. Available at: <https://nrf.com/news/how-retailers-measure-research-online-purchase-offline-capabilities>

[Cited: 20.03.2017, h. 10:59]

The blonde salad story, from 2006 to 2017. Available at <http://www.theblondesalad.com/it/about>, [Cited: 26.01.17, h:13:54]

Thomas, J.S., U.Y. Sullivan (2005). *Managing Marketing Communications With Multichannel Customers*. Journal of Marketing. 69, 239-251

Thomson, M., D. J. MacInnis, & C. W. Park (2005), ‘*The ties that bind: Measuring the strength of consumers’ emotional attachments to brands*’. Journal of Consumer Psycholog. 15, 1, 77–91

Toufaily, E., N. Souiden & R. Ladhari (2013). *Consumer Trust Toward Retail Websites: Comparison Between Pure Click and Click-and-Brick Retailers*. Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services. 20, 538-548. Available at: [sciencedirect.com](http://www.sciencedirect.com)

[Cited: 11.03.2017, h. 11:37]

Understanding Consumer's Local Search Behaviour, May 2014. Google. Available at: <https://www.thinkwithgoogle.com/research-studies/how-advertisers-can-extend-their-relevance-with-search.html>

[Cited: 24.01.17, h. 11:22]

Van Noort, G., H.A.M Voorveld, E.A. VAN Reeijmersdal (2012). *Interactivity in Brand Web Sites: Cognitive, Affective and Behavioural Responses Explained by Consumers' Online Flow Experience*. Journal of interactive Marketing. 26, 223-234.

Available at: [sciencedirect.com](http://sciencedirect.com)

[Cited: 13.03.2017, h. 9:40]

Verhoef, P., P.K. Kannan, J.J Inman (2015). *Form Multi-Channel Retailing to Omni-Channel Retailing: Introduction to the Special Issue on Multi-Channel Retailing*. Journal of Retailing. 91, 2, 174-181

Verkatesh, A., L. Penaloza, & A.F. Firat (2006). *The Market as a Sign System and the Logic of the Market. The Service-Dominant Logic of Marketing: Dialog, Debate, and Directions*, 251-265.

Vianello, A. (2015). *Multicaanalità e omnicanalità: come integrare i canali di vendita*. Available at:

<http://www.thismarketerslife.it/marketing/retail/multichannel-e-omnichannel/>

[Cited 24.01.17, h. 14:09]

Wallace, D.W., J.L. Giese & J.L. Johnson (2004). *Customer Retailer Loyalty in The Context of Multiple Channel Strategies*. Journal of Retailing 80, 249-263. New York University, Elsevier.

Wang, Q., S. Peijian & X. Yang (2013). *Understanding The Substitution Effect Between Online and Traditional Channels: Evidence from Product Attributes Perspective*.

Electronic Markets. 23, 227-239. Available at:

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/257786203\\_Understanding\\_the\\_substitution\\_effect\\_between\\_online\\_and\\_traditional\\_channels\\_Evidence\\_from\\_product\\_attributes\\_perspective](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/257786203_Understanding_the_substitution_effect_between_online_and_traditional_channels_Evidence_from_product_attributes_perspective)

[Cited: 13.05.2017, h. 12:01]

Wilson, H, D. Elizabeth (2007). *The multi-channel challenge: A dynamic capability approach*. Industrial Marketing Management, 36(1), 10–20.

Available at: sciencedirect.com .

Yang, C.Y (2009). *The study of repurchase intentions in experiential marketing -An Empirical study of the franchise restaurant*. The International Journal of Organizational Innovation, 2(2):245-261.

Yu, U.J., L. Niehm & D. Russel (2011). *Exploring Perceived Channel Price, Quality, and Value as Antecedents of Channel Choice and Usage in Multichannel Shopping*. Journal of Marketing Channels. 79-102.

Zen, M. (2016). *Positive Digital Marketing: i Contenuti Positivi Per Coinvolgere Il Pubblico*. LivenUp. Available at: <http://www.livenup.it/2016/06/03/>

[Cited: 6.02.17, h. 11:06]

## APPENDIX I – CUSTOMER QUESTIONNAIRE QUESTIONS

Dear participant,

this questionnaire will be useful in order to complete my master thesis in International Business. The aim of the survey is to understand the use (or not) of online shops and what are the main influencing factors of the purchasing decision making. It will take only few minutes to be completed and I will be grateful if you can help me in this research.

Thank you so much,

Veronica

*Do you buy products by using online platforms (Amazon, Ebay, YOOX, Brand Store Online, etc.)?*

1. Always
2. Often
3. Rarely
4. Never

*Why do you do online shopping?*

1. Price
2. More choice
3. Availability
4. Comfort (stay at home and wait for your package)
5. I am not used to do online shopping

*Only if you have answered "I AM NOT USED TO DO ONLINE SHOPPING" in the previous question, complete the following one. Why don't you do online shopping?*

1. I do not trust in websites
2. I do not like not to see/touch the product

3. I like going in a physical shop for the experience

*Does it ever happen to you to use the online channel only to have information about the product and then go to the store to buy it?*

1. Yes
2. No

*Yes, in the previous question: How many times does it happen?*

1. Always
2. Often
3. Rarely

*Does it ever happen to you to go in the store to see and touch the product and then to buy it in the online store?*

1. Always
2. Often
3. Rarely
4. Never

*Do you think that the physical store has still an important role in the shopping?*

1. Yes
2. No

*Yes, in the previous question: Why?*

1. There is more attention to the client
2. I can live an experience
3. I am satisfied in having the product immediately

4. I like to see the product
5. Because I can try it

*No, in the previous question: Why?*

1. The stores are not nice anymore: they do not offer an experience
2. The online shopping is faster, more comfortable and convenient
3. I don't like the contact with sales' personal, I prefer to do it by-my-self
4. The online shop is accessible in every time of the day

*Information*

It is very important for me to have all of your general information in order to complete the study. Please answer to this last section, thank you!

*Gender*

1. Male
2. Female

*Age*

18-24

25-34

35-44

45-54

55-64

*Nationality:*

Thank you for your time! Please submit the answered questionnaire and have a good day.

## APPENDIX II – CUSTOMER QUESTIONNAIRE SPSS ANALYSIS

Question 1: Gender (F)

Statistics		
New_2		
N	Valid	172
	Missing	0
Mean		2,6744
Std. Error of Mean		,05586
Median		3,0000
Mode		3,00
Std. Deviation		,73257
Variance		,537
Skewness		,144
Std. Error of Skewness		,185
Kurtosis		-,484
Std. Error of Kurtosis		,368
Range		3,00
Minimum		1,00
Maximum		4,00
Sum		460,00

New_2				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1,00	5	2,9	2,9
	2,00	68	39,5	42,4
	3,00	77	44,8	87,2
	4,00	22	12,8	100,0
Total	172	100,0	100,0	

Question 1: Gender (M)

Statistics		
New_2		
N	Valid	82
	Missing	0
Mean		2,9024
Std. Error of Mean		,07282
Median		3,0000
Mode		3,00
Std. Deviation		,65940
Variance		,435
Skewness		-,424
Std. Error of Skewness		,266
Kurtosis		,699
Std. Error of Kurtosis		,526
Range		3,00
Minimum		1,00
Maximum		4,00
Sum		238,00

New_2				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1,00	2	2,4	2,4
	2,00	16	19,5	22,0
	3,00	52	63,4	85,4
	4,00	12	14,6	100,0
Total	82	100,0	100,0	

Question 2: Gender (F)

Statistics		
New		
N	Valid	396
	Missing	12
Mean		1,9596
Std. Error of Mean		,00991
Median		2,0000
Mode		2,00
Std. Deviation		,19715
Variance		,039
Skewness		-4,686
Std. Error of Skewness		,123
Kurtosis		20,060
Std. Error of Kurtosis		,245
Range		1,00
Minimum		1,00
Maximum		2,00
Sum		776,00

New				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1,00	16	3,9	4,0
	2,00	380	93,1	100,0
	Total	396	97,1	100,0
Missing	System	12	2,9	
Total		408	100,0	

Question 2: Gender (M)

Statistics		
New		
N	Valid	130
	Missing	6
Mean		1,9615
Std. Error of Mean		,01693
Median		2,0000
Mode		2,00
Std. Deviation		,19305
Variance		,037
Skewness		-4,856
Std. Error of Skewness		,212
Kurtosis		21,920
Std. Error of Kurtosis		,422
Range		1,00
Minimum		1,00
Maximum		2,00
Sum		255,00

New				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1,00	5	3,7	3,8
	2,00	125	91,9	100,0
	Total	130	95,6	100,0
Missing	System	6	4,4	
Total		136	100,0	

## Question 4: Gender (F)

Statistics		
New_5		
N	Valid	172
	Missing	0
Mean		1,7965
Std. Error of Mean		,03079
Median		2,0000
Mode		2,00
Std. Deviation		,40377
Variance		,163
Skewness		-1,486
Std. Error of Skewness		,185
Kurtosis		,211
Std. Error of Kurtosis		,368
Range		1,00
Minimum		1,00
Maximum		2,00
Sum		309,00

New_5				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1,00	35	20,3	20,3
	2,00	137	79,7	100,0
Total	172	100,0	100,0	

## Question 4: Gender (M)

Statistics			
New_5			
N	Valid	82	
	Missing	0	
Mean		1,8171	
Std. Error of Mean		,04296	
Median		2,0000	
Mode		2,00	
Std. Deviation		,38899	
Variance		,151	
Skewness		-1,671	
Std. Error of Skewness		,266	

New_5				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1,00	15	18,3	18,3
	2,00	67	81,7	100,0
Total	82	100,0	100,0	

## Question 5: Gender (F)

Statistics

New\_6

N	Valid	137
	Missing	35
Mean		2,6715
Std. Error of Mean		,04646
Median		3,0000
Mode		3,00
Std. Deviation		,54381
Variance		,296
Skewness		-,024
Std. Error of Skewness		,207
Kurtosis		-,722
Std. Error of Kurtosis		,411
Range		2,00
Minimum		2,00
Maximum		4,00
Sum		366,00

New\_6

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2,00	50	29,1	36,5
	3,00	82	47,7	96,4
	4,00	5	2,9	100,0
	Total	137	79,7	100,0
Missing	System	35	20,3	
Total		172	100,0	

## Question 5: Gender (M)

Statistics

leu\_6

	Valid	66
	Missing	16
Mean		2,6212
Std. Error of Mean		,07084
Median		3,0000
Mode		3,00
Std. Deviation		,57553
Variance		,331
Skewness		,254
Std. Error of Skewness		,295
Kurtosis		-,724
Std. Error of Kurtosis		,582
Range		2,00
Minimum		2,00
Maximum		4,00
Sum		173,00

New\_6

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid	2,00	28	34,1	42,4	
	3,00	35	42,7	95,5	
	4,00	3	3,7	100,0	
	Total	66	80,5	100,0	
Missing	System	16	19,5		
Total		82	100,0		

## Question 6: Gender (F)

Statistics		
New_7		
N	Valid	172
	Missing	0
Mean		2,1221
Std. Error of Mean		,06183
Median		2,0000
Mode		2,00
Std. Deviation		,81088
Variance		,658
Skewness		,039
Std. Error of Skewness		,185
Kurtosis		-,935
Std. Error of Kurtosis		,368
Range		3,00
Minimum		1,00
Maximum		4,00
Sum		365,00

New_7				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1,00	43	25,0	25,0
	2,00	69	40,1	65,1
	3,00	56	32,6	97,7
	4,00	4	2,3	100,0
Total	172	100,0	100,0	

## Question 6: Gender (M)

Statistics		
New_7		
N	Valid	82
	Missing	0
Mean		2,1585
Std. Error of Mean		,08757
Median		2,0000
Mode		2,00
Std. Deviation		,79302
Variance		,629
Skewness		-,141
Std. Error of Skewness		,266
Kurtosis		-1,071
Std. Error of Kurtosis		,526
Range		3,00
Minimum		1,00
Maximum		4,00
Sum		177,00

New_7				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1,00	19	23,2	23,2
	2,00	32	39,0	62,2
	3,00	30	36,6	98,8
	4,00	1	1,2	100,0
Total	82	100,0	100,0	

## Question 9: Gender (F)

Statistics		
New_9		
N	Valid	318
	Missing	0
Mean		1,5283
Std. Error of Mean		,04122
Median		1,0000
Mode		1,00
Std. Deviation		,73499
Variance		,540
Skewness		1,005
Std. Error of Skewness		,137
Kurtosis		-,442
Std. Error of Kurtosis		,273
Range		2,00
Minimum		1,00
Maximum		3,00
Sum		486,00

New_9				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1,00	196	61,6	61,6
	2,00	76	23,9	85,5
	3,00	46	14,5	100,0
Total	318	100,0	100,0	

## Question 9: Gender (M)

Statistics		
New_9		
N	Valid	143
	Missing	1
Mean		1,6084
Std. Error of Mean		,05958
Median		1,0000
Mode		1,00
Std. Deviation		,71241
Variance		,508
Skewness		,736
Std. Error of Skewness		,203
Kurtosis		-,706
Std. Error of Kurtosis		,403
Range		2,00
Minimum		1,00
Maximum		3,00
Sum		230,00

New_9				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1,00	75	52,1	52,4
	2,00	49	34,0	86,7
	3,00	19	13,2	100,0
	Total	143	99,3	100,0
Missing	System	1	,7	
Total		144	100,0	

## Question 1: Nationality

## Descriptives

[Foreign]

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
New_2	49	1,00	4,00	2,7755	,74345
Valid N (listwise)	49				

## Descriptives

[Italy]

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
New_2	206	1,00	4,00	2,7476	,71525
Valid N (listwise)	206				

## Question 7: No (1) or Yes (2)

Statistics

New\_8

N	Valid	255
	Missing	0
Mean		1,9647
Std. Error of Mean		,01158
Median		2,0000
Mode		2,00
Std. Deviation		,18489
Variance		,034
Skewness		-5,067
Std. Error of Skewness		,153
Kurtosis		23,859
Std. Error of Kurtosis		,304
Range		1,00
Minimum		1,00
Maximum		2,00
Sum		501,00

New\_8

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1,00	9	3,5	3,5
	2,00	246	96,5	100,0
	Total	255	100,0	100,0

All the other questions' analysis has been conducted in the same way of the presented one. After having, in fact, converted all of the answers into numbers, by using the Likert scale method, there have been selected the filters of the genders, ages and nationalities

and, where there were relevant results, there have been done a cross-tab analysis comparing the variables

**APPENDIX III – CUSTOMERS’ INTERVIEWS PARTICIPANTS**

<b>Number</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Conscious or Blind Interview</b>
1	Female	24	Student	Ukrainian	Blind
2	Female	29	Lawyer	French	Conscious
3	Male	24	Auditor	Italian	Conscious
4	Male	40	Doctor	Benin Rep.	Conscious
5	Male	51	Banker	Italian	Conscious
6	Female	49	Entrepreneur	Italian	Conscious
7	Male	23	Student	Spanish	Conscious
8	Female	19	Student	Czech Rep	Conscious
9	Female	38	Manager	Swiss	Conscious
10	Female	56	Financial Analyst	Italian	Blind
11	Female	36	Psychologist	Italian	Blind
12	Female	26	Financial Analyst	Italian	Conscious
13	Female	27	Biologist	Russian	Conscious
14	Male	30	Anthropologist	Vietnamese	Conscious
15	Male	28	Engineer	German	Conscious
16	Female	32	Designer	Venezuelan	Conscious
17	Female	37	Marketing Manager	USA	Blind
18	Female	42	Doctor	Iranian	Conscious
19	Female	21	Student	Spanish	Conscious
20	Male	25	Student	French	Conscious
21	Female	25	Architect	Romanian	Blind
22	Male	26	Consultant	Finnish	Conscious
23	Male	43	Lawyer	French	Conscious
24	Male	57	Veterinarian	Italian	Conscious
25	Female	22	Student	Philippine	Conscious

## **APPENDIX IV – FIRM INTERVIEW**

Glassing owner, Alessandro Forte.

Interview day: 21<sup>st</sup> March 2017

Interview Place: Vigevano

Interview duration: 3 hours c.ca

Questions:

1. Can you tell me something about your brand and company?
2. Where do you operate?
3. How do you select the countries and the places?
4. Who are your main competitors?
5. Do you rely a lot on your online store? In other words, your selling focus is based on online or offline?
6. The majority of the revenues come from the online or offline stores?
7. Do you use the online channel for advertising and selling or mainly for advertising?
8. Do you think there is a reason why?
9. Since that you are using different channels (social media, online store, offline, franchising) do you think that they are linked and well integrated to each other, or do they operate separately? Why?
10. Do you think that your multichannel strategy will improve the brand loyalty of your customers? Why?
11. Does the omni-channel/multichannel presence helps you to attract international customers?

12. Does the physical store help you to personalize the customer experience and understand the customer needs? Why? How?
13. Is there a different type (or quantity) of assortment in the different stores?  
(Different channels with different product or different quantity)
14. Do you think that customers are looking for something more than the product? Do you think that the physical presence of the store can help the purchasing process to have an “happy ending”?