

"It Is Not As I Expected It": Delving Into Consumers' Expectation-based Reasons for Returning Online Purchased Products

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Abstract

In 2020, the ever-increasing share of consumers ordering products online grew abruptly due to the outbreak of the Corona pandemic. However, this development is accompanied by an increasing number of product returns which cause negative effects in multiple ways; retailers are faced with the challenge of either having returned products reprocessed or disposing them. For the environment, product returns mean a heavy additional burden through packaging and transport. Thus, the present research deals with an in-depth look at the reasons why consumers send products having bought online back. A survey was carried out among 253 consumers which investigated the reasons for their last product return. The results depict that consumers' unmet expectations play a crucial role in product returns; clothing is susceptible to unfulfilled sensory expectations, electronics, on the other hand, to utilitarian expectations. The present research contributes to the field of online retailing by providing deeper insights into consumers' reasons for returning a product ordered online.

Keywords: *product returns; consumer expectations; e-commerce*

Track: Retailing & Omni-Channel Management