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Digital Marketing through social Media for Start Up Fashion companies

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Μεταπτυχιακό Πρόγραμμα Σπουδών

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Η παρούσα μεταπτυχιακή διατριβή υποβλήθηκε προς μερική εκπλήρωση των απαιτήσεων για απόκτηση μεταπτυχιακού τίτλου σπουδών

Στη Διοίκηση Επιχειρήσεων

από τη Σχολή Οικονομικών Επιστημών και Διοίκησης
του Ανοικτού Πανεπιστημίου Κύπρου.

Summary:

Social media channels started in the early 2000s and since then their production has been growing at exponential rates to enhance and satisfy existing and new needs of the users. Recent data showed that within 2019 two thirds world population were using internet and at least 3.5 billion people used a social media platform that is one in every three people in the world (Esteban Ortiz-Ospina, 2019). There's no denying that social media plays an integral role in today's society, but now how these platforms engage, and influence users is changing.

The rapid development of social media applications and their enormous use; allowed individuals to consider themselves as active content creators in social media networks. Many changes deriving by the evolvement of innovative marketing trends, such as Social Commerce, that are incurring in the business environment, highlight several advancements in this new technological era.

The purpose of the project was to analyze and provide a better understanding on how Small and Medium sized enterprises (SMEs) should utilize Social Commerce and more generally Social Media to help them grow and stand out among others. Also, the study intended to analyze the consumer behavior with respect the online purchasing to identify any issues of the marketing technique.

In addition, the study investigated the hypotheses of credible information offered via social media and their views as trustworthy and in a positive way; how deals and offers are made through social media and how trust is perceived and how it affects consumers' behavior in the online context. In order to examine all the above a quantitative survey was conducted in order to draw results on perceptions of users around Social Media. The results of this survey that were collected using Google Forms and Microsoft Excel and analyzed with the use of SPSS present the relationship of the social factors that influence consumer behaviors.

In general, the results showed a positive attitude towards brand communication and its performance as well as the positive comments on incentives offered on social

media and at the same time a distrust to the validity of the sales deals offered on social media as well as the credibility of social's media advertisements.

Implications and recommendations for future research are also mentioned and discussed.

Περίληψη

Τα μέσα κοινωνικής δικτύωσης ξεκίνησαν στις αρχές της δεκαετίας του 2000 και έκτοτε η παραγωγή τους αυξάνεται με εκθετικούς ρυθμούς για να ενισχύσει και να ικανοποιήσει τις υπάρχουσες και νέες ανάγκες των χρηστών. Πρόσφατα στοιχεία έδειξαν ότι μέσα στο 2019 τα δύο τρίτα του παγκόσμιου πληθυσμού υπήρξαν ενεργοί χρήστες του Διαδικτύου ενώ τουλάχιστον 3,5 δισεκατομμύρια άνθρωποι χρησιμοποίησαν μια πλατφόρμα κοινωνικών μέσων που μεταφράζεται σε ένα στα τρία άτομα ανά το κόσμο σύμφωνα με τον τότε αριθμό πληθυσμού του κόσμου (Esteban Ortiz-Ospina, 2019).

Δεν υπάρχει αμφιβολία ότι τα κοινωνικά μέσα διαδραματίζουν αναπόσπαστο ρόλο στη σημερινή κοινωνία, αλλά τώρα πώς οι πλατφόρμες αυτές εμπλέκονται και επηρεάζουν τους χρήστες αλλάζει. Η ταχεία ανάπτυξη εφαρμογών κοινωνικών μέσων και η τεράστια χρήση τους, επέτρεψε σε άτομα να θεωρούν τον εαυτό τους ως ενεργό δημιουργό περιεχομένου σε δίκτυα κοινωνικών μέσων. Πολλές αλλαγές που προκύπτουν από την εξέλιξη των καινοτόμων τάσεων μάρκετινγκ, όπως το Κοινωνικό Εμπόριο, που συμβαίνουν στο επιχειρηματικό περιβάλλον, επισημαίνουν πολλές εξελίξεις σε αυτήν τη νέα τεχνολογική εποχή.

Ο σκοπός της έρευνας ήταν η ανάλυση και η καλύτερη κατανόηση του τρόπου με τον οποίο οι μικρές και μεσαίες επιχειρήσεις (ΜΜΕ) πρέπει να χρησιμοποιούν το Κοινωνικό Εμπόριο και γενικότερα τα Κοινωνικά Μέσα για να τους βοηθήσουν να αναπτυχθούν και να ξεχωρίσουν μεταξύ άλλων. Επίσης, η μελέτη αποσκοπούσε στην ανάλυση της συμπεριφοράς των καταναλωτών σε σχέση με την ηλεκτρονική αγορά για τον εντοπισμό τυχόν ζητημάτων της τεχνικής μάρκετινγκ.

Επιπλέον, η μελέτη διερεύνησε την υπόθεση α. των αξιόπιστων πληροφοριών που προσφέρονται μέσω των κοινωνικών μέσων μαζικής ενημέρωσης και πως εκλαμβάνονται (θετικά ή αρνητικά, σαν αξιόπιστες ή αναξιόπιστες πληροφορίες) β. πώς γίνονται συμφωνίες και προσφορές μέσω των μέσων κοινωνικής δικτύωσης και γ. πώς εκλαμβάνεται η εμπιστοσύνη και πώς επηρεάζει τη συμπεριφορά των καταναλωτών στο διαδικτυακό πλαίσιο. Προκειμένου να εξεταστεί η προτεινόμενη

υπόθεση, διεξήχθη μια ποσοτική έρευνα για να αντληθούν αποτελέσματα από τις αντιλήψεις των χρηστών γύρω από τα μέσα κοινωνικής δικτύωσης. Τα δεδομένα τα οποία αντλήθηκαν με τη χρήση του Google Forms και αναλύθηκαν με τη χρήση του SPSS παρουσιάζουν μια εικόνα της σχέσης των κοινωνικών παραγόντων που επηρεάζουν τη συμπεριφορά των καταναλωτών.

Γενικά, τα αποτελέσματα έδειξαν μια θετική στάση απέναντι στην επικοινωνία της επωνυμίας και την απόδοσή της, καθώς και τα θετικά σχόλια σχετικά με τα κίνητρα που προσφέρονται στα κοινωνικά μέσα και ταυτόχρονα μια δυσπιστία για οποιαδήποτε διαφήμιση και πληροφορίες στα κοινωνικά μέσα.

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Chapter I

1.1 Introduction

This study aimed to examine whether and how digital marketing is being affected using the many social media applications and/or platforms currently available. More specifically this study objected to show, if and how start up fashion companies can be, either encouraged or discouraged, by the usage of the digital world, with an emphasis on the online purchases.

In view of the rapid evolvement and heavy usage of the Internet nowadays, nearly all industries feel the need to offer and promote their services and products online. Because of this, the market environment has become more competitive, affecting all products and services provided by industries. Also, as already mentioned customer online experience changed too!

In the past, users would browse through social media, click on something they liked, and in order to proceed into purchasing actions they had to leave the platform and visit the shop's website. Now, the purchase journey has become more refined and users can make purchases directly on their newsfeeds. This change in the checkout process is also known as social commerce that gain lots of attention from the marketers as it also provides the opportunity to build a relationship-based interaction with customers could not do previously (Forbes, 2014).

Being able to obtain an online's customer opinion provides a good inside to what is expected and needed from a brand compared to similar products or services.

Online word-of-mouth has now become an alternative source of gathering information, increasing consumers awareness and making them more independent when it comes to false marketing promises. Word of mouth (WOM) – interpersonal communication about products and services between consumers is considered to be one of the most influential sources of marketplace information for consumers (Mohr, 2013), thus, the wide distribution of any information brings people to a common

domain, allowing the exchange of views (Forbes, 2014).

According to statistical data by the European Union statistical office published in 2016, companies employing more than 10 people are likely to own a website (78%), possibly use social media (45%) and might utilize online advertisement (25%) (Eurostat, 2016).

In 2017 the same office presented a lower percentage of social media users (14%) from enterprises of the same manpower (Eurostat, 2018) (Appendix A).

In 2019 statistics from again the same office for the same employee size companies showed an increase in the usage of social networks to 47% that is not much greater to the percentage reported back in 2016 whereas; three quarters or 75% of EU enterprises employing 250 or more people stated having an account and used some kind of social networks (Eurostat, 2020).

Taking into consideration the above-mentioned statistics, it is interesting to further examine why certain enterprises have a low percentage of usage of the digital marketing and of the social media marketing as a tool for effective and direct marketing as nowadays nearly everyone uses the Internet for any purpose possible.

Since the Internet is an open communication system, as well as an interactive medium that does not have any boundaries, it provides a lot of opportunities that marketers should be smart and brave enough to embrace. Anything that can give a customer voice is a tool to any marketer. Blogs, social networks, online discussion pages and any other online media platform is a powerful insight into the consumers perception of a product, service or brand and allows the business to collaborate with them as the customer is now being considered as an active participant with an opinion and strong views that demands to be heard and considered.

“Digital marketing can be simply defined as: Achieving marketing objectives through applying digital technologies” (Chaffey et al., 2012, p.10).

1.2. Dissertation Purpose

Small and medium sized enterprises, mainly start-up fashion companies, often do not have proper knowledge in regards to an up to date business model that is being directly affected by the Internet and more specifically by the Social Media Networks. Although, as mentioned earlier, some countries in the European Union already use social media, many are still not taking advantage of them yet (E.A. Mack et al. 2017).

This quantitative study aimed to examine how users perceive this marketing technique in an already established environment and how they might be affected. Moreover, an examination of demographic characteristics, such as age and gender was performed in order to find out if those affect these attitudes and to compare with the questions (1) if credible information is offered via social media and if they are viewed positively (2) how deals and offers are made through social media and (3) how trust is perceived and how it affects consumers.

1.3 Literature Review

1.3.1 E-commerce

This study will be emphasizing on the marketing aspects. More specifically, the concepts of electronic commerce (e-commerce) and electronic marketing (e-marketing) will be discussed, along with ways or proposals on how promotions could be made through social media and applications in a way that will benefit the enterprises involved.

It is suggested that social media platforms aid e-commerce businesses expand their reach and establish a cognizable brand identity. Social media platforms might affect positively sales and pave the buyers journey either by directing consumers to the retailer's online stores or by enabling the purchase of items directly from the retailer's social media pages (Ecommerce guide, 2019).

E-commerce is the use of electronic communications and digital information processing technology in business transactions to create, transform, and redefine relationships for value creation between or among organizations, and between organizations and individuals (C. Nisha and G. Sangeeta, 2012).

The main types of electronic commerce are: business-to-business (B2B); business-to-consumer (B2C); business-to-government (B2G); consumer-to-consumer (C2C); and mobile commerce (mcommerce) (C. Nisha and G. Sangeeta, 2012, Chaffey, 2009, p.11, Zheng & Qin, 2009, p.7).

When a company is thinking of expanding globally with the use of new technology tools to generate revenue, empower customers and provide support to customers, then it is important to be decided to which model the business could fit into. In terms of transaction categories, e-commerce falls into five groups: business to business (B2B), business to customers (B2C), business to governments (B2G), governments to governments (G2G), and customers to customers (C2C) (Zheng & Qin, 2009, p.25). The massive growth of e-commerce combined with the popularity of online social

networks is having a profound impact on the global economy. "Social commerce is the application of Web 2.0 features, such as content generation tools, for the enhancement of users' interactions in e-commerce. Thus, social commerce is a subset of e-commerce that involves using social media to assist in e-commerce transactions and activities" (Elizabeth A. M et al., 2017; Hajli et al., 2016; Constantinides & Fountain, 2008).

The creation of social commerce by selling and buying both products and information, through online markets were used as a concept for this study. It was important for this study to use e-commerce and more specifically social commerce as part of the theoretical framework; the examination of such elements made the investigation of their actual application in the market really interesting. In addition, the study examined the consumer buying decision process. A process of buying begins to form in the minds of the consumers, which leads to the need of finding alternatives between products that can be acquired with their relative advantages and disadvantages (Elizabeth A. M et al., 2017; Khan & Matin, 2006, p.4). The difference between social commerce and e-commerce is that the former involves communities and conversation among members, whilst the latter mainly focus on individuals and one-to-one interactions to create value. Social Media such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, provide people with a network connectivity, which enables their participation in online marketing and sales activities (Hajli et al., 2016). As recognized by Li and Ku (2017), social commerce has shifted the online shopping environment from one that used to be business oriented, to one being user oriented. The users in social commerce have the power to influence the buying behavior of others by word of mouth, recommendation and transfer of knowledge on the social network (Li et al., 2013). When users make decisions, they regard the potential of a specific social application to create or maintain their social relationships as an important factor (Li et al., 2013, p.28).

The growth of social media and the related possibilities of any large-scale consumer-to-consumer interaction and easy user-generation of content, highlight the importance of recognizing, and if possible managing, the multi-vocal nature of brand

authorship advocated by the cultural branding view (S. Gensler et al, 2013). Social media has given the opportunity to potential customers of any brand and enterprise to browse their available products either by looking for something in particular or by just browsing in general. They then visit their website and, sometimes, proceed to a purchase from their online store. Consumers, who are now empowered to share their brand stories easily and widely through social networks, have gained a more important voice; a voice that brand managers can no longer afford to ignore — even for firms that decide not to actively participate in social media themselves (S. Gensler et al, 2013).

Relative to this study, the aim was to examine if customers are influenced while using any social media applications, or platforms and whether they proceed to online purchases when they come across something that looks interesting and attractive to them.

The finding upon the examination of the decision-making process, could help online retailers to get a better understanding of how their online shoppers can switch their buying behaviors as well as to motivate them to start having social interactions that will turn into increasing their sales and profits. Furthermore, this could help organizations when developing their marketing strategies to have a better understanding when indicating potential buyers and how to approach each target group using social commerce.

1.3.2. Online branding

While digital marketing is on the rise, brand advertisers are seeking ways to better connect with consumers in getting feedback and sharing their experiences. Many industries seize the opportunity to grow using e-commerce and digital marketing.

The fashion industry is definitely one of them one of them although, such tasks was unlikely to be successful in the early days of e-commerce for fashion companies due to the need to touch and try-on clothes and the social experience associated with clothes shopping for women (Creator, 2018, Rowley J., 2009).

Recent studies have investigated the possibility of benefiting from consumer-

generated ads (Gensler et al., 2013).

Many existing factors affect the decision of consumers on whether to purchase fashion via online platforms. Those factors can be classified into four categories: consumer risk, customer service, product understanding and shopping experience. The most important factors deriving out of these four categories are recognized to be consumer risk and product understanding. When it comes to online shopping, consumer risk seems to affect consumers in the way that makes them doubt about security and privacy. High visibility of consumption should make brands more susceptible to social media, because of the public nature of the consumption process, which consequently, is affected by the consumers' high purchase decision involvement. On the other hand, product understanding usually includes proper understanding of the quality and material of the product along with price, variety and cost. Marketing literature also suggests that consumer beliefs, attitudes and behaviors tend to be influenced by their social interactions with others when making purchase decisions (Elizabeth A. M et al., 2017; Lu et al., 2015, Rowley J., 2009).

Although studies have shown that e-commerce has grown around Europe (as already mentioned in this study above) with many consumers feeling more confident nowadays on shopping online, this study will also examine consumer-seller interaction, how this can be positively affected by social support and how customers can get engaged in brand- value activities within social commerce.

The raised hypothesis deriving from the above literature is

H1. How is brand communication communicated to users and perceived.

1.3.3. Brand Authenticity

Deriving from the Greek word “authentikós”, authenticity means, “being true to oneself”. While trying to identify and conceptualize brand authenticity, a variety of definitions arise in the researching process. If we were to categorize authenticity in different contexts we can see that, in philosophy it is being referred as to someone who struggles to remain true to one’s essence, whereas in psychology it is being

referred as to someone's tendency to live life without compromises as guided by their inner being (Akbar & Wymer, 2017). In general terms, brand authenticity can be defined as "the perceive genuineness of a brand as manifested in its stability and consistency (i.e. continuity), uniqueness (i.e. originality), ability to keep its promises (i.e. reliability) and unaffectedness (i.e. naturalness)" (Athwal & Harris, 2018). Authenticity can be considered as a "benchmarking" technique, and something that is worth adopting by all organizations: "In particular, authenticity serves as evidence of quality and differentiation for consumers" (Fritz et al., 2017).

Fritz et al. also mentioned two types of authenticity when customers access it; indexical authenticity and iconic authenticity. "Indexical authenticity- distinguishes the 'real thing' from its copies thus, iconic authenticity is the result of the consumers' feeling and imagination rather than evaluation based on evidence" (Fritz et al., 2017). A study conducted by Eggers et al. showed that brand consistency and brand congruency are primary for brand authenticity, which impacts the brand trust (Eggers et al., 2013).

While a vast variety of brands exist, consumers choose only to engage with only a few of them. Brand engagement in self-concept (BESC) is an individual difference variable, which facilitates to distinguish to what extents brands are being used by consumers when needs are to be met. Consumers with high BESC are more likely to perceive authentic brands in order to create a sense of belonging.

When authenticity lies in the social world, a variety of external forces and social pressures have an impact on a personal level; thus, any personal identity is affected. Taking into consideration this fact, a person who is true to his or her identity and is not being corrupted by others, is authentic. Identity-based brand management consists of both brand image and brand identity. Brand image is considered to be the external view of any brand. It also refers to the perception of target groups in regards to the brand whether that is a judgment or an approval. Brand identity is how employees and executives of a brand attribute to its essence (Schallehn et al., 2014). Combining those two, brand managers should implement an approach where brand values, mission and norms should be endorsed along with any communication

activities (Fritz et al., 2017).

Akbar and Wymer have stated that Brand Authenticity (BA) is a multidimensional construct (2017). As found in literature (Akbar & Wymer, 2017), clusters were created in order to define in an easier way the dimensions of BA. The first cluster, states that each brand should have a heritage in order to be considered as authentic. The second cluster is honesty, where a brand is perceived to be honest by both itself and the customers. The third cluster is identified to be the admirability of the brand where focus is being paid beyond the success of the brand. The fourth cluster is commitment to quality and excellence, while brand uniqueness (i.e. originality) is identified to be the fifth cluster. The sixth cluster is any denote of a customer negotiating a brand meaning. The seventh cluster refers to how genuine a brand is (i.e. Naturalness), while brand commitment to preserve congruency and consistency is referred as the eighth cluster.

Lastly, the ninth cluster is being the category pioneer is considered as a necessity of a brands' authenticity (Akbar & Wymer, 2017).

Concluding, brands considered to be authentic are the ones who are perceived by customers as trustworthy, genuine and meaningful.

1.3.4. Trust

Trust is defined as "a willingness to rely on an exchange partner in whom one has confidence" (Tajvidi et al., 2017). Lu et al, expanding on the importance of trust on e-commerce stated that "Trust is often considered as the foundation of e-commerce and the most crucial factor for the success of e-commerce" (Lu et al., 2015).

As mentioned earlier, consumer risk seems to affect online purchasing. One of the main risks is trusting the Internet to have ones personal data and especially personal financial information.

Two of the most important impacts on trust whilst using social commerce platforms or even e-commerce platforms can be "The lack of face-to-face interactions could result in customers' suspicion of truthfulness in online exchanges and the paucity of

knowledge about the e-vendor could further heighten the adverse influence of risk in online shopping” (Hajli et al., 2016) and “Privacy concerns are derived from SNSs, where information may be collected, disclosed, and used without their consent. Such concerns have negative effects, such a less willingness to disclose personal information, decreasing intentions to use online services, and lower levels of trust” (Tajvidi et al., 2018).

If social norms share positive signals (i.e. positive WOM) and good comments and experiences towards the rest of the social cue, then other buyers will feel more confident in relation to the seller’s ability and integrity. The more people responding and perceiving shopping services through social networking sites as useful and easy to use, the more people they influence towards the same behavior, not necessarily by the same one. “Within social media, there is a need for trust mechanisms to make it possible for two parties to reduce their transactional perceive risks” (Tajvidi et al., 2018).

Accordingly, the research is aimed to examine:

H2. Trust in online sellers and advertising made on Social Media platforms

1.3.5. Social Commerce

Many definitions have been proposed in explaining the meaning of social commerce.

While the term of Social Commerce (SC) was first coined by Yahoo in 2005 to denote online places where people can share experiences, get advices from one another, find goods and services and then purchase them (Mardsen, 2010), some others can view it as a new evolution of e-commerce (Benyoucef & Huang, 2013). Another definition is that social commerce is considered to be a subset of e-commerce that involves using social technologies to assist e-commerce transactions and activities (Yadav et al., 2013). A recent study thought indicates social commerce’s intention “as the degree to which a user is willing to share and request commercial information on social networking sites” (Ko, 2018, Youcef Baghdadi, 2013).

Two types of social commerce were derived from literature findings. The first type is based on e-commerce that is used to enhance customers' content generation and the interactivity among them. "This type of social commerce limits interactions among customers to posting comments on other customers' reviews, which cannot be expanded further, such as adding other customers, sending private messages, or creating communities." The second type is the one that incorporates e-commerce features (Hajli et al., 2016, Youcef Baghdadi, 2013).

"Consumers' contributions to brand-related content – conversing with others about brands, rating brand-related videos – are driven by three motivations: personal identity, integration and social interaction, and entertainment" (Muntinga et al., 2011).

"The concept behind social commerce is that social media benefits commercial transactions of vendors by developing closer relationships with customers, enriching the quality of the relationship, increasing sales and encouraging loyalty to the business" (Hajli, 2014).

1.3.6. Social Media

"Social Media enables users to share content on multiple platforms, which not only enhances the reach of the messages initially communicated but also, enhances opportunities for co-creation and user-generated content" (Henninger et al., 2017). Social Media platforms have empowered consumers to feel confident in sharing thoughts, experiences and feelings as well as their ideas, creating an outside-in approach for industries. "Social Media is the environment in which social networking takes place and has altered the way in which consumers gather information and make buying decisions" (Paquette, 2013). Thus, by encouraging conversations about brands, brand communication has been affected. "Nearly every day, we talk about products with our friends, seek their opinions and receive recommendations from them. Knowledge, norms, attitudes, and behaviors transmitted among community members through peer communication foster a shared culture and identity. In online communities, the role of peer influence may be even more important than in other

communities because consumers tend to share their brand experiences with other brand admirers, and most interactions occur among peers rather than between members and representatives of firms. For instance, peer communication can help socialize consumers and form consumers' favorable attitude towards brands" (Liao et al., 2016; Erik B., et al., 2014).

As social media is a communication channel, companies are able to broadcast their ethics, news and messages reaching the consumers free of charge. Therefore, it is important for brands and all companies in general to be aware of the quality of their presence on social media even if consumers are the ones creating their marketing as this is found to be influencing consumers behaviors towards shopping (Paquette, 2013). Not in all, but in few social media platforms, users have open "accessibility" to other accounts of other users which means that they do not necessarily have to "follow" or "like" a company's account to look at the information shared. Consequently, this is not considered to be a useful effect on the brands, as users are not being informed on new products and promotions that would potentially engage more consumers.

1.3.7. Social Presence

The absence of the human and social elements are indicated as the major weaknesses and obstacles to the e- commerce growth. Social commerce reestablishes the social aspect of purchasing to e-commerce increasing the presence of the social element into the online environment (Lu et al., 2015).

Social Presence (SP) is defined to be the awareness of another person in an interaction and, more specifically to the capability of a website or an online store to allow the user to sense the environment as, "warm", "personal", and "sociable" (Liew et al., 2017).

According to Tu, (Tu, 2002), SP should have three dimensions; social context, online communication, and interactivity.

While some websites offer a direct interaction with another human (i.e. live chat or

customer support chat and forums), some others offer social proof (i.e. “customers who bought this also bought...”). SP can also be achieved when human images and/or videos along with customized greetings, are incorporated in an online stores’ website design.

Previous literature has shown that people tend to shop more from websites that offer “human warmth”, which shows that social presence has a positive impact on trust in online shopping.

1.3.8 Social Support

A social support theory explaining how social relationship influences individuals’ cognitions, emotions, and behaviours is used as the concept of social support (Tajvidi et al., 2017). To be more precise, social support is defined as “the social resources that persons perceive to be available or are provided to them by non-professionals in the context of both formal support groups and informal helping relationships” (Tajvidi et al., 2018).

Previous literature highlights and divides social support into two types; emotional-considered support and informational support. Both types measure individuals’ experience feelings on whether they are being cared of, responded to, and facilitated by their social groups (Tajvidi et al., 2018). “Emotional support is defined as “providing messages that involve emotional concerns such as caring, understanding or empathy” (Tajvidi et al., 2017). On the other hand, “Informational support refers to “providing messages, in the form of recommendations, advice, or knowledge that could be helpful for solving problems” (Tajvidi et al., 2017).

People or more generally users of social commerce platforms tend to believe that relationship quality can be assured if they feel that others on online social communities provide substantial support (Tajvidi et al., 2018).

When social support exists in a social network, it would be natural for community members to share commercial information and recommendations as an extension of their sharing of other supportive information. When a user notices that other

members have been caring and helpful in providing useful information, then obtaining or sharing valuable shopping information with others would be mandatory. The frequent sharing of supportive information can also enhance friendship and trust among members, which may increase the intention to conduct commercial activities even further. We can hence derive a linkage between social support and the intention to conduct social commerce (Ting-Peng et al., 2011).

1.3.9 Social Media and Fashion

Social Media appear to have had a great influence in the portrayal of fashion as well as to brand communication (Rocamora, 2016). “Social Media was described as a great way to get in touch with your people who are interested in your brand and people from all walks of life and all different backgrounds can sort of share ideas, inspirations, styles, tips and ideas” (Henninger et al., 2017).

The emergence of social media has shifted on a great degree the communication between customers and companies. As mentioned in section 2.5 (Social Media), consumers do not just view items, posts and videos but also have the power to affect others’ opinion on a brand or product. Due to this, consumers have given the perfect opportunity for small organizations (micro-organizations) to not only broadcast their ethics and messages to their preferred target audiences and among them but also to give them the opportunity in fostering a stronger relationship between them. Additionally, brands should be creating their own social presence in order to control their marketing and also be informed and up to date of consumer-generated content referring to the brand.

“A platform can be given to designers whose lack of economic capital has excluded them from the media, a space crucial to success in the field of fashion” (Bartlett et al., 2013).

Eugene Shinkle in the book “Fashion Media: Past and Present”, expressed and stated that social media and digital media forms are seen as a way of developing and evolving ordinary consumers into “brand ‘owners and advocates’ who ‘voluntarily’ incorporate fashion media within their personalized media flows of YouTube,

Facebook and Twitter” (Bartlett et al., 2013).

Facebook facilitate brands in promoting products even the brands their selves by creating Facebook groups. Those groups help consumers when they search for a product category and it is easy for them to pass on any visual content they like to any other of their social contacts.

“Instagram, a social networking site (SNS) with an emphasis on photo-sharing, is particularly popular among young adults. Unlike Facebook, Instagram primarily focuses on photo sharing, image enhancement, and nonreciprocal relationships” (Jackson & Luchner , 2017). Instagram is a mobile photo sharing application, which successfully increased its popularity since its foundation in October 2010, with over 500 million current active monthly users (Instagram Press, 2018). “A recent survey indicates that Instagram is the second most popular social media platform, with 59% of online adults ages 18–29 using” (Jackson & Luchner , 2017). Furthermore, Instagram is one of the most effective advertising channel in which advertisers invested \$1.07 billion in 2017, and were increased to \$1.60 billion in 2018 and in 2019 are projected to increase to \$2.38 billion (Casaló et al., 2018).

Focusing on visuals, Instagram offers the opportunity for creative and aesthetic pleasing posting. Therefore, products are usually showcased more appealingly.

“Social technologies reintroduce the social side into online purchasing process, making online purchasing a more social experience. Thus, while e-business concentrates more on business goals, SC is more oriented toward social goals, such as networking, collaborating and information sharing, with a secondary focus on shopping” (Lu et al., 2015). While consumers and stakeholders of a company usually view websites, social media is seen to be only used by consumers.

Everyone wears clothes; thus fashion is everywhere. Nowadays, this is more noticeable than ever. “What we wear expresses who we are as humans; our thoughts, our feelings, our beliefs, and our desires are communicated through our clothing and through our fashion choices. Fashion exists past literal labels and statements seen on

apparel, for it carries the full embodiment of understanding and meanings of both wearer and designer” (Johnson & Hokanson, 2015).

Social Media sites and applications offer a new way to the Fashion Industry to connect with consumers and establish loyalty and cultivate brand identity. The engagement level between consumers and brands can vary and be either high or low. A high level engagement, will focus more on building a close relationship between a brand and consumers while, on the other hand, a low level engagement tends to select and respond to consumers’ comments and mainly just focus on transmitting brand messages, ethics and news on their social media pages (Park et al., 2018).

While some micro-organizations generate sales message posts accompanied with a link to the brands’ website on Facebook and Instagram, some others utilize Twitter to make general statements without a link to any connection to the brand. Any user-generated comments on social media are considered to be a part of “big data” which affects fashion retailers towards future demand on their products and services.

Information shared on social media platforms can be distributed in two categories; consistent or inconsistent. When information from fashion retailers is consistent and derives from observed sales projections and market demand evaluations, consumers tend to have “a lower degree of bounded rationality” and order more confidently. On the other hand, if information is inconsistent by fashion retailers, consumers are more likely to be less confident towards the brand and not to place any orders (Choi, 2018).

Within the vast SNS sphere, blogs are a favored form of user-generated social media (Liljander et al., 2015) and have a major key role, as they represent a combination of online community platform involving both the consumer and the marketer. Bloggers should constantly create interesting and appealing content for their readers and taken on sponsorship deals from companies. All bloggers should offer the opportunity of communication experience qualities as they are expected to obtain authenticity through their stories and posts in order for them to maintain trust and appreciation of existing readers and followers and gain those qualities from new ones.

“Blog marketing, typically takes place through product recommendations” (Liljander

et al., 2015). Through blogs, any consumer of any industry can become a powerful influencer and affect other opinions. Consumer behavior is seen to be affected in a positive way as bloggers offer a genuine WOM recommendations and messages from brands they are collaborating with. When recommendations are voiced through a friendly tone, consumers perceive those messages as reliable and trustworthy.

Colliander and Erlandsson experimented with real fashion blogs and their current readers (Colliander & Erladsson , 2015), where they came across with revealing information that bloggers who get paid to promote products have lower credibility from readers, but purchase intentions and brand attitudes were higher for a recommended product.

“Due to the characteristics of social media, based on consumer to consumer dialog, it is difficult for brand managers to directly shape the conversation; however, they have the opportunity to influence it by utilizing bloggers as intermediaries” (Uzunoğlu & Kip, 2014).

“Testimonials and endorsements have been a mainstay in marketing for many years. In the online environment, these concepts have been combined, embraced, and refined to drive a hot trend: influencer marketing” (Pophal, 2016). Influencer marketing is not very different from WOM, it just happens to take place on a different environment, the digital one. Influencers exist and can be found through various prominent social media platforms. Those platforms may include blogs, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and even Snapchat. Digital Influencers have a variety of advantages and benefits; the ability of reaching and attracting a bigger number of people as audience with less effort but with increased possibilities of their shared messages to go viral. Another advantage is that those people are considered to be experts in their field of interest and inspire with ease trust and loyalty from others, influencing the overall consumer behavior and consumer attitudes. Therefore, their followed audience is eager to copy the influencer’s style and follow their favorite or mostly preferred products and brand recommendations. As this is considered one of the most powerful and efficient marketing technic nowadays, brands are eager to collaborate with influencers to broaden their target audience and broadcast their

messages through a bigger crowd of consumer groups and online norms.

SIMs (Social Media Influencers), are promoting brands through blogs, tweets, and the use of other SNS (Social Networking Sites), to shape audience aspects of a product. Some of those promotions are done in return of rewards. "Also referred by some practitioners as 'sponsored' or 'seeding campaigns' and 'organic' or 'native advertising', influencer marketing represents a growing trend in promotional strategies with varying degrees of brand encroachment" (Audrezet et al., 2018). Influencers have gained and are able to retain the trust of their followers whom are eager to replicate and adopt their behaviors and choices of products.

Fashion clothing is being considered as a consumer good, which may indicate to other aspects of their personality and status of the wearer. Fashion opinion seekers are the ones who avoid the risk of purchasing without first seek information out of opinion leaders, as they strongly believe that they have a better knowledge of the topic (Casaló et al., 2018; McQuarrie et al., 2013).

Taking into consideration the above statements, fashion opinion leaders are the ones who facilitate the wide distribution of any new fashion trends because of the great influence they have on people and more specifically to their followers due to the knowledge and expertise on the topic (Casaló et al., 2018). As followers are intended to follow and consider suggestions made by SIMs, opinion leaders are probed to buy new clothing products from the latest fashion trends to promote them. Casaló et al., also tested behavioral intentions and came across that followers are part of the value-creation process and they can contribute if they interact with a number of followers and the Influencer account, as they will recommend the account to other users by simply forwarding a message or a post. Therefore, this will help the influencer to increase the value of their account as an opinion leader (2018). "The trick will be to keep adding new players and, even harder, to keep existing ones fully engaged" (The Economist, 2012).

On the other hand, literature also argues whether brand messages can be altered when communicated via influencers. "However there is a risk of message change and

transformation into a negative meaning if the communication process is not contracted strategically” (Uzunoğlu & Kip, 2014). Although eWOM has become virally spreader and acknowledged, when a desired brand message is spreader by the brands official page is certainly expressing the brands’ ethics and original ideas, sometimes it is not valued as much as it would if an influencer had share the exact same post. Though people might engage more in that case, they would not appreciate the original idea and ethics behind it.

Assumptions that purchase intentions are increased when Social Media Influencers are involved in advertising and promoting products. Thus,

H3. Benefits and incentives drive users towards a purchase or a deeper investigation of a product

1.3.10 SMEs (Small and Medium sized enterprises)

Small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) have become to be of a great importance in the networking system. Especially in the current economy, any kind of SMEs and entrepreneurial activities has become even more prominent than they were before. It seems that all SMEs have a key role in rebuilding the economy after the crisis.

Based on recent reports and articles such enterprises are considered as great contributors to job creation and global economic development as they represent more than the 90 per cent of the business population, 60-70% of employment and 55% of the gross domestic product in developed economies.

SMEs therefore do not just play a key role to the world's economy but could BE the world's economy (The World Bank, 2020; Christopher A., 2019; World Trade Organization, 2016).

On the other hand, the survival of those enterprises depends on their belief and ability to adapt and develop into any new knowledge related to their area of expertise (World Economic Forum, 2018).

Dejectedly, many suffer from lack of resources that are essential for their evolution and improvement such as the use of technology and new marketing tolls such as social marketing could be due to the fact that those enterprises are mainly operated by middle aged people did not complete basic school education (Sakil A., 2020; Naudé et al., 2014).

Enterprise development in SMEs can be identified into four core approaches to help them survive and grow. "Business management; personality dominated (impact of owner personality or capability); organizational development (characterizes stages of development); and sectoral approaches" (Ashworth, 2012).

As everything else is evolving around technology, SMEs are developing their own e-business models and moving slowly away from the traditional customer and

marketing relationships (Ashworth, 2012). Winning publicity is key when contracting and developing long-term media relationships (Ashworth, 2012). Building an e-portfolio is an effective strategy for retailer sustainability and leads any small or medium enterprise into success. An EPD (e-portfolio development) is the strategy of developing a customer- based portfolio for any shops in the e-commerce world.

Using their network relationships, SMEs facilitate any benefits arising from international process and finding new businesses and market opportunities. “Network relationships may overcome the problems of limited resources, experiences, and credibility” (Lin & Lin , 2016). Network relationships appear to be influential when SMEs enter the target market selection process and help them to cope with any arising risks and challenges, which might be resulting from any new market entry decisions (Lin & Lin , 2016).

Scuotto at al., mentioned that Social Media Networks (SMNs) are able to enhance the product development through a close collaboration with customers and enhance their ROI (Return on Investment) (2017). Furthermore, SMNs are offering to companies’ benefits such as “ 20% increase in of successful new products or services, a 15% increase in revenue, and a 30% improvement in knowledge search and sharing” (Scuotto et al., 2017). Through SMNs, companies and users interact with each other, thus companies give users therefore customers to voice out any ideas.

1.3.11 E-Retail

“In retail the rich get richer; online retailing will make those with dominant market share more dominant” (Rosen & Howard, 2000). Technology itself can offer a lot to people, but it is all about what people can do with technology rather than just receiving information. Users, as mentioned earlier, are now able to create and consume the information they require from brands and that is adding more value to websites. “Retailers should be conscious of the importance of culture when utilising social media, since social networks are merging of different cultures and the creation of new online cultures” (Paquette, 2013).

In the long term, the Internet and e-commerce will affect the whole retail spectrum. As found in literature, nine trends are anticipated to be engaged (Rosen & Howard, 2000):

- ☒ Lower prices and increased competition will be the goal to the new e-retail competitive business model.
- ☒ The growth of e-retail will provide better information and management of their inventories and provide them with access to new markets.
- ☒ Online stores will stimulate physical retail sales in over-stored sectors and weak retailers.
- ☒ Customization in both in-store and out-of-store will be improved by the use of the Internet.
- ☒ Showcasing in a physical showroom by Web based gateway computers will help with the promotion of online sales.

- ❑ E-retail will encourage shifts in shopping centers by emphasizing on entertainment, luxury goods, food, music, theme store, etc.
- ❑ With the use of Internet retailers will improve having as leverage the benefits of a physical store (i.e. shifting from mass production to targeted marketing efforts).
- ❑ Retailers will prioritize value-added distributors to develop a manufacturer-to-consumer sales model.
- ❑ Any retail property will potentially adjust downwards to compensate for the anticipated risk of Internet sales erosion. (Rosen & Howard, 2000)

Chapter II

2.1 Data and Methods

2.1.1 Objective

The main objective of this research was to collect data via a quantitative research to investigate whether social media affect the shoppers' opinions and in what way.

In addition, the study intended to examine how external and internal factors may influence consumers and their decision-making behavior.

More specifically, interactions between consumers and sellers made via online platforms will be examined as well as how these interactions can be affected positively by social support and how customers can get engaged in brand-value activities within social commerce. An examination on whether customers are influenced while using any social media applications or platforms and whether they proceed into online purchases around the fashion industry constitutes another aim of this study

2.2 Methods

Because this study was about social media advertisement, social media promotions and social media interactive marketing, a quantitative research was developed so as to measure attitudes towards social commerce, how social media may affect consumers in establishing trust around the product and how enterprises can benefit in information seeking and marketing strategy development (Appendix B).

2.2.1 Development of the Questionnaire

Questions were taken from relevant marketing literature and were grouped into separate sections each one to measure social media advertising (6 variables), social media promotions (6 variables) and social media interactive marketing (5 variables). All relevant variables were phrased as to express a statement rather than a question and were rated on a five-point Likert scale from "totally disagree" (1) to "totally

agree” (5) as it is suggested to be an appropriate method to be used on fields of social sciences (Stoklasa et al., 2016). “The preference for an odd number of response categories reflects a tendency to choose items that allow subjects to define their position as “neutral” with respect to the construct intended to be measured” (Asu et al., 2016).

In addition, on a separate section of the questionnaire, relevant demographics such as gender and age were recorded. Gender was requested as nominal data from a multiple-choice answer with the ability to choose only one out of the three options (Male, Female, Prefer not to say). Age on the other hand, was requested as ordinal data from a multiple-choice answer in which age was grouped into seven different age groups (15-18, 19-25, 26-32, 33-40, 41-50, 51-60 and 66+). Both demographic questions were to assist in addressing the research questions as independent variables in the statistical analysis. Nationality and region were not required, as they will not have any significance and eventually alter the purpose of the research.

2.2.2 Completion of the Questionnaire

Due to time constraints, the relevant questionnaire was self-administered and respondents were chosen in a non-probability and non-random sampling method through the use of Google Forms. A web link generated by Google Forms was either sent and shared on social media or sent out via email to the respondents (<https://docs.google.com/forms/u/0/>) (Rayhan, R. U., et al., 2013).

2.2.3 Participants

As the research did not require nationality or residential country, and because legal age varies for different countries, the population frame for this study of both genders was from the age of 15 and up to 66+, since older people might have a lack of online presence and knowledge. To ensure that all participants and respondents were treated ethically, an introductory paragraph was included at the beginning of the questionnaire to guarantee full anonymity and confidentiality, as well as to inform the purpose of the study and the right to the respondents to withdraw from the research

at any point they would desire. Moreover, an email address was available in case of any possible questions raised and any requests regarding the research.

2.2.4 Estimated Sample size

The link to the questionnaire was shared via email to all the contacts of an email account (stellakkakouri@gmail.com) and shared via an active Facebook account. Therefore, the expected sample was to receive more 100 completed questionnaires and final sample was 118 questionnaires.

2.3 Statistical Analysis

As the desired sample size was achieved and collected, the questionnaire was no longer accepting responses and all responses considered as valid data were transferred from Google Forms to an Excel worksheet and then to SPSS (version 25) for data analysis. Data was organized in order to define any possible missing values and all variables entered were labelled. All responses collected and answered, were compared between different demographic groups after ensuring that they were answered in the same way and correctly. All nominal and ordinal/scale data were tested via various tests performed on SPSS (i.e. frequencies, test of normality, Wilcoxon test, Mann Whitney, etc.).

The Shapiro Wilks test for normality was the first to be performed in order to enable parametric or non-parametric testing which were to be used for statistical hypothesis testing and in order to compare all collected answers with the demographic groups. All cases that were independent comparisons were in use of non-parametric testing. Those cases were used to compare individual pair of groups and in order to signify differences the Chi-squared cross tabulation was deployed. On the contrary, all the other cases where found to be independent comparisons were binary, descriptive statistics were used such as Wilcoxon test and Mann-Whitney.

Finally, all data collected was analyzed properly without any manipulation such as additions or subtractions, and any conclusions and recommendations were made

without any bias or amplifications.

Chapter III

3.1 Analysis and Results

3.1.1 Sociodemographic Characteristics

A sample of 118 questionnaires was collected through Google Forms. Three (3) of which were answered by people aged from 15-18 years old (2,5% - group 1), thirty-three (33) of age from 19-25 years old (28% - group 2), thirty (30) of age from 26-32 years old (25,4% - group 3), thirteen (13) of age from 33-40 years old (11% - group 4), thirty (30) of age from 41-50 years old (25,4% - group 5) and nine (9) of age from 51-65 years old (7,6% - group 6) (Figure 1).

As expected, no answers were collected from the age group of 66+. Furthermore, out of the 118 questionnaires, sixty-seven (67) (50,8%) were women (1), forty-nine (49) (37,1%) were men and two (2) (1,5%) preferred not to state their gender (3) (Figure 2).

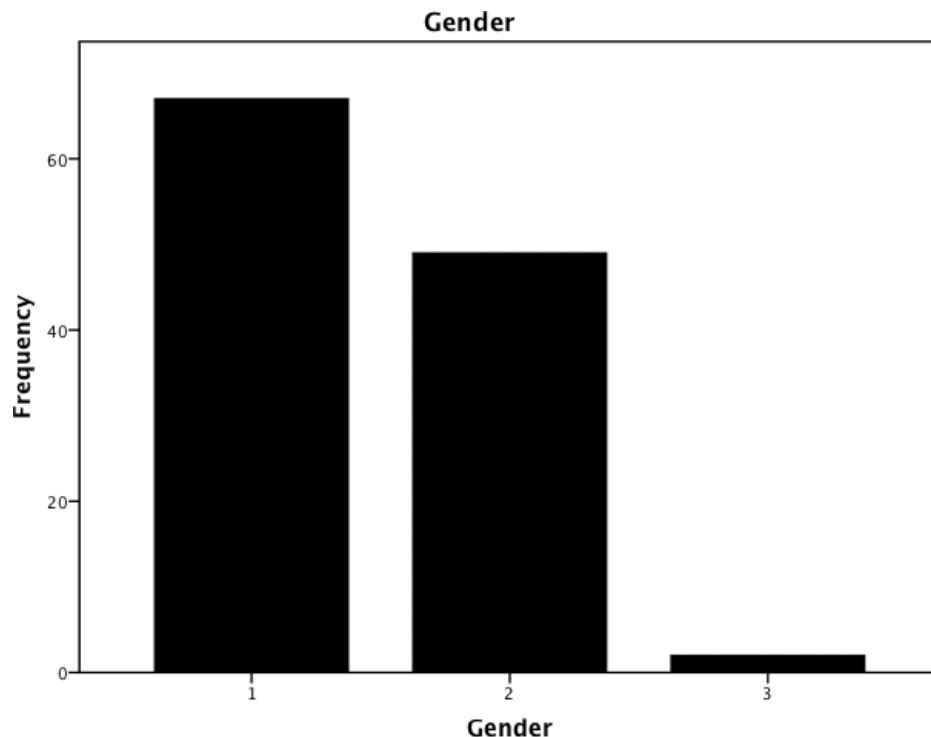


Figure 1: Constructed by author from data collected from the questionnaires

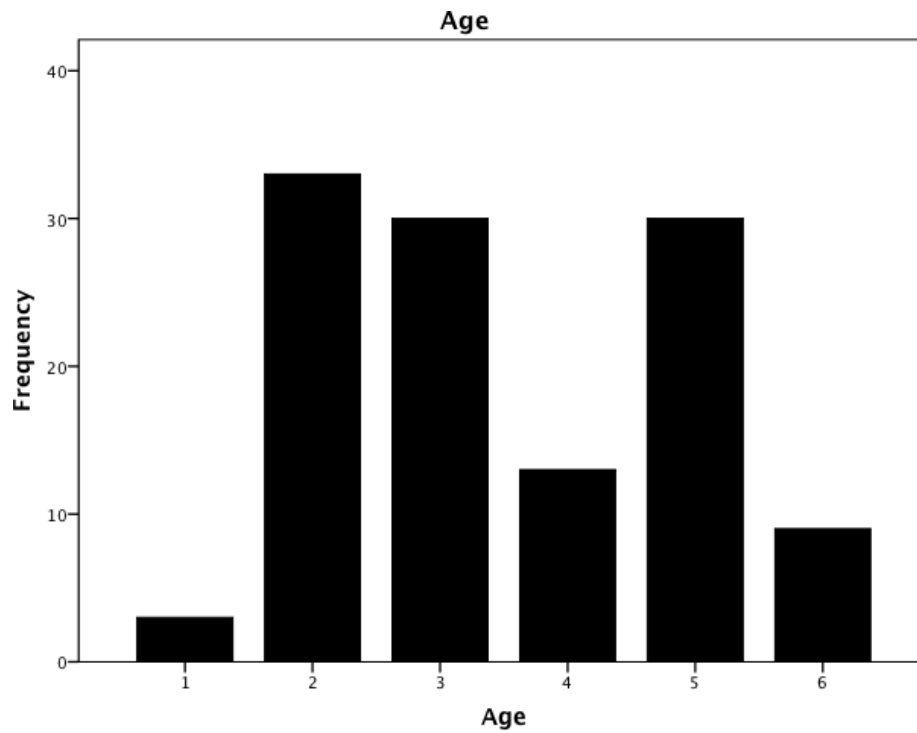


Figure 2: Constructed by author from data collected from the questionnaires

The first test performed was to measure all variables for Normality in order to distinguish what hypothesis testing would be more suitable for all data collected and whether they would be parametric or non-parametric. This was done with the use of Shapiro Wilk test for Normality (Table 1).

Test of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
THE ADVERTISEMENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA OFFERS ME SOMETHING NEW"	,266	118	,000	,881	118	,000
THE ADVERTISEMENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA GIVES ME USEFUL INFORMATION	,264	118	,000	,826	118	,000
THE ADVERTISEMENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA GIVES ME CREDIBLE INFORMATION	,245	118	,000	,879	118	,000
THE ADVERTISEMENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA ARE CREATIVE	,400	118	,000	,711	118	,000
THE ADVERTISEMENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA HELP ME IN FORMING AN OPINION	,268	118	,000	,863	118	,000
IQAM PERSUADED BY ADVERTISING CAMPAIGNS ON SOCIAL MEDIA	,407	118	,000	,706	118	,000
SALES INCENTIVES ARE GIVEN ON SOCIAL MEDIA	,287	118	,000	,863	118	,000
PRODUCT- TRIALS ARE ANNOUNCED ON SOCIAL MEDIA	,275	118	,000	,878	118	,000
PROMOTION INFORMATION ARE ANNOUNCED ON SOCIAL MEDIA	,347	118	,000	,772	118	,000
DISCOUNTS ARE OFFERED ON SOCIAL MEDIA	,374	118	,000	,762	118	,000
GIVEAWAYS ARE OFFERED ON SOCIAL MEDIA	,292	118	,000	,849	118	,000

I DON'T BELIEVE THE SALES DEALS OFFERED ON SOCIAL MEDIA ARE VALID	,301	118	,000	,852	118	,000
THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA, I HAVE DIRECT CONTACT WITH BRANDS	,332	118	,000	,788	118	,000
SOCIAL MEDIA IS USED TO RAISE AWARENESS ON THE BRANDS	,270	118	,000	,809	118	,000
SOCIAL MEDIA IS USED TO EVOKE SALES OF BRANDS	,264	118	,000	,875	118	,000
SOCIAL MEDIA CAN BE USED TO LINK THE WEBSITE OF BRANDS VIA POSTS	,220	118	,000	,845	118	,000
SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS CAN BE USED TO SHARE INFORMATION ABOUT BRANDS	,366	118	,000	,783	118	,000
a. Lilliefors Significance Correction						

Table 1. Test of Normality

The results from the Normality test (Table 1) showed a significant difference for all statements with a p value below 0.05; indicating that nonparametric tests should be followed.

Next calculation performed was of a descriptive type to find out the mean and median values ranged between 3 and 4 (Table 2).

Median for each statement

Statements	MEDIAN
Q1. The advertisement on social media offers me something new	4
Q2 The advertisement on social media gives me useful information	3
Q3 The advertisement on social media gives me credible information	4
Q4 The advertisement on social media are creative	4
Q5 the advertisement on social media help me in forming an opinion	3
Q6 I am persuaded by advertising campaigns on social media	4
Q7 Sales incentives are given on social media	3
Q8 Product trials are announced on social media	3
Q9 Promotion information are announced on social media	4
Q10 Discounts are offered on social media	4
Q11 Giveaways are offered on social media	4
Q12 I don't believe the sales deals offered on social media are valid	4
Q13 Through social media I have direct contact with brands	3
Q14 Social media is used to raise awareness on the brand	4
Q15 Social media is used to evoke sales of brands	4
Q16 Social media can be used to link the website of brands via posts	4
Q17 Social media platforms can be used to share information about brands	4

Table 2: Median for each Statement

The third test performed was a Chi-Square test for categorical variables to assess the replies from the participants.

The results showed that the participants chose to reply mainly with the numbers 3 and 4 from the likert scale that refer to 'Neither Agree or Disagree' and 'Agree' respectively (Figure 3).

With regards the statements under section 1 pertain to Social Media Advertising the participants mainly agreed with the statements 1, 4 and 6 suggesting that the advertisements on social media offer something new, are creative and are persuasive. Whereas, the individuals took part into the study could not agree or disagree with the statements 2, 3 and 5 suggesting that advertisements on social media might or might not give useful information (80.5% of the participants), might or might not provide credible information (88.1% of the participants) and might or might not help into forming a decision (65.3% of the participants) (Table 3).

With regards the statements under section 2 relate to Social Media Promotions the participants mainly agreed that within Social Media promotion information is announced, discounts and giveaways are offered however, they do not believe that those deals offered are valid (79.7% of the participants in Agreement) (Table 3).

With regards the statements under section 3 pertain to Social Media Interactive Marketing the participants of the study agreed mainly with the statements 15, 16 and 17 suggesting that Social Media are used to evoke sales of brands, to link the website of brands via post and to share information about brands whereas were in favor of the option 3 from the likert scale for the statement suggesting that through Social Media consumers have direct contact with brands. In addition, the greatest percentage of the participants was in total agreement of the statement that the Social Media are used to raise awareness on the brand (Table 3).

Statements	1 % (N)	2 % (N)	3 % (N)	4 % (N)	5 % (N)
Q1	16.1 (19)	7.6 (9)	20.3 (24)	46.6 (55)	9.3 (11)
Q2	0.0 (0)	5.1 (6)	80.5 (95)	14.4 (17)	0.0 (0)
Q3	6.8 (8)	4.2 (5)	88.1 (104)	0.0 (0)	0.8 (1)
Q4	2.5 (3)	1.7 (2)	11.0 (13)	84.7 (10)	0.0 (0)
Q5	0.8 (1)	15.3 (18)	65.3 (77)	18.6 (22)	0.0 (0)
Q6	2.5 (3)	0.0 (0)	6.8 (8)	90.7 (10)	0.0 (0)
Q7	0.8 (1)	7.6 (9)	73.7 (87)	17.8 (23)	0.0 (0)
Q8	1.7 (2)	18.6 (22)	60.2 (71)	19.5 (23)	0.0 (0)
Q9	0.8 (1)	6.8 (8)	27.1 (32)	58.5 (69)	6.8 (8)
Q10	0.8 (1)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	90.7 (10)	8.5 (10)
Q11	0.8 (1)	6.8 (8)	18.6 (22)	52.5 (62)	21.2 (25)
Q12	5.1 (6)	3.4 (4)	11.0 (13)	79.7 (94)	0.8 (1)
Q13	9.3 (11)	4.2 (5)	73.7 (87)	5.9 (7)	6.8 (8)
Q14	4.2 (5)	3.4 (4)	5.1 (6)	5.1 (6)	97 (82)
Q15	8.5 (10)	11.9 (14)	22.9 (27)	44.9 (53)	11.9 (14)
Q16	0.0 (0)	11.9 (14)	7.6 (9)	80.5 (95)	0.0 (0)
Q17	0.0 (0)	11.9 (14)	7.6 (9)	80.5 (95)	0.0 (0)

Table 3. Results from Chi-Square Test for categorical variables

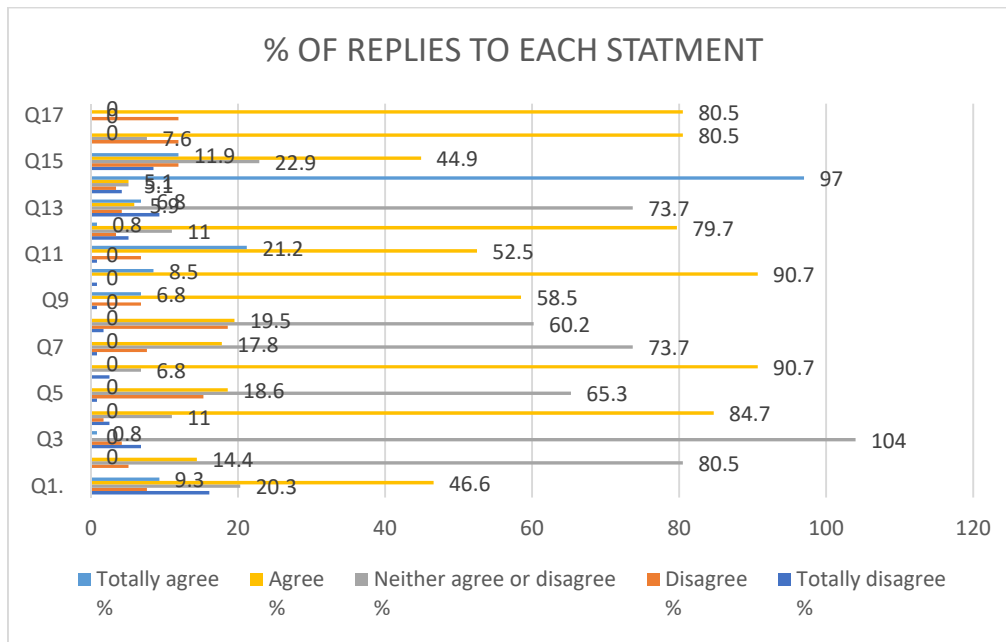


Figure 3. Results from Chi-Square Test for categorical variables

Chi-Square Tests followed comparing first all statements with gender and then all statements with age.

Based on the Chi-Square analysis for all statements and gender p value < 0.05 thus; significant difference was shown for the following statements:

- **Q3:** The advertisement on social media gives me credible information ($p=0.010 < 0.05$) (Table 4).
- **Q9:** Promotion information are announced on social media ($p=0.01 < 0.05$) (Table 5).
- **Q12:** I don't believe the sales deals offered on social media are valid ($p=0.017 < 0.05$) (Table 6).
- **Q13:** Through social media I have direct contact with brands ($p=0.00 < 0.005$) (Table 7).
- **Q15:** Social media is used to evoke sales of brands ($p=0.003 < 0.005$) (Table 8).

Chi-Square Tests: Statements and Gender

Q3: THE ADVERTISEMENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA GIVES ME CREDIBLE INFORMATION	FEMALE	MALE	PREFER NOT TO SAY
ANSWERED 1	10,4%	12,2%	100,0%
ANSWERED 2	10,4%	10,2%	0,0%
ANSWERED 3	50,7%	46,9%	0,0%
ANSWERED 4	19,4%	8,2%	0,0%
ANSWERED 5	9,0%	22,4%	0,0%

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	20,187 ^a	8	,010
Likelihood Ratio	14,749	8	,064
Linear-by-Linear Association	,209	1	,648
N of Valid Cases	118		

a. 6 cells (40,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is ,20.

Table 4. Chi-Square Tests and Statement 3

NOTES: $p = 0.010 < 0.05$ thus there is significant difference between the answers received from women and the answers received from men.

Chi-Square Tests: Statements and Gender

Q9: PROMOTION INFORMATION ARE ANNOUNCED ON SOCIAL MEDIA	FEMALE	MALE	PREFER NOT TO SAY
ANSWERED 1	11,9%	4,1%	0,0%
ANSWERED 2	11,9%	0,0%	0,0%
ANSWERED 3	14,9%	22,4%	100,0%
ANSWERED 4	49,3%	73,5%	0,0%
ANSWERED 5	11,9%	0,0%	0,0%

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	26,029 ^a	8	,001
Likelihood Ratio	30,095	8	,000
Linear-by-Linear Association	1,188	1	,276
N of Valid Cases	118		

a. 10 cells (66,7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is ,14.

Table 5. Chi-Square Tests and statement 9

NOTES: $p = 0.001 < 0.05$ thus there is significant difference between the answers received from women and the answers received from men

Chi-Square Tests: Statements and Gender

Q12: I DON'T BELIEVE THE SALES DEALS OFFERED ON SOCIAL MEDIA ARE VALID	FEMALE	MALE	PREFER NOT TO SAY
ANSWERED 1	7,5%	2,0%	0,0%
ANSWERED 2	14,9%	6,1%	0,0%
ANSWERED 3	20,9%	22,4%	0,0%
ANSWERED 4	47,8%	55,1%	0,0%
ANSWERED 5	9,0%	14,3%	100,0%

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	18,567 ^a	8	,017
Likelihood Ratio	13,441	8	,098
Linear-by-Linear Association	6,762	1	,009
N of Valid Cases	118		

a. 7 cells (46,7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is ,10.

Table 6. Chi-Square Tests and Statement 12

NOTES: $p = 0.017 < 0.05$ thus there is significant difference between the answers received from women and the answers received from men

Chi-Square Tests: Statements and Gender

Q13: THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA, I HAVE DIRECT CONTACT WITH BRANDS	FEMALE	MALE	PREFER NOT TO SAY
ANSWERED 1	6,0%	14,3%	0,0%
ANSWERED 2	11,9%	14,3%	0,0%
ANSWERED 3	73,1%	57,1%	0,0%
ANSWERED 4	6,0%	6,1%	0,0%
ANSWERED 5	3,0%	8,2%	100,0%

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	32,426 ^a	8	,000
Likelihood Ratio	15,993	8	,042
Linear-by-Linear Association	,673	1	,412
N of Valid Cases	118		

a. 10 cells (66,7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is ,12.

Table 7. Chi-Square Tests and Statement 13

NOTES: $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ thus there is significant difference between the answers received from women and the answers received from men

Chi-Square Tests: Statements and Gender

Q15: SOCIAL MEDIA IS USED TO EVOKE SALES OF BRANDS	FEMALE	MALE	PREFER NOT TO SAY
ANSWERED 1	7,5%	6,1%	100,0%
ANSWERED 2	10,4%	16,3%	0,0%
ANSWERED 3	26,9%	20,4%	0,0%
ANSWERED 4	44,8%	42,9%	0,0%
ANSWERED 5	10,4%	14,3%	0,0%

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	23,675 ^a	8	,003
Likelihood Ratio	11,950	8	,153
Linear-by-Linear Association	1,107	1	,293
N of Valid Cases	118		

a. 6 cells (40,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is ,17.

Table 8. Chi-Square Tests and Statement 15

NOTES: $p = 0.003 < 0.05$ thus there is significant difference between the answers received from women and the answers received from men

Based on the Chi-Square analysis for all statements and age significant difference was shown for all statements with p values < 0.05.

It should also be noted that age groups were merged into 3 groups as by performing the analysis for the initial 7 age groups results did not indicate any substantial outcome.

Therefore, age groups proposed and used in the questionnaire were revised as follows:

1. Age Groups 1 and 2 (15y – 18y and 19y – 25) were merged to one as Group 1 (15y – 25y).
2. Age groups 3 and 4 (26y – 32y and 33y – 44y) were merged and created Group 2 (26y – 44y).
3. Finally, initial age groups 5, 6 and 7 (41y – 50y, 51y – 65y and 66+y) were merged and created Group 3 (42+y).

Chi-Square Tests: Statements and Age Groups

Q1. The advertisement on social media offers me something new							
Crosstab							
		Q1					Total
		1,00	2,00	3,00	4,00	5,00	
1,00	Count	5	10	12	5	4	36
	% within demoage	13,9%	27,8%	33,3%	13,9%	11,1%	100,0%
	Count	0	2	16	18	7	43
2,00	% within demoage	0,0%	4,7%	37,2%	41,9%	16,3%	100,0%
	Count	0	4	28	7	0	39
3,00	% within demoage	0,0%	10,3%	71,8%	17,9%	0,0%	100,0%
	Count	5	16	56	30	11	118
Total	% within demoage	4,2%	13,6%	47,5%	25,4%	9,3%	100,0%

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	40,221 ^a	8	,000
Likelihood Ratio	42,862	8	,000
Linear-by-Linear Association	1,306	1	,253
N of Valid Cases	118		

a. 7 cells (46,7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1,53.

Table 9. Chi-Square Tests and between Age Groups and Statement 1

NOTES: $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ thus there is significant difference between the answers received from the three age groups and the statement 1.

Moreover, the age group agrees with the statement is the second group (26-44 years of old) that are the individuals usually can process a purchase on their own and do not depend to their family.

Chi-Square Tests: Statements and Age Groups

Q2 The advertisement on social media gives me useful information Crosstab						
		Q2			Total	
		2,00	3,00	4,00		
demoage	1,00	Count	5	31	0	36
		% within demoage	13,9%	86,1%	0,0%	100,0%
	2,00	Count	1	34	8	43
		% within demoage	2,3%	79,1%	18,6%	100,0%
	3,00	Count	0	30	9	39
		% within demoage	0,0%	76,9%	23,1%	100,0%
Total	Count	6	95	17	118	
	% within demoage	5,1%	80,5%	14,4%	100,0%	

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	16,076 ^a	4	,003
Likelihood Ratio	21,267	4	,000
Linear-by-Linear Association	13,378	1	,000
N of Valid Cases	118		

a. 3 cells (33,3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1,83.

Table 10. Chi-Square Tests and between Age Groups and Statement 2

NOTES: $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ thus there is significant difference between the answers received from the three age groups

Chi-Square Tests: Statements and Age Groups

Q3 The advertisement on social media gives me credible information							
Crosstab							
		A3				Total	
		1,00	2,00	3,00	5,00		
demoage	1,00	Count	5	5	25	1	36
		% within demoage	13,9%	13,9%	69,4%	2,8%	100,0%
	2,00	Count	3	0	40	0	43
		% within demoage	7,0%	0,0%	93,0%	0,0%	100,0%
	3,00	Count	0	0	39	0	39
		% within demoage	0,0%	0,0%	100,0%	0,0%	100,0%
Total		Count	8	5	104	1	118
		% within demoage	6,8%	4,2%	88,1%	0,8%	100,0%

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	21,163 ^a	6	,002
Likelihood Ratio	23,841	6	,001
Linear-by-Linear Association	7,482	1	,006
N of Valid Cases	118		

a. 9 cells (75,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is ,31.

Table 11. Chi-Square Tests and between Age Groups and Statement 3

NOTES: $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ thus there is significant difference between the answers received from the three age groups

Chi-Square Tests: Statements and Age Groups

Q4 The advertisement on social media are creative							
Crosstab							
		Q4				Total	
		1,00	2,00	3,00	4,00		
demoage	1,00	Count	0	2	13	21	36
		% within demoage	0,0%	5,6%	36,1%	58,3%	100,0%
	2,00	Count	3	0	0	40	43
		% within demoage	7,0%	0,0%	0,0%	93,0%	100,0%
	3,00	Count	0	0	0	39	39
		% within demoage	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	100,0%	100,0%
Total		Count	3	2	13	100	118
		% within demoage	2,5%	1,7%	11,0%	84,7%	100,0%

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	43,781 ^a	6	,000
Likelihood Ratio	46,351	6	,000
Linear-by-Linear Association	11,523	1	,001
N of Valid Cases	118		

a. 9 cells (75,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is ,61.

NOTES: $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ thus there is significant difference between the answers received from the three age groups

Table 12. Chi-Square Tests and between Age Groups and Statement 4

NOTES: $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ thus there is significant difference between the answers received from the three age groups. It seems that all age groups care of whether an advertisement is creative or not and agree that social medial provide creative advertisements.

Chi-Square Tests: Statements and Age Groups

Q5 the advertisement on social media help me in forming an opinion							
Crosstab							
		A5				Total	
		1,00	2,00	3,00	4,00		
demoage	1,00	Count	0	8	6	22	36
		% within demoage	0,0%	22,2%	16,7%	61,1%	100,0%
	2,00	Count	1	10	32	0	43
		% within demoage	2,3%	23,3%	74,4%	0,0%	100,0%
	3,00	Count	0	0	39	0	39
		% within demoage	0,0%	0,0%	100,0%	0,0%	100,0%
Total		Count	1	18	77	22	118
		% within demoage	0,8%	15,3%	65,3%	18,6%	100,0%

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	81,548 ^a	6	,000
Likelihood Ratio	94,037	6	,000
Linear-by-Linear Association	7,012	1	,008
N of Valid Cases	118		

a. 3 cells (25,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is ,31.

NOTES: $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ thus there is significant difference between the answers received from the three age groups

Table 13. Chi-Square Tests and between Age Groups and Statement 5

NOTES: $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ thus there is significant difference between the answers received from the three age groups.

It seems that younger individuals agree that the advertisements on social media assist on forming an opinion in contrast to the older age groups that might need more to an advertainments to form an opinion to a brand and to make a purchase decision.

Chi-Square Tests: Statements and Age Groups

Q6 I am persuaded by advertising campaigns on social media						
Crosstab						
		A6			Total	
		1,00	3,00	4,00		
demoage	1,00	Count	0	8	28	36
		% within demoage	0,0%	22,2%	77,8%	100,0%
	2,00	Count	3	0	40	43
		% within demoage	7,0%	0,0%	93,0%	100,0%
	3,00	Count	0	0	39	39
		% within demoage	0,0%	0,0%	100,0%	100,0%
Total		Count	3	8	107	118
		% within demoage	2,5%	6,8%	90,7%	100,0%

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	24,515 ^a	4	,000
Likelihood Ratio	26,133	4	,000
Linear-by-Linear Association	3,411	1	,065
N of Valid Cases	118		

a. 6 cells (66,7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is ,92.

NOTES: $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ thus there is significant difference between the answers received from the three age groups

Table 14. Chi-Square Tests and between Age Groups and Statement 6

NOTES: $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ thus there is significant difference between the answers received from the three age groups.

Chi-Square Tests: Statements and Age Groups

Q7 Sales incentives are given on social media						
Crosstab						
		B1				Total
		1,00	2,00	3,00	4,00	
1,00	Count	0	9	25	2	36
	% within demoage	0,0%	25,0%	69,4%	5,6%	100,0%
2,00	Count	1	0	38	4	43
	% within demoage	2,3%	0,0%	88,4%	9,3%	100,0%
3,00	Count	0	0	24	15	39
	% within demoage	0,0%	0,0%	61,5%	38,5%	100,0%
Total	Count	1	9	87	21	118
	% within demoage	0,8%	7,6%	73,7%	17,8%	100,0%

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	38,503 ^a	6	,000
Likelihood Ratio	38,761	6	,000
Linear-by-Linear Association	22,274	1	,000
N of Valid Cases	118		

a. 6 cells (50,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is ,31.

NOTES: $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ thus there is significant difference between the answers received from the three age groups

Table 15. Chi-Square Tests and between Age Groups and Statement 7

NOTES: $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ thus there is significant difference between the answers received from the three age groups.

Chi-Square Tests: Statements and Age Groups

Q8 Product trials are announced on social media							
Crosstab							
		B2				Total	
		1,00	2,00	3,00	4,00		
demoage	1,00	Count	0	7	6	23	36
		% within demoage	0,0%	19,4%	16,7%	63,9%	100,0%
	2,00	Count	2	12	29	0	43
		% within demoage	4,7%	27,9%	67,4%	0,0%	100,0%
	3,00	Count	0	3	36	0	39
		% within demoage	0,0%	7,7%	92,3%	0,0%	100,0%
Total		Count	2	22	71	23	118
		% within demoage	1,7%	18,6%	60,2%	19,5%	100,0%

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	78,773 ^a	6	,000
Likelihood Ratio	85,631	6	,000
Linear-by-Linear Association	10,566	1	,001
N of Valid Cases	118		

a. 3 cells (25,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is ,61.

NOTES: $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ thus there is significant difference between the answers received from the three age groups

Table 16. Chi-Square Tests and between Age Groups and Statement 8

NOTES: $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ thus there is significant difference between the answers received from the three age groups.

Younger individuals showed to agree of the statement that social media announce product trials compared to older age groups showed a preference towards the neither agree nor disagree response.

That might have resulted due to the fact that those age groups are financially dependent thus they aim to find and like to have the opportunity to use such trials whereas; for other age groups product trials are not important thus might skip such information available in social media.

Chi-Square Tests: Statements and Age Groups

Q9 Promotion information are announced on social media						
Crosstab						
		B3				
		1,00	2,00	3,00	4,00	5,00
1,00	Count	0	0	21	15	0
	% within demoaage	0,0%	0,0%	58,3%	41,7%	0,0%
2,00	Count	1	0	1	39	2
	% within demoaage	2,3%	0,0%	2,3%	90,7%	4,7%
3,00	Count	0	8	10	15	6
	% within demoaage	0,0%	20,5%	25,6%	38,5%	15,4%
Total	Count	1	8	32	69	8
	% within demoaage	0,8%	6,8%	27,1%	58,5%	6,8%

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	59,696 ^a	8	,000
Likelihood Ratio	65,698	8	,000
Linear-by-Linear Association	,105	1	,746
N of Valid Cases	118		

a. 9 cells (60,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is ,31.

NOTES: $p= 0.000 < 0.05$ thus there is significant difference between the answers received from the three age groups

Table 17. Chi-Square Tests and between Age Groups and Statement 9

NOTES: $p= 0.000 < 0.05$ thus there is significant difference between the answers received from the three age groups.

Age groups 2 and 3 seem to agree that promotion information is announced within social media whereas younger ages seem to be in favor of the neither agree or disagree reply that could be to the fact that those age groups might not pay attention to the information in such was as the older age groups do.

Chi-Square Tests: Statements and Age Groups

Q10 Discounts are offered on social media						
Crosstab						
		B4			Total	
		1,00	4,00	5,00		
demoage	1,00	Count	0	26	10	36
		% within demoage	0,0%	72,2%	27,8%	100,0%
	2,00	Count	1	42	0	43
		% within demoage	2,3%	97,7%	0,0%	100,0%
	3,00	Count	0	39	0	39
		% within demoage	0,0%	100,0%	0,0%	100,0%
Total	Count	1	107	10	118	
	% within demoage	0,8%	90,7%	8,5%	100,0%	

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	26,480 ^a	4	,000
Likelihood Ratio	27,805	4	,000
Linear-by-Linear Association	8,704	1	,003
N of Valid Cases	118		

a. 6 cells (66,7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is ,31.

NOTES: $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ thus there is significant difference between the answers received from the three age groups

Table 18. Chi-Square Tests and between Age Groups and Statement 10

NOTES: $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ thus there is significant difference between the answers received from the three age groups.

Chi-Square Tests: Statements and Age Groups

Q11 Giveaways are offered on social media						
Crosstab						
		B5				
		1,00	2,00	3,00	4,00	5,00
1,00	Count	0	0	0	11	25
	% within demoage	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	30,6%	69,4%
2,00	Count	1	8	11	23	0
	% within demoage	2,3%	18,6%	25,6%	53,5%	0,0%
3,00	Count	0	0	11	28	0
	% within demoage	0,0%	0,0%	28,2%	71,8%	0,0%
Total	Count	1	8	22	62	25
	% within demoage	0,8%	6,8%	18,6%	52,5%	21,2%

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	88,447 ^a	8	,000
Likelihood Ratio	99,974	8	,000
Linear-by-Linear Association	23,049	1	,000
N of Valid Cases	118		

a. 6 cells (40,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is ,31.

NOTES: $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ thus there is significant difference between the answers received from the three age groups

Table 19. Chi-Square Tests and between Age Groups and Statement 11

NOTES: $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ thus there is significant difference between the answers received from the three age groups.

Chi-Square Tests: Statements and Age Groups

Q12 I don't believe the sales deals offered on social media are valid							
Crosstab							
		B6					
		1,00	2,00	3,00	4,00	5,00	
demoage	1,00	Count	0	0	0	35	1
		% within demoage	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	97,2%	2,8%
	2,00	Count	0	0	10	33	0
		% within demoage	0,0%	0,0%	23,3%	76,7%	0,0%
	3,00	Count	6	4	3	26	0
		% within demoage	15,4%	10,3%	7,7%	66,7%	0,0%
Total		Count	6	4	13	94	1
		% within demoage	5,1%	3,4%	11,0%	79,7%	0,8%

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	35,004 ^a	8	,000
Likelihood Ratio	39,527	8	,000
Linear-by-Linear Association	18,343	1	,000
N of Valid Cases	118		

a. 12 cells (80,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is ,31.

NOTES: $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ thus there is significant difference between the answers received from the three age groups

Table 20. Chi-Square Tests and between Age Groups and Statement 12

NOTES: $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ thus there is significant difference between the answers received from the three age groups.

Results indicate the highest percentages from all age groups to be in agreement with the statement. Thus, although they agree that those offers and giveaways are offered their validity is questioned

Chi-Square Tests: Statements and Age Groups

Q13 Through social media I have direct contact with brands							
Crosstab							
		C1					
		1,00	2,00	3,00	4,00	5,00	
demoage	1,00	Count	0	0	31	1	4
		% within demoage	0,0%	0,0%	86,1%	2,8%	11,1%
	2,00	Count	3	5	26	6	3
		% within demoage	7,0%	11,6%	60,5%	14,0%	7,0%
	3,00	Count	8	0	30	0	1
		% within demoage	20,5%	0,0%	76,9%	0,0%	2,6%
Total		Count	11	5	87	7	8
		% within demoage	9,3%	4,2%	73,7%	5,9%	6,8%

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	29,001 ^a	8	,000
Likelihood Ratio	33,758	8	,000
Linear-by-Linear Association	9,319	1	,002
N of Valid Cases	118		

a. 12 cells (80,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1,53.

NOTES: $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ thus there is significant difference between the answers received from the three age groups

Table 21. Chi-Square Tests and between Age Groups and Statement 13

NOTES: $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ thus there is significant difference between the answers received from the three age groups.

Chi-Square Tests: Statements and Age Groups

Q14 Social media is used to raise awareness on the brand								
Crosstab								
		C2					Total	
		1,00	2,00	3,00	4,00	5,00		
demoage	1,00	Count	0	0	0	0	36	36
		% within demoage	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	0,0%	100,0%	100,0%
	2,00	Count	0	3	3	3	34	43
		% within demoage	0,0%	7,0%	7,0%	7,0%	79,1%	100,0%
	3,00	Count	5	1	3	3	27	39
		% within demoage	12,8%	2,6%	7,7%	7,7%	69,2%	100,0%
Total	Count	5	4	6	6	97	118	
	% within demoage	4,2%	3,4%	5,1%	5,1%	82,2%	100,0%	

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	20,605 ^a	8	,008
Likelihood Ratio	25,800	8	,001
Linear-by-Linear Association	11,814	1	,001
N of Valid Cases	118		

a. 12 cells (80,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1,22.

NOTES: $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ thus there is significant difference between the answers received from the three age groups

Table 22. Chi-Square Tests and between Age Groups and Statement 14

NOTES: $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ thus there is significant difference between the answers received from the three age groups.

All age groups strongly agree that the social media is used to raise awareness of a brand.

Chi-Square Tests: Statements and Age Groups

Q15 Social media is used to evoke sales of brands						
Crosstab						
		C3				
		1,00	2,00	3,00	4,00	5,00
1,00	Count	4	14	13	4	1
	% within demoage	11,1%	38,9%	36,1%	11,1%	2,8%
2,00	Count	3	0	8	21	11
	% within demoage	7,0%	0,0%	18,6%	48,8%	25,6%
3,00	Count	3	0	6	28	2
	% within demoage	7,7%	0,0%	15,4%	71,8%	5,1%
Total	Count	10	14	27	53	14
	% within demoage	8,5%	11,9%	22,9%	44,9%	11,9%

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	20,605 ^a	8	,008
Likelihood Ratio	25,800	8	,001
Linear-by-Linear Association	11,814	1	,001
N of Valid Cases	118		

a. 12 cells (80,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1,22.

NOTES: $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ thus there is significant difference between the answers received from the three age groups

Table 23. Chi-Square Tests and between Age Groups and Statement 15

NOTES: $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ thus there is significant difference between the answers received from the three age groups.

With the aforementioned statement individuals from age groups 2 and three show to be in favor of the 'agree' reply to the younger ones who tend to be in favor the 'neither agree nor disagree' reply.

Chi-Square Tests: Statements and Age Groups

Q16 Social media can be used to link the website of brands via posts						
Crosstab						
		C4				
		1,00	2,00	3,00	4,00	5,00
1,00	Count	0	22	9	1	4
	% within demoaage	0,0%	61,1%	25,0%	2,8%	11,1%
2,00	Count	3	0	39	0	1
	% within demoaage	7,0%	0,0%	90,7%	0,0%	2,3%
3,00	Count	0	0	39	0	0
	% within demoaage	0,0%	0,0%	100,0%	0,0%	0,0%
Total	Count	3	22	87	1	5
	% within demoaage	2,5%	18,6%	73,7%	0,8%	4,2%

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	80,583 ^a	8	,000
Likelihood Ratio	87,641	8	,000
Linear-by-Linear Association	5,361	1	,021
N of Valid Cases	118		

a. 9 cells (60,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is ,31.

NOTES: p= 0.000 < 0.05 thus there is significant difference between the answers received from the three age groups

Table 24. Chi-Square Tests and between Age Groups and Statement 16

NOTES: p= 0.000 < 0.05 thus there is significant difference between the answers received from the three age groups.

Younger age group showed a preference of the answer 2 thus; ‘disagree’ of the statement that ‘Social media can be used to link the website of brands via posts’ compared to the other two age groups were in favor of the ‘neither disagree or agree’ reply.

Chi-Square Tests: Statements and Age Groups

Q17 Social media platforms can be used to share information about brands						
Crosstab						
		C5			Total	
		2,00	3,00	4,00		
demoage	1,00	Count	13	9	14	36
		% within demoage	36,1%	25,0%	38,9%	100,0%
	2,00	Count	1	0	42	43
		% within demoage	2,3%	0,0%	97,7%	100,0%
	3,00	Count	0	0	39	39
		% within demoage	0,0%	0,0%	100,0%	100,0%
Total		Count	14	9	95	118
		% within demoage	11,9%	7,6%	80,5%	100,0%

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	57,423 ^a	4	,000
Likelihood Ratio	59,821	4	,000
Linear-by-Linear Association	37,776	1	,000
N of Valid Cases	118		

a. 5 cells (55,6%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2,75.

NOTES: $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ thus there is significant difference between the answers received from the three age groups

Table 25. Chi-Square Tests for Statements and age groups and Statement 17

NOTES: $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ thus there is significant difference between the answers received from the three age groups.

A great percentage of each age group seems to agree on the statement that Social media platforms can be used to share information about brands.

Finally all Statements' were tested using the Wilcoxon test where H0 was suggesting that the median value of each hypothesis 'statement' is not different than the median answer of 3 ("neither agree or disagree"). Same was done for Gender and Age groups (Figures 4-6)

Looking at Figures 4-6 and table 26

- The calculated p value for statement Q1 was equal to 0.015 which mean that the null hypothesis was rejected with a mean value of 3.4919 and median 4 thus; people tend to agree with the statement 'The advertisement on social media offers me something new'. With respect the gender and age the same test showed significant difference with respect to the age (Table 26; Figure 4).
- The calculated p value for statement Q3 was equal to 0.002 which mean that the null hypothesis was rejected with a mean value of 3.4917 and median 4 thus; people tend to agree with the statement that 'The advertisement on social media gives me credible information'. The same test did not indicate any significant difference with respect the gender and age groups (Table 26; Figure 4).
- The calculated p value for statement Q4 was equal to 0 therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected with a mean value of 3.8051 and a median of 4 showing that the participants agreed with the statement 'The advertisement on social media are creative' however, the same test did not indicate any significance with regards the age and gender (Table 26; Figure 4).
- The calculated p value for statement Q9 was equal to 0 therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected with a mean value of 3.4831 and a median of 4 showing that the participants agreed with the statement 'Promotion information are announced on social media'. The same's test results suggested also that age and gender are factors that affect the participants decisions (Table 26; Figure 5).
- The calculated p value for statement Q10 was equal to 0 therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected with a mean value of 3.4407 and a median of 4 showing that our sample agreed with the statement 'Discounts are offered on social media'. The same test showed also a significant difference to age (Table 26; Figure 5).

- The calculated p value for statement Q11 was equal to 0 therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected with a mean value of 3.4407 and a median of 4 showing that our sample agreed with the statement 'Giveaways are offered on social media'. In addition, the same test performed to age and gender indicated significant difference to age (Table 26; Figure 5).
- The calculated p value for statement Q12 was equal to 0 therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected with a mean value of 3.5424 and a median of 4 showing that our sample agreed with the statement 'I don't believe the sales deals offered on social media are valid' having the factor gender playing a role to the participants decision with a significant difference calculated from the test to be 0 that is lower to 0.05 (Table 26; Figure 5).
- The calculated p value for statement Q14 was equal to 0 therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected with a mean value of 3.9576 and a median of 4 showing that our sample agreed with the statement 'Social media is used to raise awareness on the brand' (Table 26; Figure 6).
- The calculated p value for statement Q15 was equal to 0.001 therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected with a mean value of 3.7576 and a median of 4 showing that our sample agreed with the statement 'Social media is used to evoke sales of brands' having the factor age playing a role to the participants decision with a significant difference calculated from the test to be 0.002 that is lower to 0.05 (Table 26; Figure 6).
- The calculated p value for statement Q16 was equal to 0.042 therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected with a mean value of 3.8281 and a median of 4 showing that our sample agreed with the statement 'Social media can be used to link the website of brands via posts'. In addition, the same test performed to age and gender indicated significant difference to both factors with p values equal to 0.014 and 0.004 respectively (Table 26; Figure 6).
- The calculated p value for statement Q17 was equal to 0 therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected with a mean value of 3.5424 and a median of 4 showing that our sample agreed with the statement 'Social media platforms can be used

to share information about brands' (Table 26; Figure 6).

Summary of the results from the Wilcoxon test

STATEMENTS	P VALUE	MEAN	MEDIAN	P VALUE FOR GENDER	P VALUE FOR AGE GROUPS
Q1.	0.015	3.4919	4	0.106	0
Q2	0.222	3.4746	3	0.426	0.011
Q3	0.002	3.4917	4	0.492	0.317
Q4	0	3.8051	4	N/A	N/A
Q5	0.763	3.1864	3	0.446	0
Q6	0.06	3.1864	3	N/A	N/A
Q7	0.086	3.1356	3	0.801	0
Q8	0.676	3.2119	3	0.24	0
Q9	0	3.4831	4	0.038	0.024
Q10	0	3.4407	4	0.09	0
Q11	0	3.4407	4	0.253	0
Q12	0	3.5424	4	0	0.317
Q13	0.591	2.8814	3	0.001	0.043
Q14	0	3.9576	4	N/A	N/A
Q15	0.001	3.7576	4	0.714	0.002
Q16	0.042	3.8281	4	0.004	0.014
Q17	0	3.5424	4	N/A	N/A

Table 26. Summary of the results from the Wilcoxon test

Hypothesis Test Summary			
Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1 The median of A1 equals 3.000	One-Sample Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test	.015	Reject the null hypothesis.
2 The median of A2 equals 3.000	One-Sample Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test	.022	Reject the null hypothesis.
3 The median of A3 equals 3.000	One-Sample Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test	.006	Reject the null hypothesis.
4 The median of A4 equals 3.000	One-Sample Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.
5 The median of A5 equals 3.000	One-Sample Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test	.763	Retain the null hypothesis.
6 The median of A6 equals 3.000	One-Sample Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.
7 The median of B1 equals 3.000	One-Sample Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test	.096	Retain the null hypothesis.
8 The median of B2 equals 3.000	One-Sample Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test	.676	Retain the null hypothesis.
9 The median of B3 equals 3.000	One-Sample Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.
10 The median of B4 equals 3.000	One-Sample Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.
11 The median of B5 equals 3.000	One-Sample Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.
12 The median of B6 equals 3.000	One-Sample Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.
13 The median of C1 equals 3.000	One-Sample Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test	.501	Retain the null hypothesis.
14 The median of C2 equals 3.000	One-Sample Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

Hypothesis Test Summary			
Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
15 The median of C3 equals 3.000	One-Sample Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test	.001	Reject the null hypothesis.
16 The median of C4 equals 3.000	One-Sample Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test	.040	Reject the null hypothesis.
17 The median of C5 equals 3.000	One-Sample Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

Figure 4. Wilcoxon test for all statements

Performing the same test compared to Gender the median for men to the median for women was found to be different only for statements Q9 (Promotion information are announced on social media), Q12 (I don't believe the sales deals offered on social media are valid), Q13 (Through social media I have direct contact with brands) and Q16 (Social media can be used to link the website of brands via posts) (Figure 2).

Hypothesis Test Summary			
	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig. Decision
1	The medians of A1 are the same across categories of Demographics_FEMALE_1_MALE_2_PREFER_NOT_SAY_3	Independent Samples Median Test	.106 Retain the null hypothesis.
2	The medians of A2 are the same across categories of Demographics_FEMALE_1_MALE_2_PREFER_NOT_SAY_3	Independent Samples Median Test	.426 Retain the null hypothesis.
3	The medians of A3 are the same across categories of Demographics_FEMALE_1_MALE_2_PREFER_NOT_SAY_3	Independent Samples Median Test	.402 Retain the null hypothesis.
4	The medians of A4 are the same across categories of Demographics_FEMALE_1_MALE_2_PREFER_NOT_SAY_3	Independent Samples Median Test	Unable to compute.
5	The medians of A5 are the same across categories of Demographics_FEMALE_1_MALE_2_PREFER_NOT_SAY_3	Independent Samples Median Test	.446 Retain the null hypothesis.
6	The medians of A6 are the same across categories of Demographics_FEMALE_1_MALE_2_PREFER_NOT_SAY_3	Independent Samples Median Test	Unable to compute.
7	The medians of B1 are the same across categories of Demographics_FEMALE_1_MALE_2_PREFER_NOT_SAY_3	Independent Samples Median Test	.801 Retain the null hypothesis.
8	The medians of B2 are the same across categories of Demographics_FEMALE_1_MALE_2_PREFER_NOT_SAY_3	Independent Samples Median Test	.240 Retain the null hypothesis.
9	The medians of B3 are the same across categories of Demographics_FEMALE_1_MALE_2_PREFER_NOT_SAY_3	Independent Samples Median Test	.038 Reject the null hypothesis.
10	The medians of B4 are the same across categories of Demographics_FEMALE_1_MALE_2_PREFER_NOT_SAY_3	Independent Samples Median Test	.090 Retain the null hypothesis.
11	The medians of B5 are the same across categories of Demographics_FEMALE_1_MALE_2_PREFER_NOT_SAY_3	Independent Samples Median Test	.253 Retain the null hypothesis.

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

Hypothesis Test Summary			
	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig. Decision
12	The medians of B6 are the same across categories of Demographics_FEMALE_1_MALE_2_PREFER_NOT_SAY_3	Independent Samples Median Test	.000 Reject the null hypothesis.
13	The medians of C1 are the same across categories of Demographics_FEMALE_1_MALE_2_PREFER_NOT_SAY_3	Independent Samples Median Test	.001 Reject the null hypothesis.
14	The medians of C2 are the same across categories of Demographics_FEMALE_1_MALE_2_PREFER_NOT_SAY_3	Independent Samples Median Test	Unable to compute.
15	The medians of C3 are the same across categories of Demographics_FEMALE_1_MALE_2_PREFER_NOT_SAY_3	Independent Samples Median Test	.714 Retain the null hypothesis.
16	The medians of C4 are the same across categories of Demographics_FEMALE_1_MALE_2_PREFER_NOT_SAY_3	Independent Samples Median Test	.004 Reject the null hypothesis.
17	The medians of C5 are the same across categories of Demographics_FEMALE_1_MALE_2_PREFER_NOT_SAY_3	Independent Samples Median Test	Unable to compute.

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

Figure 5. Wilcoxon test for all statements compared to Gender

Performing the same test compared to Gender the significant difference was found to statements Q9 ('Promotion information are announced on social media'), Q12 ('I don't believe the sales deals offered on social media are valid'), Q13 ('Through social media I have direct contact with brands') and Q16 ('Social media can be used to link the website of brands via posts') (Figure 5).

Hypothesis Test Summary			
	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig. Decision
1	The medians of A1 are the same across categories of demogage.	Independent-Samples Median Test	.000 Reject the null hypothesis.
2	The medians of A2 are the same across categories of demogage.	Independent-Samples Median Test	.011 Reject the null hypothesis.
3	The medians of A3 are the same across categories of demogage.	Independent-Samples Median Test	.317 Retain the null hypothesis.
4	The medians of A4 are the same across categories of demogage.	Independent-Samples Median Test	. Unable to compute.
5	The medians of A5 are the same across categories of demogage.	Independent-Samples Median Test	.000 Reject the null hypothesis.
6	The medians of A6 are the same across categories of demogage.	Independent-Samples Median Test	. Unable to compute.
7	The medians of B1 are the same across categories of demogage.	Independent-Samples Median Test	.000 Reject the null hypothesis.
8	The medians of B2 are the same across categories of demogage.	Independent-Samples Median Test	.000 Reject the null hypothesis.
9	The medians of B3 are the same across categories of demogage.	Independent-Samples Median Test	.024 Reject the null hypothesis.
10	The medians of B4 are the same across categories of demogage.	Independent-Samples Median Test	.000 Reject the null hypothesis.
11	The medians of B5 are the same across categories of demogage.	Independent-Samples Median Test	.000 Reject the null hypothesis.
12	The medians of B6 are the same across categories of demogage.	Independent-Samples Median Test	.317 Retain the null hypothesis.
13	The medians of C1 are the same across categories of demogage.	Independent-Samples Median Test	.043 Reject the null hypothesis.
14	The medians of C2 are the same across categories of demogage.	Independent-Samples Median Test	. Unable to compute.

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

Hypothesis Test Summary			
	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig. Decision
15	The medians of C3 are the same across categories of demogage.	Independent-Samples Median Test	.002 Reject the null hypothesis.
16	The medians of C4 are the same across categories of demogage.	Independent-Samples Median Test	.014 Reject the null hypothesis.
17	The medians of C5 are the same across categories of demogage.	Independent-Samples Median Test	. Unable to compute.

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

Figure 6. Wilcoxon test for all statements compared to Age Groups

Performing the same test compared to Age Groups the significant difference was found to statements Q1 ('The advertisement on social media offers me something new'), Q2 ('The advertisement on social media gives me useful information'), Q5 ('The advertisement on social media help me in forming an opinion'), Q7 ('Sales incentives are given on social media'), Q8 ('Product trials are announced on social media'), Q9 ('Promotion information are announced on social media'), Q10 ('Discounts are offered on social media'), Q11 ('Giveaways are offered on social media'), Q13 ('Through social media I have direct contact with brands') and Q16 ('Social media can be used to link the website of brands via posts') (Figure 5).

Chapter IV

4.1. Major Findings

Brand communication is seemed to be found as improved and being increasingly valued by users. Participants agreed that social media platforms of any kind might enhance the relationship of consumers to a brand or assist the brands introduction to new ones. That can be done by offering credible information to raise awareness, share news, and potentially help to evoke sales via a direct link to their official website. Those statements were formed to examine whether perception around brand communication is formed and in what way. As respondents seem to agree by responding (4) “likely” and (5) “most likely”, the conclusion deriving is positive on the brand communication and its performance.

Although only two statements investigated and referred to trust, all responses showed that there is lack of trust on any sale deals and credible information in advertisements taking place on SNSs. The majority of responses for trust statements were moving along the middle of the Likert scale provided, starting from (3) “neither agree or disagree” and moving towards the negative (1) “not at all”. However, a minor percentage of responds were selected as (2) “slightly”, showing that they disagree on the fact that they do not believe that sale deals are valid on the social media environment. Overall, answers imply that respondents are confused and concerned on putting their trust around deals and other offers on social media and are more sceptical on whether messages and posts are credible and trustworthy.

User benefits (or advantages) such as sale incentives, discounts and giveaways seem to be appreciated and valued by users, as most answers related to these statements were answered with a (4) “likely” response. Even though reactions were moving along the (4) “likely” response, a high percentage of (3) “neither agree or disagree” responses were collected as well. That does not necessarily mean that users do not engage with those benefits, they might just simply choose not to pay the relevant attention or value enough those offers.

Furthermore, it has been found that users are (4) “likely” and (5) “very likely” to take on product trials and pay attention on promotional information announced on social media.

As all user benefits are connected with any advertising taking place on social media platforms, perceptions on advertising were examined as well. Examining creativity, usefulness and informative results were not as expected. Despite the several (4) “likely” responses, (3) “neither agree or disagree” was the primary response to all relevant statements. Prominent results might conclude to the lack of attention users pay to advertising and how it is usually presented on the SNSs. It has also been found by results that when the appropriate attention is not employed by users, forming an opinion around a product is applicable and therefore users are not as persuaded by campaigns as organizations would like it to be.

4.2 Implications of the Findings

Due to the advance of technology, the evolvement of the Internet and more specifically e-commerce and furthermore social commerce, consumers currently have acute and more sophisticated information, and can no longer be manipulated or contained by organizations. Consumers feel empowered within the vast of social networking sites (SNSs) and they no longer wish to feel victimized; on the contrary they want to be an active part and communicate with organizations. In addition, instead of just being passive and simply accepting any information shared towards them, they tend to put their trust into opinions of others that appear to be similar to theirs.

Dissemination of information and brand messages have become easier, more simple and almost effortless as the number of social media users is growing day by day. As previously indicated, opinion leaders have an impeccable impact on other users, especially in shaping opinions around a fashion product. Traditional approach suggests that face-to-face communication taking place usually in the same geographical areas determines social interaction. However, in the online setting, as personal interaction is not restricted in any geographical area terms, no limitations

are affecting influencers and bloggers forming an opinion and influencing others around it. Although their opinion matters and has a great value to other users, online conversations are an emerging factor holding a great significance when forming an opinion.

Questionnaires collected and analyzed examined all the previous desired to be tested hypothesis statements. Results were concluded to be reflecting opinions of users in all relevant subjects around social media matters, which were narrowed down to four major categories; brand communication, trust, user benefits and advertising on social media. As analyzed end explained in the previous chapter (Analysis and Results), results were almost all in favor of the statements provided and answered excluding the ones concerning trust. Trust is appeared to be a significant issue that needs to be resolved by all organizations facilitating social commerce in order to engage customers and motivate them in purchasing on online platforms with no doubts, winning their loyalty.

Previous literature has examined how trust can be increased within the online context. "Social presence conveyed by the web content (text, pictures, videos, etc.) and the social presence conveyed by interaction with sellers can significantly increase buyer trusting beliefs" (Lu et al., 2015).

4.3. Limitations

As this study was developed and conducted in a limited period of time and words count constraints, not all framework and theories could have been further explored around the subject. Although there was no in-depth outcome, an overall representation of the topic is provided along with a fertile ground for future researches. As it is already aforementioned, this study focused around a specific topic of consumption and consumer buying behavior and is was distributed into a specific geographic segment due to the non-random sampling method used; as the researcher distributed the questionnaires through friends, family and other connections. The researcher suggested that different societies and cultures would have provided significant variations among marketing practices that apply to different beliefs,

attitudes and behaviors and would have narrowed down the findings into more precise conclusions.

Although results retrieved from the distributed questionnaires helped forming an opinion around social media and how it is perceived and gave the researcher conclusive results on the general view of social media, more extension to Social Media Influencers (SMIs) should have been made and answered. A proposition of another quantitative questionnaire is made to examine furthermore the perceived opinion of users towards SMIs and how they can be influenced by them and to what extent. Therefore, trust was found to be another limitation deriving from this research, as it was not examined properly in order to get more conclusive results. There are many perspectives to assist in measuring trust such as subjective norms; future researchers can consider other factors that may connect to trust and uncover more factors that may have an impact on individuals' desire to engage and trust in social commerce activities.

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Appendix A:

INDIC_IS: Use any social media (as of 2014) UNIT: Percentage of enterprises
 SIZEN_R2: All enterprises, without financial sector (10 persons employed or more)

TIME	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
GEO					
European Union (current composition)	:	36	39	45	47
European Union (before the accession of Croatia)	:	36	39	45	48
European Union (15 countries)	:	39	42	48	51
Euro area (EA11-2000, EA12-2006, EA13-2007, EA15-2008, EA16-2010, EA17-2013, EA18-2014, EA19)	:	36	39	45	47
Belgium	:	:	45	53	58
Bulgaria	:	28	30	32	34
Czech Republic	:	:	25	34	36
Denmark	:	49	56	64	68
Germany (until 1990 former territory of the FRG)	:	33	38	47	45
Estonia	:	28	33	39	40
Ireland	:	60	64	66	68
Greece	:	38	37	44	50
Spain	:	37	40	44	51
France	:	:	30	36	41
Croatia	:	37	38	42	45
Italy	:	32	37	39	44
Cyprus	:	52	57	64	67
Latvia	:	19	28	26	30
Lithuania	:	36	42	45	50
Luxembourg	:	36	39	49	54
Hungary	:	26	29	34	38
Malta	:	66	72	71	74
Netherlands	:	58	63	65	68
Austria	:	41	42	50	53
Poland	:	22	22	25	27
Portugal	:	39	38	44	46
Romania	:	22	25	30	35
Slovenia	:	39	42	46	47
Slovakia	:	29	34	34	39
Finland	:	46	50	60	63
Sweden	:	48	53	58	65
United Kingdom	:	44	54	59	63
Iceland	:	63	:	:	79
Norway	:	53	60	68	72
Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the	:	37	50	53	:
Serbia	:	30	:	:	:
Turkey	:	:	39	38	46

Available flags:

b break in time series

e estimated

n not significant

s Eurostat estimate (phased out)

c confidential

f forecast

p provisional

u low reliability

d definition differs, see metadata

l see metadata (phased out)

r revised

z not applicable

Special value:

: not available

INDIC_IS: Have a Website and use any social media (as of 2014) UNIT: Percentage of enterprises SIZEN_R2: All enterprises, without financial sector (10 persons employed or more)

TIME	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
GEO					
European Union (current composition)	:	33	36	41	44
European Union (before the accession of Croatia)	:	33	36	41	44
European Union (15 countries)	:	36	39	45	47
Euro area (EA11-2000, EA12-2006, EA13-2007, EA15-2008, EA16-2010, EA17-2013, EA18-2014, EA19)	:	33	36	42	44
Belgium	:		41	48	53
Bulgaria	:	21	22	24	26
Czech Republic	:		25	33	35
Denmark	:	47	54	62	67
Germany (until 1990 former territory of the FRG)	:	32	37	45	43
Estonia	:	25	31	36	38
Ireland	:	52	56	57	58
Greece	:	33	32	44	43
Spain	:	33	37	41	48
France	:		27	33	35
Croatia	:	34	34	37	39
Italy	:	27	33	35	39
Cyprus	:	45	50	56	56
Latvia	:	17	23	24	28
Lithuania	:	32	38	40	45
Luxembourg	:	33	36	46	51
Hungary	:	23	26	31	34
Malta	:	61	69	67	67
Netherlands	:	56	62	63	66
Austria	:	40	40	47	50
Poland	:	20	21	24	26
Portugal	:	30	38	44	46
Romania	:	16	19	21	25
Slovenia	:	36	41	43	45
Slovakia	:	27	32	32	35
Finland	:	45	50	59	62
Sweden	:	47	52	57	63
United Kingdom	:	42	51	55	60
Iceland	:	57			63
Norway	:	47	54	59	62
Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the	:	28	35	39	
Serbia	:	27			
Turkey	:		39	38	46

Available flags:

b break in time series

e estimated

n not significant

s Eurostat estimate (phased out)

c confidential

f forecast

p provisional

u low reliability

d definition differs, see metadata

l see metadata (phased out)

r revised

z not applicable

Special value:

: not available

Appendix B:

Questionnaire : Social Media Marketing

This is a survey conducted as part of a postgraduate dissertation in an MBA Master Degree. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. There are no risks associated with this project, however, if you feel uncomfortable answering any questions, you can withdraw from the survey at any point. It is very important for us to learn your opinion.

Your survey responses will be strictly confidential and data from this research will be reported only in the aggregate.

The purpose of this research is to examine the consumer's perception of any advertisement made on social media.

For any queries and / or clarifications you can contact me at the e-mail address stellakkakouri@gmail.com

Thank you for your valuable contribution and for your time.

***Required**

Social Media Advertising

1. The advertisement on social media offers me something new *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Not at all Very Likely

2. The advertisement on social media gives me useful information *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Not at all Very Likely

3. The advertisement on social media gives me credible information *

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Not at all Very Likely

4. **The advertisements on social media are creative ***

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very Likely

5. **The advertisements on social media help me in forming an opinion ***

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very Likely

6. **I am persuaded by advertising campaigns on social media ***

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very Likely

Social Media Promotions

7. **Sales incentives are given on social media ***

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Totally Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Totally Agree

8. **Product-trials are announced on social media ***

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Totally Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Totally Agree

9. **Promotion information are announced on social media ***

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Totally Disagree1	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Totally Agree

10. **Discounts are offered on social media ***

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Totally Disagree Totally Agree

11. **Giveaways are offered on social media ***

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Totally Agree Totally Disagree

12. **I don't believe the sales deals offered on social media are valid ***

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Totally Disagree Totally Agree

Social Media Interactive Marketing

13. **Through social media, I have direct contact with brands ***

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Totally Disagree Totally Agree

14. **Social media is used to raise awareness on the brand ***

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Totally Disagree Totally Agree

15. **Social media is used to evoke sales of brands ***

Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Totally Disagree Totally Agree

16. **Social media can be used to link the website of brands via posts ***
Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Totally Disagree Totally Agree

17. **Social media platforms can be used to share information about brands ***
Mark only one oval.

1 2 3 4 5

Totally Disagree Totally Agree

Demographics

18. **Gender ***
Mark only one oval.

- Female
- Male
- Prefer not to say
- Other: _____

19. **Age ***
Mark only one oval.

- 15-18
- 19-25
- 26-32
- 33-40
- 41-50
- 51-65
- 66+