



Private International Institute of Management and Technology

MBA THESIS

SOCIAL MEDIA: THE FUTURE OF MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION?

ELABORATED BY: AMINA ZRIOUILAT

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ABSTRACT

Social Media have become an important part of so many people's lives, nowadays it's very rare to find someone who doesn't know what Social Media is or that doesn't work with one or more Social Media platforms.

Social Media has completely changed the game, and it has become very obvious that is very useful and important that it be included in everything in life.

This study aims to demonstrate Social Media's importance in people's personal and professional life, as well as to show how much it has become implicated in companies' Marketing and Communication strategies.

This study also aims to shed the light on the eventuality of Social Media replacing other media in terms of Marketing and communication strategies.

This study has two parts, the first one gives a general idea about what Social Media is and where it came from historically, and what its impact is on Marketing and Communication, as well as challenges concerning it.

The second part is a small quantitative research that I have conducted to demonstrate how much Social Media could alter costumers buying habits focusing on ads and posts influence.

The research also helps understand what customers look for in Social Media ads.

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INTRODUCTION

In a fast growing world, companies are becoming more and more competitive and innovative. We might find similarities in the products or services but what makes the difference is how they are presented to the public. This is where the importance of Marketing and communication strategies comes in, as companies are striving to find new ways to reach potential buyers and ways to keep them interested.

Marketing and Communication are very vital parts of a company's strategy, companies spend huge amounts of money on their strategies in order to represent their products and or services to the potential consumers, in the best way possible, to differentiate their products from their competition as well as to make people interested in buying.

Marketing strategies involve the product and how it should be presented and the characteristics that would fit the targeted segments, while communication helps reach those segments and also make the image of the company, as a good communication makes the company more approachable and closer to its customers and to the public.

Since 2004, when Facebook was introduced to the world, things have completely changed as the social media opened a whole new channel of people's communication as well as companies' communication.

Social media is the 2000's trend, it has blown up overnight and never stopped expanding ever since, everyone is talking about it whatever their age or social status is.

Social media have become a very important part of people's lives as well as companies' strategies, because companies realized how important it is to be up to date with new technologies and adapt their strategies to it in order to reach larger audiences.

Old communication strategies are becoming dull when it comes to reaching audiences, as customers are now becoming more and more aware of what they want and what they need, they are no longer influenced by basic advertising and promotion techniques, as they are expecting to be amazed by something new every day.

The questions that can be asked here are:

- Where did the Social Media come from?
- How can Social Media help companies in their Marketing and communication strategies?
- Is Social Media going to be replacing traditional Marketing and Communication?
- Is Social Media Advertising better than regular advertising?
- How can Social Media Advertising influence Social Media users?

In this thesis dissertation, I am going to try and answer all of those questions, by dividing into two main parts:

In the first part, I am going to go into details about communication and Social Media history as well as Social Media types and go over their definitions and some statistics concerning them.

I am then going to highlight the impact that Social Media has on Marketing and Communication, and talk about Social Media advertising, and finally talk about some challenges and concerns about Social Media.

In the second part, I am going to present the quantitative research I have done about Social Media impact on customers and focus on advertisements influence.

I am then going to talk about the findings and discuss them to either accept or refute the presented hypotheses.

CHAPTER I: LITTERATURE REVIEW

I- HISTORY OF COMMUNICATION:

Ever since the beginning of times, humans have communicated with each other with different forms of communication, depending on the time and place. The earliest known form of communication was cave paintings, although it's said that they communicated verbally but they portrayed it visually by drawing paintings of shapes and people and even animals on cave walls.

In the 15th and 16th century, another form of communication saw the light, which is the printing press, it was a huge deal back then as people no longer needed to write manually.

In the 17th century, newspapers made their appearance, which was a huge leap in the history of written communication.

In the 18th century, the postal system was established, although letters could be sent and received before that but the system was flawed and deliveries were so long and inefficient.

In the 19th century, the telecommunication was invented, as electricity was incorporated into communication channels. The electric telegraph was the first to be invented in 1831, it allowed messages to be sent and received over long distances, and was used by the military forces. In 1876, the telephone was invented by Alexander Graham Bell; this was the start of a long line of inventions.

In the 20th century, the telephone became mobile in 1981, although it was heavy and couldn't be carried around as much, however, in the 1990's the telephone began becoming pocket friendly as its size began to be downsized down more and more.

Computers were invented in the beginning of the 20th century, in 1965, online written communication expanded into email.

Then the personal computer (pc) was introduced in the 70's, making it a common household tool.

In the 21th century, communication got fast as the world itself is growing faster, face to face communication became popular, as well as social media websites which are online communication tools used to connect and share ideas.

These sites were released within years of each other and became so popular that they were included into the communication industry.

II- HISTORY OF SOCIAL MEDIA:

On the contrary to what some people think, social media are not that recent, the social networks we see now have been inspired by many networks from the past.

In the 20th century, precursors to current social media had seen the light; In 1979 « Usenet » was mentioned, this social network allowed posting news articles or posts to newsgroups.

In the late 1970's, Bulletin Board Systems (BBS) were introduced, they are the first form of social media, and they were the first the first kinds of websites where it is required to log in in order to connect with other people, it was hosted in a computer for one person at a time. The BBS became the primary kind of online community through the 1980s and early 1990s, before the World Wide Web arrived.

In 1988, Internet Relay Chat was introduced, it was used for link and file sharing and keeping up in touch, and it was the real predecessor of instant messaging. ICQ (pronounced I seek you) was the first known program for instant messaging.

In 1997, Six degrees which the first social media platform was launched, it had over one million members but was unfortunately shut down in 2001, it was a platform where users could create professional or personal accounts where they can add other members.

In the 2000's, modern social media has started to get more and more advanced, with the creation of Friendster ,which had over a hundred million members, in 2002.

In 2003, LinkedIn was founded, it's a professional network that was first used mainly for businesses, as of now everyone can get an account to get in touch with businesses and know more about them.

In 2004, two of the major social media websites were founded, Facebook and MySpace, in those platforms users could add other users and chat with them, and they could also share music or articles they liked.

In 2005, YouTube has launched its website; it was the first sharing sites and video hosting platform.

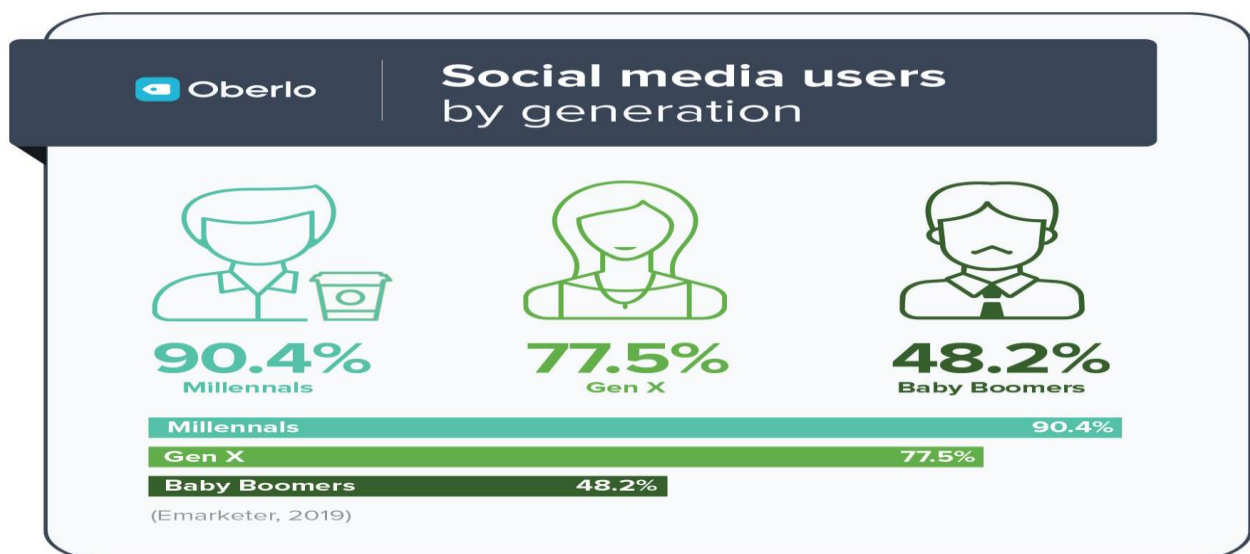
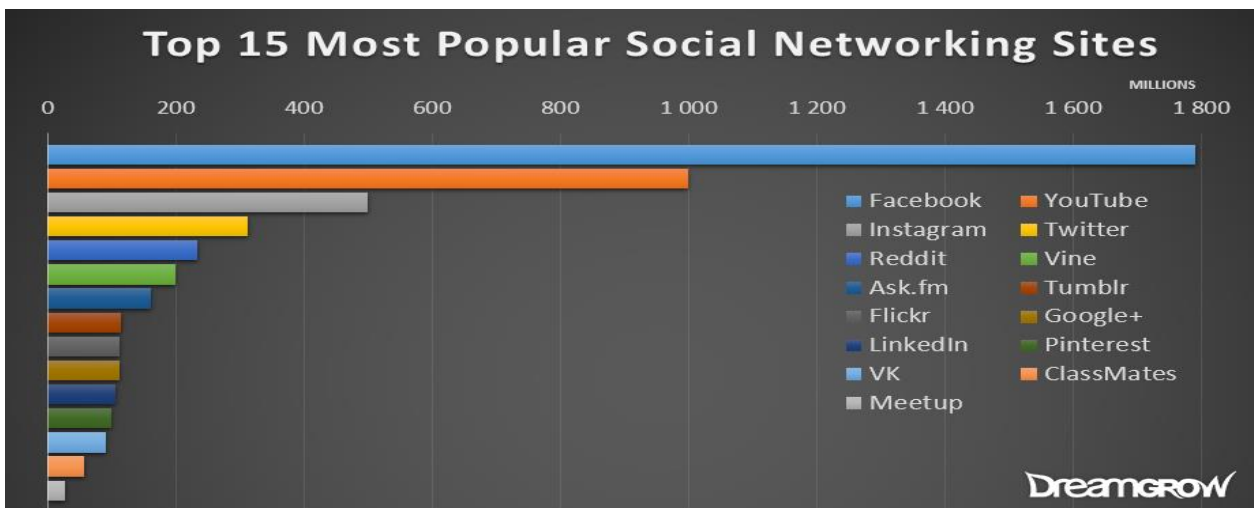
2006 is the year where twitter had seen the day; it has over 300 million user's month.

Last but not least, Instagram launched in 2010, it has started as a platform where users can upload pictures or short videos, and now it has been updated with more features for personal and professional use.

III- TYPES OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Social Media are forms of electronic communication, through which users create online communities to share ideas, information, pictures, videos, and personal messages.

There are over 300 social networks over the web, and over 3, 4 billion users worldwide from different age ranges (as shown in the figure below); they have a larger choice range of platforms depending on their preferences and their purpose.



1- Social Networks:

It's the most notorious and used social media, it's a group of platforms that allow users to connect and share with each other by creating personal accounts where friends, family members, or even acquaintances could reach them.

This type of social media encourages exchange between users, by offering a variety of services such as chatting, sharing, and commenting.

Several types of social networks are to be distinguished, since some are quite generalistic like Facebook, which is the world leader by far, while others are for professional use such as « LinkedIn ».

Facebook:

Founded in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg, it's the most popular social networking website worldwide, and the leading social platform with over 60,6% of Internet users.

Facebook started as a social networking website, where users create accounts and can add other users and share with them pictures or ideas.

Now, Facebook is a whole institution, it's used worldwide for personal and professional matters, and it has become used in Marketing.



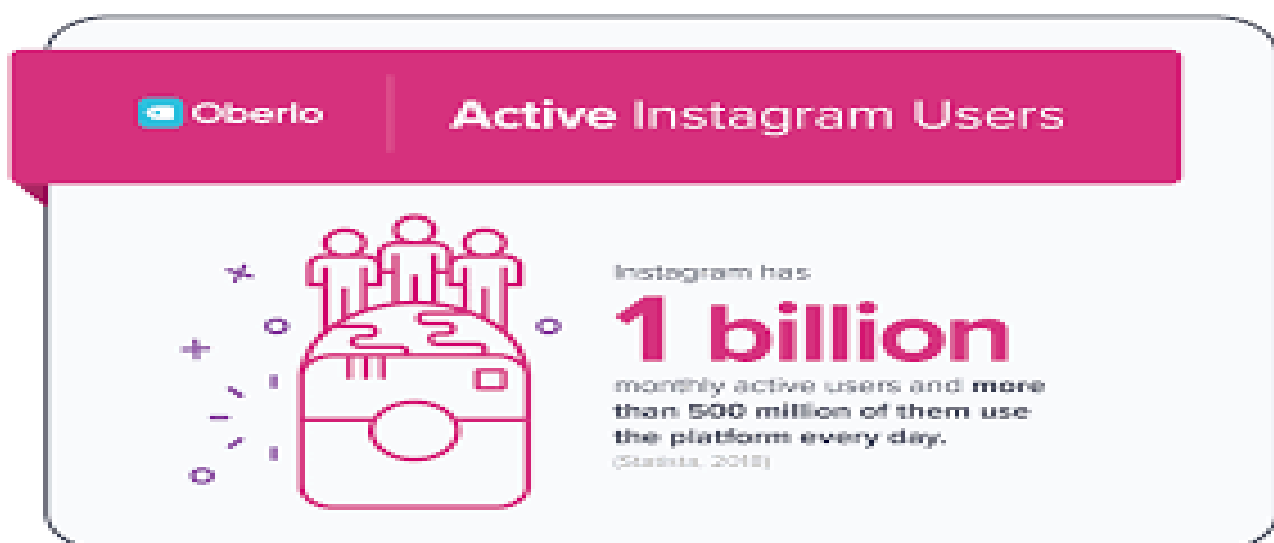
LinkedIn:

LinkedIn is a social network for the business community that was founded in 2002, this site is a place for professionals to connect to current or past colleagues, or connect to potential job offerers or job hunters. Users create résumé like accounts, where they share their professional information with their connections. This site has become widely used by freshly graduates and professionals as a networking tool.



Instagram :

Instagram is a photo and video sharing and social networking site, it was created in 2010 and acquired by Facebook in 2012. It allows its users to create accounts and share pictures and videos with their followers if they have a private account or with the Instagram community if they have a public one. Instagram also offers the possibility of creating a professional account where users can access insights about their usage and profile visits.



2- Blogs

A blog (short for Web log) is an online journal or informational website; it can be used for personal matters as well as professional matters.

Blogs display information in the reverse chronological orders, meaning that the more recent posts are shown first.

This type of platform allows a user or a group of users to share their opinions and views about a particular subject.



There are a lot of blogging platforms all over the Internet such as:

Wordpress.org: It's the most popular blogging platform by far, powering over 90% of blogs on the Internet. Wordpress.org is the perfect fit for all kinds of blogs, but mostly for serious bloggers who want to reach huge amounts of audiences.

Blogger: It's a free blog hosting service that was created in 1999 and acquired by Google in 2003.

It's perfect for beginners and hobby bloggers, and is easier to use when having a Google account.

Medium: It's a publishing platform that was founded in 2012 by one of twitter's founders, it's a community where writers and bloggers and journalists could blog posts and comment and like on each other's posts

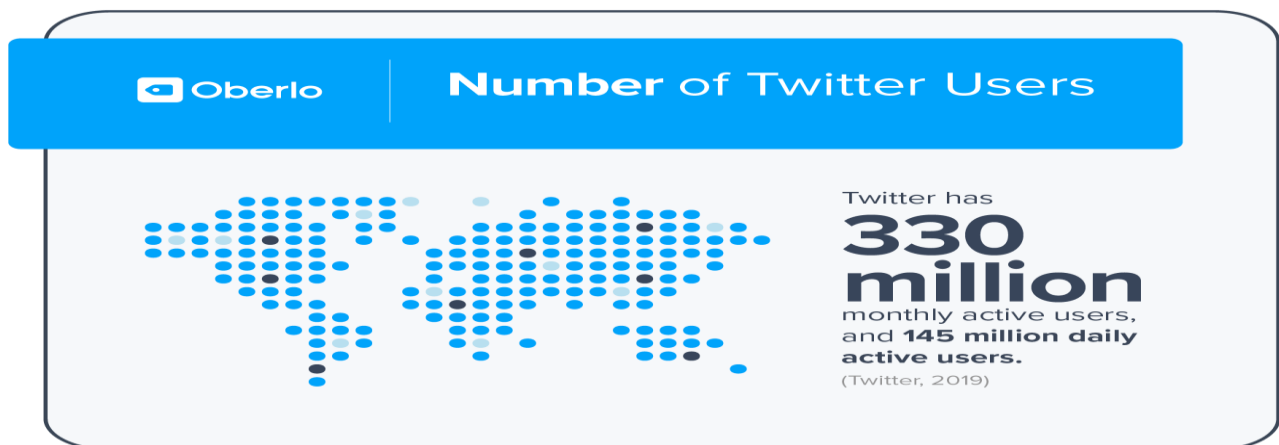
3- Micro blogging

A micro blog is an online broadcast medium that allows users to publish short content such as messages or posts about various topics.

Micro blogging could be done by different social networks such as Facebook status or Instagram posts, but there are special platforms for Micro blogging only.

Twitter: It's a Micro blogging social site created in 2006 by Jack Dorsey, Evan Williams, Noah Glass, and Biz Stone; it is currently run by Jack Dorsey.

Twitter allows its users to post short messages called « tweets » either online or by a text message, it is very popular among celebrities and politicians.



Tumblr: it's a Micro blogging platform that was created in 2007 by David Karp and previously owned by Yahoo, this platform allows users to post texts, images, videos, and links, Tumblr is really popular among young audiences.

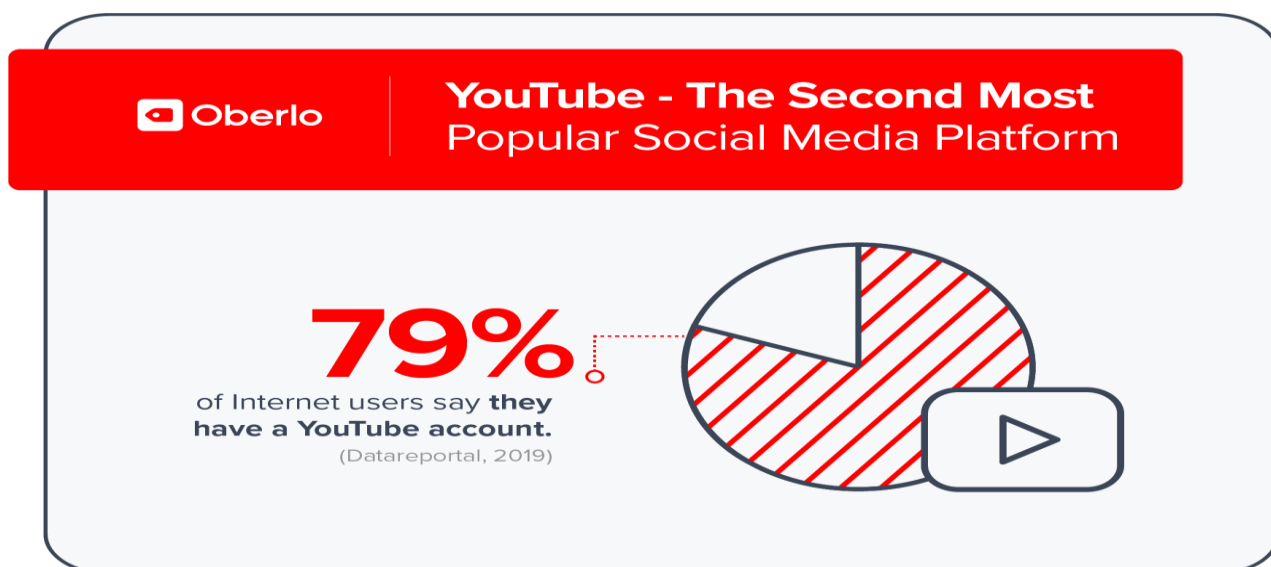


4- Content creation and sharing sites

Content creation and sharing sites are platforms that allow users to create all sorts of content and publish it to Internet users in order to have their opinions.

Each of those platforms has a specific vocation, for example, YouTube and Tiktok is for Video sharing while Flickr and Pinterest are for photo sharing.

YouTube : YouTube is an American online idea-sharing site created in 2005 and owned by Google, it allows users to watch, share, and react to the content. YouTube is the second most popular social media after Facebook with over 2 billion active users.



Flicker : It's an image and video hosting service that was launched in 2004, it allows its users to create accounts where they can add other users and upload their photos and videos to share them with other photographers. Flickr has over 90million monthly users and over 75million registered photographer (updated in 23/03/2019).

Tiktok : it's a short video sharing social networking owned by byteDance, it was launched in 2017.

Tiktok allows its users to create accounts, create and share videos with other tktok users, or on the Internet, it has over 800million users worldwide and is widely popular among teens and young adults.

5- Forums

Forums have been around since the beginning of Internet, they are the oldest for of social media.

Forums are platforms that allow Internet users to discuss any given subject, gather information, and get recommendation.

There is a huge amount of forums all over the Internet, these forums can have answers to questions asked by Internet users from skilled professionals.

Reddit :It's a community Website that was created in 2005, Reddit allow its users to share their thoughts and ideas within people who have the same mindset.

Redditors can join one or more communities, post stories or share links, and vote on other posts, it has over 430Million active monthly users



Quora : it's a Question and Answer forum that allows users to ask questions, get answers, answer other people's questions, and upvote answers.

Quora was launched in 2009, and since it has been a viable website where people share information's about all kinds of topics.

Quora has over 300 Million monthly active users; the majority of them are in the Us, India, and the United Kingdom.

6- Virtual Worlds

Virtual worlds are platforms that allow users to be a part of an online fictional world, they are similar to video games but what makes them different is the necessity for an Internet connection to get access to them. Virtual world platforms have chatting windows as well as forums, where players get to socialize while playing the games.

Active Worlds : it's an online virtual world in 3D, that has been in activity since 1995, making one of the oldest existing virtual world.

It allows users to create avatars and interact with each other, and it even has the multiplayer option.

Second life : It's an online virtual world that was released in June 23rd 2003, it allows users « residents » to create virtual representations of themselves called « avatars » and interact with places and objects and other avatars. In 2013, Second life had approximately one million regular users, but this number has declined, in 2017 it was documented that it went to between 800000 and 900000 users.

The Sims : It's a series of virtual world simulations that was created in 2000, its last version « The Sims 4 » was launched in January 21st 2020 and has over 20 Million players (updated 30/01/2020).

The Sims allows users to create a virtual reality where their avatars makes choices and even have « normal » lives.

IV- IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION

A- SOCIAL MEDIA AND MARKETING

In less than twenty years, Internet has become a fully fledged communication channel and has positioned itself as the fourth media before radio.

Since its creation, Internet has undergone significant change, and has never ceased to expand and improve, its users numbers grow bigger and never stop doing so.

The expansion of Social Media is a result of the huge amount of Internet users worldwide, these communication channels allowed users to be connected and have a voice and an opinion of their own.

Marketing and communication strategies are very important in a company, they are what boosts sales and profitability as well as how people see the company's products and services.

It is important for a company to elaborate a good Marketing and communication strategy in order to assure its image and notoriety and profitability in a competitive market.

Social Media have changed a lot of things within companies, they no longer rely on traditional Marketing and Communication techniques, instead they have incorporated Social Media into their strategies which has helped them reach more people and access a lot of information that was not easy to access

1- Market Research

Knowing about the market is very important, companies need to investigate and do research about each market before entering it. Market research is an important process used by companies to gather important information about the markets, this information helps identify and analyze the needs of the market, it also helps companies with maintaining competitiveness.

Market research includes social research, which is a method used by researchers to learn about people and societies, since people have different habits, this research gathers information about all of these aspects. Market research also includes opinion research, which is a research method used by researchers to learn about what people think of a certain issue.

As people think differently, this research allows researchers to get a glimpse of people's opinions, and Social Media have helped researchers get access to more information about a lot of these matters as well as competitors and other markets.

Researchers can easily gather secondary data to help them in their research, market segmentation is much more efficient due to Internet communities, and the elaboration of Marketing Mix is easier due to the fact that the data gathered with Social Media can be more efficient than regular data.

2- Marketing Research

Marketing research is the systematic collection, analysis, and interpretation of data pertaining to the marketing conditions.

The Marketing research is mainly conducted to find out the changes in the consumer behavior due to the change of elements in the marketing mix (product, price, place, and promotion).

Each type of Marketing research can be suitable for one or different products, as the targeted markets and consumers are different, so in order to conduct a good research , the researchers would choose the most adequate type depending on the aims.

In order to understand consumers, Marketers should get an idea of their actions and moves, this is where Social Media helps Marketers spot consumer behavior and that with the help of several methods :

Psychographics :

It's the qualitative methodology of studying consumers based on psychological characteristics and traits such as values, desires, goals, interests, and lifestyle choices.

Psychographics in marketing focus on understanding the consumer's emotions and values, so marketers could market their products more accurately and reach consumers on another level.

Social Media data could help in the elaboration of psychographics, as they give a clear idea on a lot of details about consumers based on their Social Media activity.

Qualitative content analysis (number of likes/comments/shares) :

The number of Likes can be both a vanity metric and a tool that allows the assessment of the engagement rate of consumers on social media, this rate may suggest the attractiveness of a marketing message or product.

Social listening :

It allows marketers to passively gather feedback from customers or monitor opinions about their brand or competitors.

Polls/questions :

Marketers can ask questions directly in social media feeds, encouraging users to share thoughts and feelings, this gives the customers the feeling of being heard and of being able to make a change, and it also allows marketers to understand their customers more and to make changes in their products or services.

3- Segmentation, Targeting, and Positioning

Market segmentation is the process of dividing a market of potential customers into groups, or segments, based on different characteristics. The segments created are composed of consumers who will likely respond similarly to marketing strategies and who share common traits such as interests, needs, or locations.

Market segmentation is a very important process, because it makes it easier to adapt the adequate strategy and Marketing plan to different groups in terms of their characteristics.

There are 4 types of segmentation : Demographic segmentation , psychographic segmentation , behavioral segmentation, and geographic segmentation.

Social Media plays an important role in segmentation, as it helps companies easily identify the audience, as Social Media platforms create several communities, which makes it easier to learn more about them. Social Media also contain a lot of information about its users, which allows companies to apply a better segmentation on the basis of the tracking of consumers.

It's very important to note that Social Media users share a lot of their personal information on their platforms, by gathering those information, marketers could have a better idea and make an adequate strategy to match those information.

Once the segmentation process is finished, targeting is the next step in line, it's when marketers choose the adequate segment that they're going to base their marketing strategy on.

Targeting is important as it allows the company to focus on one group of people, which is simpler and straight to the point.

Not only does it make it easier for the company as it helps them stay focused and even improve, but it also helps with customer loyalty.

Social Media helps in this process as they help with the differentiation between segments, as well as making them more accessible which costs less for the companies.

Social Media also helps the companies keep up with trends and competitors, as well as customers.

Positioning is one of the most powerful marketing concepts, it refers to the place that the brand occupies in the minds of its customers, in other words, it's what distinguishes the brand from its competitors.

In order to gain that place, companies have to establish how they want to be recognized, and build their brand image.

Social Media helps on developing and effective Marketing Mix (Product, Price, place, promotion) for each selected segment.

It also helps establishing maximum competitive advantage by developing an effective positioning strategy, that is going to reach customers' minds even more.

Social Media helps monitoring and shaping the discussion regarding products, which can influence consumers' buying behaviors.

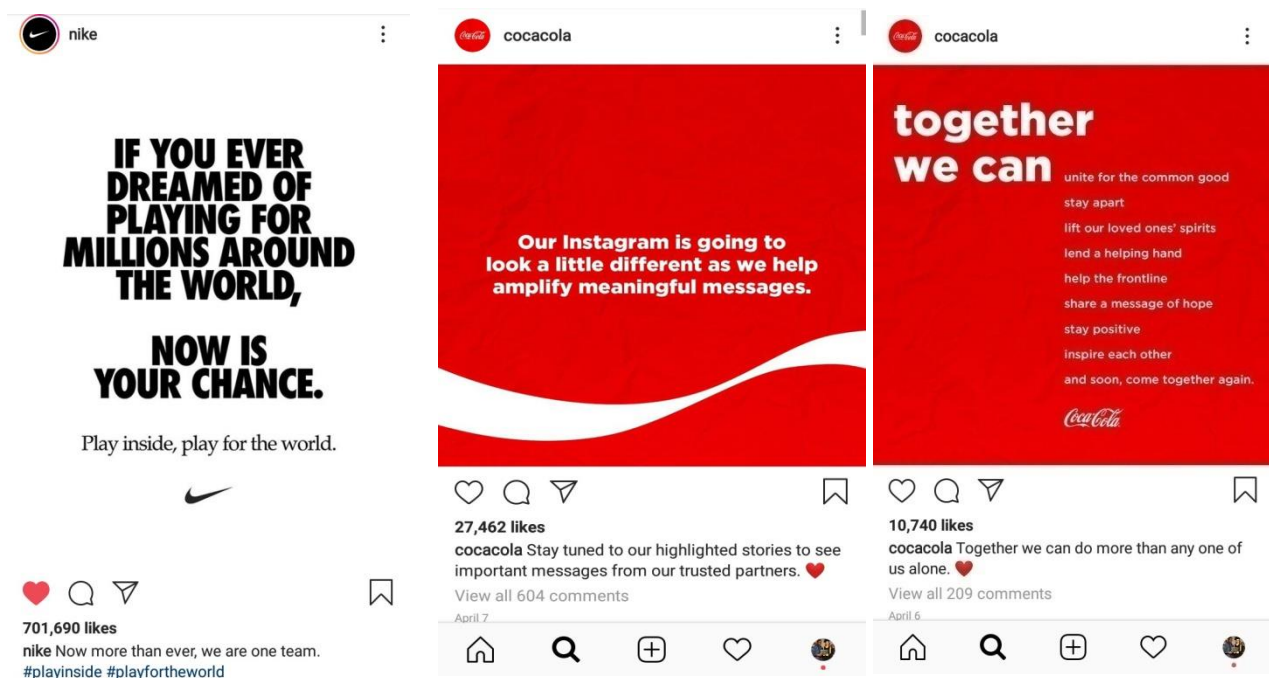
By elaborating a good marketing strategy, one that is adequate to the targeted segment, the company is very likely to gain customers trust, but it is important to note that the brand image can change anytime and that companies never cease updating their methods.

Social Media can be effective in that matter as it can shape easily how a customer perceives a brand, since most of customers are most likely to have social media accounts that they are present on, they are connected to their favorite brands.

Any communication faux pas could cause the brand image to collapse, and a serious decrease in sales.

One good example of how companies raise their brand image via Social Media is by posting useful content, such as motivational quotes or helpful advice.

In Covid-19, many companies started posting advice on their Social Media pages, encouraging people to stay home on lockdown, some companies even organized online events to cheer their communities up.



Above are Nike and Coca Cola posts during Covid-19 lockdown, they are inspiring their followers to stay home and be responsible, motivating them to act right.

4- Brand Awareness

Brand awareness is a marketing term that describes the degree of recognition a consumer has of a product by its name.

Brand awareness creation is an important step in promoting a new product or reviving an older brand.

Awareness of the brand can include the qualities that distinguish the product from others such as the product quality or color or the brand name itself.

It is more likely that products and services that have a high level of brand recognition are the ones that generate more sales, as consumers usually would go for a product that they know of rather than a unknown brand.

The giants of soft drinks industry, Coca Cola and Pepsi are a living example of the importance of brand awareness as they have huge shares of a big industry such as the beverage industry.

Coca Cola and Pepsi have their own loyal consumers that would rather stay without any drink than choose another brand.

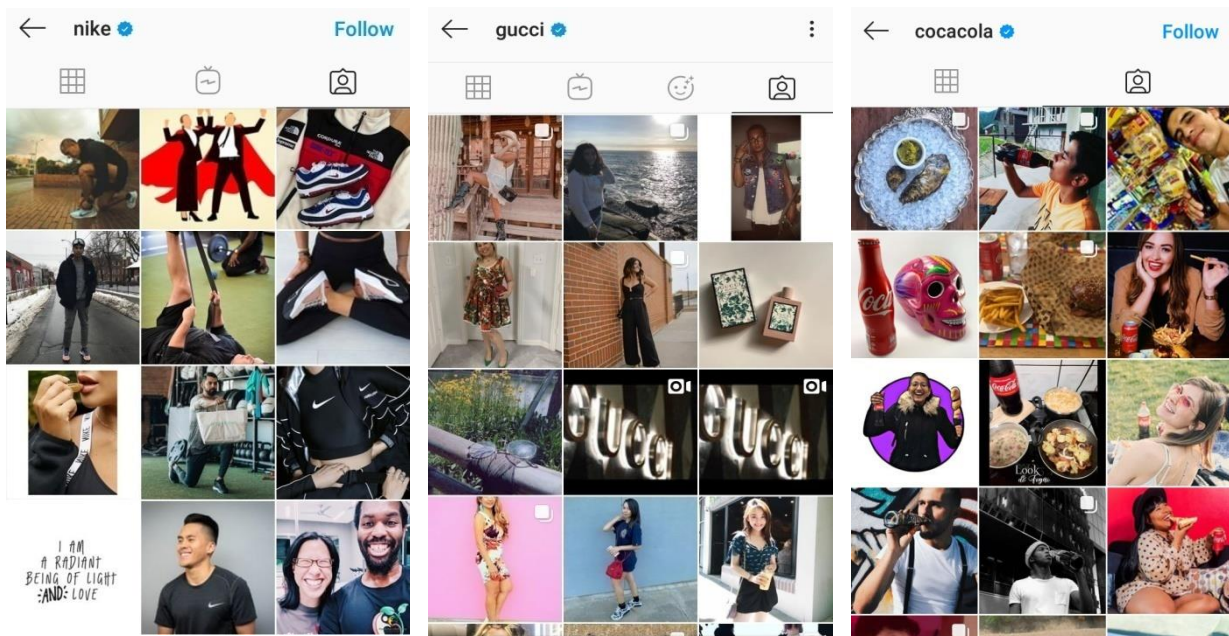
When packages are removed, the drinks are similar in terms of color and texture and sometimes even taste, but what differentiates them from one another is their packages and their brand names.

These two companies have spent huge amounts of money on advertising and promotion campaigns to raise brand awareness and these campaigns are so effective.

Social Media use in brand awareness campaigns has become very important, as a lot of consumers and potential consumers are using Social Media on a daily basis.

Companies are now using Social Media platforms to raise brand awareness, which can be done by making consumers promote products for themselves and generate discussions and even communities about them.

An example of brands using Social Media for brand awareness is when they use these platforms to create trends or tags and hashtags, and consumers could use those tags to show their opinions about the products ; On Instagram for example, a lot of people post pictures with their favorite products from their favorite brands, and tag them in the pictures, this generates likes and discussion about the product qualities or flaws, depending on what the consumers think of it.



The pictures above are Screenshots of actual Nike, Gucci, and Coca-Cola Instagram profiles, where customers tag them in posts where they are showing their products, there are many Instagram posts uploaded by the minute via fans that care to be seen as loyal customers of the brands.

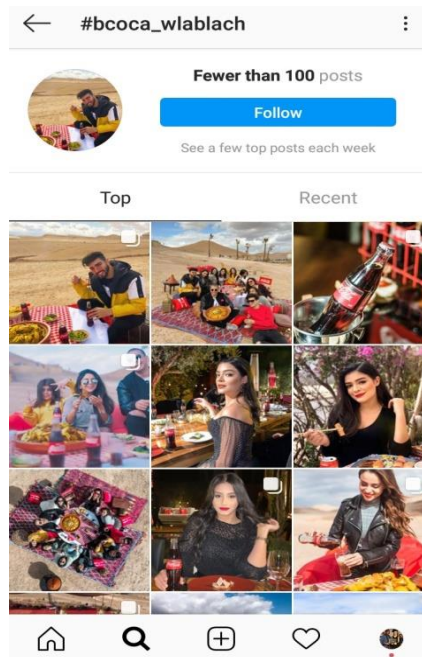


Above are screenshots from McDonald's Morocco's account, where they did a challenge in collaboration with a Moroccan famous rapper upon the launch of their new "McWrap", that challenge was very popular on Instagram and soon enough it got a lot of people participating in it.

As we see in the first two pictures, McDonald's workers are having a blast while dancing on a rap song by @elgrandetoto , and the challenge got so big McDonald's Morocco agreed on producing the song's clip if their video reaches one million view.

This strategy is very good for both parties as they gain more visibility by the increase of the likes and shares of their posts.

McDonald's brand image was enhanced as it made their customers feel good vibes and it gave them a look of how things are on the inside of the company. Happy and cheerful employees are always a good image to put in front of customers, as it enhances the humanity side as well as the trust factor.



Above are other hashtags made by “Sultan” which is a tea company that is very notorious in Morocco, the hashtag is about a challenge of who can make the best Moroccan tea, and share it with the company’s community.

The two other photos are about another hashtag made by Coca Cola Morocco in collaboration with Moroccan influencers, to encourage consumers on posting their pictures with their Coca Cola and share it with the community.

B- SOCIAL MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION

1- Public Relations

Public Relations (PR) is the practice of releasing and spreading information about the company to the public, this practice helps the company inform the public and prospects as well as customers, investors, and shareholders of things that are happening within the company, and to help create and maintain a positive perspective about the company.

Public Relations can be done within the company or externally by hiring skilled PR agents, and it's different from publicity.

Public Relations are very important to the company, as it's the communication channel between it and all of its contributors as well as the public eye.

Social Media is a very important communication tool, and as public relations are based on communication, Social Media could help PR in so many ways.

Social Media help brands establish relationships with the public, and help managing them ; Social Media also help establish brand image and brand message by using posts and engaging influencers, in addition it help identify threats fast.

2- Company/Customers relations

Raising and improving interaction with customers are some of the main concerns of companies, Nowadays, the majority of companies have brand pages on Social Media platforms.

The correct use of Social Media platforms could help companies establish and improve their relations with customers and potential customers, as Social Media is a channel that brings people together, it would give customers a sense of involvement with the company.

There are many ways that companies interact with costumers via Social Media, they can post content about existing or new products and ask for opinions or reviews, they can also include customers in decision making by making them answer polls or surveys.

There is also a trend going on Social Media which is that customers post their purchases from a company and give their feedback about them, and tag the company so as to share with them what they think and to gain more visibility.

This trend is profitable for both parties, especially when it comes to gaining more visibility on Social Media platforms.

The way a company communicates with its customers can either make or break their business,

3- Crisis Communication

Due to the unpredictability of global events, companies must be able to cope with drastic changes within and around them, and be able to protect their businesses from the unknown.

Crisis Management is the methods used to identify threats surrounding the company and deal with them, it requires that the decisions be made in a short amount of time in order to get through the crisis with the minimum damage.

Crisis management can be mistaken as risk management, they may have some similarities but they are completely different.

Risk management involves planning for events that might occur in the future, crisis management involves reacting to negative events during and after they have occurred.

Crisis can either be self-inflicted or caused by external forces. Examples of self-inflicted could be an employee being irresponsible around dangerous material, or confidential data being leaked to the public.

When it comes to external forces that could affect companies' operations, they may include natural disasters such as the recent Covid-19 pandemic that has affected the world globally, and in so many ways ; security problems such as terrorist attacks ; and rumors about the company that could ruin their public image forever.

Traditional crisis management follows the strategy of moving as quickly as possible to maintain control over how the crisis affects the company, its stakeholders, and the public ; and how the news are shared and interpreted.

Elaborating an effective crisis management plan can impact how well a company manages crisis, it could either make or break a business, which is why it is very important to work hard on it.

Crisis communication plays an important role in crisis management, as communication is how the company reaches other parties.

Social Media has changed how crisis management does communication, because it has created a different communication context in which authenticity is more valued, dialogue is more accessible, and information is quicker to reach people.

For starters, with Social Media any event can become a crisis, because the public can easily express what they think about the company, or expose something that could ruin the company to the public.

People have access to a lot of platforms where they can easily discuss, or express their satisfaction or the opposite to other people, which can be a huge challenge to the company if the Social Media posts get out of hand.

An example about that, is when an “United airlines” passenger was filmed being mistreated by the law enforcement officers and kicked out of the flight for no apparent reason, the video reached a huge amount of views which made the public very unhappy with the airlines company, this had cost them a lot of customers who weren’t ready to set foot in their plane anytime soon.

V- SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING

Advertising is a one way communication that has as a purpose to inform and attract potential customers to products or services offered by the company. Advertising is a way of product promotion, but it's a longer and more costly process.

Social Media advertising is defined as a form of digital advertising where ads are communicated to potential customers via Social Media platforms. In addition to having huge amounts of users, Social Media platforms use users information and preferences to give more targeted advertisements, so companies could reach anyone and everyone with a lesser cost than regular advertising.

According to some statistics, it is said that 26% of Facebook users that click on an ad are most likely to buy the advertised product.(via Facebook) It is also said that more than 7 million companies use Facebook advertising and that by 2023 companies are most likely to double the budget allocated to Social Media advertising. (THE CMO survey)

Social media allows brands to access cost-effective marketing, interact with their audience, and build brand loyalty. But it's difficult to measure the exact social media impact, as every social media platform measures activity differently.

Brands are riding the wave of social media marketing. 73% of marketers believe that their efforts through social media marketing have been "somewhat effective" or "very effective" for their business (Buffer, 2019).

Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter are the most popular Social Media Platforms, with Facebook being on the top of the list and offering a wide range of options for companies that want to advertise their products.

It's very unlikely that a Social Media user won't come across any ad while using the platforms, either targeted ads or influencer ads which can be helpful but sometimes irritating to users as they can be very redundant and somewhat persistent.

In my latest use of Instagram, I came across more than 10 ads in the span of one hour, some of those ads were interesting enough to look at, but some were not relevant enough for my search.

Since it's currently Covid-19 pandemic, a lot of the ads I come across are about essential products or services, with the delivery and safety details highlighted.

ariel_maroc
Sponsored

10 likes
ariel_maroc في ظل الظروف الصعبة التي يعيشها مجتمعنا حالياً، 100 000 وجبة طعام لفائدة الأشخاص بدون مأوى سوف نقوم بتوزيعها، و ذلك بمساعدة من بنك التغذية و كارفور المشكورين على دعمهم السخي
#قلبتنا_مع_غيرنا

marocfish
Sponsored

Book Now
105 likes
marocfish Du poisson 100% frais et local
Maroc Fish, c'est votre poissonnerie en ligne qui vous fait découvrir ou redécouvrir les produits de la mer.

Boucherie Reda
Sponsored

7,467 views
Restez chez vous.
Commandez par Whatsapp: <https://wa.me/212667266709> ou Par site web: <https://boucheriereda.com/>
✓ Paiement à la livraison.
✓ livraison gratuite à partir de 400dhs par commande.
✓ 15dh frais de livraison pour toute Commandes moins de 400dhs.

chateaublancmaroc
Sponsored

220 likes
chateaublancmaroc Parce que #Ramadan est le mois du partage, Château Blanc a pensé à vous !
👉 Collection Made To Share : 1KG à 750DH / 1,5KG à 980DH

homeandsofa_officiel
Sponsored

808 likes
homeandsofa_officiel When nothing goes right, go left.
NOUVELLE COLLECTION 2020 !
Séjour VIENNA
Table basse DAX
Table de coin VIENNA
Rideau

glamsmakeupmaroc
Sponsored

2,209 likes
glamsmakeupmaroc Vous l'avez demandé, nous l'avons appliqué !... more



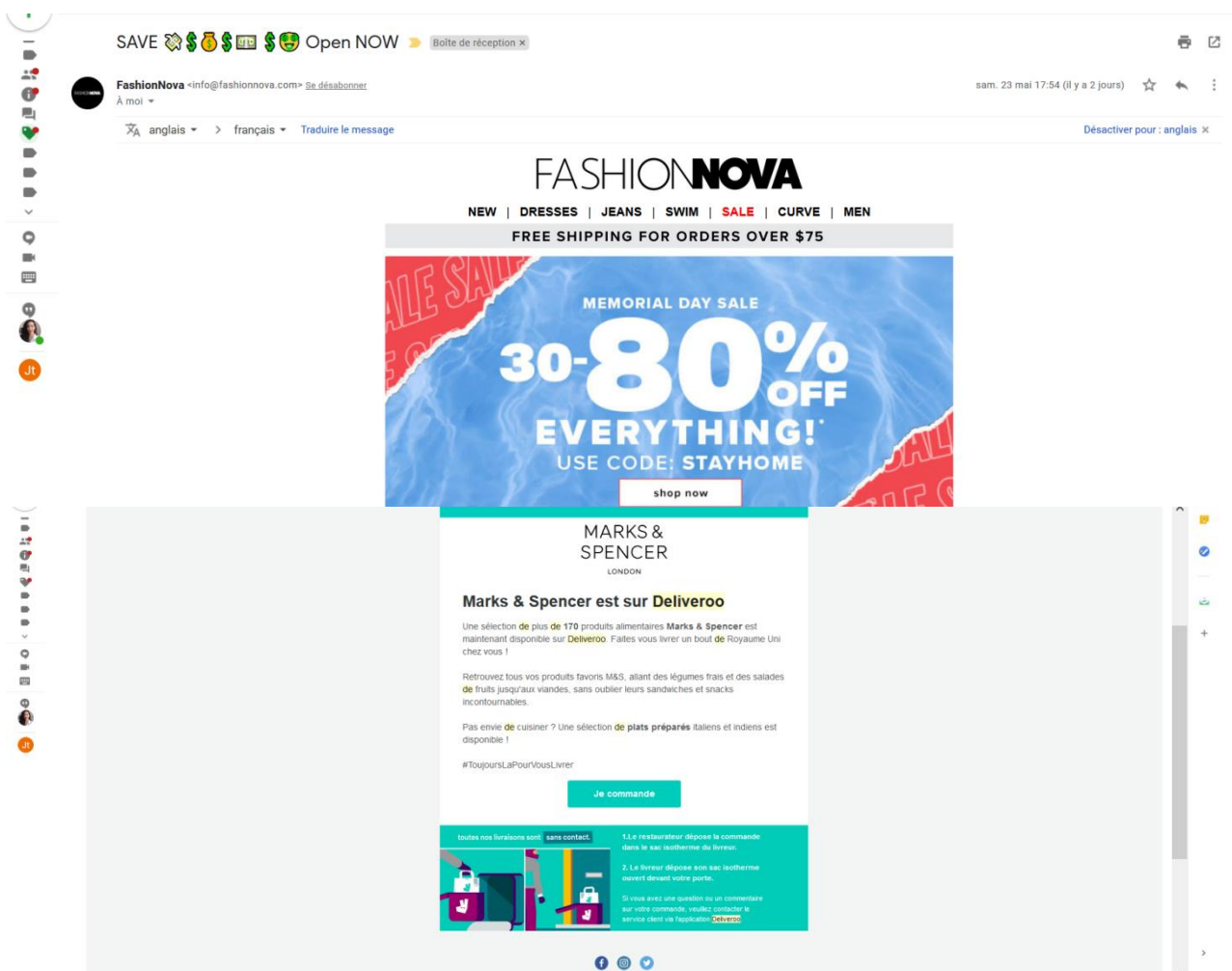
Another types of ads I come across are paid partnership ads that influencers post on their Social Media accounts.



Social Media users are faced with ads wherever they go, and whatever platform they are using, they have become accustomed to the amount of ads they encounter daily.

Some websites such as streaming websites use a lot of ads display in order to provide free services for their users, other applications use a more targeted way of displaying ads, using search engine history and cookies saved to track the users search and preferences.

Personally, I get a lot of ads daily, either when visiting websites or via emails or while using Social Media platforms, this sometimes plays in favor for the brands as the ads get me intrigued or interested, but sometimes receiving so many ads makes me irritated to the point of unsubscribing to the website or the brand's newsletters.



VI- CHALLENGES AND CONCERNS OF SOCIAL MEDIA

1- What to post and when to post it

Establishing a Social Media strategy is very important for a company, it can help setting objectives and choosing which Social Media platforms are adequate, and it also helps organizing when and what to post.

Although it might seem easy, choosing what to post on Social Media can be a very hard challenge, and should be taken very seriously. Photos and videos can be very important tools for marketers, they can help them reach more audiences and send a powerful message. Choosing when to post is also important, because too many posts could annoy followers, they give them the impression of being trapped with too many promotions in their hands, and that makes them want to unfollow the brand's page.

Instagram and Facebook have a lot of tools that can help brands with these matters, as they show insights about posts and the overall page, and they give information about when posts reach more people, and where the posts are mostly seen. They also show how many people follow or visit the page, and how many share, also how many users see the posts and don't interact with them.

It is very important for marketers to organize and plan their posts in advance, take note of the insights, and make changes when needed.

2- How to keep in touch with customers

Social Media is about socializing, and not only about posting and waiting for results. It's the company's portal to discuss and debate new ideas, getting feedback from customers, and interact with customers and potential customers.

Keeping up with all those social media interactions could be a big challenge for the brand, as it requires work and a lot of time and effort to keep up with so many social media platforms.

By being responsive, the company could increase brand loyalty and brand awareness, because these interactions strengthen the relations between the company and its customers.

This also gives the company a human side, as customers will feel they're interacting with someone rather than something, and would feel more at ease expressing themselves more.

A lot of companies use Social Media platforms to get new ideas from their followers, as well as to test if some of their ideas are reaching the public in the way they had hoped initially.

Customers share their feedbacks and are more than pleased to be involved in their favorite brand's new products and/or services.

3- Who to collaborate with

Building a good online presence is very important in a company's Social Media strategy, what's going to be shown to the public and how it is going to be shown should be seriously taken into consideration.

That is why companies collaborate with many parties to reach the maximum of Social Media users, to represent their brand and enhance their brand image.

Some companies turn to influencer marketing, which is a widely used strategy due to its cost effectiveness compared to mainstream advertising, this strategy can be effective as influencers usually have a big following range and are able to "influence" their followers' choices by telling them about products or services they liked or disliked.

The bigger challenge comes in getting the best influencers to represent the brand and bring added value to it, which requires doing research about the type of content the influencers give and their following range to see if it matches the targeted audience the brands aims for.

Some companies turn employees into brand advocates, which can be a brilliant idea, as Social Media users would trust what they have to say about the brand.

Who's better than someone from the inside sharing about the company, it certainly gives a humanistic side to the company and makes their followers feel included, which adds to the transparency factor.

4- How to differentiate from competitors

The Social Media world is a very vast world, as there is billions of users, there are millions of companies present too, which makes it hard to be different and build a unique online identity.

Social Media users come across so many posts on a daily basis, some of them are similar to each other, some of them even have the same message; This throws off the users who avoid redundancy and who are looking for more unique content to follow.

The best way that companies could follow to be different from competitors is to be their true self, meaning that they show the company's true personality.

Setting a Brand voice is what sets the company's personality in the minds of Social Media users, it needs to be engaging and reflected in the company's content.

Maintaining a consistent Brand voice is very important as it has an impact on users; it gives them a sense of security and trust.

Another way is when companies give excellent customer support by being responsive to their messages and requests, because customers always remember the attitude a company had towards them even online.

CHAPTER II: METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, we notice the growing number of social media users, it has become a very prominent part of our lives

The question that arises, however, is the impact that social media has on people, more specifically customers and potential customers.

That is the reason I have decided to choose this matter as the theme of my MBA research Thesis, and to conduct a small investigation as part of my research, to dissect and analyze the impact of social media on buying patterns.

Since we are going through a covid-19 pandemic, I took advantage of this situation to see how social media profited from a worldwide crisis.

The objectives of this survey are to know how much time users spend on social media, the amount of ads they encounter, and whether it changes their buying patterns.

This study also aims to help see if Covid-19 lockdown has impacted Social media users average use of platforms and if it has increased or decreased their buying patterns.

I started my investigative work by developing a problematic in which I posed four main hypotheses on which I based my study

Problematic:

Social Media have become a huge part of everyone's life, thus becoming a huge part in company's lives as well.

How do social media impact customers?

Did Covid-19 help popularize social media use and online purchases?

Hypotheses:

H1: Social Media ads have an impact on customers

H2: Social Media ads do not have any impact on customers

H3: Covid-19 helped popularize Social media use and online purchases

H4: Covid-19 did not help popularize Social media use and online purchases

The questionnaire was developed subsequently, based on the hypotheses posed in the problematic, the questions were simple and precise, so as to obtain the information without exceeding the limit vis-à-vis the person who answers the questionnaire.

After the finalization of the questionnaire, I administered it to two people as a pretest, which was an essential step in order to know if I should proceed or change the questions or make other modifications.

The interviewees were skeptical at first, and did not take me seriously, but when I took time to explain my study's main purpose and my objectives, they were more than happy to contribute.

I- METHOD

The questionnaire is the best known and most frequently used investigative tool in investigative work. The questionnaire method has several advantages and is practically the only one suitable for quantitative surveys. The observations are systematic and standardized; moreover that the operations are simple, fast, and at low cost; and finally it is possible to study large samples and make them process the data found statistically. However, the interest of this method and its apparent simplicity should not be misleading, because this kind of method is not suitable for any observation, it is limited to the study of verbal responses.

In addition, the verbal behaviors thus collected are not spontaneous but biased and, therefore, cannot be regarded as reliable indicators of the behaviors that occur.

Here we find the classic problem of the gap between what we say and what we do, between the opinion about a subject and the acted behavior towards it

The development and fine-tuning of the questionnaire is done in several stages:

1- Definition of the subject treated :

The definition of the subject to be treated is essential to define the type of questions to ask, and the way in which they will be organized in the questionnaire.

My questionnaire is the impact of social media on customers, more specifically on their buying habits and patterns.

2- The target population :

Defining the target population can also help define and organize the questions.

This research's questionnaire targets people that are potentially using social media, more specifically adults that can be potential buyers meaning aged 18 and over.

3- What type of questions to ask :

After defining the subject to be addressed and the target population, the choice of questions and the type of questions to be asked is important, the questions should be asked in such a way that the person answering the questionnaire is not not annoyed or bored.

My questionnaire is made up of 25 questions, 5 of which are open questions, and it usually would take between 1 to 3 minutes maximum to answer.

I chose to include open questions to include the interviewee in the study, and to encourage them to give their opinions and to give us ideas and examples.

4- How the questionnaire will be distributed :

After having completed the three preceding stages, the choice of the distribution of the questionnaire is also important, and it is made according to the target population.

My questionnaire was distributed via the Internet through the Google forms site link that I sent through email and other social media sites.

It was also distributed via telephone for people that couldn't be reached via email, I couldn't do it manually because of the Covid-19 pandemic and the lockdown we are currently living in..

II- SAMPLE

The choice of the sample was made from previous surveys, I limited the choice to adults and young adults over the age of 18 years old , since their answers will be more relevant and informative than others.

Adults and young adults over the age of 18 constitute a big portion of social media users, the choice of the sample being 18 years and older came from the need to find potential customers and buyers who do their own purchasing.

The number of the sample is 100 people, and the survey was done worldwide, since the questionnaire was going to be distributed via Internet by the Google Forms site, I figured that more than a country would help me uncover more information and would give more value to the research

I could say that the administration of the questionnaire was not as easy as I expected, since some of the people I sent it to were reluctant to answer, others were not interested, and others answered it in a unprofessional matter.

III- ANALYSIS

DATA PREPARATION

Data preparation aims to turn raw data into a readable and more meaningful data, and it is the first step of data analyzing.

1- Data Validation

Data validation is a four steps process that aims to find out if the data collection was done as the pre-set standards and without any bias.

- Fraud :
I administered the questionnaire myself, and supervised its answering by being connected to Google forms at all times, so I can be sure that there was no fraud in the answers and that the questionnaire answering was made correctly.
- Screening:
The respondents were chosen as per the research criteria.
- Procedure:
The data collection procedure was duly followed and I supervised it myself to make sure.
- Completeness:
All the questions were asked to the respondents, those that were not answered were open questions or questions that won't change anything to the results of the questionnaire.

IV- LIMITATION

During this research, I have encountered several difficulties which have delayed my progress:

The most important is the time constraint; I had to manage my busy schedule between online courses and freelance gigs, without forgetting the fact that I have changed the subject in the last minute due to the pandemic circumstances.

The research was time consuming and I had to wait for questionnaire responses in order to finish and find results.

In addition, I had to be extremely careful with questionnaire administration, as the time period was not that convenient for everybody, not to forget how stressful the last months have been on people around the globe.

I know that as future leaders and entrepreneurs, we have to be able to work in all circumstances, but it was particularly hard to work on a research that is mainly about the future while not knowing much about the present.

Regarding the field investigation, the only constraint that I encountered was the delay of questionnaire answers, and no cooperation of some people who didn't take the survey seriously.

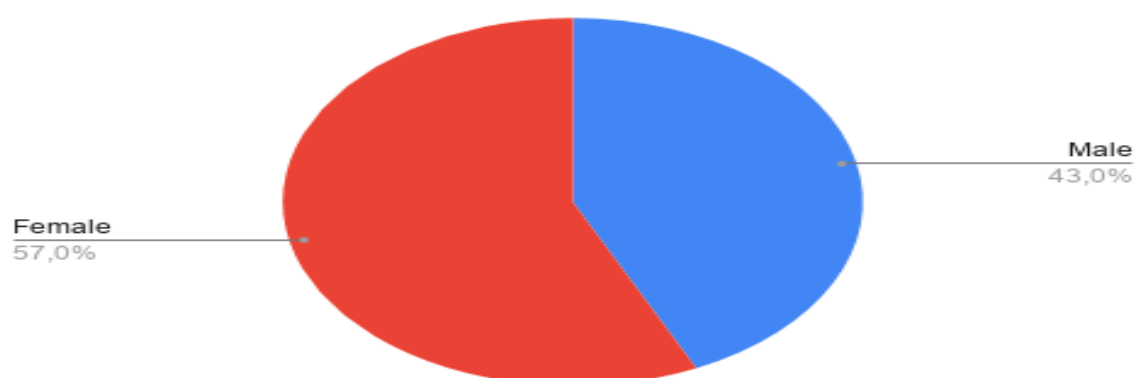
CHAPTER III: FINDINGS

QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

- **You are ?**

GENDER	Number
Male	43
Female	57
Total	100

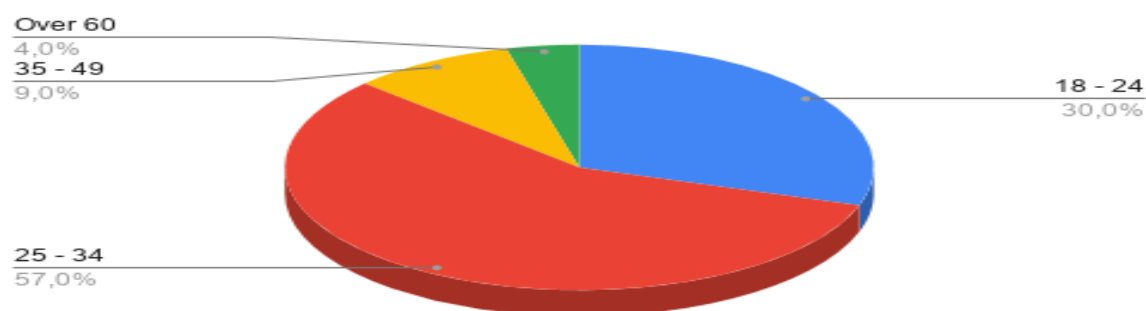
GENDER



- **Your age ?**

AGE RANGE	Number
18 - 24	30
25 - 34	57
35 - 49	9
Over 60	4
Total	100

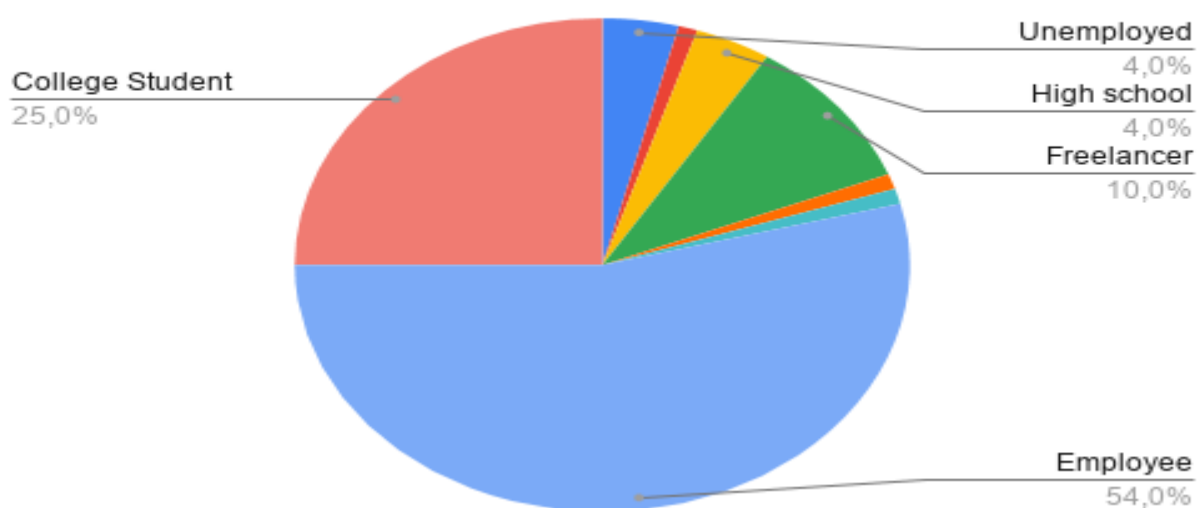
AGE



- **Your profession ?**

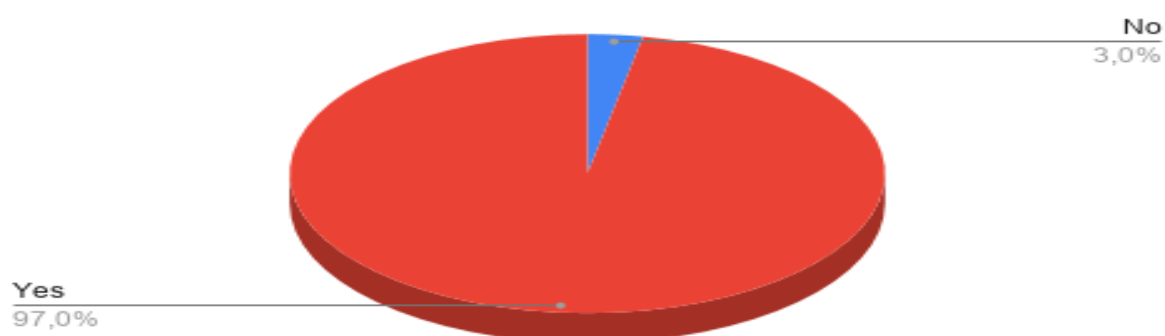
PROFESSION	Number
Unemployed	4
Trainee	1
High school student	4
Freelancer	10
Entrepreneur	1
Engineer	1
Employee	54
College Student	25
Total général	100

PROFESSION

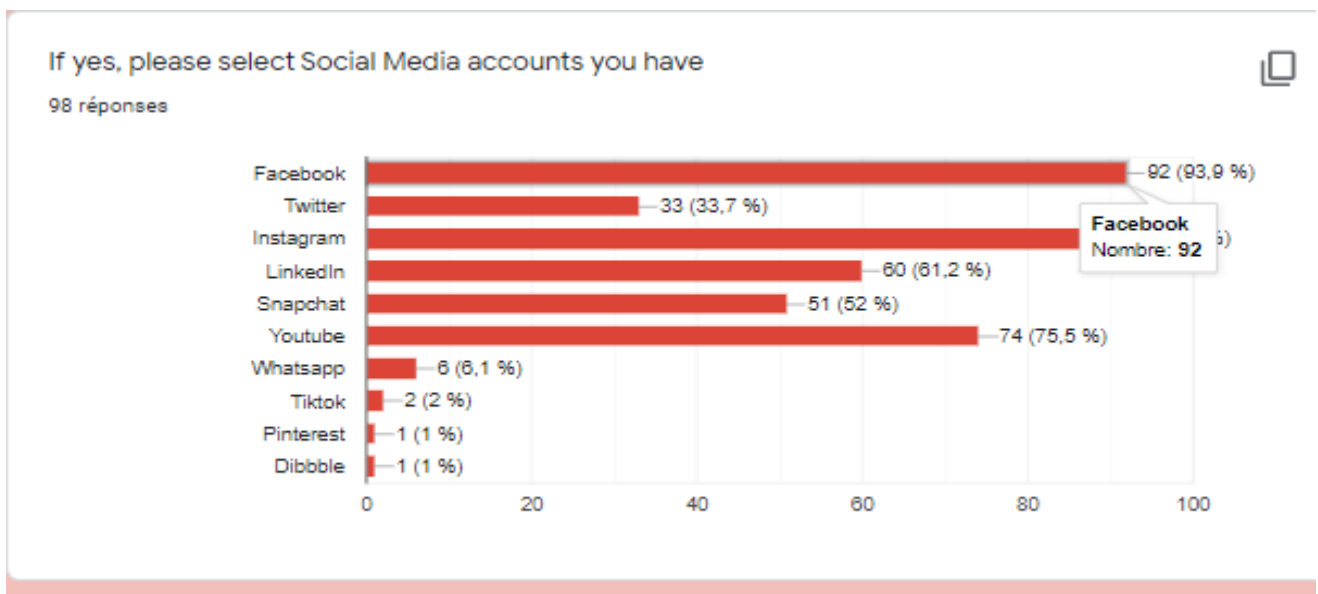


- **Do you have Social Media?**

SOCIAL MEDIA



- **If yes, please select Social Media accounts you have**



- **If no, can you tell us why?**



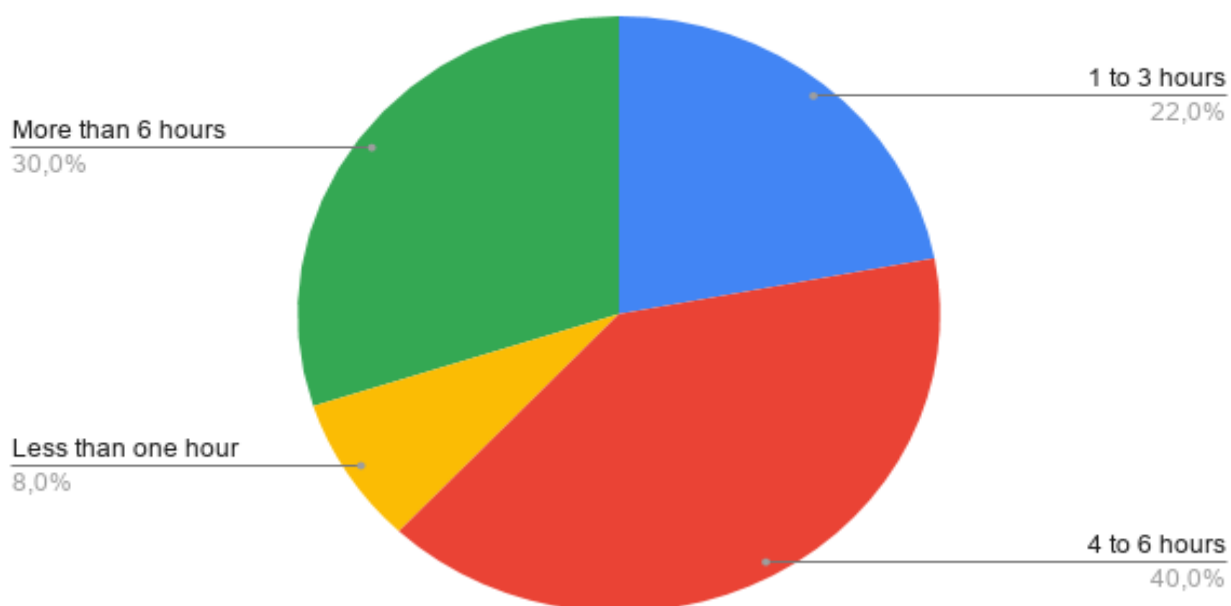
- **Why do you use Social Media?**

Why do you use Social Media	Percentage
I don't use	3,00%
Personal use	48,00%
Personal use, Professional use	49,00%
Total	100,00%

- **How many hours per day do you use on your phone?**

Hours spent on phone	Number
1 to 3 hours	22
4 to 6 hours	40
Less than one hour	8
More than 6 hours	30
Total	100

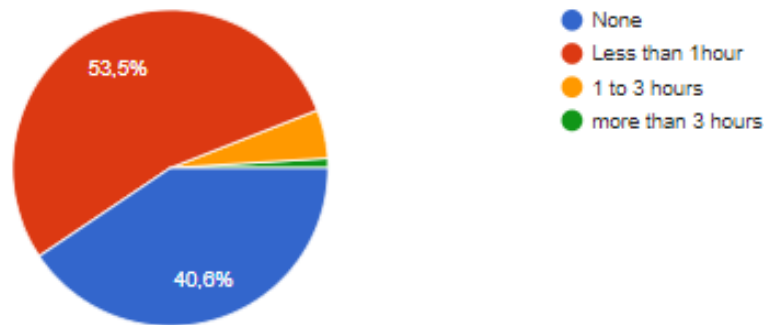
PHONE USE



- **How many hours per day you are on your Social Media?**

Hours spent on Social Media	Percentage
1 to 3 hours	36,00%
4 to 6 hours	37,00%
Less than 1hour	10,00%
More than 6 hours	13,00%
None	4,00%
Total	100,00%

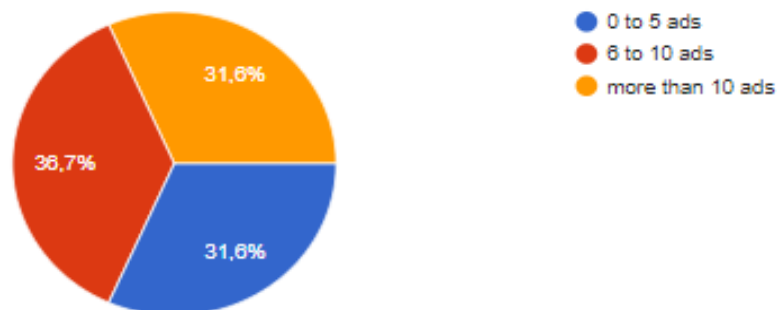
- **How many hours per day you spend online shopping?**



- **Can you give us some online shopping sites you visit frequently?**

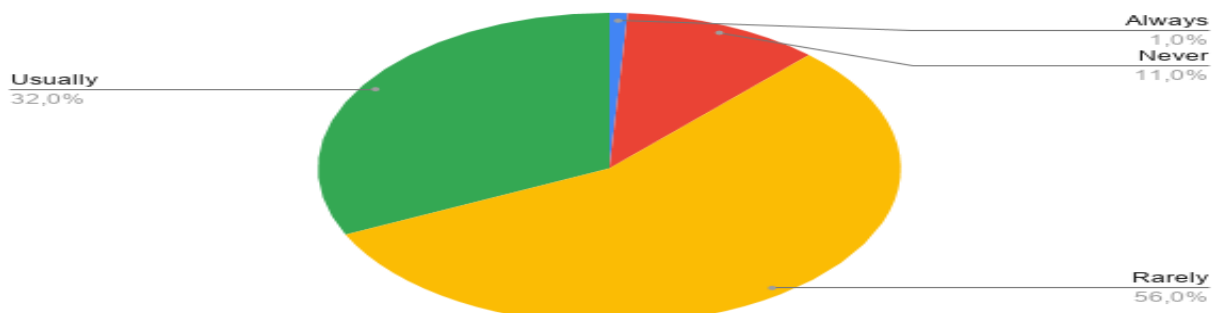
Amazon, Jumia.ma, Aliexpress, Shein, Showroomprivé.fr, Ebay, Asos, Zaful, Hudabeauty, Zara, Nike, Footlocker, Zalando, Iherb, lefties, Primark, Pull&Bear, Facebook Market, Instagram pages

- **How many ads (advertisements) do you encounter when using Social Media**

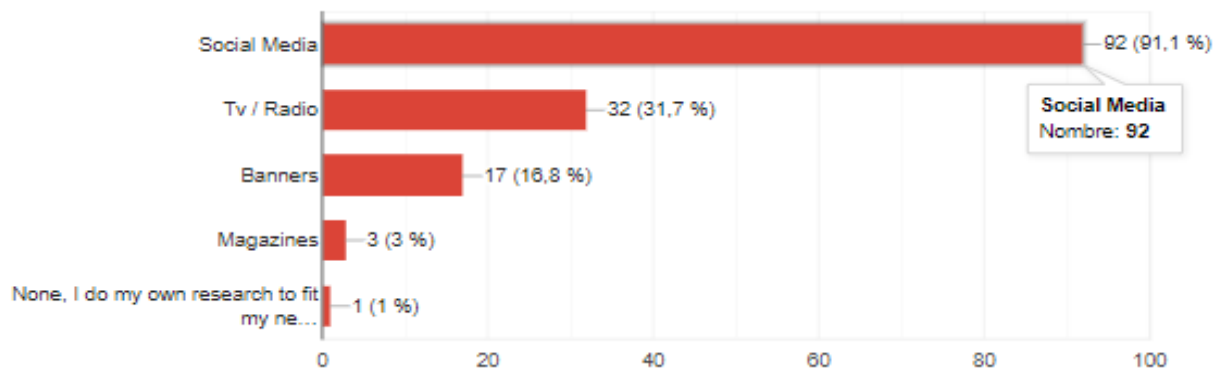


- **How frequently do you encounter ads that respond to your needs?**

FREQUENCY OF ENCOUNTERS WITH ADS RESPONDING TO NEEDS



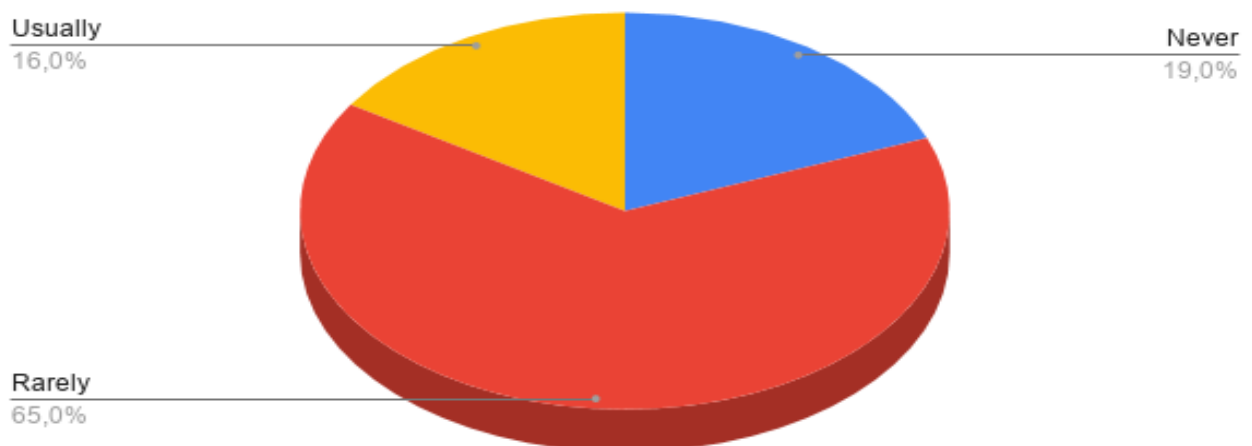
- **Where do you mostly find ads that respond to your needs?**



- **How often do you buy products shown on ads?**

How often do you buy products shown on ads?	Frequency
Never	19,00%
Rarely	65,00%
Usually	16,00%
Total	100,00%

FREQUENCY OF BUYING PRODUCTS SHOWN ON ADS



What encourages you to buy a product you've seen on social Media?

The need to buy it, the reviews

Price

If a product is advertised by a trusted individual that have tried it and are giving their honest opinion or recommendation then I would be interested in purchasing it.

Reviews

Needs

Brand, design and utility

Reviews

Delivery delay

i buy products either if i need them or i am impressed by it

You tubers

Feedbacks

Because i need it

Reviews

Perhaps the feedbacks of people who used it

Nothing, I just find it degrading

Price, feedback, review

It's quality and If it is a solution to a problem that I have.

Low price

Experience of others

Price, feedback, review

information

The brand

Needs

Quality. And desire

Opinions, seller credibilty

Les soldes

Price, feedback, review

The need/the price/reviews

feedback

low prices

The need/the price/reviews

The need, the price, the reviews

Price, review, feedback

Good feedback

The product itself and the way it's promoted

Curiosity

Customer's positive feedbacks

Reviews

Feedback, since I can't get access to it and know its quality, I rely mainly on feedback to see if its worth it or not

The need first, the prices, feedback, reviews, the quality, the brand name

Need, price, reviews

The feeds

The satisfaction to get what I worked for

Need, price, reviews

Look

I have to touch and see the product to trust it

Quality, reviews, price, need

Price

Sales / quality

Feedbacks

People's responses towards the product

It depends on whether I need it or not, the price and quality

Consumers feedback

The quality and need for it.

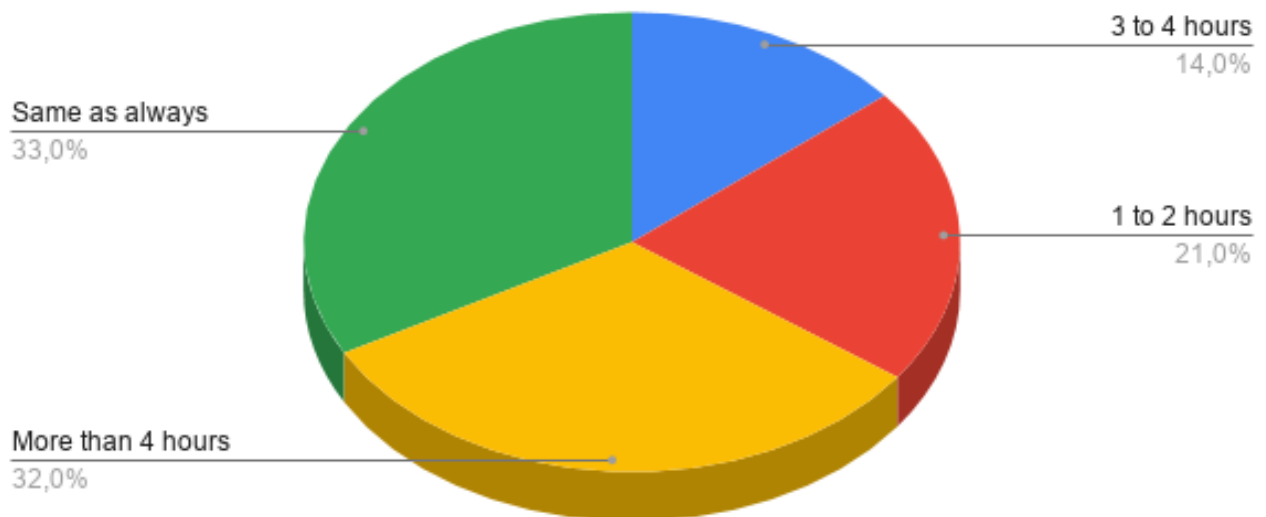
The comments/ the nowadays style beside me loving the item.

What discourages me is the I feel like it would not be as advertized

Other customers' feedback

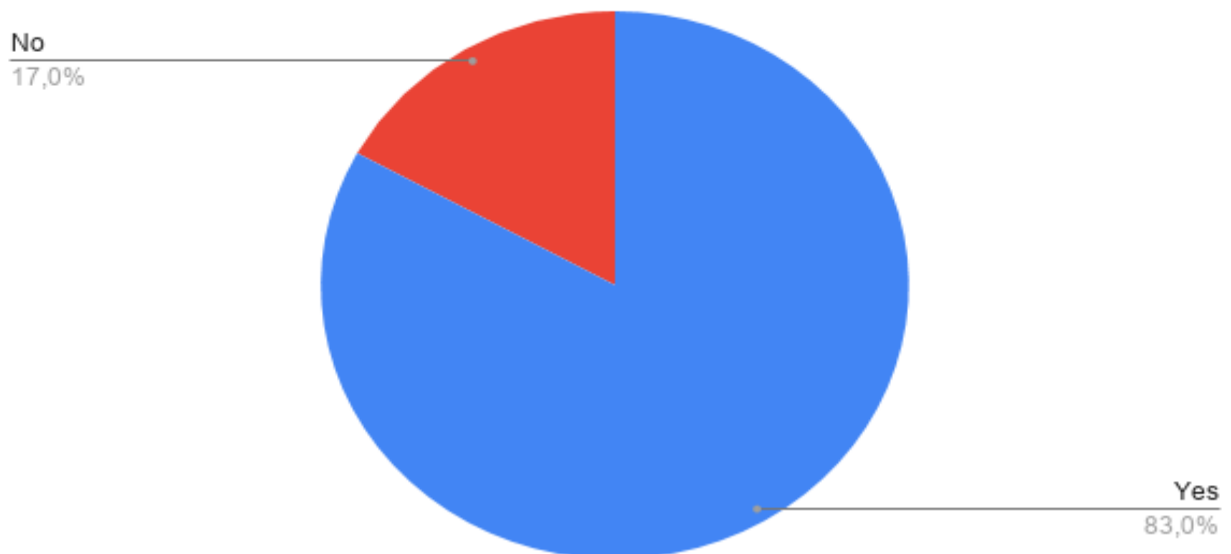
- **Ever since Covid-19 lockdown, how much more time do you spend on Social Media?**

Time spent on Social Media ever since Covid-19 lockdown



- **Do you think ads were adequate to this kind of crisis?**

Nombre de Do you think ads were adequate to this kind of crisis?



- **If not, can you tell us why?**

Random articles that doesn't the pandemic needs

We don't have money

Because all the shipments were stopped

they show shops that do delivery for either food or house supplies and even groceries

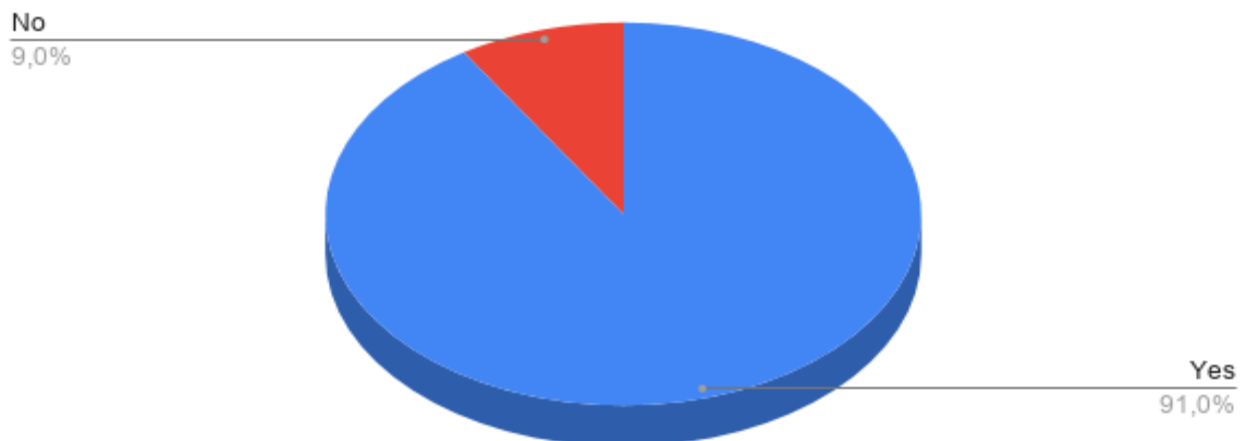
I see the same ads as usual

It's just not the right time to shop items you won't need

Some products are over priced ever since lockdown

- **Do you think companies' posts on Social Media were adequate to this kind of crisis?**

Do you think companies posts on Social Media were adequate to this kind of crisis?



- **If not, can you tell us why? and give us some examples?**

I sense that companies are trying to take advantage of our weaknesses

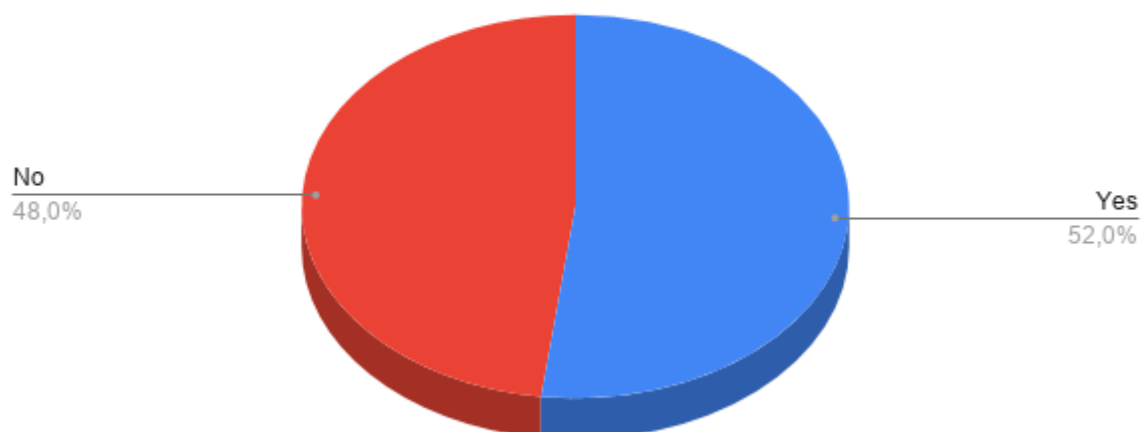
Depends on the content

The example of McDonald-Burgerking , LAND ROVER ..

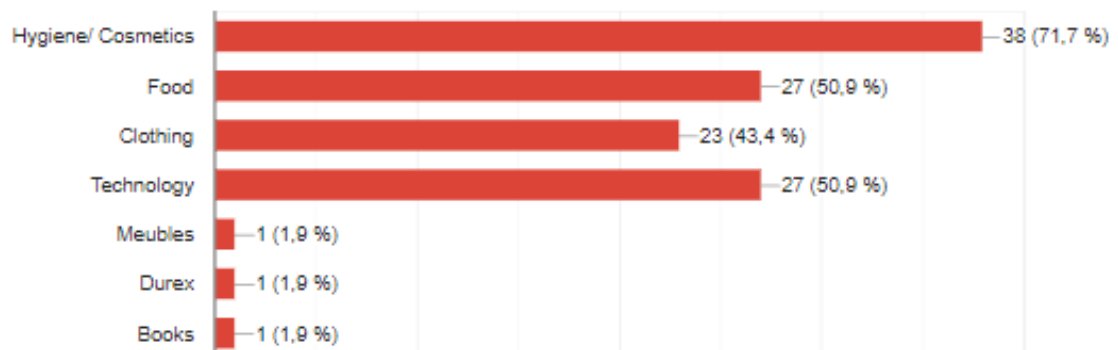
Companies tried to adapt it I think, because now we see Covid-19 everywhere

- **Have you made any online purchases ever since the lockdown started?**

Have you made any online purchases ever since the lockdown started?

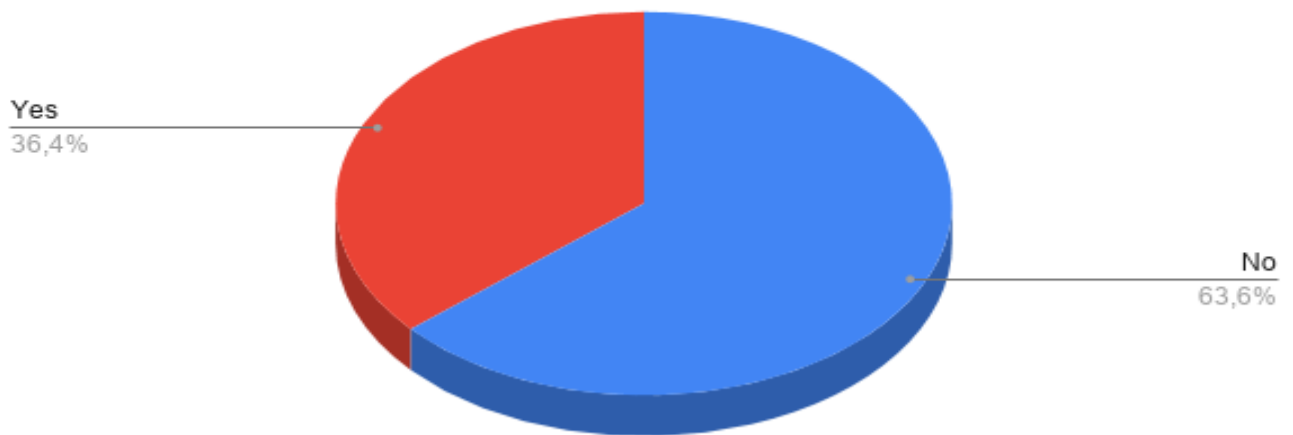


- **If yes, what kind of products have you purchased?**



- **Were any of your purchases been encouraged by Social Media ads?**

Were any of those purchases encouraged by Social Media ads?



- **If yes, can you name some brands?**

IKEA
Huda beauty
Yves Rocher , body shop , Amazon
Dyson, sony camera
Macadamia, natus
Samsung
Lws
Small retailer
farmasi
Jumiafood ad on instagram , a machine ad I saw on Facebook
Belkabir pastries on Facebook
Jumia food
Jumia , shein
Daniel wellington
Sushi Marrakech
I do all my purchases online since a long time ago, whenever I need something I look for it online
Nike , Apple , durex
Zalando
Protein gains/ sports wear

PIVOT TABLES

Profession and hours spent on Social Media

	How many hours per day you are on your Social Media?					
Your profession	1 to 3 hours	4 to 6 hours	Less than 1hour	More than 6 hours	None	Total
College Student	7,00%	12,00%	2,00%	4,00%		25,00%
Employee	22,00%	16,00%	7,00%	6,00%	3,00%	54,00%
Engineer	1,00%					1,00%
Entrepreneur			1,00%			1,00%
Freelancer	4,00%	5,00%			1,00%	10,00%
High school student	1,00%	3,00%				4,00%
Trainee		1,00%				1,00%
Unemployed	1,00%			3,00%		4,00%
Total	36,00%	37,00%	10,00%	13,00%	4,00%	100,00%

We can see from the Table above that the majority of people interviewed spend between 1 and 6 hours daily on Social Media.

The two most present segments are College students and Employees.

Age and hours spent on Social Media

	How many hours per day you are on your Social Media?					
Your age	1 to 3 hours	4 to 6 hours	Less than 1hour	More than 6 hours	None	Total
18 - 24	10,00%	13,00%	1,00%	5,00%	1,00%	30,00%
25 - 34	25,00%	20,00%	4,00%	8,00%		57,00%
35 - 49		4,00%	3,00%		2,00%	9,00%
Over 60	1,00%		2,00%		1,00%	4,00%
Total	36,00%	37,00%	10,00%	13,00%	4,00%	100,00%

From the table above, we can see that people who use Social media the most are people between the age of 25 and 34, and that people between the age of 18 and 34 use Social Media from 1 to 6 hours

Profession and Social Media use

	Why do you use Social Media			
Your profession	I don't use	Personal use	Personal use, Professional use	Total
College Student		14,00%	11,00%	25,00%
Employee	3,00%	22,00%	29,00%	54,00%
Engineer		1,00%		1,00%
Entrepreneur			1,00%	1,00%
Freelancer		4,00%	6,00%	10,00%
High school student		3,00%	1,00%	4,00%
Trainee		1,00%		1,00%
Unemployed		3,00%	1,00%	4,00%
Total	3,00%	48,00%	49,00%	100,00%

From the table above, we can see that people interviewed either use Social Media for personal use only, or use it for personal and professional use.

None of the people interviewed uses Social Media for professional use only.

29% of employees, which is the biggest segment we have, use Social Media for personal and professional use.

Age and Social Media use

	Why do you use Social Media			
Your age	I don't use	Personal use	Personal use, Professional use	Total
18 - 24		17,00%	13,00%	30,00%
25 - 34		23,00%	34,00%	57,00%
35 - 49	2,00%	5,00%	2,00%	9,00%
Over 60	1,00%	3,00%		4,00%
Total	3,00%	48,00%	49,00%	100,00%

From the table above we can see that our biggest segment; which is people between 25 and 34, use Social Media for both personal and professional use.

We can also see that people interviewed that are over 35 use social Media mainly for personal use.

Hours using phone and hours using Social Media

	How many hours per day you are on your Social Media?					
How many hours per day do you use your phone?	1 to 3 hours	4 to 6 hours	Less than 1hour	More than 6 hours	None	Total
1 to 3 hours	15,00%		5,00%		2,00%	22,00%
4 to 6 hours	15,00%	25,00%				40,00%
Less than one hour	2,00%		4,00%		2,00%	8,00%
More than 6 hours	4,00%	12,00%	1,00%	13,00%		30,00%
Total	36,00%	37,00%	10,00%	13,00%	4,00%	100,00%

From the table above, we can see that the majority spends from 4 to 6 hours and more on their phone, while they use it for Social Media from 1 to 6 hours.

Hours using phone and hours online shopping

	How many hours per day do you spend on online shopping?				
How many hours per day do you use your phone?	1 to 3 hours	Less than 1hour	more than 3 hours	None	Total
1 to 3 hours	1,00%	12,00%		9,00%	22,00%
4 to 6 hours	2,00%	26,00%		12,00%	40,00%
Less than one hour		1,00%		7,00%	8,00%
More than 6 hours	2,00%	14,00%	1,00%	13,00%	30,00%
Total	5,00%	53,00%	1,00%	41,00%	100,00%

From the table above we can see that 70% of the people interviewed use their phones between 4 and more hours per day and the majority of them spend less than one hour or nothing on online shopping.

Hours on Social Media and Ads encounters

	How many ads (advertisements) do you encounter while using Social Media			
How many hours per day you are on your Social Media?	0 to 5 ads	6 to 10 ads	more than 10 ads	Total
1 to 3 hours	11,00%	12,00%	13,00%	36,00%
4 to 6 hours	8,00%	16,00%	13,00%	37,00%
Less than 1hour	6,00%	3,00%	1,00%	10,00%
More than 6 hours	5,00%	5,00%	3,00%	13,00%
None	4,00%			4,00%
Total	34,00%	36,00%	30,00%	100,00%

From the table above, we can see that Social Media use frequency can be related to how much ads the users encounter, 13% of the interviewees spend between 4 to 6 hours and encounter more than 10 ads.

Profession and frequency of purchases of products shown on ads

	How often do you buy products shown on ads?			
Your profession	Never	Rarely	Usually	Total général
College Student	9,00%	15,00%	1,00%	25,00%
Employee	6,00%	38,00%	10,00%	54,00%
Engineer		1,00%		1,00%
Entrepreneur		1,00%		1,00%
Freelancer	2,00%	4,00%	4,00%	10,00%
High school student	1,00%	2,00%	1,00%	4,00%
Trainee		1,00%		1,00%
Unemployed	1,00%	3,00%		4,00%
Total général	19,00%	65,00%	16,00%	100,00%

From the table above, we can see that 65% of people we interviewed rarely make purchases based on Social Media ads, only a small proportion of the population are used to online purchases and 10% of them are employees.

Age and frequency of purchases based on Social Media ads

	<i>How often do you buy products shown on ads?</i>			
<i>Your age</i>	Never	Rarely	Usually	Total
18 - 24	7,00%	19,00%	4,00%	30,00%
25 - 34	11,00%	38,00%	8,00%	57,00%
35 - 49	1,00%	5,00%	3,00%	9,00%
Over 60		3,00%	1,00%	4,00%
Total	19,00%	65,00%	16,00%	100,00%

From the table above, we can see that age doesn't affect the frequency, as mentioned earlier; the interviewees are not frequent online purchasers.

Covid-19 Lockdown and online purchases

	<i>Ever since Covid-19 lockdown, how much more time do you spend on Social Media?</i>				
<i>Have you made any online purchases ever since the lockdown started?</i>	1 to 2 hours	3 to 4 hours	More than 4 hours	Same as always	Total général
No	8,00%	7,00%	12,00%	21,00%	48,00%
Yes	13,00%	7,00%	20,00%	12,00%	52,00%
Total général	21,00%	14,00%	32,00%	33,00%	100,00%

52% of the people interviewed made online purchases, 20% of those people's use of Social Media has increased by 4 or more hours since the beginning of lockdown.

There may be a correlation between lockdown and social media use which caused an increase in online purchasing.

CHAPTER IV: DISCUSSION

INTERPRETATIONS:

The results of my research includes that the majority of people interviewed use Social Media and have more than one Social Media platforms (Facebook and Youtube were very prominent in the results).

The most present segments were people between 25 and 34 and employees and college students.

People interviewed use their phones for between 4 hours and 6 hours and more daily, they use this time mostly on Social Media, while they spend less than one hour in online shopping.

The results showed that the more people use Social Media, the more they are likely to stumble across ads.

The results also show that the people interviewed rarely buy products shown on ads, for so many reasons, but mainly because they lack trust in products in Social Media.

The results show that Covid-19 lockdown has increased Social Media use, and online purchases.

Most of purchases made by interviewees were Cosmetics and Hygiene products.

91% of the people interviewed think that ads were adequate to the crisis, while the others felt that some companies sounded like they are taking advantage of it to sell more, one interviewee even said that some products are over-priced.

IMPLICATIONS:

The study further proved the points stated in the literature review as of frequency of Social Media use and the age segment was accurate.

The experiment provides a new insight on the correlation between a global crisis and the increase of online purchasing and social Media use. Although customers are skeptical, they had to do online purchases due to the crisis, but what made their purchasing decisions wasn't entirely ads but other factors such as reviews and price, and mostly the actual need for the product.

The data contributes to the theory that no matter how many ads Social Media might encounter while using platforms, it's never enough to make them make the purchasing decision.

The ads might play a counter productive role for companies, as the more users encounter ads on Social Media, the more they are likely to not care about the content.

This implicates that companies should focus on the overall product and feedbacks and their Social Media notoriety in order for their ads to be effective.

This opens the discussion about the reason why people still don't trust online purchasing as a trustworthy form of purchasing.

Another question that should be asked is why people overlook ads.

Limitations:

Some results were inconclusive for methodological choices and some missing questions that would've been crucial to the research.

The sample size was limited and didn't give a clear image of the population the study aimed to research.

Some data had to be rewritten due to the unprofessionalism of some interviewees, as the questionnaire was not administered face to face, but by email and Instagram.

RECOMMENDATION:

It's better if further research would take into consideration the use of a bigger sample to have conclusive results.

Researchers could care to use language that interviewees would understand in order to have better results.

To study a crisis as big as COVID-19, a lot of time should be spared in order to have all information possible.

CONCLUSION

Social media was created to help people maintain connections, network, and obtain information. Most people have one or more accounts on social media platforms.

Social media allows people to interact with online communities, and share ideas and thoughts with them.

Social Media has taken a huge part of people's lives and time, it has become so grown in popularity that most of us can't imagine the world without it.

As Social Media made people connected by making communications easier, it has also impacted companies on many levels.

The including of Social Media in companies' Marketing and communication strategies has become a must in such a competitive market, because of the huge change Social media has made in costumers behavior. Consumers can now have more power over companies because of Social Media and the power it gave them, they can speak up about brands and show what they think about them.

As much as Social Media can be filling the gap between companies and customers by making them closer than before, and strengthening the bond, it can also break that bond if the companies don't use their Social Media in the right way.

“Social media allows big companies to act small again” – Jay Baer

“If you make customers unhappy in the physical world, they might each tell 6 friends. If you make customers unhappy on the Internet, they can each tell 6,000 friends.” – Jeff Bezos

“Word-of-mouth marketing isn’t about giving customers talking points, as if they were brand spokespeople. It’s about delivering an exceptional customer experience that makes customers want to recommend you.” – Deborah Eastman

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