



JÖNKÖPING UNIVERSITY

*Jönköping International  
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# Perceptions and Challenges of Online marketing Professionals

Online marketing Professionals' Perceptions of  
Challenges in the online campaign optimization process.  
A Qualitative Study.

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# Master Thesis in Business Administration

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## Abstract

Online marketing professionals' perceptions about the challenges have got huge importance on marketing campaigns and conversion rates. Online marketing professionals' effective digital marketing strategies are crucial for businesses and clients to grow. However, marketers are facing several challenges in optimizing campaigns, and how they perceive them can affect the whole outcome of the campaigns, the clients' success, as well as certain markets. Understanding their perceptions is important for developing effective strategies and improving conversion rates. Therefore, this research aims to explore the perceptions of challenges that marketers are facing when it comes to optimizing online marketing campaigns. The data for this qualitative project was collected through a total of 9 interviews, of which 4 were in-depth, and 5 were conducted to support or refute the discovered themes. All of the interviewees are highly-experienced online marketing professionals who are currently working in this field. The findings of this study are divided into 5 themes, and each theme has a challenge and a solution part. Marketing professionals can perceive the challenges along these 5 themes when optimizing campaigns to improve conversions. These 5 themes cover: (1) *client communication*, (2) *applied methods*, (3) *internal factors*, (4) *external factors*, and (5) *timeframe*. The marketers perceive the challenges in our studied topic along the 5 identified factors below: (1) *do not understand each other with the client*, (2) *there is no clear idea about what kind of methods can work*, (3) *they have a limited effect on the company's internal factors*, (4) *external factors cause an anomaly*, (5) *lack of long-term goals*. They can overcome these with client-centric communication, clear ideas, a well-thought-out decision-making approach, market-appropriate strategies, and long-term goals.

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Maria-Izabela Fieraru



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## Chapter 1: Introduction

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*This introduction discusses the challenges marketers face in optimizing their online marketing campaigns, highlighting how the digital revolution has transformed advertising and how businesses can use online marketing campaigns to reach a global audience and track the effectiveness of their campaigns. Here we briefly mention the benefits of digital marketing, such as cost-effectiveness, data-driven decision-making, and the ability to create personalized advertising campaigns. Additionally, it touches upon some trends in online marketing, including influencer marketing, personalized advertising, and video marketing, concluding by noting the importance of conversion rates and how businesses can optimize their campaigns by improving website design, creating engaging product descriptions, and implementing effective pricing strategies, leaning towards the problem formulation and the research question.*

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### 1.1. Background

Traditional marketing used to be the cornerstone and the sole mean of organizations' efforts to reach their target audience by employing print, radio, and television advertising. However, this changed when the Digital Revolution introduced us to computers and the Internet (E. Schoenherr, 2004). The internet-facilitated e-commerce, which originated as a consequence of digitalization, has fundamentally transformed how businesses sell and promote their goods and services (Hoffman, 1995) since the ease and convenience of online shopping have made it an increasingly popular choice among consumers (A. Kumar, 2018). The global e-commerce industry's projected compound annual growth rate (CAGR), a widely used metric in business and economics to assess the performance of an industry or market over time, is projected to be 14.7% from 2021 to 2028, indicating that the e-commerce industry is experiencing strong and sustained growth and has potential for continued success (Research, 2021-2028). With the rise of e-commerce, businesses have increasingly turned to online marketing efforts to attract new customers and increase sales. The Internet facilitated businesses reaching a global audience with just a few clicks, allowing marketers to redirect their means to more targeted and cost-effective marketing strategies, reaching a wider audience at a lower cost compared to traditional marketing methods and channels (Schoenbachler, 1997). The explosion of online communication channels gave birth to a transformative shift in marketing practices (Tucker, 2014). Some digital channels that emerged in

online marketing are search engine optimization, social media advertising, and email marketing, opening a path for personalization - tailored ads to fit specific demographics and interests (Tucker, 2014). Because the level of personalization helps businesses build brand loyalty and establish strong online presence, it might also aid in increasing the likelihood of converting leads into customers (Degeratu, 2000), so these new approaches have a high potential to be cost-effective and pinpointed if employed correctly.

The rise of social media and mobile devices shaped the field, introducing novel methods for organizations to promote their services to their prospects (Scott, 2015) leading to a boom in influencer and video marketing trends (Scott, 2015). With the increasing accessibility and convenience of online platforms for content consumption, video marketing has gained significant popularity (Mulier, 2021), resulting in businesses shifting their marketing strategies towards creating more video content-based ads to reach their target audience and stay competitive in the market (Mulier, 2021). Online platforms offer another avenue – influencer marketing, where businesses collaborate with social media personalities to promote products and services to their followers (Holt, 2016). This approach allows businesses to expand their reach and raise brand awareness among a younger audience (Holt, 2016). Moreover, they can effectively target prospects who have already shown interest in their offerings through the platform's algorithms suggestions (Barta, 2023).

These new strategies opened new advertising opportunities for businesses (Brown, 2008), proving their effectiveness in engaging audiences and driving conversions (Scott, 2015). Through online marketing campaigns, marketers can track and measure the effectiveness of their efforts, yielding quantitative results (Ellis-Chadwick, 2012). An online marketing campaign is an initiative launched to increase traffic (Desai, 2019), conversions, engagement, and income (Desai, 2019). The campaign utilizes one or more digital media and is aligned with the business's broader objectives (Desai, 2019). Marketers may track and evaluate the success of their initiatives in real time using analytics tools, make data-driven decisions, and adapt their tactics as necessary (Ellis-Chadwick, 2012). These methods aid in improving the campaign results but also help to save time and money by enabling marketers to target their audience and optimize their ads for optimum impact (Kannan, 2017).



However, in today's competitive environment, businesses encounter numerous challenges when converting potential customers into paying ones (Bostanshirin, 2014). According to the dictionary, a challenge is “a new or difficult task that tests somebody’s ability and skill” (Dictionary, n.d.). The success of an e-commerce business is not solely dependent on its ability to attract customers to its website, but also on its ability to convert those visitors into paying customers. (Järvinen, 2016). The conversion rate, measuring the percentage of website visitors who complete a desired action, such as making a purchase or filling out a form (Strauss, 2014), is a critical metric for organizations to measure their online marketing campaign effectiveness (Banerjee, 2019), yet creating a successful campaign that converts visitors into customers is not an easy task for marketers (Di Fatta D. P., 2018).

Companies must employ various strategies to optimize their conversion rates, such as improving website design, creating engaging product descriptions, and implementing effective pricing strategies (Peter M. K., 2021). In this context, understanding the challenges practitioners face when optimizing marketing campaigns is crucial for businesses to succeed in the digital marketplace.

As Albert Einstein once said, “*The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results*” (Einstein, A. 1987). This statement emphasizes the importance of not repeating ineffective strategies and expecting different results. In the marketing context, it highlights the need for optimization when the desired outcome is unmet. Changing the approach and strategy by adopting a well-researched strategy is essential when previous methods fail. For goal achievement, the optimization process entails modifying the marketing strategy based on collected data, ensuring that the adjustments align the outcomes with the intended objectives (Chaffey, 2012). The marketers’ ability to adapt, think critically, and analyze data are crucial factors in the campaign optimization process, as the main focus of marketing optimization is improving goal achievement (Chaffey, 2012).

## **1.2. Problem formulation**

As the business landscape has grown increasingly digital recently, internet marketing initiatives have gained more recognition. It has led to an increase in the demand for professionals who are skilled in those new fields of internet marketing, such as experts in search engine optimization – the procedure of enhancing a website's technical aspects, content relevance, and link popularity to

improve its accessibility, usefulness, and popularity among users (Ledford., 2008), social media marketing, and content creation, as well as expertise in areas such as email marketing, mobile advertising, and data analytics. Naturally, this necessitates a comprehensive understanding of customer behavior, data analysis, and the ability to quickly adapt to changing market trends. Marketers consistently evaluate and analyze their endeavors, seeking growth opportunities and implementing enhancements to maximize conversion rates.

However, the optimization process of online marketing campaigns presents challenges attributed to the proliferation of diverse channels and strategies accessible to marketers. The academic importance lies in comprehending marketers' perceptions concerning the impact and challenges inherent in optimization. Perceptions serve as a fundamental cognitive mechanism through which humans interact with their environment (Efron, 1969), thereby exerting influence over their subsequent actions (McDonald, 2011). Given the influential role of marketers as decision-makers within the digitally-driven realm, their perceptions and challenges should not be overlooked as they shape their actions in the online campaign optimization process. Thus, gaining insights into marketers' challenges and perceptions enables the development of effective strategies, which can improve conversion rates and ROI - return on investment - (Strauss, 2014).

We argue that understanding marketers' perceptions is crucial, as it aids academia in identifying the challenges and obstacles of practitioners when optimizing online marketing campaigns. This knowledge holds potential for developing frameworks that assist marketing researchers and businesses in proactively addressing these issues and seeking viable solutions. Our study holds theoretical and academic relevance as it explores novel aspects regarding the challenges and perceptions in the online marketing campaign optimization context, uncovering the obstacles encountered by practitioners. The findings of this study can serve as a basis for future discussions among researchers, ultimately leading to the formulation of frameworks that effectively overcome these optimization challenges.

### **1.3. Purpose of the study**

The purpose of our study is to explore how the marketers are perceiving the facing challenges when it comes to optimizing, evaluating, and improving online marketing campaigns, focusing on

the human motivation and perception aspects of online marketing and aims to understand the struggles of marketers in this field of work.

Our study prioritizes adding to the existing theory on marketing campaign optimization. By doing so, we aim to inspire other academics to explore this topic, leading to the creation of more effective theories and frameworks that can be applied in the real world. This research can help enhance understanding in the marketing sector by filling gaps in the literature and providing new insights. Ultimately, it can contribute to the development of more effective tactics for marketers and practitioners to achieve their objectives and improve performance. As Digital Business Master's students and young practitioners, we believe that academic significance underpins our study, as it adds to the existing knowledge in the field of marketing optimization.

Secondly, we aim to gain insights into how marketers overcome challenges in their daily work and optimize marketing campaigns. We want to understand their struggles and how they navigate complex situations. The findings can be used to develop training programs and resources for marketers, improving their problem-solving skills. It can also contribute to a better understanding of the marketing profession and its challenges. The study can help practitioners integrate best practices and provide valuable insights from central European marketers. Additionally, it can assist marketing academia in developing effective strategies aligned with real-world challenges, contributing to the marketing and business literature.

To delimit our study, we are mainly going to focus on the central European marketers and we refer them as experts, practitioners, online marketer professional or marketers. Broadly speaking, the actors who are involved in the online marketing campaigns are of course the marketers, the organization they are working for/with – since our research studies the relation between the marketers, as employed professionals to take care of digital marketing campaigns, and the businesses which are employing them, we are referencing back to the businesses as “clients”, and the target audience of their marketing campaign are the prospects towards marketers are expressing their efforts in their campaigns in order to convert them. We are also referencing but without discussing in-depth the external factors which can shape the perceived behavioral control of the marketers.

By gaining a deeper understanding of these challenges, the study ambition is to provide insights and recommendations for marketers to improve their online marketing strategies. Additionally, this study aims to expand the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1985) and its applicability in the business field in the central European market by drawing from interviews conducted with real-field marketing experts to understand their perceptions and challenges in their field of work, more precisely in the context of optimizing marketing campaigns. This research can contribute to the existing literature on the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1985) by providing a new perspective on its application in the context of marketing campaigns, enlarging its applicability in the business field.

#### **1.4. Research question**

Despite the difficulties marketers are encountering when optimizing their online marketing campaigns, it is important to understand how they are approaching them to boost conversion rates. The proposed research question for our study is:

*How do marketers perceive the impact and challenges when optimizing different online marketing campaigns to improve conversion rates?*

We believe that by identifying effective strategies and addressing challenges proactively, businesses can optimize their marketing efforts to achieve their desired outcomes more efficiently and effectively.

#### **1.5. Research objectives**

Our study proposes the following research objectives:

- To identify patterns in the collected dataset of marketers' perceptions
- To understand the online marketing professionals' perceptions on how to achieve high conversion rates
- To identify challenges marketers are facing when optimizing marketing campaigns and to make recommendations on how to overcome on them

- To enrich and enlarge the specialty literature with our paper findings and inspire other academia to pursue this topic to enhance our knowledge in this field.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

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*For decades, marketing campaigns have been a cornerstone of businesses, as they are critical for generating awareness, engagement, and revenue. However, with the rise of digital marketing, the complexity of online marketing campaigns has considerably widened, posing challenges that marketers must solve to maximize their campaigns. The challenges arise from the massive amounts of data generated by digital marketing platforms, the requirement to effectively analyze campaign performance, and the demand for personalized and targeted content that resonates with customers. This thematic literature review aims to review current techniques and strategies for optimizing campaigns and identify challenges marketers face when optimizing marketing campaigns.*

---

### 2.1. The current state of the literature

As digital technology is rapidly and ongoingly evolving and with the increasing popularity of online platforms (Ellis-Chadwick, 2012), researchers argue that online marketing campaigns are now a crucial component of modern business plans (Desai, 2019). The conventional approach for online businesses to achieve profitability was reliant on the sales of their products or services (Krafft, 2020). Digitalization opened a new playground for experimentation, leading to the formulation of new digital strategies (Kumar V. M., 2020), including utilizing social media platforms (Dwivedi, 2015), email marketing (Hartemo, 2016), and search engine optimization to increase brand awareness and drive websites traffic (Bala, 2018). The rise of e-commerce has made online marketing campaigns crucial for businesses to maintain competitiveness in the digital marketplace (Desai, 2019).

The online advertising industry's substantial growth (Strauss, 2014) and increasing relevance have pushed businesses to optimize their strategies for greater profitability (Baltes, 2015). Online marketing initiatives offer benefits such as targeting specific customer segments (Cahill, 1997), delivering personalized and interactive content (Kerr, 2015), and tracking and measuring effectiveness (Kiang, 2000). Digital marketing offers benefits for global consumer base companies and low advertising budgets (Kiang, 2000).

The complexity of the online business model (Strauss, 2014), coupled with the dynamic nature of the online marketplace, creates additional challenges for businesses operating in this domain

(Strauss, 2014). Companies must proactively identify and utilize innovative strategies to gain a competitive edge in the online market (Sehgal, 2022). They must invest in cutting-edge technologies, adopt novel marketing strategies, or optimize their website's functionality to enhance user experience and engagement (Sehgal, 2022).

#### 2.1.1. Understanding the online marketing campaigns

In the following, we are going to discuss the most common components of online marketing campaigns. Online marketing campaigns are the strategic and coordinated efforts conducted to promote products, services, or brands using various online channels. They typically involve a combination of different components that contributes to achieve specific marketing goals (Saura J. R., 2019).

Firstly, Website Optimization ensures that the website is user-friendly, visually appealing, and optimized for search engines, involving elements such as responsive design, fast loading times, intuitive navigation, and relevant content (Chaffey, 2012). Another strategy in online marketing optimization is Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is the practice of marketers to improve the visibility of your website in search engine results (Chen, 2011), the primary goal being to attract organic traffic (Chen, 2011). Strategies employed here include keyword research, on-page optimization, link building, and technical SEO to enhance organic traffic (Panchal, 2021).

A study underrun suggests that SEO influences website traffic, positively impacting business performance, including sales, profitability, and customer satisfaction (Poturak, 2022). The study found that companies that invest more in SEO tend to have better business performance comparing to those who invest less (Poturak, 2022). The study highlights the importance of SEO for businesses, particularly in the digital era, and the need for companies to adopt SEO strategies to improve their online presence and business performance (Poturak, 2022).

Similarly, Search Engine Marketing (SEM) is a paid advertising strategy that aims to increase a website's visibility in search engine results through paid search listings (Panchal, 2021). The most common form of SEM is Pay-Per-Click (PPC) advertising, where advertisers bid on specific keywords, and their ads appear at the top or bottom of search engine results when those keywords

are searched (Panchal, 2021). SEM campaigns often involve setting budgets, creating compelling ad copy, and optimizing landing pages for better conversions (Panchal, 2021).

Content marketing involves creating and distributing relevant content to attract and engage the target audience through blog posts, articles, videos, infographics, podcasts, or eBooks (Barry, 2015). Similarly, Social Media Marketing is utilizing social media platforms (such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube) to build brand awareness (Bilgin, 2018), engage with customers, and drive website traffic, including organic posts, paid advertising, influencer partnerships, and community management (Dwivedi, 2015).

Email Marketing involves nurturing leads and building customer relationships through targeted campaigns like sending newsletters, promotional offers, personalized recommendations, and automated email sequences (Hartemo M. , 2016). Nevertheless, Online Advertising displays ads on third-party websites, often through ad networks like Google Display Network or programmatic advertising platforms (Ha, 2008), and allows for broader reach and precise targeting based on demographics, interests, and browsing behavior (Ha, 2008).

Conversion Rate Optimization (CRO) is optimizing the website elements or landing pages to increase the percentage of visitors who take a desired action, such as purchasing, filling out a form, or subscribing to a newsletter (Chaffey, 2012). It involves a systematic approach to enhance the user experience, encourage engagement, and ultimately drive conversions (Chaffey, 2012), based on analyzing user behavior, testing different elements, and making data-driven decisions to optimize the conversion funnel (Chaffey, 2012).

Analytics and tracking play a crucial role in online marketing campaigns as they provide valuable insights into the performance and effectiveness of various marketing efforts (France, 2019). Through monitoring and analyzing campaign data, marketers can make informed decisions, optimize their strategies, and achieve better results (France, 2019). These metrics can include website traffic, page views, bounce rates, time spent on the site, conversion rates, click-through rates, social media engagement (Barger, 2016), and more (France, 2019). By accessing such data, marketers can understand how their campaigns perform and which specific elements are driving the desired outcomes (France, 2019).



For goal achievement, it is necessary to collect and analyze data related to online ads to gain insights, and a perfect tool to assess the strategies' effectiveness is A/B testing (Siroker, 2013). By conducting A/B testing, businesses can systematically compare different versions of their websites, landing pages, or marketing materials to identify the most effective elements and strategies (Feit, 2019). In an A/B test, one-half of the target market receives "version A" automatically, while the other receives "version B" (Feit, 2019). Having a solid hypothesis, identifying key metrics, and conducting tests over a sufficient period to obtain reliable results are crucial when employing this strategy (Siroker, 2013). However, a critical view of A/B testing is that it can be time-consuming and costly to run multiple experiments, especially for businesses with limited resources (Siroker, 2013). Businesses should prioritize tests based on potential impact and allocate resources wisely (Siroker, 2013).

Through proper interpretation of the data, professionals can identify areas that require improvement and adjust their advertising approaches accordingly (France, 2019). The ability to draw meaningful conclusions from online advertising data is essential in driving sustained profitability, as is well supported by the digital landscape (Fan S. L., 2015).

#### 2.1.2. Challenges in Online Marketing Campaign Optimization

The online advertising market has become increasingly competitive, with numerous online businesses vying for ad placement and display (Bostanshirin, 2014). Many businesses' marketing campaigns employ online advertising, yet the effectiveness of these online marketing campaigns can vary significantly depending on the type of advertisement used (Slater, 1995). Despite the significant investment in online advertising, many businesses struggle to optimize their campaigns to achieve their desired conversion rates, which negatively impacts their profitability and success (Di Fatta D. P., 2018). As a result, achieving high conversion rates at an affordable cost has become a daunting challenge for businesses and practitioners, which needs to provide good results with their campaigns, aiming for a better conversion rate.

The dynamic and interactive nature of digital advertising requires a complex model which integrates factors such as user-generated content, social media, and the use of mobile devices (Kerr, 2015), so marketers need to rethink their advertising strategies in the digital age and focus

on building engagement with customers through interactive and personalized content (Kerr, 2015), as online businesses become increasingly interested in leading more traffic and increasing their conversions through their online marketing campaigns (Baltes, 2015).

Target audience, segmentation, and profiling mean dividing the market into smaller groups with similar characteristics, behaviors, or needs (Cahill, 1997). It helps marketers understand their customers better and deliver personalized experiences (Cahill, 1997). Segmentation allows for efficient resource allocation, customization of marketing messages, targeting niche markets, and building customer relationships (Cahill, 1997), and profiling involves creating detailed profiles for each segment (Somervuori, 2014). Inadequate understanding of the target audience and segmentation can lead to wasted resources, missed opportunities, and low conversion rates (Goyat, 2011). It is crucial for marketers to invest time and effort into conducting thorough market research (Pomirleanu, 2013), gathering customer insights (Blasco-Arcas, 2022), and analyzing data to gain a deep understanding of their target audience (Amado A. C., 2018). This understanding enables marketers to create relevant and personalized marketing campaigns that connect with their audience (Strycharz, 2019), drive engagement (France C. M., 2016), and ultimately achieve their marketing goals (Cravens, 2006).

Through data collection, marketers can determine the conversion rate, which can help them later decide if a certain campaign or action was successful or not (Vennström, 2019). Online marketers can employ various techniques to improve conversion rates, and several factors can impact the efficacy of these modifications. Of course, the website capabilities play an important role in conversion rate optimization. Functionalities like search, shopping cart, and security significantly impact conversion rates (Ayanso A. Y., 2009). A study discusses the importance of setting up goals and funnels (Plaza, 2011), tracking e-commerce transactions (Plaza, 2011), and using custom reports and dashboards for more in-depth analysis (Plaza, 2011). It suggests that Google Analytics is a powerful and versatile tool that can help businesses improve their online presence and maximize the effectiveness of their digital marketing strategies (Plaza, 2011), a highly used tool by practitioners nowadays because it shows numerous benefits and provide them with a clear overview of their campaign and their state within the online market.

Is difficult to determine how to optimize to achieve a higher conversion rate. The average conversion rate is situated between 0.5% and 8% (Ayanso, 2009), although the vast majority of online businesses have less than a 2% value for conversion rate (Moe, 2000). Moreover, by using mobile devices, this number can be even lower (Moe, 2000). This highlights the complexity of this measurement because a small act – meaning using another type of device – can modify the results. Surprisingly, 96% of those customers who visit a website, won't purchase any item, just search on the website, or eventually, they add products to their cart (Moe, 2000), so even though their actions are classified conversions, they do not generate revenue for businesses (Moe, 2000).

Choosing appropriate marketing channels and platforms is an important strategy in developing an effective online marketing campaign (Watson IV, 2015). Identifying the platforms that align with the target audience's preferences and behaviors and maximizing your reach can aim to achieve the set marketing goals (Peter M. K., 2021). By considering platform features, assessing reach and engagement potential, evaluating costs, analyzing competition, testing and monitoring performance, and adapting to changes, it can aid the online marketing campaigns to remain relevant and successful over time (Peter M. K., 2021).

As mentioned, crafting compelling messaging and creative content is vital for successful online marketing campaigns (Lopes, 2022). It involves creating content that resonates with the target audience, captures their attention, and motivates them to take action (Lopes, 2022). Marketers' duties are to create content that grabs attention, builds brand awareness, conveys the value proposition, and establishes trust (Lopes, 2022). Additionally, their content must include clear calls to action and undergo iterative testing and optimization (Lopes, 2022). Consistency across marketing channels is imperative, ensuring alignment with the brand's voice and values (Lopes, 2022). Marketers can achieve desired campaign outcomes by continuously refining messaging and creative approaches to engage their audience effectively (Lopes, 2022).

Four key components: value creation, value capture, value delivery, and value communication (Bharadwaj, 2013), were proposed, and successful digital business strategies should focus on (1) creating value for customers, (2) capturing value through effective pricing strategies, (3) delivering value through efficient operations, and (4) communicating value through effective marketing and

branding (Bharadwaj, 2013). It underlines the importance of aligning digital business strategy with broader business goals and objectives, as well as with the organization's capabilities and resources (Bharadwaj, 2013). Budget constraints further compound the challenges, as marketers must work within a predetermined financial limit (Gross, 2019), requiring careful planning and optimization to allocate the budget effectively across various marketing channels and activities (Gross, 2019). Prioritization becomes crucial to ensure that funds are allocated to the most impactful strategies which align with the overall marketing objectives (Gross, 2019).

In the following, we introduce the theoretical framework employed to analyze the marketers' perceptions and challenges towards their partners and their difficulties in the marketing campaign optimization process for improving the conversion rate.

### 2.2. Theoretical framework

Figure 1 depicts the Theory of Planned Behavior, how the individual elements are connected, and how they lead to Behavior.

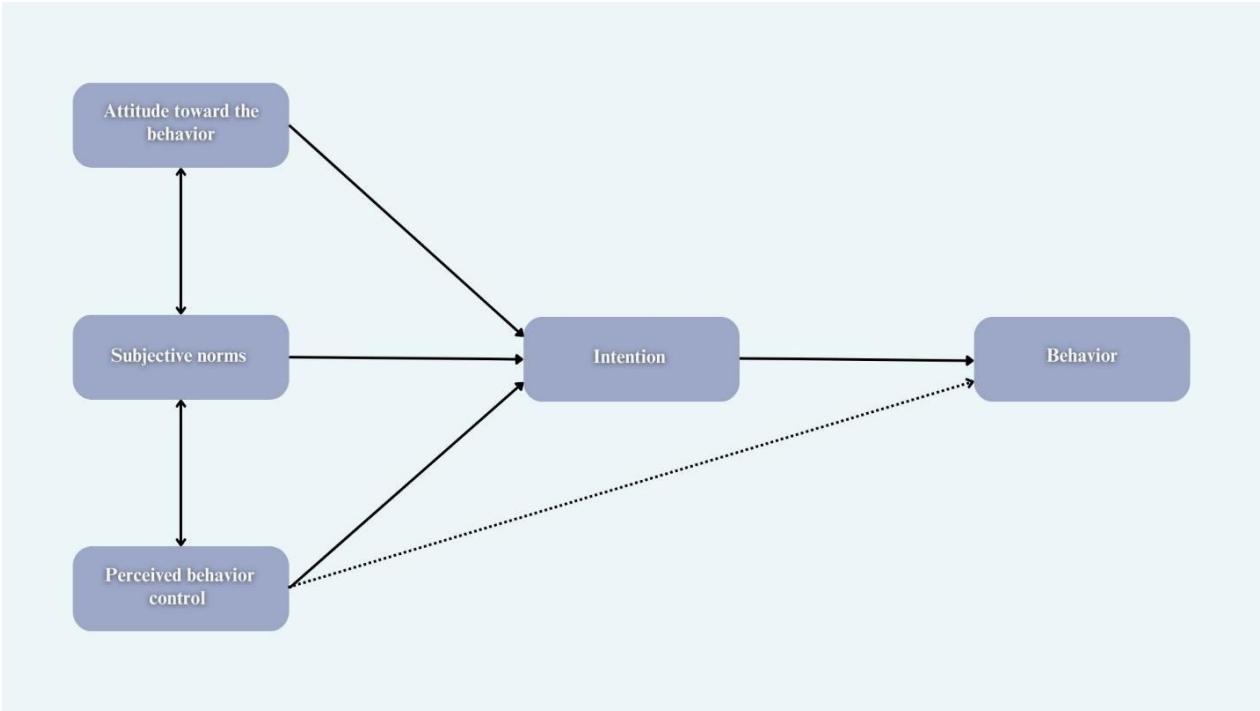


Figure 1. Representation of the Theory of Planned Behavior by Icek Ajzen, 1985.

### 2.2.1. Theory of Planned Behavior

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is a social psychology theory that explains the relationship between individuals' attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and their behavior in relation to those factors (Ajzen, 1985) and it was developed by Icek Ajzen in 1985. It has since become one of the most widely used theories in social psychology research, having multiple applications for other disciplines where the center is human behavior.

The idea holds that attitudes can affect intentions because they represent a person's overall behavior assessment (Ajzen, 1985), so positive attitudes and expectations from others increase a person's desire to engage in a behavior - intention - and the actual likelihood of engaging in that certain behavior. (Ajzen, 1985). Additionally, subjective norms influence one's intentions because they reflect how people perceive social pressure to engage in a behavior (Ajzen, 1985). Moreover, behavioral outcomes are directly predicted by perceived behavioral control because people are more likely to engage in an activity if they feel capable (Ajzen, 1985).

#### 2.2.1.1. Attitudes

Attitudes refer to an individual's positive or negative evaluation of the behavior – their opinions (Ajzen, 1985). They are the thoughts about the outcomes or consequences of engaging in an action (Ajzen, 1985). These attitudes, coupled with perceptions of behavioral control and subjective norms, impact the intention to engage in an activity (Ajzen, 1985). The intention then leads to the actual behavior (Ajzen, 1985).

For example, if someone has a positive attitude about entrepreneurship, there is a high chance that this might trigger the intention to become an entrepreneur. A good attitude could indicate a potential behavior. Conversely, a negative attitude about entrepreneurship can lead to a lack of interest or avoidance of entrepreneurial activities. The Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1985)

suggests that attitudes play an important role in shaping individuals' intentions and behaviors toward entrepreneurship. A positive attitude can increase the likelihood of engaging in entrepreneurial activities, while a negative attitude can decrease it.

#### 2.2.1.2. Subjective norms

Subjective norms are the perceived social pressure or expectations from significant others, such as friends or family members, to engage in the behavior (Ajzen, 1985). Subjective norms are the way a person feels under social pressure to engage or not in a behavior (Ajzen, 1985). They can further categorize in (1) normative beliefs: Do I think that person wants me to do that behavior? (Ajzen, 1985) and (2) motivation to comply: How much do I want to do what this person wants me to do? (Ajzen, 1985). The individual's dedication to upholding those standards and their expectations of what others expect of them impacts these norms (Ajzen, 1985); as such, the individual will be more likely to live up to those standards others portrayed for them (Ajzen, 1985).

This theory relies heavily on subjective norms since they can significantly affect someone's intention to engage in a certain activity (Ajzen, 1985). Thus, anticipating and encouraging behavior change can be made easier by better understanding the existing subjective norms within a particular social situation (Ajzen, 1985).

Furthermore, the subjective norms are injunctive norms: What do I think that other people are thinking that I need to do?, and descriptive norms: What do I think most people are doing?

For instance, if a person's significant other supports their pursuit of entrepreneurship and has a positive attitude toward it, the person may feel more motivated and confident to engage in entrepreneurial behavior because they are more likely to be positively influenced by the attitudes of their peers. Alternatively, if a person's family members or friends have negative attitudes towards entrepreneurship and discourage them from pursuing it, then the individual may feel social pressure to conform to their expectations and not engage in entrepreneurship, so they may have a negative intention toward it. Regardless of their peer's attitudes toward certain behaviors, the person in question will feel motivated to comply (Ajzen, 1985).

### 2.2.1.3. Perceived behavioral control

Perceived behavioral control refers to the individual's perception of the ease or difficulty of performing the behavior (Ajzen, 1985). It refers to a person's judgment of their ability to carry out behavior, being influenced by factors like prior knowledge, experience, and access to resources (Ajzen, 1985).

Perceived behavioral control is the key component in determining whether the individual will engage or not in an activity (Ajzen, 1985). To exemplify, if someone wants to start their own business but lacks the necessary skills and resources, they may perceive their behavioral control over this action to be low; therefore, it is unlikely that they would engage in this action, as it affects someone's motivation and confidence to act. Contrastingly, if an individual believes that they have the necessary skills, knowledge, and resources to start a business, their perceived behavioral control will be high, and they will be more likely to take action toward entrepreneurship. Therefore, it is important to address any barriers to perceived behavioral control when trying to encourage behavior change (Ajzen, 1985).

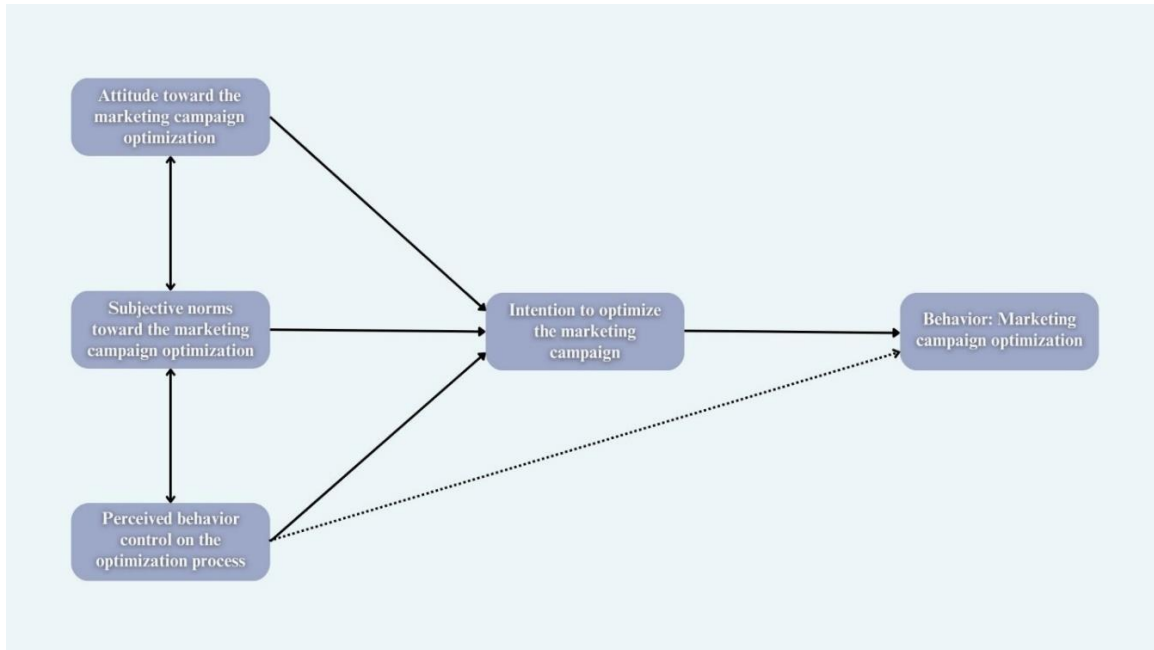
Similarly, self-efficacy is a psychological concept that refers to an individual's belief in their ability to successfully perform a specific task or achieve a particular goal (Bandura, 1982). It is the confidence that a person has in their abilities to complete a task or overcome a challenge (Bandura, 1982). Self-efficacy beliefs can influence the effort, persistence, and resilience that individuals put into their tasks (Bandura, 1982). For example, if one believes they have high self-efficacy toward entrepreneurial activities, they are more likely to attempt the behavior, expend more effort, and persist in the correlated obstacles or setbacks (Bandura, 1982). Conversely, if one has low self-efficacy in entrepreneurial activities, they are less likely to attempt the behavior, and even if they do, they may give up more easily and be less persistent (Bandura, 1982).

To summarize, according to the theory, three important characteristics are shaping a person's behavior (Ajzen, 1985): (1) Attitudes – their attitudes toward the act in question, or what they think about it, (2) Subjective norms – social norms associated with the action, or what other people think about it, and (3) the Perceived behavior control – their perceived control over the behavior. All these elements are highly interrelated and interdependent (Ajzen, 1985). Additionally, we

reference the self-efficacy concept, which is the belief in one's ability to succeed, affecting motivation, resilience, decision-making, and effort put into tasks and goals (Bandura, 1982).

### 2.2.2 TPB through marketer's Lens

Figure 2 demonstrates how we apply the previously described theory to our research topic.



*Figure 2. The Theory of Plan Behavior applied to our marketing study.*

Researchers recognized the versatility and applicability of the psychology model (Ajzen, 1985) for business studies. For example, a study used this model to examine the factors influencing socially responsible consumer behavior (SRCB) and conducted a meta-analysis of the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1985) as a framework for explaining their topic (Han, 2017). The results show that the TPB constructs (Ajzen, 1985) were significant predictors of socially responsible consumer behavior (Han, 2017), with attitudes and subjective norms being significant predictors of behavioral intention (Han, 2017), and behavioral intention and perceived behavioral control significantly predicting actual behavior (Han, 2017). The findings also indicated that the TPB model (Ajzen, 1985) has significant variations across countries, age groups, and types of social responsibility issues (Han, 2017).

Another study examined the factors that influence luxury purchase intention by developing a conceptual framework based on an extension of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen,



1985) (Jain, 2015). The constructs significantly influence luxury purchase intention (Jain, 2015). Additionally, the findings informed that brand consciousness and materialism are significant predictors of attitudes toward luxury products (Jain, 2015), while the need for uniqueness is a significant predictor of subjective norms (Jain, 2015). The study highlights the importance of understanding the psychological factors that influence luxury purchase intention and provides implications for luxury brand managers to develop effective marketing strategies (Jain, 2015).

Additionally, through this theory, a study aimed to examine the factors that influence the students' entrepreneurial intentions in Poland (Wach, 2016). The research found that attitudes toward entrepreneurship, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control were significant determinants of entrepreneurial intentions among the students (Wach, 2016). The results also suggested that the presence of role models and previous entrepreneurial experience positively affected attitudes toward entrepreneurship, whereas cultural values and social support positively influenced subjective norms (Wach, 2016). Furthermore, self-efficacy and entrepreneurship education are the significant determinants of perceived behavioral control among students (Wach, 2016).

Since the psychology-based model was applied in business studies, other authors recognized the potential of this theory and its applicability for the business setting, so we argue that this model fits our context of online marketing campaign optimization since marketers are individuals who can be subject to these psychological norms. With the conviction that one can act in a specific way under the circumstances, the Theory of Planned Behavior construct might prove that marketers' intentions and actions in optimizing online marketing campaigns are influenced by their attitude toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, or the belief in their ability to act accordingly (Ajzen, 1985).

We argue that marketers' perception of their ability to overcome challenges and implement optimizations significantly influences their intentions and subsequently, their behavior. We must not ignore the decision-making role of human actors in the highly digitalized domain. It is important to capture their perceptions in regard to the challenges they face in their line of work, as their perception and challenges are influenced by various factors, including their knowledge, skills,

resources, and organizational support. Access to the right information and resources enhances their confidence in maximizing their efforts. Data and tools enable informed judgments and campaign performance assessment, leading to increased confidence and potentially better outcomes.

### **2.3. Research Gap**

It is essential to have a deeper understanding of the existing research to develop a research agenda and address knowledge gaps. By employing databases, keywords, and inclusion/exclusion criteria, we identified relevant literature that aligns with the main topic of our thesis. This focused approach ensures our research is comprehensive and aligned with our overarching theme.

After reviewing the literature, we understood that online marketing campaigns offer numerous benefits and that traditional advertising models are unsuitable for the digital context. Also, A/B testing represents a useful tool for assessing campaign effectiveness. However, there was a lack of research on the specific topic, making it challenging to answer the research question and apply the theoretical framework. The research gap lies in the limited understanding of the multifaceted challenges faced by marketers in optimizing online marketing campaigns. Existing literature often focuses on technical aspects, neglecting the crucial role of human perceptions and factors influencing campaign optimization.

As previous research studied different frames and conditions concerning the online marketing campaign optimization, we expect to have different results in our paper regarding the challenges the marketers are facing in the optimization process, as this is an understudied subject. We stress the fact that there is a gap in the literature which needs to be filled and developed to provide a better understanding for business researchers. This driver motivated us to further pursue this topic and answer our question by conducting this research, aiming to enhance the existing studies on the online marketing campaign optimization process and the challenges which practitioners are facing in that regard.

## Chapter 3: Methodology

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*In the methodology, we illustrate the research philosophy of relativism and constructionism. From there we show the case study approach and the research design. Finally, the data collection and analysis methods of interviews along with the research ethics are discussed.*

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### 3.1. Research Philosophy

To understand individuals' perceptions and interpretations of a phenomenon, we employed a social constructionist approach, as this approach recognizes that knowledge and meaning are not objective, but are instead created and shaped by social and cultural contexts.

In the case of our research question: *“How do marketers perceive the impact and challenges when optimizing different online marketing campaigns to improve conversion rates?”* understanding how marketers perceive the impact and challenges of optimizing online marketing campaigns requires an exploration of the subjective experiences and interpretations of marketing professionals with expertise within the field. In the present Master's thesis, we pursue a constructionist approach to epistemology and a relativist approach to ontology. By using a social constructionist approach, we can gain insight into how marketers perceive their understanding of the challenges they face and the impact of their actions on campaign performance. The chosen method enables the exploration of diverse truths and perspectives concurrently to address the research question effectively.

As the social constructionist approach emphasizes the importance of context and the role of social interactions and relationships in shaping perceptions and meanings, therefore we believe this approach is suitable for understanding professionals' challenges and perceptions in online marketing campaign optimization.

We have asked individuals how they perceive certain situations and asked them to give their personal opinions based on their own experience, all of which may be good choices for each situation, we believe that constructionism is the appropriate epistemology for our research as well

as the relativist ontology. Respondents may experience a range of good judgments and truths based on their experiences and activities within online marketing, so it is important to choose the appropriate epistemology and ontology (Easterby-Smith, 2018).

Also, since in the field of marketing the interactions between marketers and their clients can have a significant impact on campaign optimization and conversion rates, the social constructionist approach offers a nuanced understanding of the challenges of online marketing campaign optimization by considering the social context and client relationships, emphasizing the subjective nature of knowledge and meaning, and recognizing the significance of social and cultural factors. As we are more interested in the human factor and the thought processes that lead to decisions in the present research project, we have chosen constructionism. Furthermore, we were committed to not distracting the respondents' answers with the questions we asked, and therefore we aimed at asking purely open-ended questions. There were no right or wrong answers, merely a wide range of experiences, thoughts, feelings, and opinions.

We also sought to ensure that our research provided as large a data set as possible from our conducted interviews and provide the individuals with all the necessary means so that they could express their views without constraints. The constructionism approach allows us to emphasize the participant perspectives, so employing semi-structured interviews as our method, our chosen philosophy is aiding us place importance on understanding the subjective experiences and perspectives of individuals. A large data set was obtained through interviews using a semi-structured approach. Participants were encouraged to freely discuss their experiences and opinions without interruption, resulting in a substantial amount of data.

### **3.2. Research Approach**

This study adopts an inductive and qualitative approach, which is appropriate for understanding marketers' perceptions of online marketing campaign optimization. The inductive approach allows for data-driven analysis, uncovering themes and patterns without imposing preconceived categories or theories since this approach is particularly useful for exploring understudied topics and in our case open-ended research questions.

By using an inductive approach, we can capture the diversity of perspectives and experiences of the participants, which might be missed by a deductive approach that is based on preconceived categories or theories. Moreover, a qualitative approach is beneficial for gaining deep insights into participants' experiences and perceptions. It enables the collection of rich, detailed data that captures the nuances of subjective experiences, attitudes, and beliefs. In the case of our research question, the use of an inductive approach and qualitative approach allowed us to explore the impact and challenges of optimizing online marketing campaigns from the perspectives of the marketers themselves. By using thorough questioning, an inductive and qualitative approach enables comprehensive information gathering. It helps identify underlying themes and patterns, leading to detailed answers for our research question and broader conclusions when examining specific data sets.

### **3.3. Research Design**

The question of how the research process can be implemented is addressed by research design. This section aims to explain how the right technique was used, as well as what went into the process of choosing the study subjects and how it was carried out. Last but not least, the research design clearly explains how and why the aforementioned data set was analyzed (Flick, 2011).

The assertions and methodologies chosen in the first two sections should be agreed upon before choosing a study design, and the design should be chosen based on these (Bryman, 2012).

The study emphasizes the human factor and explores the perceptions and challenges of online marketing professionals, so admittedly our main goal is to comprehend the entire process that influences these individuals' choices. We study a less studied and insufficiently comprehended region in our research, as the existing literature failed to provide us with a concrete answer to our research question.

An exploratory research design is a suitable option for our current investigation because it allows us to gather incremental insights and knowledge about our topic of interest. In the case of our research question, "*How do marketers perceive the impact and challenges when optimizing online marketing campaigns to improve the conversion rates?*", an exploratory research design can help

us gain a deeper understanding of the experiences and perspectives of marketers in this area. Our research question is open-ended and seeks to explore a relatively unexplored area, so an exploratory research design can provide a flexible and adaptable framework for our research. Additionally, we chose an exploratory research design as it can help us to identify potential research gaps and new trajectories for future research.

Since the research strategies can take a variety of shapes, such as surveys, action research, case study research, interviews, and others (Saunders, 2007) we chose to approach our research through the case study method, as this will enable us to evaluate each aspect, pinpoint the data set's key traits and trends, and identify more general conclusions from the answers that were provided.

In this research project, instead of a case study, we conduct a cross-case analysis. It is essential to acknowledge that the use of the term “cases” reflects the unique characteristics, perspectives, expertise, and viewpoints of each participant in our study. Due to these separate characteristics of our participants, we consider them unique cases. The cross-case analysis we employ here involves examining interview data in relation to other participants in our study. Therefore, we may examine the similarities and differences between several situations using cross-case analysis. Creating a secure environment for responses and promoting the free flow of ideas is crucial. A comprehensive study with well-framed questions allows for the comparison of multiple situations and the identification of patterns or trends through cross-case analysis, leading to more general conclusions.

Examining marketers' perceptions of conversions and online marketing campaigns can be interesting from several perspectives. Firstly, the sector of online marketing has grown to play a significant role in the strategies of some businesses because the visibility of companies and other organizations on online platforms and the advertising of their services and goods there are critical to the success of businesses in the competitive marketplace.

Secondly, since online marketing has become an essential part of modern business strategy as businesses depend more and more on digital platforms to promote their goods and services, interact with their target consumers, and achieve other business goals (Vitell, 2003). Online marketing is a complex industry that warrants research. The experts shaping and enhancing marketing

campaigns have a substantial influence on industry acceptance, customer behavior, market competitiveness, and business survival (Gummesson, 2011). In a complicated industry like online marketing and business in general, there is still a huge need for specialists to assist with things like internet marketing campaigns and conversion optimization, even with modern technology like AI systems (Triberti, 2020).

Thirdly, these experts' judgments, use of their knowledge, interpretation of each situation's consequences, and actions can have a significant impact on the results of an entire online marketing campaign, including conversions. Finally, knowing how marketers see how human behavior affects online marketing efforts and the difficulties they encounter when trying to optimize conversion rates may offer important insights into enhancing marketing plans and methods (Martin C. M., 2022). Referencing back our study chosen theory, our research highlights the importance of understanding the attitudes, norms, and perceived control (Ajzen, 1985) of marketers themselves to improve marketing strategies and methods. Understanding the challenges marketers encounter in optimizing conversion rates allows for identifying influential factors and adapting marketing strategies. This leads to more effective campaigns and improved outcomes for marketers and the businesses they collaborate with.

The exploratory analysis of this case study offers the chance to map this particular and complicated environment and uncover the answers to our research question (Saunders, 2007). We can study the choices and insights of these internet marketing specialists and transform them into a broader pattern by adhering to the research procedures discussed and chosen in the methodology chapter. The choice of which case and research questions to use within our study is the result of a long and well-circulated process of exploring which aspects of the case are best examined. The cross-case analysis is anticipated to reveal the key distinctions and reveal how marketers view the implications and difficulties of customizing various online marketing campaigns to increase conversion rates.

### **3.4. Description of the interviewees**

Digitalization has fundamentally changed the advertising marketing strategy of businesses. Professionals have had to and are currently facing new methods and challenges, for which there is often no universal right or wrong tactic (Leeflang, 2014). In many cases, the experiences and perspectives of marketing professionals can influence the outcome of a particular online marketing campaign, as what one professional may consider a good decision in a particular optimization process may be judged from the opposite perspective by another (Yasmin, 2015). Therefore, it is important to get comprehensive research on how marketing professionals perceive these challenges and influences while creating online marketing campaigns and optimizing them for better performance, based on their data and knowledge, towards predefined goals. We believe this area has not received enough attention among researchers, who have focused on numerical data with different frameworks rather than on real intuition and perception of specific situations. In this research project, we aim to provide a relevant and general explanation of our research question from the carefully collected data set. The rationale for conducting interviews with experts to gather insights on marketers' perceptions of impact and challenges related to optimizing online marketing campaigns for improving conversion rates is crucial.

Firstly, the marketer's experience and the industry they are working in, i.e., online marketing was a great factor in choosing the interviewees. These individuals, as highly experienced online marketers, working with several online webshops in different industries, can be considered major players in the highly competitive online marketing sector. Also, it is interesting to see different insights in this study, and choosing these marketers as interviewees with different perspectives, marketing method usage, and their different client portfolio made them the ideal candidates for studying the impact of online marketing campaigns on conversion rates.

In the following subsections, we are presenting each of our interviewees, in the chronological order of their conducted interview.

#### 3.4.1. Interviewee 1

Our first interviewee is Bálint Forgács, a very experienced marketing professional who has been working in digital marketing for 5 years. During this time, he has built up his own company and



has also worked as a brand manager for several big companies. Bálint covers a very special and extensive part of marketing with his knowledge, as he says *"From 2019 when I started my own company in the digital marketing area, that is the point when I started to get familiar with the whole industry in more depth"*. He holds several positions in his own company at the same time. Of course, within his own company, Bálint is in charge of the director's activities, so he can provide a comprehensive picture of the business operations from his perspective in this report. He is also *"...senior expert of PPC, the expert of SEO and also the project manager..."*. From this, we can see that his knowledge in the field of online marketing is fully relevant to our research question and that he can provide us with an appropriate and representative view of his own perceived experiences, impacts, and challenges. Not only he has work experience in online marketing but is also educated in the business field. His marketing studies provided him with a wide range of resources and insight on this subject. Additionally, Bálint works both with B2B partners and with various web shops, where conversions are measurable and online marketing campaigns need to be set up and optimized on a regular basis. He has completed a university course in this field, which has provided him with a wide range of information and new insights into the subject we are discussing. Bálint works both with B2B partners and with various web shops, where conversions are measurable and online marketing campaigns need to be set up and optimized on a regular basis. Although he lives in Hungary, he operates in the global market, cooperating with international partners and clients from all over the world. Therefore, Bálint's extensive experience makes him a suitable interviewee for the present study.

#### 3.4.2. Interviewee 2

Our second interviewee chose to remain anonymous and will be referred to as Interviewee 2. He described himself as *"I'm an entrepreneur mostly, but I would take myself as a marketer and I am an online marketer as well."* He also calls himself a strategist, as he has a lot of useful suggestions for his clients in online marketing. On top of that, he worked as a freelancer in conversion optimization, so his wide spectrum experience is making him an eligible candidate for our study, as he is well-adjusted in several topics which are matching the interests of our research topic. Currently, he is working in his own business, where he is a PPC manager, in addition to his director duties. *"And now we're going to do lead generation for companies, which means we're going to*

*try to get some good bookings, appointments, leads, prospects to different kinds of companies."* He said that he has been working in this field for six years, so we thought he was the right interviewee for our research, as he has a wide range of experience in many areas of online marketing. His customers can be found in many parts of Central Europe, which is why our second interviewee is an important subject of our research.

### 3.4.3. Interviewee 3

Our third interviewee is Áron K. Szabó PhD, founder of Clickers Marketing Agency and the managing director and owner of the legal entity behind this online marketing agency. He is also a Ph.D. student at the Marketing Institute of the Corvinus University of Budapest, a lecturer and researcher in the field of Marketing, and the President of the Student Association for Enterprise Development of the Faculty of Business Development of the Corvinus University of Budapest. With his 7 years of experience in online marketing, his position as the president of his enterprise development, and his outstanding studies, Áron is an excellent interviewee for our research question and this thesis. We believe that Áron's work has given him a wealth of experience relevant to our topic and that he can provide us with appropriate answers to our interview questions, which we can analyze and use to answer our research question. As he said, *"I have many years of experience in online marketing campaigns, performance measurement, and conversion optimization and I am confident that I can contribute this knowledge to the success of your thesis"*.

### 3.4.4. Interviewee 4

Our fourth interviewee is Péter Müller, who did a degree in marketing and commerce in Hungary at Budapest Corvinus University and then he started to work in that area as a trainee. Later, as he gained more and more experience, he utilizes his knowledge and he started his own company in online marketing execution. With more than 6 years of experience, today as a CEO has around 80 and 90 clients to work with and help in their inquiries about online marketing. As he said, *"A big part of our work is ad management, both on Facebook and Google, and a big part of that process is analyzing websites and looking at where a company might be stuck in terms of conversion and how to improve it"*.

#### 3.4.5. Interviewee 5

Our fifth interviewee is Gergő Kovács who works at the company called Omnicom Media Group, which is a global media, marketing, and corporate communications holding company. His position at the company is the Head of Digital Planning, which requires so much responsibility and experience. He works at the company for more than 8 years now, and he started his career there as a PPC assistant, and then he became the PPC manager. After, he was leading a digital team where he had to strategically summarize several digital areas and define the digital strategy for our clients and make sure that everything was right with the clients. Now he is operating in his current Head of digital planning position for more than a year, where he mainly oversees digital design across the whole group and practically any digital professional topic and helps digital people develop professionally and improve the quality of their work. As he said, *“I have quite a lot of experience in conversion optimization”*. He worked for one of the biggest e-commerce shops in Hungary for about 2 or 3 years, as a digital team leader, and previously as a PPC manager. He also optimized e-commerce campaigns daily for an online travel broker in Hungary and several other countries in the surrounding countries, which reinforces how representative his input is in this research paper.

#### 3.4.6. Interviewee 6

The sixth interviewee chooses to stay anonym for respecting his name and the company he works for; hence, we are only describing his experience and his position. Our interviewee (Interviewee 6) is working in the online marketing area for more than 8 years now, and he is in his current position which is called Head of the Digital Activation for more than 2 years now. He was working with several other online marketing agencies in the past, so he gained huge relevant experience in this field. He described his position as managing digital campaigns daily, as an agency, and he is one of the technical leaders for those in-house. He said, *“...we now optimize a very significant part of our campaigns for conversion. The way it converts can be very, very different from client to client and from campaign to campaign, but basically, I think more than half of our campaigns are now conversion optimized in some way”* which duly demonstrates that his input and participation are a relevant and highly professional participant in our research.

#### 3.4.7. Interviewee 7

The seventh interviewee is Bereniké Győri, who is currently working as a marketing manager, at a company that provides full-scale online services to clients from web development to marketing management. Bereniké in this position is managing online campaigns on daily for multiple webshops, and she is optimizing them to achieve higher conversion rates. Her tasks are very complex because she has to communicate with the clients and also has to improve the campaigns according to the client's needs. Before this position Bereniké worked as a PPC manager for about 2 years, so with her current position she has around 5 years of experience in the online marketing field. She said, *"...you always have to find this golden mean somewhere, and I think that with an over-optimized campaign, you can make the mistake that if that target audience dies out, it will be very difficult to find again the optimal targeting that you have already succeeded in once again."*, which well represents that her experience and critical thinking are essential in her everyday work.

#### 3.4.8. Interviewee 8

The eighth interviewee is Benedek Tóth, who founded the HiData agency with a friend about 3 years ago. In addition, he has been working in online marketing for more than 7 years. *"...I worked in Berlin at a startup that made a product comparison site called Shopalike, and I made Shopalike sites for maybe 17 countries"*. In addition, he worked for a company called Criteo in Barcelona for about 2 years, where he mainly dealt with retargeting, i.e., reminder ads. They started working in their own company with an SEO focus, but they also work on PPC projects: *"...so we cover SEO and PPC"*. In his agency called HiData, Benedek works with a total of 6 full-time employees and another 3 project-based partners.

#### 3.4.9. Interviewee 9

Our ninth interviewee is Dávid Juhász, who studies at a university of economics where he understood the basics of marketing and management, but after his studies, he immediately started to work on his own company, and he became a freelance online marketing expert. He gradually extended his scope in his own business, because *"...first I dealt with Facebook marketing, then Google for 1-1.5 years, and then I also learned LinkedIn, Mailchimp, TikTok, and Pinterest"*

*marketing.*" Since he currently performing all the tasks in his company alone for about 5 years, Dávid's work is very complex and requires a lot of experience to cope with everyday challenges smoothly and efficiently. *"Trends are constantly changing, so I keep my knowledge up to date."*

### **3.5. Data collection**

As the methodological approach affects the process of data gathering and analysis (Bryman, 2012) and the method utilized at this point in the research makes a substantial contribution to the study's validity and accuracy (Saunders, 2007). In this qualitative research study, we gathered primary data to find the answer to our research question, as we believed that this is the best strategy to fulfil our research purpose. We choose interviews as our primary technique of data collection since we have found them to be the most efficient for our research endeavour. Interviews were selected as the data collection method to engage closely with online marketers and benefit from their expertise and unique insights. This approach allowed us to gain a comprehensive understanding of the study issue by witnessing and listening to multiple perspectives from the respondents. Interviews serve as the primary data source, providing accurate information from marketing experts. To ensure transparency, four in-depth analyses of interviews were conducted, followed by five additional interviews to confirm or contest the findings from the initial analysis.

#### **3.5.1 Primary Data**

##### **3.5.1.1 Semi-Structured Interviews**

The utilization of interviews as our primary source of data lends credibility and reliability to our research findings, as the data is obtained directly from marketing professionals who possess first-hand experience in the field. This dataset enables us to conduct research in a nuanced and insightful manner, allowing for creative and meaningful analysis. Given that our research aims to uncover the challenges and impacts of online marketing campaigns in the context of conversion optimization, interviews are a fitting choice for our qualitative research methodology, as they provide an in-depth perspective from online marketers who are actively engaged in implementing such strategies.

The utilization of interviews as a research method provides a unique opportunity to explore diverse and divergent perspectives of human participants, thereby facilitating the generation of meaningful conclusions (Feilzer, 2010). In our study, marketing professionals were engaged as interviewees, allowing them to freely express their opinions and share their personal experiences on the research topic without any constraints. To ensure a seamless and uninterrupted exchange of information, we adopted a semi-structured interview approach, emphasizing continuity and the promotion of free-flowing dialogue (Rowley, J., 2012). This approach involved the use of open-ended questions, which do not impose predetermined answers and do not have a definitive right or wrong response. This methodology was chosen to maximize our understanding of the research topic, as it encourages interviewees to provide in-depth and comprehensive insights based on their perspectives and experiences (Flick, 2011).

This aspect bears significant importance in the investigation of a distinct and intricate subject matter such as online marketing, as diverse marketing professionals may interpret the same situations through varying perspectives. Thus, the utilization of open-ended questions formed the foundation of our research and interview methodology, enabling a comprehensive exploration of the research topic (Feilzer, 2010). Given the nature of our interviews, which were conducted using a semi-structured approach, we facilitated the formulation and inclusion of additional questions that were deemed relevant to the research objectives, alongside our pre-defined questions. This approach allowed us a creative and flexible approach to data collection, permitting the interviewees to share their insights and experiences in a manner that best captured their unique perspectives and reflections on the research topic.

Our research methodology embraced flexibility in interviews, prioritizing valuable insights relevant to the research question. We proactively pursued further questions when interviewees provided interesting and significant responses, deviating from pre-determined questions. For the interview questions, see Appendix 1. This approach aimed to create a safe and conducive environment, wherein the interviewees felt comfortable and willingly shared information with the researchers. As a result, many interviewees voluntarily responded to the originally planned questions, underscoring the effectiveness of our interview structure in facilitating open discussions.

This approach enabled us to amass a substantial volume of data, which could be effectively analyzed to derive meaningful insights. Our interview guide served as a comprehensive framework that guided us in our research process and provided us with a structure, however not limiting us from pursuing interesting inquiries arising from our interviewees' answers. To enhance its comprehensibility, we have provided a detailed description of the key sections within the interview guide in Figure 3. These sections encompassed background, introductory, experience, and conversion rate-based questions, and were carefully formulated based on a thorough analysis and deconstruction of our research question. By meticulously categorizing the interview guide, we ensured alignment between specific questions and individual sections, thus enhancing the coherence and relevance of our data collection process.

#### 3.5.1.2. Interview guide

Figure 3 depicts the Interview Guide, which shows how the individual questions are related to the theory, the research objectives and which category the individual questions fall into.

Qualitative Interview Guide					
Category	Interview Question	Relevant Objective	Theory	Explanation	
e.g. Introductory/learning about the Marketer, Background, Experiences, Perceptions, Core question, etc.	Focus on broader questions that do not lead the interviewee. Use "How", "why" or "To what extent" questions that are more open-ended.	The objective this question most aligns with: you will use this to make sure the appropriate kind of information is provided (especially for structured/semi-structured interviews)	Any theories or information of expectations that can guide you when you pick up on information that may be relevant to the literature.	A list of prepared questions that may help to get more out of a response. Or questions that may be more relevant to some participants than others.	
1	Introductory	Please tell us about yourself.	-	Name, job position/title, the industry you work at, for how long, may how did you get this position etc.	
2	Learning about the marketer	What attributes does someone need to have in order to be really successful in this position?	To understand the online marketing professionals' perceptions on how to achieve high conversion rates	Attitudes	
3	Learning about the marketer, Experiences	What are the most common questions from the clients?	To understand the online marketing professionals' perceptions on how to achieve high conversion rates	Perceived behavioral control; Subjective norms	for example: improve the sales or do they have other conversion goals?
4	Core question	What can impact an online marketing campaign and conversion rate? Can those all be measured?	To understand the online marketing professionals' perceptions on how to achieve high conversion rates	Perceived behavioral control	
5	Experiences	Why do you think the Hungarian market is relevant, competitive, and different than other markets?	To understand the online marketing professionals' perceptions on how to achieve high conversion rates	Subjective norms	Why is this place unique regarding online marketing?
6	Core question	Which are the most triggering strategies which marketers are putting in place in order to generate conversion rates?	To identify patterns in the collected dataset of marketers perceptions; To understand the online marketing professionals' perceptions on how to achieve high conversion rates	Perceived behavioral control; Subjective norms	For example good creative images, well-written ads, call to action button, brighter pictures are more successful or something like that?
7	Core question	What are the challenges in creating these online marketing campaigns to improve conversion rates?	To understand the online marketing professionals' perceptions on how to achieve high conversion rates; To identify challenges marketers are facing when optimizing marketing campaigns and to make recommendations on how to overcome on them	Attitudes	
8	Experiences	How do you optimize online marketing campaigns to increase conversion rates?	To understand the online marketing professionals' perceptions on how to achieve high conversion rates	Perceived behavioral control; Attitudes	when optimizing the campaign, which are the biggest challenges you need to solve/ overcome?
9	Core question	What are the biggest challenges when optimizing a campaign from your POV?	To identify patterns in the collected dataset of marketers perceptions; To identify challenges marketers are facing when optimizing marketing campaigns and to make recommendations on how to overcome on them	Subjective norms	
10	Experiences	Is there any common solution or overall strategy you could apply for all businesses to increase conversion rate?	To identify patterns in the collected dataset of marketers perceptions; To understand the online marketing professionals' perceptions on how to achieve high conversion rates	Subjective norms	
11	Experiences	What are your biggest accomplishments? failures?	To identify patterns in the collected dataset of marketers perceptions	Attitudes	

*Figure 3 Representation of the interview guide used for our interviews*

Subsequently, the interview questions were administered to each interviewee by the aforementioned method. The interview questions and their explanation can be seen in Appendix 1. Each section of the interview guide was systematically paired with our specific research objectives, ensuring that the questions posed were highly relevant to our topic and aligned with our research objectives. Furthermore, the interview guide included a section that elucidated any relevant theories and their corresponding components for each question, providing a theoretical framework that contextualized our data collection process and contributed to the rigor and robustness of our analysis.

The comprehensive design of our interview guide, including the alignment of interview sections with research objectives and the incorporation of relevant theories, ensured that our data collection process remained focused and purpose-driven. Additionally, we included a section for other



explanations, which facilitated clarification of questions by interviewees when needed. It is noteworthy that all interviews for our research project were conducted online, utilizing platforms such as Microsoft Teams and Google Meet, to overcome geographical constraints and enable the remote participation of interviewees.

### 3.5.1.3. Sampling Strategy

In our study, we employ purposive sampling, which entails choosing certain individuals by predetermined goals. This includes, for instance, the respondents' qualifications and experience as well as whether or not they are employed in an industry that is pertinent to the study's research topic (Bryman, 2012). Each candidate for the interview in this instance was carefully chosen based on a variety of factors that were important to the study. When researchers aim to demonstrate a better comprehension of the issue and get more detail into the experiences of specific participants, they frequently employ a purposive sampling technique (Easterby-Smith, 2018).

We had to choose how to get in touch with them when the technique was established. The following methods were used: email, LinkedIn, and phone. Through one of these platforms or channels, potential interview subjects were contacted, told of our topic, the goal of our study, and our research question, and encouraged to engage in the interview, i.e., to participate in our research. We provided participants with the choice to remain anonymous or be mentioned in our research, respecting their decisions and prioritizing their privacy as part of our responsibility as researchers. Nevertheless, just a few of the prospective interview subjects who were reached consented to take part in the study. Most of them cited a lack of time, but others stated that they lacked motivation.

Therefore, one of the obstacles was finding interview candidates, and the other was selecting an appropriate interview time with those who had previously accepted. Interviews were usually held in the evenings, after working hours, as all of them were busy online marketing specialists who simultaneously held many jobs within their own and other firms. We determined that the number of respondents was adequate for our study because we think that the breadth and depth of their co-op experience provides us with enough information to address our research topic. Our respondents have, on average, worked in the field of online marketing for more than five years, developing

various online marketing campaigns and carrying out daily conversion optimization tasks. They are therefore appropriate interview subjects for our study since their viewpoints, perceptions, and specific decision-making circumstances can offer a satisfying response to our research topic.

### **3.6. Data Analysis**

One of the most important steps regarding analyzing the gathered data is to choose an appropriate data analysis approach, to fit our qualitative research investigation, as our qualitative research places more emphasis on words, descriptions, and what other people have to say than it does on numerical data (Easterby-Smith, 2018).

Therefore, we chose to pursue the Thematic Analysis technique because this type by nature looks for patterns of meaning in a given data set. This may be done by data gathering techniques like focus groups or interviews (Easterby-Smith, 2018). In thematic analysis, the researcher closely scrutinizes the data to spot themes and unearth meanings that recur across a specific data set. Thematic analysis groups the data into categories based on similarities it finds in the existing data set (Easterby-Smith, 2018). For the present research project, this proves to be the best choice, as we want to discover patterns in the available data set to answer our research question.

We believe the thematic analysis is the ideal way to investigate our topic as one of the main tenets of our study project is the behavior of the internet marketers themselves, as well as how they react and perceive certain scenarios. To understand people's experiences, viewpoints, and ideas, it is crucial to note that thematic analysis may be quite helpful (Initiative, 2011). The interviews provided valuable insights from experienced online marketing experts, helping us focus and delve deeper into the research topic. The semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed for follow-up on relevant responses, making it a suitable data analysis approach for the current study.

There are several methods to go about doing a thematic analysis, but the most often used strategy entails six steps: familiarization, coding, theme generation, theme evaluation, theme definition, labelling, plus conclusion writing (Braun, 2006). We decided to evaluate our dataset utilizing this six-step process since doing so can help researchers build their study with less confirmation bias.

This method was first developed by Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke for psychological research. However, thematic analysis is a flexible approach that may be used in a variety of research kinds (Braun, 2006).

It is necessary to note the drawbacks of the methodologies as well as their benefits. For example, when employing theme analysis, there is a chance that the analysis would be subjective and rely on the researcher's opinions. This issue may be solved by giving the decision-making process more thought, which entails reconsidering and verifying concepts that were previously in the public domain (Braun, 2006). The present study is carried out by two researchers, therefore individual decisions must be agreed upon, to prevent such subjectivity issues which can further mitigate these issues. The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), which is the theory mentioned in this study, also offers the interpretive framework for the current data analysis. Consequently, the conclusions and findings of our investigation will be based mostly on the patterns, i.e., themes, that arise from the data set instead of on the theory in the current situation because the study itself takes an inductive method. TPB will be employed in this study to aid in the analysis of the interview data; it will act as a sort of guide, but the findings will be broad and not be based on a test or demonstration of the validity of the theory, but rather on our data set.

### **3.7. Data Quality**

Using Lincoln and Guba's model (Lincoln, 1986), we analyzed the quality of our data by assessing each of the four elements of the data rigor criteria: credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. In this section, we are going to discuss each of those criteria through the lens of our study and argue about how we cope with each of those.

Figure 4 is illustrating the following sections of data quality.

Rigour criteria	Purpose	Important aspects	Strategies applied in our study
<b>Credibility</b>	To showcase that the results are credible	<p>Interviewing process and techniques</p> <p>Presentation of the topic</p> <p>Knowledge about the topic</p>	<p>the chosen techniques allowed us to discover solutions to our research question and subject, which were formally and explicitly established in advance</p> <p>The topic was clearly introduced for all participants</p> <p>Familiarizing with the topic while preparing the literature review and also analyzing the answers of the interviewees helped in gaining relevant knowledge of the topic</p>
<b>Dependability</b>	To make sure the results of this study can be reproduced	<p>Description of methods</p> <p>Establishing an audit trail</p>	<p>We have prepared a detailed draft of the data collection process, both in terms of the interview guide and the pre-formulated questions</p> <p>Describing the detailed and clear steps of data analysis and describing our data gathering and qualitative methods</p>
<b>Confirmability</b>	To increase the likelihood that the findings will be supported by or verified by other studies.	<p>The nature of the interviewers</p> <p>Triangulation</p>	<p>The interview questions were worded neutrally to avoid influence on the given answers</p> <p>We applied several sources and data in our study activity, including theory, data source, and methodological assumptions, to ensure triangulation</p>
<b>Transferability</b>	To increase the degree to which the findings are transferable or generalizable to different situations or contexts.	<p>Possibility of a broader conclusion making</p> <p>Relevant theory for real-world applicability</p>	<p>Our conclusions can be used by other online marketing professionals and researchers</p> <p>The used theory - Theory of Planned Behaviour - allowed us to transfer the theory to the field of online marketing</p>

*Figure 4. Illustrating the summary of data quality*

### 3.7.1. Credibility

The study findings' credibility as well as the language's scientific rigor and integrity may all be guaranteed by what is mentioned in the credibility section. Credibility also affects how the study topic has been presented since it might indicate the usage of current, reliable sources of information and the upkeep of an academic tone that is cogent and constant throughout the text. How the research's conclusions match up with reality will be addressed in the believability section. The

solution offered might take on a variety of forms since the qualitative approach utilized in this thesis allowed us to discover solutions to our research question and subject, which were formally and explicitly established in advance (Patton, 1999). Because they are now employed in the field of online marketing and deal with difficulties and concerns with decision-making daily, our respondents gave us data that was representative of the sector. The literature review provided a comprehensive understanding of the research topic by incorporating peer-reviewed research papers. The selected theory guided the qualitative research methodologies, enabling the discovery of relevant and accurate responses to the research question.

### 3.7.2. Transferability

The key need for the transferability section is to demonstrate that the results are truly applicable and perhaps transferrable to real-world activities, or relevant. The extensive data set allowed us to derive broad conclusions that are valuable for online marketing professionals and researchers. By examining online marketing and conversion optimization from the perspective of marketing professionals using selected methods and analytical techniques, the findings can be beneficial to the field.

Within our study, we are linking the theoretical generalizability, as under the described conditions within our study, these realities exist and under similar conditions, these realities might recur again. Furthermore, the theory used allowed us to transfer the theory to the field of online marketing, as it is also about people and their perceptions. Therefore, the results of our study can be generalized and applied to real-life problems and issues, both in the field of online marketing and possibly to other situations where people have to make decisions by considering and weighing together multiple factors and their professional knowledge (Korstjens, 2018).

### 3.7.3. Dependability

The Dependability section of this research study aims to clarify whether the results and conclusions of our qualitative study can be reproduced in the same environment, without changing the participants, the data analysis (coding), and the context of our research project (Jackson, 2007) We

have meticulously prepared a comprehensive draft of the data collection process, including the interview guide, pre-formulated questions, research question, aim, and objective. By describing the clear detailed steps of data analysis and describing our data gathering and qualitative methods, we made sure to maximize the dependability section.

#### 3.7.4. Confirmability

The confirmability section's purpose is to describe if the study findings are supported by other researchers, which might be assured by the researcher's objectivity (Anney, 2014). The interview questions were worded neutrally, indicating that we were just interested in the perspectives of internet marketing experts and had no intention of swaying or influencing their answers. Furthermore, we applied several sources and data in our study, including theory, data source, and methodological assumptions, to ensure triangulation.

### **3.8. Research Ethics**

The concepts, standards, and norms that direct the conduct of the study in a way that is responsible and ethical are referred to as research ethics. It includes all of the ethical factors that researchers have to take into account while planning, carrying out, and communicating their study. Applying moral values like respect for individual autonomy, beneficence, and fairness to the different phases of the study's process is known as research ethics (Ryen, 2011).

To guarantee that research is carried out with respect for human rights and responsibility, it is essential to abide by research ethics. It aids in ensuring that research is carried out in a transparent, reliable, and responsible manner while ensuring its potential advantages outweigh any possible risks or harm. Ethics in research often entails taking into account factors like participant-informed permission, preservation of human subjects' rights, confidentiality, and proper data collecting (Ryen, 2011). According to GDPR, as we are not allowed store personal data for longer than requires, all collected data will be deleted after a year post-defence. Also, the data is stored in a password-protected file, to prevent unauthorized access from malevolent third parties.

Reflecting on research ethics, we wanted to make sure that we are compliant with these factors in our research so we provided the interviewees with relevant information about the interview, such as its length, research topic, purpose, aims, and research question. We briefly explained to them that we were focusing on human factors and that we were conducting qualitative research, so we could not rely on quantitative data, but only on their personal opinions, experiences, and the information they told us. Furthermore, as a key point of research ethics, we have always asked the interviewees if they wish to remain anonymous or if they would like their names to be included in our research. Accordingly, our interviewees decided individually which category they would like to belong to, and therefore we have a mixture of anonymous individuals and subjects who have given their names in our study. Furthermore, we informed them and asked for their consent to record the interview purely for data analysis purposes and informed them that anything said in the interview and labelled as confidential information would not be used in the future. Creating an optimal atmosphere for online interviews was prioritized to encourage interviewees' comfort and openness. Recognizing that discomfort may hinder comprehensive responses, efforts were made to maximize the research outcomes.

## Chapter 4: Findings

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*We present our research findings in this chapter. We use quotes from interviewees to support our findings. The framework shows the groundwork for the upcoming analysis and is informed by the themes that arose from the codes created throughout the data analysis.*

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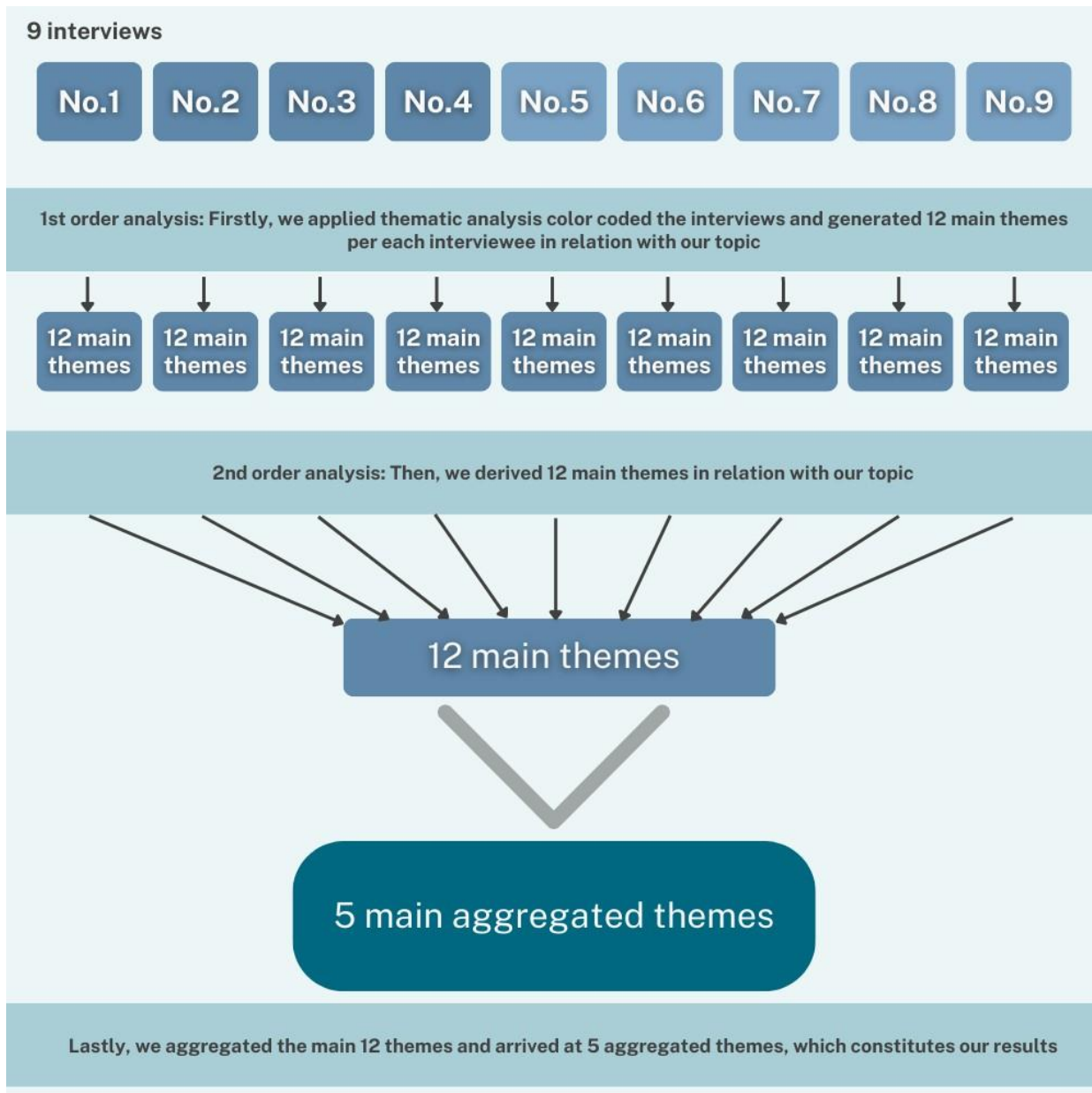
The textual data available from the interviews were analyzed according to the thematic coding described in the previous chapter. In our qualitative research, we conducted a total of 9 interviews. Four were in-depth interviews, while the remaining five focused on validating or challenging the patterns and themes identified in the initial four interviews. The subsequent interviews confirmed the primary findings, leading to more specific and conclusive results.

From the interviews, codes were identified by analyzing them one by one, and then these codes were grouped by theme to follow the criteria of thematic analysis. From the resulting themes conducted with 9 interviewees, we were able to classify themes into a total of 12 groups, which covered all the themes discovered for each interviewee.

In our thematic analysis, we conducted second-order coding by aggregating a maximum of 12 themes per person, resulting in a total of 12 themes from 9 participants. These themes were then further consolidated, focusing on codes with similar themes to streamline the analysis and arrive at fewer final findings. By aggregating the data, the initial 12 main themes were condensed into 5 main themes. The process is visually depicted in Figure 5. For a detailed representation of the second-order coding steps, refer to Figure 8 in Appendix 2.

Throughout the coding process and interview conduction, we maintained a focus on our research question. Each step and coding process was designed to advance our research and ultimately provide an answer to our research question.





*Figure 5. Representation of the method imposed to derive the 5 main findings of our study*

After discussing how the coding was done, we present and analyze the main findings of this thesis in the followings.

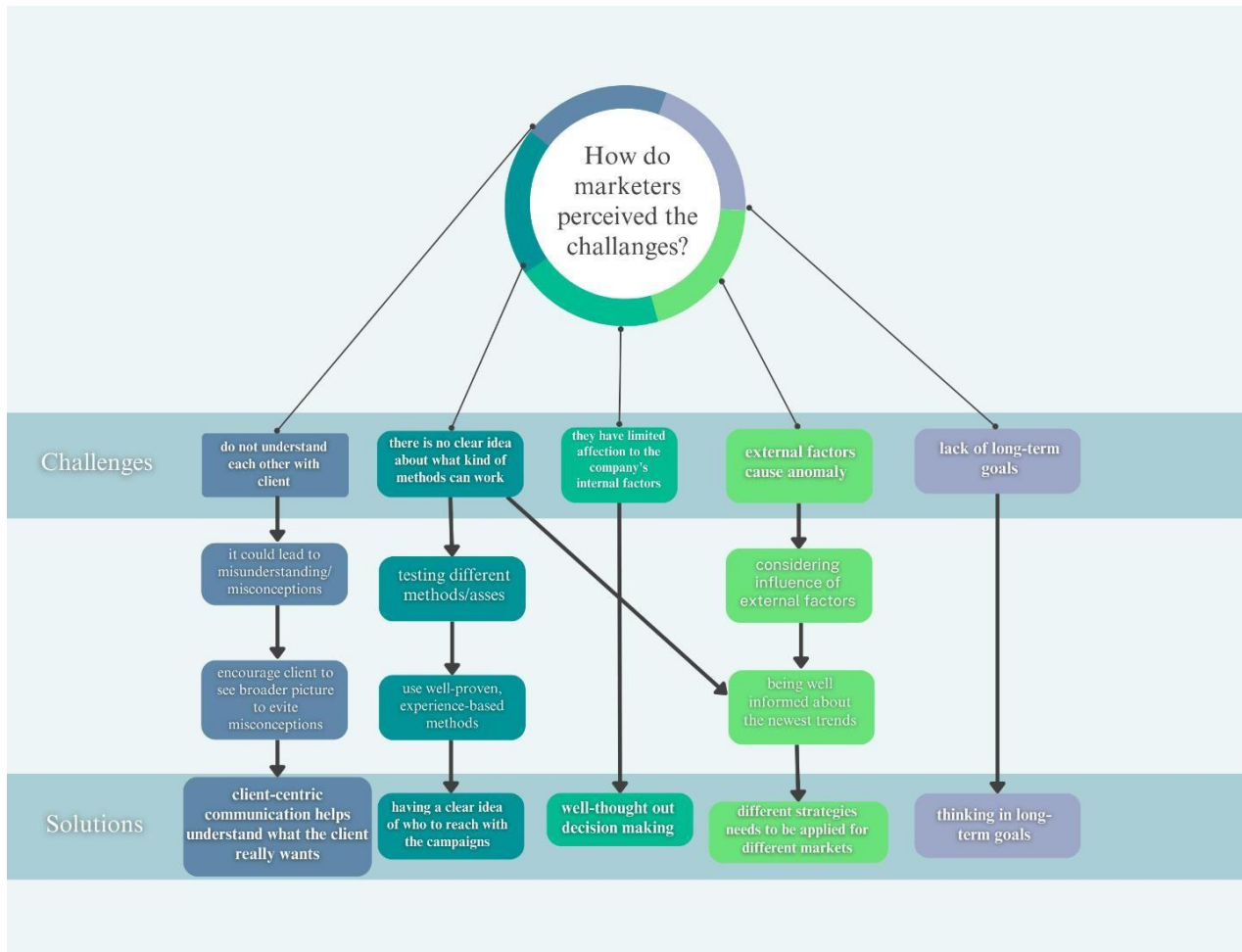


Figure 6. Representation of the 5 main themes of our study including the connecting challenges and solutions

To enhance reader comprehension, we present our final results derived from the interviews. The results of the thematic analysis are illustrated in Figure 6, providing a visual representation of the findings obtained from the interviews.

The research question underlying the research was as follows:

*How do marketers perceive the impact and challenges when optimizing online marketing campaigns to improve conversion rates?*

As it shows, our research question can be divided into two parts:

- 1 a part which is referring to how marketers perceive the impact and challenges,

2 and a part which is referring to online marketing campaigns and conversion optimization.

Given the complexity and multifaceted nature of the online marketing field, it is crucial to acknowledge that a single main finding cannot fully address our research question. To ensure a comprehensive answer, we identified multiple themes that collectively address our research question and provide a high-quality response in this significant domain. Given the complexity of our research question and the intricate nature of the online marketing field, we cannot answer the research question unless we further analyze these 5 topics. These findings encompass 5 distinct themes, each exerting a significant impact on conversion rates and posing daily challenges to marketers. As a result of our interview and coding, we identified 5 main themes: (1) the role of client communication, (2) the role of clear vision of campaigns, (3) the role of internal factors, (4) the role of external factors and (5) the role of long-term goals.

In Figure 6, these 5 main themes can be seen per column, where 1 column is shown as 1 theme, which is represented by each color. These 5 themes are influencing conversion rate improvement and connecting challenges and generating impacts for marketers. Also, the five topics found have the biggest influence in answering the research question.

As Figure 6 shows, our findings are divided into 5 themes, and each theme causes challenges and thus solutions. The challenges section in Figure 6 is referring to the first half of our research question, which is how marketers perceive the challenges. The five listed elements are directly answering for the marketers' perceptions, and how they perceive challenges. These five elements are: (1) Do not understand each other with the client, (2) There is no clear idea about what kind of methods can work, (3) They have a limited effect on the company's internal factors, (4) External factors cause anomaly and (5) Lack of long-term goals.

Through coding, we identified the most significant themes related to campaign improvement despite the numerous challenges involved. By grouping the codes, we distilled them into five main themes. While our research provided insights into various challenges from the input of interviewees, we successfully classified them into one of the five main themes relevant to our research question.

During our interviews, we discovered not only the challenges themselves and their perception of them, but we were also able to identify the associated solutions, which are depicted at the bottom of Figure 6. We were also able to identify 5 pieces here, which can be matched to the same 5 main themes, which were formulated based on our research. The solution part of Figure 6 is referring to the second half of our research question. These are respectively: (1) Client-centric communication helps understand what the client really wants, (2) Having a clear idea of who to reach with the campaigns. (3) Well-thought-out decision-making, (4) Different strategies need to be applied to different markets and (5) Thinking in long-term goals.

As can be seen in Figure 6, each column on our diagram symbolizes 1-1 theme, and with arrows pointing down, it leads you through the challenges created by marketers' perceptions up to their solutions.

Next, we are going to explain each element to give the reader more context and understanding of our topic's findings and strengthen each section by listing quotes from the interviews.

#### **4.1. Client communication**

Communication with clients, as revealed from the coding process and the interviews conducted, is particularly important. This theme came up for every single interviewee and they were able to talk at length about its importance and effects. As Péter noted, *“I think in this marketing execution world it's say 30% about marketing and 70% about communication. So, the relationship you have with the client or how you can get an idea across to them [...] is basically what determines how they will ultimately see, let's say, a campaign.”*

As Áron noted, *“In my opinion, fulfillment is not affected by this, but if you understand the customers' thinking, motivations, and decisions, then you can be successful.”* Áron also noted, that *“[...] if you don't want to increase conversions, but you say you do, then the marketer can see what you really want. This often comes out when the customer sees the marketing materials as meeting their own subjective needs.”*

According to interviewees, the role of client communication can arguably be considered one of the cornerstones of marketing activity. Without quality and essential communication between the client and the marketer, even entire projects can be considered pointless. The role of client communication itself, as one of the main themes we identified during our research, can also affect the quality of online marketing processes and conversion optimization, since according to our interviewees, with proper communication, even campaigns that did not reach the set goals can be successful because if the customer is satisfied and this is properly communicated to him, he can still remain the client of the marketer, therefore they do not suffer damage from an unfulfilled goal, due to the importance of communication between the two. In the following, we will explain in detail all the important aspects of the theme.

#### 4.1.1. Do not understand each other with client

If the client and the marketing specialist do not have the right communication style, and they talk past each other, it may mean that they do not understand each other. As Áron noted, *“You have to split into two parts: what the customer says and what the customer wants. So, it's not always what the customer says they want. I know it sounds strange but it is often the case.”* This can have an impact on the entire marketing process, which can lead to absolutely negative consequences. Taking into account the relevant part of our research question, i.e. How do marketers perceive the challenges? It can be answered with the first Challenge section of our first topic, i.e., with Do not understand each other with clients (and of course we are not referring to language barriers here), because this refers to the perceived perceptions of the marketer, the consequences and solution of which will be explained later. As Gergő noted, *“There are a lot of misunderstandings. I think that with all types of clients and with all types of campaigns [...] there are many misunderstandings, [...] that if we don't speak the same language, I'm not talking about Hungarian here, but that there is a PPC person who is very professional in PPC, but he doesn't know the marketing language and there is a marketer on the other side who doesn't know what the PPC guy is talking about, he only hears that he uses a lot of 3-letter abbreviations, which leads to a lot of misunderstandings.”* The lack of understanding can be perceived by marketers as possible misunderstandings, unexpected results, and reactions from the clients, and they talk past each other since the things expected by the client and the tasks that the marketer can perform are not clearly defined. As Bálint

noted, *“I believe we need a good strategy which is based on a business goal. So how to translate the business goal to a marketing goal, how to use the goal and the tools [...]?”*

According to Gergő, *“[...] the stated demand is usually to increase efficiency and reach as many people as possible, but basically... this is not the customer's demand, it is often more our need, to make it easier with the customer, the customer's education.”* Problems and challenges arising from misunderstandings are important because they can affect the entire campaign management process. If the task and the goal are not sufficiently clarified at the beginning, the specialist acts according to his own judgment, which will not satisfy the client's needs, so even if what he is doing is professionally correct, the marketing campaign will not fulfill the expected goals. As Benedek noted, *“[...] customers don't always know what their goal is with a campaign either. When these are clear from moment zero then I think it's possible to decide whether it is successful or not.”*

#### 4.1.2. It could lead to misunderstanding or misconceptions

If the online marketer and the client do not understand each other, it could be because the goals the client has set are not representative of what they really want to achieve. As Bálint noted, *“They are giving me a list that these are the persons they want to reach in digital marketing. And I like, okay, if it is to the salesperson, it's not much, but this is still marketing.”* It's because in many cases the clients' marketing and online marketing knowledge is limited or simply non-existent. According to our interviewees, the frequent requests from clients that arise when looking for online marketing specialists and entrusting them with the provision of online marketing services can be the following:

Professionals often find that clients who are not well-educated in marketing can misunderstand them and possibly confuse them with sales professionals - which is a different position. As Gergő noted, *“It happens that there are misunderstandings between you and your customers, as a good example when they think that you are a salesman in marketing but at the same time you can't deliver the same results.”* Misunderstandings can also include clients believing that results will be visible within a few days, however, according to our interviewees, to see representative results in a few days or a few weeks is not enough to run a campaign. As Interviewee 2 noted, *“Clients are*

*very impatient. They want results in under an hour. It is hard to tell them that it's not going to happen overnight, that it takes time and testing and optimizing.*” More time and complex processes are required for a specific campaign to bring the expected results, which information is very difficult to convey to customers who do not understand the basics of online marketing. As Bálint noted, *“[...]if they are educated in marketing, then they are interested in more insightful information and details. But for small companies, this is not the case.”* As Interviewee 6 noted, *“So, I think one of the most common questions is, what can this result in? So, if we do Facebook marketing, why is it good for me? What results can it bring in?”*

#### 4.1.3. Encouraging the client to see the broader picture to evite misconceptions

To eliminate the above, marketers can encourage their clients to notice the correlations and not focus only on a specific value, number, or amount, since the world of online marketing and conversion optimization is really complex. As Áron noted, *“...if the marketer is not able to fulfill this in the next period, then no matter how good campaigns he prepares, the client will be dissatisfied because the so-called anchor effect will prevail: so, the client will relate to that strong period, [...] and consider it as a base, which was only an outlier period, it was not a base.”* If marketers properly communicate to clients that they can see the broader picture, they usually receive positive feedback, because clients generally prefer to know what the outcome of a given campaign might be.

#### 4.1.4. A client-centric communication helps understand what the client really wants

As an overall solution, if the marketer can understand the client’s real needs, the marketer can be successful. Many of our interviewees were defining their success in customer satisfaction because for marketers if their clients recommend them to others, can be a particularly great success since the clients will then definitely be satisfied with their work. As Áron noted, *“Success and failure are objective. It is not relative and I think the benchmark should be customer satisfaction. So, yes, we can say that if the client is dissatisfied with the campaign, then it was unsuccessful.”* That is why understanding what they really want and noticing that the communication between the two of them is not adequate, which can affect the entire further work, can be a huge advantage.

## 4.2. Applied methods

The second theme identified from interviews and coding is the role of a clear vision of campaigns. This is a very important aspect since an online marketing specialist who acts with clear goals and to achieves well-defined results can influence the outcome of campaigns, conversions, and the success of cooperation with partners. As Benedek noted *"...customers don't always know what their goal is with a campaign either. When these are clarified from the very beginning of what the purpose of a campaign is, I think that it is indeed possible to decide whether [the given campaign] is successful or not."*

### 4.2.1. There is no clear idea about what kind of methods can work

How online marketing specialists perceive the challenges is reflected in the second identified theme, the role of a clear vision of campaigns, whose challenge level is there is no clear idea about what kind of methods can work. As Dávid noted, *"To this, I can say that there are as many markets, as many consumers, as many habits, it is different, you can generally follow characteristics and patterns that follow from online consumption habits."* Marketers perceive the challenges as not having a clear definition of which methods, which campaign settings, and which types of campaigns to use. Creating a campaign is very complex and there are many opportunities for marketers, which is why there is no clear idea about what kind of methods can work means that marketers are perceiving this aspect as a challenge.

As Gergő noted, *"A campaign can come up with about forty-five different indicators that are somewhat related to the effectiveness of the campaign, and to choose which one of those is the one that you make a decision based on is also somewhat subjective [...] sometimes trying to be too objective narrows your vision and you're not looking at the whole picture."* It is important that clients often expect marketers to generate a certain number of visitors, customers, or revenue for them, but this cannot always be ensured due to the challenges identified by marketers.

### 4.2.2. Testing different methods and assets



To overcome these problems, marketers can test instead of promise. As Interviewee 2 noted, “*So first you have to do your research, and never, never ever say this is going to work better than that [...] because it's a matter of testing, it's a matter of data optimizing and continuous improvements.*” With the so-called AB testing, marketers create two very similar campaigns and run them with minor adjustments over a period of time to see which setup is more successful. Consequently, they can select the better-performing campaign and run it until the end of the designated period. As Gergő stated, “*One of the most important things a conversion campaign manager can do is testing. What's subjective about that is choosing what to test. That's probably the most subjective because evaluating the tests should be objective, but there are some subjective factors in that as well, but basically what test you choose has a big impact on the direction that campaigns go*”. At the same time, the testing can be longer, and more complex, and the better-performing campaign type can be tested even longer. Marketers can experiment with images, texts, settings, and campaign types. Often even a small modification can cause big differences - either on the positive or negative side.

As Áron noted, “*It depends on how unsuccessful it was and how I know it was unsuccessful so the easiest way is to test and say this is the best way is to do an AB test so you run two similar campaigns side by side, in which case they just have different audience settings. So, if I say I know a better target audience than option A then [...] I won't use that one. Or maybe [...] I'll change the target audience if I can do better than that*”. According to our interviewees, their experience also has a great impact on testing, since if they have encountered a certain situation many times, or if the same problem has arisen several times, testing can be beneficial. Although, thanks to their experience and expertise, marketers can learn from repeated, identical mistakes and draw the appropriate conclusions from them, so that they no longer make the same mistakes in the future, and do not use unsuccessful campaign optimization settings.

#### 4.2.3. Use well-proven experience-based methods

As Bálint noted, “*[...] conversion rate is a tricky thing, because if we just optimize the thing to have as high a conversion rate as you can reach, then we are not the entry to real customers.*” Measuring conversions is often not an easy task, as it sometimes takes several years for certain

types of conversions to be visible, and at other times conversion data can include the complex world of internal and external factors, which we explain in the following themes.

Marketers face challenges where there is uncertainty about effective methods so testing is used to find solutions, and marketers rely on their experience to employ methods that have proven successful.

As Interviewee 6 noted, *“[...] there is a part of our own experience, and fortunately there is also a lot of inside information coming in about what is the direction that we should be targeting, so that we can add that extra 1-2-3-5% that others don't necessarily know.”*

As Gergő noted, *“[...] the more experience someone has, the more important their subjectivity becomes because it adds something extra to the campaign.”*

#### 4.2.4. Having a clear idea of who to reach with the campaigns

Finally, in our graph, the solution belonging to the role of clear vision of campaign themes can be the challenge faced by marketers, if the marketers have a clear idea of who to reach with the campaigns.

Our interviewees perceive the challenge that appears at the beginning can be eliminated if the marketing professional knows what kind of audience they have to reach with the campaigns and what kind of campaign fits the best to the client's goals. As Bereniké noted, *“[...]we marketing specialists know a lot and very often, they think that we are omniscient.”* These processes can be facilitated by testing, and after the marketer applies a well-proven experience based on many years, then the marketer can have a clear picture of whom to target with the campaign. *“...there is a client who needs to work with, say, a 10 percent gross turnover to cost ratio, then, of course, I can play with these tests until I have to negotiate with the client, and I can stay within this level of return[...].”*

We can see how interconnected each process is, and the individual topics can also affect each other, since the quality of communication with the client can again come to the fore here, and the elimination of problems arising from mutual misunderstanding. As Bereniké noted, *“The knowledge of the market is always there with the client, and he must provide these starting points. Afterwards, we can look at a lot of things from Analytics, but basically, the customer also has a role in this, it is not necessarily only the marketing people who should be entrusted with this [...] so the more specific a product range is, the bigger role the customer gets in this[...].”*

Once the professionals know this, they can use their own knowledge and the tools at their disposal to implement campaign settings that help them reach the relevant target audience. With testing and clear information and goals, professionals can create clearer settings, which can lead to overall good campaign results and satisfied clients. Consequently, the client's company can earn more income, which can give financial advantages over competitors, and also can create a new situation in the market by stimulating competition and bids.

#### **4.3. Internal factors**

As Péter noted, *“It's a bit complicated, you have to try to look at both external and internal factors in a more complex way to really break down the fact that you as a marketer are doing a good job and your campaigns are good.”*

When referring to internal factors related to the company, we are specifically considering the factors mentioned by our interviewees such as the quality of the website design, the easy handling of the landing pages, the quality of the online store, the quality of the product images released to the marketer, the maximum budget that can be committed to online marketing and the specific preferences of the brand, the characteristics and peculiarities of the product to be sold. As Péter noted, *“[...]in the online space is basically just to get people from A to B. So, say from Facebook it's redirecting someone to the website but it's what's received on the website that basically determines whether a conversion rate is that high or not.”* The role of internal factors is of decisive importance in online marketing processes, and also has a great impact on marketers. The identified theme prompted an extensive discussion with all interviewees due to its significance and the

everyday challenges faced by marketers. The next section elaborates on their perceptions regarding this topic.

#### 4.3.1. They have limited impact on the company's internal factors

As a challenging factor on our graph, these factors can greatly influence the possibilities of professionals, although they only have a limited influence on them. As Interviewee 2 noted, “[...] *if the client doesn't have the ad budget that really can be challenging.*” In terms of budget, if a marketer believes an increase is necessary for a campaign but the client lacks available funds, the marketer will perceive this as a limiting factor, and hinders campaign and conversion optimization efforts for optimal results.

As Bereniké noted, “[...] *on these customer pain points [...] how each product range can be different, I think we should put more emphasis on these and then we can either make returning customers, or we can greatly increase the conversion rates if we reduce these fears in our customers.*” So, marketers perceive a limited impact on clients' internal factors (including their company) regarding the challenges and their perceptions explored in our research question.

#### 4.3.2. Well-thought-out decision-making approach

As Áron noted, “[...] *when I set the audience, I have an idea of who I want to reach. So, deciding who is the end user of the product and who buys the product can often be a dilemma. This is classically a question for children's toys since the user of the product is the child, but the purchase decision will be made by the parent [...]*”. In the Role of the internal factors theme, a Well-thought-out decision-making represents the solution for the above-mentioned challenge. After we have determined the internal factors perceived by marketers a well-thought-out decision-making can be the solution for it. Still, on the question of the budget, the marketer can make the most out of the limiting factors with his well-thought-out decisions, taking into account the limited budget. As Áron noted, *"For example, scaling, which means that in certain advertising accounts with sufficient quantitative data, the changes in the return figures can be followed by increasing the*

*advertising budget. What does it mean? Every account has a point where the return is the highest [...] usually this is the maximum return and the reason for this is that we can reach the most easily accessible users at the cheapest price. [...] if we start increasing the budget, we will reach more and more users who are further away from our company, have no brand awareness, a cold audience [...]."*

An optimally distributed budget can be very rewarding for campaigns, as it can positively influence conversion rates. Acknowledging the presence of limiting factors, marketers can proactively prepare and make informed decisions aligned with those constraints. As Bálint noted, *"Sometimes the hard part is to find the connections and think out of the box because of the user interface and this is the trap of the traditional marketing that they are giving much information."*

#### **4.4. External factors**

The external factors represent a wider range than the previous internal factors. As Áron noted, *"In many cases, it's because there are certain seasonal effects, there are certain competitor positions, there are certain different factors that combine to give the client a very high return on investment over a period of time, over six months, or 30 days, up to 50 million of profit."* While the internal factors are focused on the limiting factors of the company itself, the external factors refer to the situation present in the entire market, geopolitical factors, cultural differences, competitors' moves and price strategies, inflation, effects caused by epidemics, brand awareness, and brand equity. These examples all occurred during our interviews. As Péter noted, *"[...] this big picture is affected by the external circumstances themselves, the global economic situation, even how many people are on the market, or the actions of competitors in a given period[...] so, I see that the topic of conversion value is very, very complex."* External factors in online marketing, according to our interviewees, cannot be directly measured but still exert an indirect influence on campaigns, conversions, and even the decision-making of marketing professionals.

##### **4.4.1. External factors cause an anomaly**

The external factors cause an anomaly part of the challenges part of Figure 6 adequately represents the challenges perceived by marketers belonging to the role of external factors theme. In this

section, thanks to our coding and our interviewees, we were able to identify external factors that marketers use to cause anomalies. These factors pose challenges for marketers, resembling internal factors but on a larger scale. As Péter noted, “[...] *you have to pay attention to external factors, [...] an increase in income does not mean anything by itself if, say, inflation was higher than your income increased.*”

Marketers have even less influence on these factors (than competitors' moves, economic situations, and inflation), but they can notice this by discovering anomalies. The fact that marketers perceive external factors as causing challenges is no accident, as this can affect their campaign and conversion optimization settings and actions. According to our interviewees, external factors can have positive effects, leading to higher ROI. However, clients often have limited awareness of these factors, and even if they are aware, they may not connect them to marketing activities. As Péter noted, “*I see that the more established a brand comes to us taking into account the brand's awareness, the easier our job is, because in many cases, only the name of the brand itself can sell the given product[...].*” Competitors offering lower prices can significantly impact marketers, as customers may opt for cheaper options, causing challenges in maintaining competitiveness so marketers can identify anomalies in such situations. As Áron noted, “*The uncertainty stems from the fact that we do not know how the competition will react, what they will do, what they will advertise, and since online ads are usually auction-like, without the operations and ads of my competitors, my ads cannot be interpreted by themselves, since their bids fundamentally influence my bids.*”

#### 4.4.2. Considering the influence of external factors

As Bereniké noted, “*There are things that we can't necessarily explain [...] in many cases, there is an external market factor such that [a product] was discounted somewhere[...] or the hype around the product died out, so that today there are a lot of things affects our level of return.*” Consequently, this is why online marketing specialists must take these external factors into account and make their decisions with them in mind. They can use a different marketing strategy, change the message, or simply spend a bigger budget in this case if the client allows it. As Interviewee 6 noted, “[...] *the price is a very serious factor and if the customer has a good offer, then, say, brand*

*awareness may be less important so, with a bolt, brand awareness will probably matter less than with, say, a car brand.*” Just by considering the influences of these external factors, they can start from the above-mentioned challenge itself, towards the solution. Ignoring the presence of external factors can cause a big disadvantage for marketers.

#### 4.4.3. Being well informed about the newest trends

As Bereniké noted, *“[...] we can say that different strategies may have to be applied to different markets, as this also requires you to be well informed about the target audience and the trends.”*

How can marketers overcome all of this or incorporate it into their effective conversion optimization processes when optimizing a campaign to achieve better results? One of the best ways to do this, according to our interviewees, is to be well-informed about current trends. As Interviewee 2 noted, *“You got to know what's trending, how to make a viral video, how to leverage AI, these are the new things.”* This may include, for example, the fact that the latest campaign optimization developments and new settings are launched from the US. Online marketers can track these and prepare for the fact that these changes may soon be introduced in their current market. According to one of our interviewees, an effective tool for this could be to consider the advice of each assigned Facebook or Google support specialist and to act by the preliminary development settings they have given. As Péter noted, *“...obviously, I'm not saying that you should take anyone's word for it, but if you were assigned a specialist from Google who knows what developments are expected, or even sees million-dollar projects that are a little ahead of us, from which a lot of information can be filtered, what will be the trend”*. Monitoring the latest trends can also help deliver the desired marketing message, as an outdated message can have a negative effect on the target group, and the campaign will ultimately fail to achieve its goal. Online marketing professionals face the challenge of solving customer requests creatively. By staying informed about current settings and options, marketers can effectively address specific and complex customer demands. As Péter noted *“For years the trend on Facebook was to try to target as segmented communities as possible with more segmented messages. Then, from 2020-21 because so much data was available in the system [...] a campaign works better if we tried to target as large an audience as possible.”*

#### 4.4.4. Different strategies need to be applied to different market

In the end, marketers deal with the challenges related to external factors theme in such a way that they discover anomalies and can solve them by applying different strategies for different markets. As Gergő noted, *“I have had clients whose goals were not achieved, but they were satisfied because they saw what steps we took and that external factors affected us more than internal, so an ‘unsuccessful’ campaign that did not reach those numbers is also evaluated positively.”* Our interviewees agreed that there are unique market characteristics, which can also be seen in the different goals chosen by clients and companies. It is also a general conclusion here that the size of the company requires different strategies. According to our interviewee, there is a difference in goals based on company sizes. As Péter noted, *“I think that every market has its own characteristics [...] so let's say different messages work in different markets.”* Also, according to another interviewee, bigger companies are thinking in trends. As Bálint stated, *“For bigger enterprises, the question would be that, do we see any insights to highlight? So, like trend changes, they are thinking about trends.”* For this very reason, different strategies must be used for companies of different sizes located in different markets to avoid anomalies.

#### 4.5. Timeframe

As Áron stated, *“I think that the marketer can only be satisfied if his client is also satisfied, according to the classical marketing theory, the most effective form of orientation and corporate orientation is customer orientation, also known as marketing orientation. The guest is always right, and here in marketing the client is always right, long-term success requires something similar.”* The role of long-term goals is an important aspect of our findings and our graph. Long-term goals, as revealed through interviews and coding, significantly impact both marketers and clients. Short-term collaboration preferences by clients can limit achievable results and may necessitate less profitable tactics for marketers in the long run. As Bálint said, some conversion measurements can take years.



#### 4.5.1. Lack of long-term goals

How the marketers perceive the challenges is also reflected in the 5th theme, the role of long-term goals, in the way that the marketers see that there is a lack of long-term goals. Marketers emphasize that short-term decisions and measurements are not indicative. Drawing conclusions from a campaign requires a longer duration to account for the learning process and obtain meaningful results, disregarding isolated outliers or a few days' data. As Áron stated, “[...] *improving one campaign will have an impact on the others, the marketer considers what the client is looking for. If the client wants a big revenue quickly then there are other options for conversion optimization, if the client is committed to stable predictable but slow growth, this is better and this is the long-term solution.*” Short-term inquiries from clients pose challenges for marketers, impacting their performance and the results they deliver. Marketers note the lack of sufficient long-term goals from clients, which further adds to the challenges they face in their work. As Bereníké noted, “*Every campaign has a learning period when you start the algorithm and it learns who are the people who might be interested in the product. And then it is difficult to find such a way that a campaign will immediately bring outstanding results.*”

#### 4.5.2. Thinking on long term goals

As a solution to overcome this, it would be ideal for marketers if the clients were also thinking in long-term goals. As Péter noted, “*Our basic goal is that a marketing activity can deliver results in a sustainable way in the long term, if we do something and we see that in terms of conversion rate, in terms of the number of transactions, the client can grow over a period of 3-6 months in a continuous way*”. Having a longer period of time available enables the easier achievement of goals and proper execution of campaign and conversion optimization processes. This timeframe facilitates the learning process and the ability to draw meaningful conclusions for marketers. In the case of longer-term collaborations, the effects of competitors' actions and the current needs of the market can be shed light on, while this is not possible during a short-term campaign or in a few days, so it is feared that the results will not be repeatable, give a distorted picture and it is possible that they will not match the client's needs either. As Péter noted, “*I think the basis is that the client's results should be number one, so that if you can set realistic goals together, and this is*

*reviewed from time to time, and you can see that he's [the client's] really improving and happy, then I think it's a fulfillment for you."* The findings of this chapter have implications for marketers, clients, and the broader market. Successful campaign setup and conversion optimization can result in increased website visitors, purchases, and desired actions. This can lead to a competitive market environment and necessitate competitor reactions. However, it is important to recognize that results are influenced by internal and external factors, which may limit marketers' activities.

## Chapter 5: Results analysis

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*Within this chapter, the analysis of the 5 themes and connecting challenges and solutions was made. We use the TPB to analyze our findings and explain our results.*

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The results analysis section is due to present the findings of our study and their interpretation for answering our research questions. In this section, we are presenting and analyzing the data collected during the study through the qualitative method of interviews, to identify patterns and themes. Then, we will discuss the main findings and how they relate to the research questions and objectives of our study. Furthermore, are provide insights and recommendations based on the results to contribute to the existing literature and inform future research.

To recapitulate, the research objectives of this paper are the following:

- To identify patterns in the collected dataset of marketers' perceptions
- To understand the online marketing professionals' perceptions on how to achieve high conversion rates
- To identify challenges marketers are facing when optimizing marketing campaigns and to make recommendations on how to overcome on them
- To enrich and enlarge the specialty literature with our paper findings and inspire other academia to pursue this topic, so we can enhance our knowledge in this field.

The theoretical framework we employed to help us answer our research question: “*How do marketers perceive the impact and challenges when optimizing different online marketing campaigns to improve conversion rates?*” was the psychology-based model of the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1985), with its three main elements: (1) Attitudes, (2) Subjective norms and (3) Perceived behavioral control. In the context of our research question, attitudes refer to the marketer's beliefs about the importance and effectiveness of optimization in improving conversion rates. Subjective norms relate to the marketer's perception of the expectations of their peers and clients regarding optimization. Perceived behavioral control is the marketer's belief in their ability to implement optimization strategies effectively despite the internal and external factors that may

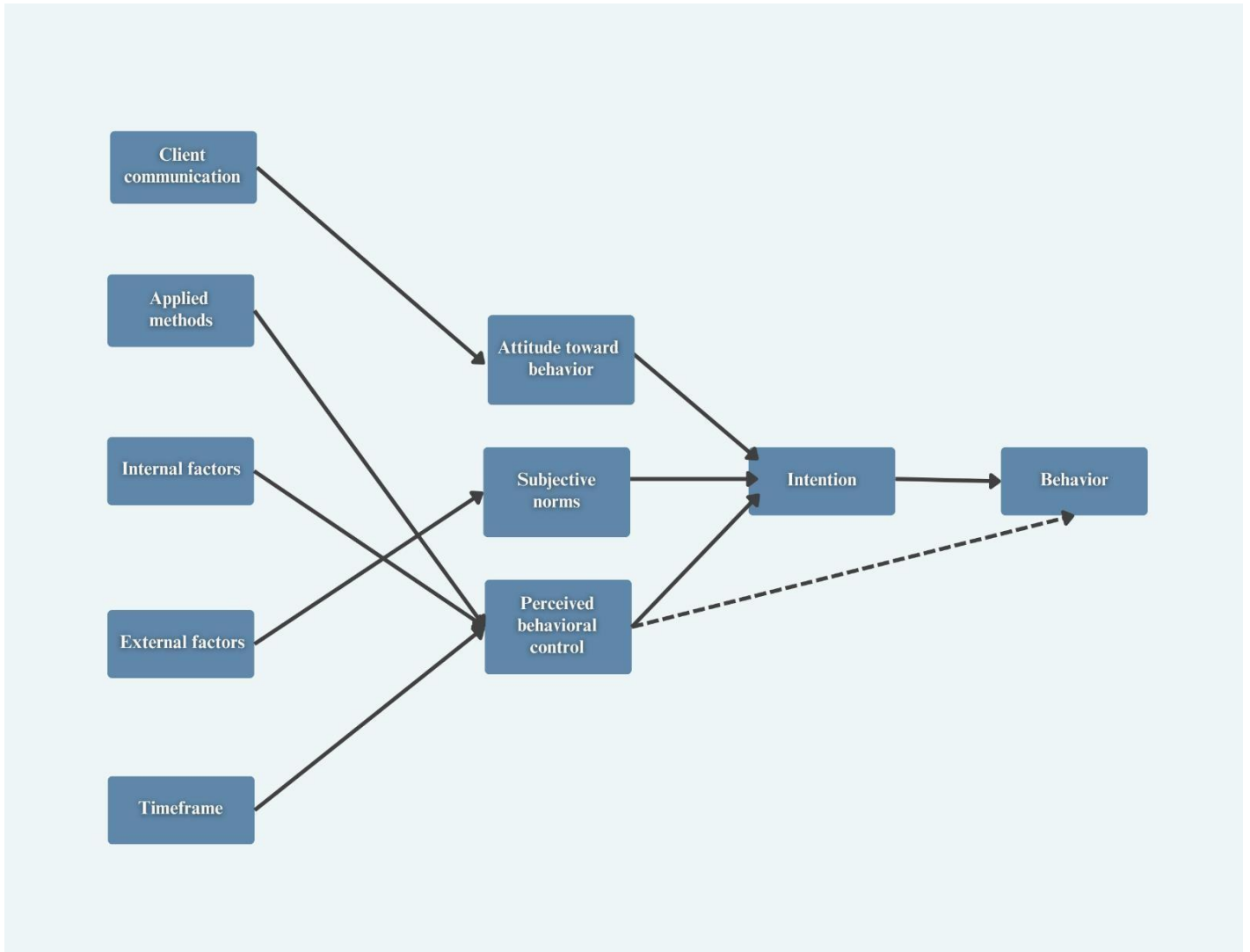
impact the optimization process. Therefore, the TPB framework can help explain how marketers perceive and respond to the challenges they face when optimizing online marketing campaigns for improved conversion rates.

The five main themes found from the 9 conducted interviews by coding and thematic analysis are the following:

- Client communication
- Applied methods
- Internal factors
- External factors
- Timeframe

The theory guides the identification of themes and the explanation of findings in relation to the research question. Findings are aligned with the theory, confirming the objectives set in the thesis.

Figure 7 is representing the connection of our themes with the elements of the TPB.



*Figure 7. Representation of the connection of our themes with the elements of the TPB*

### **5.1. Client communication**

As we saw in the findings, the role of client communications is a very complex and important theme. During our analysis, we paired the role of client communication with the Attitudes part of the theory. We decided this way because attitudes refer to an individual's positive or negative evaluation of the behavior. When online marketing professionals choose their communication style, they decide for themselves whether it is the right way or not, which suits the best to the given client and situation. As the TPB claims about attitudes, thoughts affect the outcomes of individual

events and actions. Therefore, an individual's thoughts can influence the positive or negative outcome of a given situation.

In the case of communication, this means that marketers, from their own perspective and according to their own thinking, decide on a specific communication style that they believe will be the best for the given client. Regarding our research question, it appears that online marketing specialists and clients do not understand each other. This can later lead to misunderstandings and inaccurate campaign goals, a challenge that online marketing specialists can detect on a perceptual level from mutual misunderstanding. By recognizing this challenge, online marketing professionals can take actions on a personal level, along the lines of attitudes, which can lead to positive results and misunderstandings will be avoided. For example, the marketer can explain the results more simply to a client who does not have the adequate marketing knowledge or can reveal the client's real goals with more questions and clarifications, which helps alleviate problems arising from mutual misunderstanding. In conclusion, client-centric communication can help overcome the challenges of ensuring that marketers accurately understand the true intuitions of their clients, even when the clients are actually saying different things than what they want. This can be overcome with client-centric communication, as marketers can have a positive effect on the outcomes by proceeding along the attitude factors since they can influence actions even at the level of thinking. This also has a great impact on online marketing campaigns and conversion optimization processes. The marketer must know exactly what the client expects from them, and what the client's goal is. By directing his communication at the level of attitudes, the marketer has an impact on his own decision-making and can promote the positive outcome of conversion optimization processes.

Consequently, ensuring client satisfaction is a key outcome of the complex and multifaceted process of conversion optimization. Therefore, marketers' perceptions of impacts and challenges in optimizing online marketing campaigns have a significant influence on subsequent processes and decisions, including each conversion optimization activity.

## **5.2. Applied methods**

In the findings chapter, we presented in detail the role of a clear vision of campaigns. During our analysis, we paired "*The role of a clear vision of campaigns*" finding with the Perceived behavioral

control part of the theory. We decided this way because, as we presented earlier, the related part of the theory suggests that a person's prior knowledge, years of experience, or access to resources beyond their own control can influence how the person judges their own ability to perform a given activity. This means, in this case, online marketing professionals and the challenges they perceive, that if there is no clear idea about what kind of methods can work. Online marketing professionals can use Perceived behavioral control to take stock of their own skills, which have been proven so far, based on their experience based on their solutions, and can test them to eliminate the challenges they perceive.

Since marketers do not have a guide that is perfectly applicable to every situation, they perceive the challenge of this theme as there is no clear idea about what kind of methods can work in each situation. Perceived behavioral control influences their decision-making regarding methods, campaign settings, and conversion optimization tasks. Consequently, they resort to testing, so they can validate the impact of their own ability on a campaign in the best possible way. Being aware of their abilities, prior knowledge, experience, and access to resources all play a role in how they perceive their impact on *“The role of a clear vision of campaigns”* theme challenges.

Thus, if an online marketing professional wants to optimize campaigns to increase conversion rates, but there is no clear idea about what kind of methods can work, then he can improve his behavioral control over this action by testing, using well-proven, experience-based methods. Therefore, they solve the perceived challenge by having a more accurate picture of whom the marketer wants to reach with a specific campaign, what target audience needs to be set, and draw the conclusion that these methods are suitable for the true goals of the client.

### **5.3. Internal factors**

We are now going to link a concept to explain the perceived behavior control of marketers with respect to their set task of optimization to lead to conversions. Even though this is a concept derived from another theory, it highly interlinks with TPB, as it explains that if a person's belief in his own capabilities is positive, ultimately leads to a successful outcome in regard to a certain action undergo. Perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1985) is similar to self-efficacy (Bandura, 1982)

since both are referring to an individual's belief in their ability to perform the behavior in question. Thus, the stronger an individual's self-efficacy is for a particular behavior, the more likely they are to have a high perceived behavioral control and intend to perform the behavior, according to the TPB (Ajzen, 1985).

In this scenario, the self-efficacy (Bandura, 1982) concept plays an important role in a marketer's perceived behavior control to optimize marketing campaigns and generate conversion rates. A high level of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1982) can lead to a strong belief in their ability to control the factors that influence campaign optimization and ultimately generate a high conversion rate, while a low level of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1982) can lead to doubts about their ability to optimize campaigns and limited perceived control over the factors that influence campaign optimization.

The third level of the study findings focuses on internal factors that impact the collaboration between marketers and their clients. These factors play a significant role in optimizing marketing campaigns and improving conversion rates. The internal factors primarily reside within the client's organization and include aspects such as website design quality, user-friendly landing pages, the quality of online stores, product image quality provided to the marketer, the maximum budget allocated for online marketing, brand preferences, and specific product characteristics. These factors are closely connected to the client's ability to provide third-party support, which is essential for the marketer to achieve their goals. The marketer's influence over these factors is limited, as the final decisions lie with the client.

Since all these internal company features are highly connected to the capability of the marketer to arrive to optimal results in his optimization process, it is safe to say that the perceived behavior control of the internal factors of a company, such as website design, landing page usability, product images, budget constraints, and brand preferences, have a significant impact on marketers power in the campaign optimization process, as those business implications could either result in either positive or negative scenarios for the marketing capability to generate good results from his employed efforts.

The perceived behavior control refers back to both the marketer's control beliefs, or whether some factors within the employer organization will constitute obstacles in the process of optimization of



the marketing campaigns, as well as referring to the power of control factors, or how powerful are certain factors in stopping or enabling the marketer to do the optimization process. Thus, when faced with different contexts, marketers must assess the company's capabilities, whether the hiring company is offering the needed support to enable them to do the optimization process or is actively or indirectly imposing obstacles in the perceived control of the professional to do the optimization process.

Marketers may perceive these factors which are directly linked to their employer as limiting their ability to achieve the best results for their campaigns. For example, if the marketer believes that a campaign requires a larger budget to be successful, but the client is unable to provide it, the marketer's actions will be limited, and they may not be able to achieve their desired results, hence the perceived behavior control of the marketer is weak in that regards since handling the budget of one's company does not lay under his capabilities.

To address this challenge, being able to drive a well-thought-out decision from the decision-making process can aid the marketer to extend his perceived behavior control. In that sense, by being able to recognize the limiting factors impose by their collaborative party, the marketer can prepare himself in advance to make the best decisions in accordance with the setting his operating in. He can make the most out of the limiting factors by, for example, acknowledging them with some time ahead. For example, he can get a sense of how is the company willing to invest in the optimization process of a certain marketing campaign by having an upfront discussion with his partner and aligning on the budgeting. An optimally distributed budget can have positive implications for the campaign, as good budgeting and allocation of resources can positively influence conversion rates.

#### **5.4. External factors**

Linking back to our theory, we identified that the subjective norms influence the marketer's perception concerning the optimization process, as their behavior could be influenced by their peer or by their business partners. By external factors, we are referencing factors that do not lay in the marketer's hands, nor in the businesses in which they are working, as our participants explain that

those factors are external, such as (1) the overarching market they are operating in, (2) geopolitical factors, (3) cultural differences, (4) competitors' moves and price strategies, (5) inflation, (6) effects caused by epidemics, (7) brand awareness or (8) brand equity. As suggested, these factors cannot be directly measured, but they for sure indirectly influence the setting in which they are operating, shaping both campaigns and conversions and in the narrowest sense, even the decision-making of marketing specialists themselves, as pointed out by our participants. Subjective norms can be linked to external factors as they refer to an individual's perception of social expectations and pressures to conform to certain external behaviors.

In the context of campaign optimization, subjective norms can influence how marketers perceive and respond to these external factors. Marketers may feel the need to align their strategies with the norms and expectations of the market they are operating (1). They may consider geopolitical factors (2) and cultural differences (3) when adapting their campaigns to different regions or countries, taking into account the preferences and values of their target audience.

Competitors' moves and price strategies (4) can also impact subjective norms as marketers may feel the pressure to match or differentiate themselves from their competitors in terms of pricing and marketing tactics. Additionally, inflation (5) and the effects caused by epidemics (6) can shape subjective norms by influencing consumer behavior and expectations, which marketers need to consider when optimizing their campaigns.

Furthermore, subjective norms play a role in building brand awareness (7) and brand equity (8). Marketers may perceive the societal norms and expectations related to brand recognition and reputation, influencing their decisions on how to promote and position their brand to enhance awareness and equity.

By understanding and considering these external factors through the lens of subjective norms, marketers can make informed decisions and adjust their campaign optimization strategies to align with the expectations and pressures of their target market, cultural contexts, competitors, economic conditions, and brand positioning. In that sense, this approach can help marketers stay agile and

adapt to changing market conditions, ultimately leading to more effective campaigns and better results, which can inform future marketing efforts.

## **5.5. Timeframe**

Lastly, as derived from our research, the role of long-term goals is an important take, as marketers believe that long-term goals are highly beneficial for both the companies and the practitioners, as a broader timeframe can enable the marketing professionals to better test various instances, with the purpose of understanding which strategy to adopt to attain the desired conversion rate. Unfortunately, they stated that the lack of long-term goals from clients can cause challenges as it affects their performance and the results, they can generate, underlying that this is not always the case, but most of their clients are impatient and they want to see great results over a short period. Through the lens of the TPB (Ajzen, 1985), this aspect is fully dependent on the preferences of the company the marketers are operating in, whether they want or not to expand the goal of the marketing campaign they assigned their professionals with, the perceived behavior control the marketer is experiencing is quite limiting, as they hold limited power in terms of extending the timeframe of one campaign if their employer does not agree upon it.

In that sense, marketers believe that the lack of long-term goals from clients can cause challenges as it affects their performance and the results they bring, as short-term inquiries from clients can limit the results that can be achieved and may require other tactics from the marketer, which will not necessarily be profitable in the long term, therefore, they expressed that it is more ideal for them if clients also think in long-term goals.

Our practitioners underline that for a campaign to generate conversions, there is a need to agree upon a period of time to overlook their results, as better analysis can be driven if you allow the campaign enough time to reach maturity and have enough time to test different instances. That can enable them to carry out campaign and conversion optimization processes properly since a longer period would be available, which would allow the learning process and the drawing of appropriate conclusions. In the case of longer-term collaborations, the effects of competitors' actions and the current needs of the market can be shed light on, while this is not possible during a short-term

campaign of a few weeks or, in extreme cases, a few days, so it is feared that the results will not be repeatable and representative for the campaign and rushing to grasp the results might give a distorted picture about the overall capability of the campaign, with the possibility that the rushed results will not match the client's needs, nor they will be representative for the marketing professional.

## Chapter 6: Conclusions

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*The study will come to a conclusion in this chapter, which will summarize the major results in connection to the objectives and research questions and analyse their importance and contribution. Additionally, it will discuss the study's shortcomings and suggest areas for additional investigation.*

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In our qualitative study we fulfilled our aim to investigate how do online marketing professionals are perceiving the challenges when they are modifying different online marketing campaigns, in order to improve conversion rates and we managed to find an answer to our research question.

We aimed to investigate how do online marketing professionals are perceiving the challenges when they are modifying different online marketing campaigns, in order to improve conversion rates. By gaining a deeper understanding of the challenges marketers are facing on a daily basis, and understanding how they perceive it personally, it also allowed us to identify five themes to which we were able to associate a challenge and a solution. In order to answer our research question, which is “How do marketers perceive the impact and challenges when optimizing online marketing campaigns to improve conversion rates?”, we identified these 5 themes: Client communication, Methodology, Internal Factors, External factors, Timeframe. In our qualitative study, we conducted in-depth interview analyses, and cross-case analyses with experienced PPC managers, online marketing agency owners, and heads of companies' digital departments, and then analyzed the results using thematic analysis. As a result of coding the information, we determined 5 final groups that cause the most challenges in the marketing of companies during conversion optimization. Therefore, marketers perceive the challenges in our studied topic along the 5 identified factors: (1) do not understand each other with clients, (2) there is no clear idea about what kind of methods can work, (3) they have a limited effect on the company's internal factors, (4) external factors cause an anomaly, (5) lack of long-term goals.

Our study successfully achieved all of our research objectives. We thoroughly analyzed marketers' perceptions and discovered significant patterns in the collected dataset. Additionally, we gained a

comprehensive understanding of online marketing professionals' perspectives on achieving high conversion rates. We also identified the challenges faced by marketers in optimizing marketing campaigns and provided well-founded recommendations to overcome these obstacles. Importantly, our study makes a significant contribution to the existing literature in the field, aiming to enrich and expand knowledge in this specialty area and inspire further exploration by fellow academics.

Client communication refers to the characteristics of the communication between the client and the marketer, which is the basis of the marketer's success. Without this, the marketer does not exactly understand the client's real goal, so he cannot provide an adequate solution. For the marketer, it's crucial to recognize what the client's goal is behind the words, as this will allow him to create a clear idea of what methods can be used to optimize conversion. This must be determined precisely with the planning, where the immanent properties given by the company must also be taken into account and clarified, which may appear as a limiting factor when they come to the surface afterward.

Conversion optimization is a time-consuming process, the results of which can be realized in the long-term, therefore the lack of long-term goals eliminates those short-term strategic solutions that can cause later success. This short-sightedness is a common management problem, which often does not receive enough attention at the strategic level, in the same way, that the accurate consideration of internal and external factors does not. Although these factors shape the movements of the clients' market, which have a huge impact on the success of conversion optimization from both the supply and demand sides.

## Chapter 7: Discussion

### 7.1. Summary of key findings

In our paper, we aimed to answer the research question “*How do marketers perceive the impact and challenges when optimizing different online marketing campaigns to improve conversion rates?*” through a qualitative study, as we believed this approach is the most facile to encapsulate various truths and diverse perspectives on this topic by conducting in-depth interviews with well trained and experienced marketing experts. This is because there is no single universal belief, but rather a multitude of nuanced opinions that needed to be explored.

To summarize, in relation with our topic and our research question, we have identified the following challenges and perceptions from our interviewed professionals. These challenges and perceptions were recurring themes throughout the interviews, highlighting the difficulties marketers face in their work:

1. **Client communication:** Effective communication between marketers and clients is crucial for smooth campaign optimization. Understanding clients' attitudes and goals is important, as attitudes can significantly influence behavior and campaign outcomes. By adopting a client-centric communication approach and addressing concerns openly, marketers can positively influence conversion optimization processes and achieve client satisfaction. Attitudes plays a significant role in this context, as marketers needs to understand and grasp the positive or negative evaluations of their clients' behavior and failure to correctly identify their attitudes can result in misunderstandings and inaccurate campaign goals. As theory is suggesting, one’s attitude can deeply influence the outcome of their behavior towards our context.
2. **Applied methods:** Marketers face challenges when there is uncertainty about which methods will improve conversion rates. Perceived behavioral control plays a role in assessing skills and experience. If the complexity of the problem is challenging, the most optimal approach here is to test different instances in the optimization process, as proposed by all of our interviewees when asked how to they overcome the challenge of unknowing which optimization method can work best. A/B testing and aligning campaign features to the target audience can help overcome this challenge. Clear communication and setting achievable goals are essential in the collaboration between marketers and businesses.

3. **Internal factors:** Marketers may encounter difficulties if they lack support or resources from the client's company. Internal factors such as website design, landing page quality, budget, and product characteristics affect optimization processes. Marketers have limited influence over these factors but can make well-thought-out decisions by considering them in advance.
4. **External factors:** External factors like market situations, cultural differences, and competitors' actions impact online marketing. These factors can cause anomalies and challenges for marketers, who must take them into account when making decisions. Marketers must be well-informed about current trends and tailor strategies accordingly to overcome these challenges and achieve better results. The company's size and goals also play a role in determining suitable strategies.
5. **Timeframe:** Short-term goals can limit results and may not be profitable in the long run. Lack of long-term goals among clients poses challenges for marketers. They suggest that clients should focus more on long-term goals, conduct proper campaign and conversion optimization, and consider competitors' actions and market needs. A longer collaboration period allows for learning and drawing appropriate conclusions from the results.

## 7.2. Limitations and future research directions

Since our study is qualitative, with a social constructionist approach, relying on semi-structured interviews and oriented towards human perception, we acknowledge that solely relying on experts' opinions is the biggest limitation of our study, since the data on which we based our study can be highly subjective, meaning that the results cannot be generalized to a larger extent.

There is a possibility that after applying our suggestions in the optimization process, the marketer can experience better outcomes than before. However, we are stressing the fact that this topic needs to be further researched by marketing and business academia. As a qualitative study that depends solely on semi-structured interviews with subject-matter experts, without being supported by any quantitative data, it should be interpreted with a pinch of salt. We suggest for further research be compiled in a quantitative approach, as this can enlarge the literature with another facet on our subject and better inform our findings.



Our sample size represents a limitation of our study since we only drew our conclusion from 9 interviews, predominantly male participants. Hence, we suggest that future research could incorporate a larger sample size with a more equal gender distribution, to englobe both genders' professionals' views on the topic, as our findings are derived from a significantly larger population of males, specifically 8 participants, in contrast with only one female participant. By englobing an equal distribution, it can help other researchers to further validate or contrast our findings. This could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the topic and reduce the potential for bias that might derive from our qualitative study and unequal gender distribution. Further research on our topic can be powered to probe the reality of our findings by studying the same concepts within the same marketer's positions we studied, for example, PPC professionals, to further inform the reliability of our findings.

We also recommend that future studies should explore the perspectives of diverse groups to ensure that the findings are representative of a wider population and not limited to a specific representative demographic of central European participants, enriching the transferability feature of our study. By expanding the sample size, this would enhance the generalizability of the results and increase their applicability in different contexts.

Additionally, incorporating diverse perspectives from different stakeholders could also enhance the validity and reliability of the results, such as business representatives or prospects. Triangulating our findings with other sources of data could provide the interested audience of academia with a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

Due to the absence of prior research on this topic, we believe there is plenty of scope for further research on this subject. Therefore, we underline the importance for researchers to pursue this topic and analyze it more in-depth to gain valuable research-oriented insights, so other researchers can grasp more information from the specialized literature from now on.

### **7.3. Contributions to theory and practice**

Our study enhances the applicability of the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1985) in the business context by introducing a new perspective on this theory. Since we utilized this theory to contain the marketers'

perspectives concerning the optimization process, by the 3 elements of this model: attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1985), we added and enriched the literature on this topic by proposing a new context in which this model can be used.

We focused on understanding how these elements of Ajzen's model (Ajzen, 1985) can be translated in our context of marketing campaign optimization, as they are demonstrated drivers in human behavior, we used them to understand which factors are shaping the marketer's behavior in relation with their marketing campaigns optimization process.

By doing so, we contribute to the existing literature on this topic and bring fresh insights to the field, as it is not uncommon for psychology models to be referred to in business studies, and our research aimed to further enrich this interdisciplinary field. As they are not many studies that address the challenges of marketers in the optimization process of marketing campaigns to improve the conversion rate, we acknowledged this gap in the knowledge, and our research aimed to address that.

Our findings add to the current understanding of the topic and the practical implication for marketing professionals. The findings contribute to the practice of online marketing campaign optimization by providing insights into communication strategies, the importance of testing and decision-making, dealing with internal and external factors, and emphasizing the value of long-term goals in achieving successful outcomes, factors which can highly contribute to both the marketers and their business which they are operating with.

The participants stressed that due to the highly dynamic industry they are operating in, with a plethora of digital tools enhancements, there is a need for a research-oriented perspective, as the marketer needs to be well acquainted with all the emerging trends on the market and be well adjusted with the new tools available in their field. Thus, continuous learning and upskilling are crucial elements for marketers to remain competitive in their market, requiring a proactive approach towards self-development and keeping up with the latest advancements in technology, as through rigorous study they can enhance their self-efficacy (Bandura, 1982) and accountability.

Moreover, our participants underlined that additional training is necessary in this agile industry, so, we informed businesses that they need to invest in quality training programs to ensure that their

marketers are well-trained and capable to attain their imposed goals, improving their perceived behavior control and their self-efficacy in the context of the optimization process.

#### **7.4. Managerial implication**

Business-wise, this study might come in handy by providing a framework that can help to improve the collaboration between the businesses and their marketing peers, as well as fostering an agile culture, which aims to lead to long-term success and growth for the organizations.

Firstly, marketers should be well-informed about the current trends and be creative to deliver the desired marketing message, as they need to apply adjusted strategies for distinct markets and tailor their strategies according to the companies' sizes, to achieve their goals effectively.

From the business side, it is well recognized that acknowledging the external factors which can influence the results of their efforts, so we recommend to both parties to have a broader spectrum about the current situation, as this is a great approach to correctly diagnose the market they are operating in and identify threats and opportunities for their business. Having a broader overview of the market turbulences and being up-to-date with the market tendencies, the geopolitical factors, epidemics, or other independent factors which are shaping the industry, the companies can have a better understanding of the opportunities and weaknesses of their sector and employ strategies aligned with the state of the market.

This comprehension can help marketing professionals develop more effective strategies and tactics to meet those challenges and our findings, inform that there is a need for the development of marketing education programs to better prepare future marketers for their careers. The necessity of the training which needs to be implemented concerning our findings about client communication and the applied methods, as these were the main difficulties for marketers of our study and themselves stress the importance of adopting more educational programs in the areas of communication and strategies for optimization.

There is unclear however how much investing in training programs will cost businesses, as this can vary significantly depending on several factors, including the type and duration of the program, the level of expertise or specialization involved, the location, the reputation of the training provider, and any additional resources or materials included. Lastly, marketers need to align

clients' goals and should actively encourage their clients to think beyond short-term gains. By emphasizing the importance of long-term planning, marketers can ensure that they have sufficient time to carry out proper campaign and conversion optimization processes. Consequently, we recommend to businesses understand the importance of long-term planning and strive to establish longer-term collaborations with their partners to achieve more effective marketing outcomes.

The key investment here is “time”, as allowing more time for marketers can enhance the learning process derived from the testing period, the ability to conclude, and a better understanding of competitors' actions and the current needs of the market and lead to better results in the optimization process.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1

Interview structure:

We started with some background questions:

- Please tell us about yourself. (name, job position/title, the industry you work at, for how long, may how did you get this position, etc.)*
- What attributes does someone need to have in order to be really successful in this position? - skip it if they talk for too long in q1*
- What are the most common questions from the clients? for example: improve the sales or do they have other conversion goals?*

Then we moved forward to the core questions:

- What can impact an online marketing campaign and conversion rate? Can those be measured? (Brand awareness, loyalty, etc.)*
- Why do you think the Hungarian market is relevant, competitive, and different than other markets?*
- Which are the most triggering strategies which marketers are putting in place in order to generate conversion rates?*
- What are the challenges in creating these online marketing campaigns to improve conversion rates?*
- How do you optimize online marketing campaigns to increase conversion rates?*
- What are the biggest challenges when optimizing a campaign from your point of view?*
- Is there any common solution or overall strategy you could apply for all businesses to increase conversion rate?*

And we closed the interviews with a closing question:

*What are your biggest accomplishments and/or failures? How could you overcome them?*

It is important to mention that since we conducted semi-structured interviews, these interview questions and their order may have changed during the interviews. It is also important that during the semi-structured interviews, if the respondent touched on a topic that is particularly important from the point of view of our topic, then we could ask further about it and deviate from this order of questions. As we moved forward with the interview processes, we added some more precise questions to our scope, and we asked them if the interview touched one of the topics.

*-Regarding conversion optimization, as far as I know, there are factors that cannot be measured directly, such as brand awareness or loyalty. I think I can call these external factors. How do you think these external factors affect campaigns and conversions?*

*-What are the internal factors that can affect conversions? (Further explanation for the interviewees if it needed: So first we looked at the big picture, and now we take it one narrower. Here I am mostly thinking about limiting factors related to companies, e.g., web design, budget, communication difficulties, misunderstandings, etc.). What could these be in your case?*

*-As a marketer, based on your decision-making, how do you think you can influence the outcome of campaigns and conversions? What influence do you have on these factors? (Further explanation for the interviewees if it needed: for example, with testing, lots of experience, using tips heard from others?)*

*-What role do you think the education of your client in the field of marketing plays in the whole process? (Further explanation for the interviewees if it needed: There can certainly be misunderstandings when the client does not understand that the marketer cannot provide results in 3 days.)*

*-Is it always clear whether a particular campaign is successful or not? How do you define that a decision of yours was successful?*

*-Communication with customers certainly plays an important role in the processes. How can you decide what is the right communication style with a given client and what is its importance?*

## Appendix 2

Figure 8: Representation of formation of our 12 themes from the 1st order thematic analysis

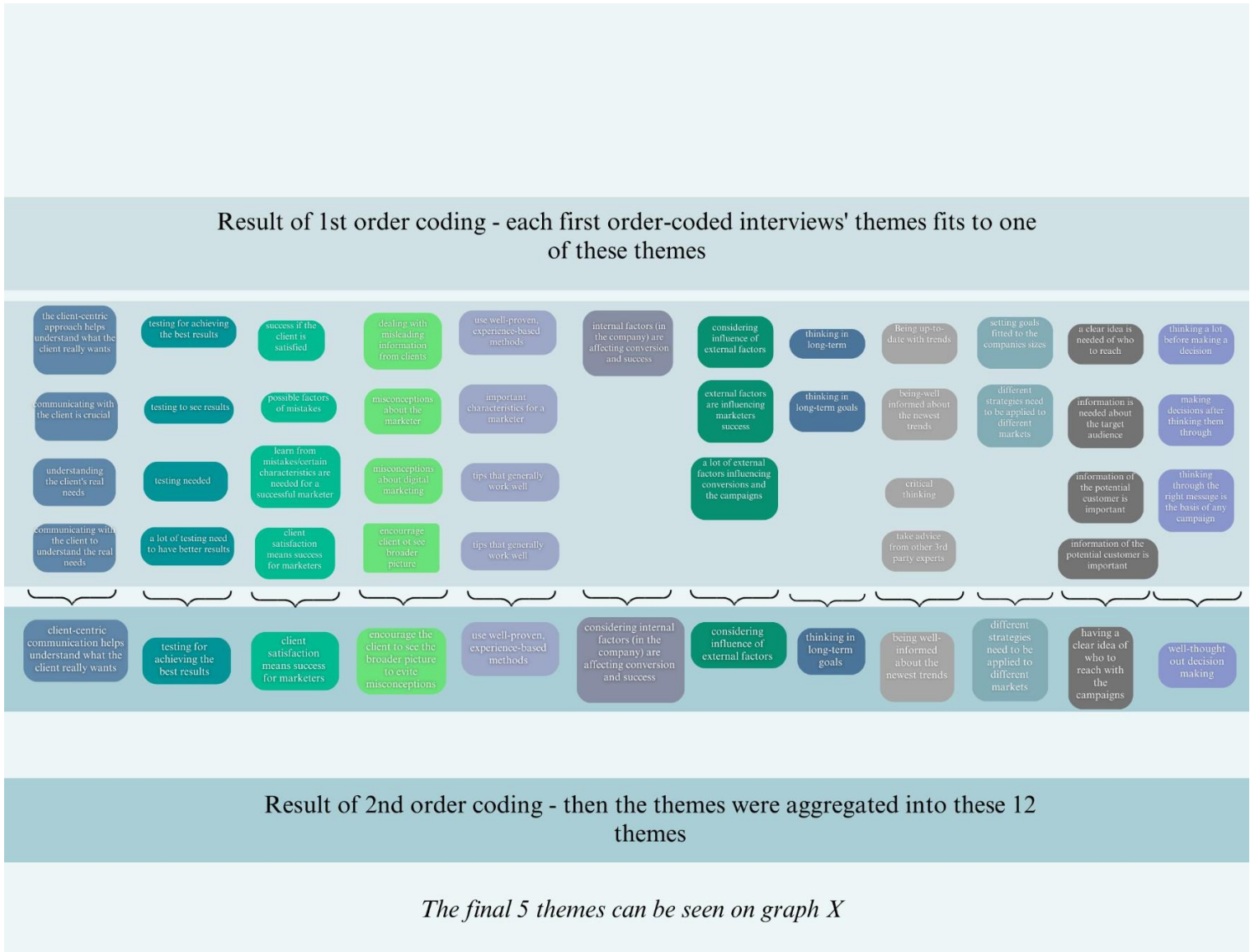


Figure 8. Representation of formation of our 12 themes from the 1st order thematic analysis

Explanation: The first part of the Figure shows the 1st order results of the thematic analysis coding of the interviews we conducted. This result brought us 12 separate themes as a result, which, although they belonged to one theme, did not yet have a specific collective name. The colored parts in the first 4 rows of the Figure represent these themes. Of course, text boxes of the same color represent the same theme, but without aggregation. After collecting these 12 themes and grouping them by color, we can see our results in a logical and orderly manner. After that came

the 2nd order thematic coding, when the aforementioned 12 non-specialized themes were summarized piece by piece (by color) into 1-1 theme, which final theme names adequately represented the content within each theme. Narrowing this down further, the final 5 themes can be seen on Figure 6, which we were able to assign 1 challenge and 1 solution to each theme.