

**MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND**  
**SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH**

**École Supérieure de Commerce – Koléa**

*A Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for Master's degree in Commercial and Financial Sciences*

***Specialty : MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION***

***THE IMPACT OF SPONSORED CONTENT  
ON BRAND PERCEPTION***

***CASE : SIM AGRO***

***Submitted by :***

***Boualam Maroua***

***Supervised by:***

***DR . Hachemi Nadia***

***Place of training:*** SIM AGRO Company -Blida-

***Period of training:*** From 26/04/2024to 02/06/2024.

**2023/2024**



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## *Dedecation*

*I would like to dedicate this thesis .....*

*To my parents, for their love , care and sacrifices throughout the years, which have shaped me into who I am today.*

*To my father , who never stopped believing in me and encourage le to be a better version of my self*

*To my sister and brother who made this road much easier with their help and support*

*To my friends , the wonderful people I met during this five-year journey, who made my hardest times more bearable and my successes more enjoyable.*

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*الحمد لله*

*Next , I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor “DR .Nadia Hachemi “ for her unwavering patience, invaluable guidance, and profound knowledge throughout this journey. She was always there for me I am truly fortunate to have had such an exceptional supervisor by my side.*

*A special thanks to my friends , 2024 marketing group , with whom, I shared unforgettable memories*

*To my special friends , Farah and Djamila , the adventures and the laughter I shared with you made this journey truly unforgettable*

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***LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS***

**SMI** : Social media influencer

**IBM** : International business machines corporation

**PPC** : Pay per click

**SEO** : Search engine optimization

**CTA** : Call to action

**STM** : Short term memory

**LTM** : Long term memory

**ASA** : Advertising Standards Authority of the U.K

**FTC** : Federal Trade Commission

## ***Abstract***

The phenomenon of social media has profoundly transformed marketing practices and redefined the relationship between brands and their audiences. While social media offers companies abundant opportunities to create value and high-quality content to positively influence their audience. These influences can either enhance or damage brand image and perception, ultimately affecting commercial performance and sustainability.

This study examines the extent to which sponsored content influences consumer perception toward brands by analyzing the dynamic interplay between this kind of content and brand perception, and assessing the role of each dimension of sponsored content.

## **ملخص**

لقد أحدثت ظاهرة وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي تحولاً عميقاً في ممارسات التسويق وأعدت تعريف العلاقة بين العلامات التجارية وجمهورها. في حين توفر وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي للشركات فرصاً وفيرة لخلق قيمة ومحتوى عالي الجودة للتأثير على جمهورها بشكل إيجابي. ويمكن لهذه التأثيرات إما أن تعزز صورة العلامة التجارية وإدراكها أو تضرر بها، مما يؤثر في نهاية المطاف على الأداء التجاري والاستدامة.

وتبحث هذه الدراسة في مدى تأثير المحتوى المدعوم على تصورات المستهلكين تجاه العلامات التجارية من خلال تحليل التفاعل الديناميكي بين هذا النوع من المحتوى وتصور العلامة التجارية وتقييم دور كل بُعد من أبعاد المحتوى المدعوم

## General introduction

**Content is King**, is the title of an essay which Microsoft founder Bill Gates originally presented in 1996. In this essay, Gates talks about the future of the internet, stating in his opening sentence that “Content is where I expect much of the real money will be made on the Internet ” .By now this essay is more than 20 years old, but it seems that Gates hit the nail right on the head.

Over the past decade, the social media landscape has undergone a seismic shift, with platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube and TikTok becoming an integral part of daily life for billions of people around the world. This explosion in social media usage has not only revolutionized the way individuals connect, communicate and consume content, but has also reshaped the marketing strategies of businesses across all industries.

In this digital age, where attention is fragmented across various online platforms, brands have recognized the immense potential of social media as a powerful product where consumers are increasingly turning to not just for entertainment and social interaction but also for product discovery and recommendations . No longer confined to traditional advertising channels, brands are increasingly leveraging the dynamic and interactive nature of social media to amplify their messaging, build brand awareness, and drive conversions

In the contemporary landscape of digital marketing, two interconnected concepts stand at the forefront of brand communication strategies: content marketing and brand content. Both are pivotal in shaping consumer perceptions, fostering engagement, and driving business growth.

Content marketing, as a strategic approach, focuses on the creation and distribution of valuable, relevant content to attract and retain a clearly defined audience. It transcends traditional advertising by prioritizing the delivery of information, entertainment, or education, thereby establishing brands as authoritative voices within their respective industries.

Conversely, brand content encompasses the specific content initiatives undertaken by a brand to promote itself, its products, or its values. Through various mediums such as articles, videos, social media posts, and more, brand content aims to establish meaningful connections with consumers, foster brand loyalty, and ultimately drive desired actions. In modern marketing, content marketing and brand content work together as a dynamic duo, providing brands with the opportunity to authentically engage with audiences while reinforcing their unique identities and value propositions.

Central to this paradigm shift is the rise of social media influencers and content creators as key players in the marketing ecosystem. These individuals have amassed large followings and cultivated deep relationships with their audience. Through authentic engagement, influencers have become influential voices in the realm of social media, shaping trends, opinions, and consumer behaviors. Brands are increasingly veering away from conventional ad formats on social platforms and instead embracing sponsored content collaborations with influencers to engage with their target audiences in more authentic and compelling ways, partnering with them to authentically integrate products or services into their content in a way that resonates with their audience .

Paid collaborations between brands and SMIs<sup>1</sup> are commonly realized in the form of sponsored content .That's it , the influencer creates and publishes a product recommendation content on social media, and in return, receives compensation from the sponsoring brand .

## Research problem

In today's digital marketing landscape, sponsored content has emerged as a prominent strategy for brands to engage with consumers . However, there remains a gap in understanding how consumers perceive brands when exposed to sponsored content created by influencers or content creators on social media . In our work, we aim to address the following problem statement :

**“ To what extent does sponsored content influence consumers brand perception”**

To find answers to that research problem we chose to work on the case of SIM<sup>2</sup> , an important Algerian company that belongs to food industry, Doing so, our research aims to address the following questions :

**1/Do visual appeal of sponsored content , sponsorship disclosure and influencer brand fit have a positive impact on consumers' perception of the sponsoring brand ?**

**2/Do consumers perceive the brand differently when they are familiar with the type of sponsored content?**

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<sup>1</sup> Social media influencer

<sup>2</sup>Semoulerieindustrielle de la Mitidja (SIM) is an Algerian agro-food group specializing in the manufacture of pasta and couscous.

## Hypotheses

A hypothesis is defined as : "*A statement of an expected or predicted relationship between two or more variables that researchers intend to test*"<sup>3</sup>

In order to accomplish our research objective , we have formulated the following hypotheses that we will attempt to verify through our study :

**H1 : There is a significant positive relationship between the visual appeal of sponsored content, sponsorship disclosure and influencer brand fit and consumers' perception of the sponsoring brand.**

**H2 : Brand perception differs between those who are familiar with this type of content and those who are not**

## The reasons for choosing this topic

- With the extraordinary rise of social media use and digital marketing, we have also noticed the emergence of influencers on various digital platforms. They have become a tool for brands to reach a large audience and persuade them to adopt their products or services. Examining how these influencers impact brand perception through sponsored content can provide insights into the effectiveness and significance of such collaborations.
- Now, consumers are spending more time than ever on their phones, where they have access to vast amounts of information intentionally or deliberately and they can form initial impressions about anything. Therefore, examining how digital marketing tools such as sponsored content influence these perceptions can offer valuable insights into consumer behavior towards a brand.
- Understanding the factors that positively impact brand perception through sponsored content helps brands identify where they need to focus to positively influence their audience.
- Also , this topic intersects with various academic disciplines such as digital and content marketing, advertising, psychology, and communications, making it intellectually stimulating and offering opportunities for interdisciplinary research

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<sup>3</sup>Marko sarstedt and Erik mooi (2014) ,*A concise guide to market research*, 2nd ed , Springer , p141

## The scope of research

In an era where traditional advertising methods often fail to capture consumer attention or trust, sponsored content offers a promising alternative by merging seamlessly with the content consumers already engage with. That's why this research can be interesting in many ways :

- Investigating whether the company (SIM) places importance on sponsored content on its social media pages
- Understanding how consumers shape their perception of a brand when exposed to content created by influencers or content creators about SIM products
- Influencers and content creators often build trust and credibility with their audience over time. When they endorse SIM products in a sincere and trustworthy manner, consumers are more inclined to believe in the quality and value of the products, positively impacting their perception of the brand
- Gaining insight into how the credibility and quality of both the content and the influencer consumers can impact the brand image in the consumer mind
- Understanding the impact of sponsored content on brand perception, this will provide practical insights that can be directly applied to marketing strategies

## Methodology

To comprehensively address the main research question, both primary and secondary research will be conducted. The documentary research aims to establish a robust theoretical foundation regarding the subject, ensuring a deep understanding of the sponsored content and brand concept.

While theoretical knowledge is crucial, it is not sufficient on its own. Therefore, a quantitative research approach will be employed to gather empirical data.

This research will be conducted through an online questionnaire and analyzed via the statistical software SPSS, using multiple regression analysis and independent simple t-test to test our research hypotheses



## Research plan

Our work will include 3 chapters :

the first one aim at explaining the concepts of content marketing and sponsored content in social media and its integration with influencer marketing. , it focus on the main independent variable

The second chapter addresses the foundational aspects of branding and brand perception exploring the key elements of brands their perceptual processes

In this third and last chapter, we study the impact of the variables discussed in the first and second chapters by analyzing the collected data and test out the research hypotheses his chapter also presents the case study that our research is based on.

# **CHAPTER 01**

## **The brand content in digital era**

## Introduction

The interactivity dimension of the internet has allowed the customer to be a part of the marketing of any brand, product, services, or other entity. To this extent, digital inbound marketing encourages a customer-centric perspective in which organizations have to focus on helping consumers and involving them in the value delivering process. An important component of digital inbound marketing that creates value and engagement for consumers is content marketing.<sup>4</sup>

Content marketing has become a standard practice for the majority of organizations, with nine out of ten now engaging in this strategy. Rather than relying solely on traditional sales tactics, companies are now focusing on building their brand by sharing valuable information, ideas, and entertainment with their customers. . The success of content marketing has radicalized the way companies communicate<sup>5</sup>

The phenomenon of content marketing and brand publishing has unfolded rapidly because it responds to consumer preferences. According to the Content Marketing Institute<sup>6</sup>, 70% of people would rather learn about a company via an article than an ad.

And now , through various digital mediums such as social media, websites, and online videos companies can effectively tell their brand story, showcase their values, and engage with customers on a deeper level than traditional advertising allows , alongside this, sponsored content has emerged as a valuable avenue for brands to expand their reach and engagement by collaborating with third-party platforms or influencers.

The first part of this chapter focuses on delineating content marketing and its various formats, highlighting its pivotal role as one of the most significant tools in inbound marketing strategies. The next section will delve into a discussion of digital brand content, exploring its nuances and impact. Lastly, we will examine sponsored content in detail, unraveling its processes, and exploring its specificities within the marketing landscape.

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<sup>4</sup>Vinerean, S. (2017). *Content marketing strategy : definition, objectives and tactics* , Expert journal of marketing , Volume 5, Issue 2 , <http://hdl.handle.net/11159/1982>

<sup>5</sup> Alexander Jutkowitz (JULY 01, 2014 ) , *The Content Marketing Revolution* , Harvard business review

<sup>6</sup> The Content Marketing Institute (CMI) is a leading organization dedicated to advancing the practice of content marketing. It provides education, training, and resources to help marketers develop effective content strategies

## Section 01 :Introduction to content marketing

Content marketing has emerged as a pivotal strategy in the digital age, transforming the way brands engage with their audiences. This section delves into the rich history and evolution of content marketing , its components as well as its importance

### 1.1 History of content marketing

Although content marketing seems to be born quite late, in the last 10 years, its history is much longer .The concept of content marketing originated in the 1800s in America.

In 1891, “August Oetker” sold small packages of his Backin baking powder to households with recipes printed on the back. In 1911 he started publishing his highly successful cookbook. It went through major updates over the past 100 years and is one of the most successful cookbooks globally ,with 19 million printed copies .<sup>7</sup>

Four years later, in 1895 . following the passing of JOHN DEERE the founder of the renowned tractor company , DEERE & COMPANY , the company he established, introduced a publication called the FURROW. Instead of promoting their tractors, the magazine aimed to assist farmers in enhancing their crop production by addressing various agricultural topics, including crop selection, farming techniques, and economic diversification challenges; the magazine is still around today and has 1.5 million readers in 40 countries.

In 1900, André Michelin with his brother Édouard published the first edition of the Michelin Guide that contained tips for vehicle maintenance and travel;they were the first to do content marketing in France . At that time, there were less than 3000 cars in France, but the guide was published in over 35 000 copies .Today, the Michelin Guide is published in 14 editions, covering 23 countries and it is sold in nearly 90 countries .

In 1999, author Jeff Cannon wrote: “In content marketing, content is created to provide consumers with the information they seek”<sup>8</sup>.

Here are important dates in content marketing's growth over time :

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<sup>7</sup>Loredanapatrutiubaltes(2015 ), *Content marketing - the fundamental tool of digital marketing* , Bulletin of the transilvania university of braşov, Series V: Economic Sciences , Vol. 8 (57) ,No. 2 , p113-114

<sup>8</sup> Idem

- From 2000 onwards, companies were compelled to embrace digital solutions due to the economic and financial crisis. This shift aimed to minimize communication expenses while introducing a surge of inbound marketing strategies centered around content and user engagement
- 2001: The term "Content Marketing" is used for the first time by PENTOM CUSTOM MEDIA
- 2004: Microsoft launches its First Major CORPORATE blog.
- 2010: Creation of the Content Marketing Institute.
- 2015: Release of the first film on content marketing, entitled "The Story of Content Rise of the New Marketing".<sup>9</sup>

## 1.2 Definition of content marketing

*“Content marketing is the marketing and business process for creating and distributing valuable and compelling content to attract, acquire, and engage a clearly defined and understood target audience—with the objective of driving profitable customer action.”<sup>10</sup>*

Content marketing is about delivering the content your audience is seeking , It is the effective combination of created, curated, and syndicated content .

*“ Your customers don’t care about you, your products, or your services. They care about themselves, their wants, and their needs. Content marketing is about creating interesting information your customers are passionate about so they actually pay attention to you”<sup>11</sup>*

## 1.3Content marketing as a tool of inbound marketing

The concept of inbound marketing revolves around the creation and distribution of content. This marketing approach focuses on being discovered by potential customers without any direct push from the seller’s side through various channels such as blogs, podcasts, eBooks, eNewsletters, website pages, whitepapers, search engine optimization, social media marketing, and other forms of content marketing.

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.webmarketing-com.com/2015/10/09/40992-naissance-levolution-content-marketing>

<sup>10</sup>JoEpulizzi (2013) , *Epic content marketing how to tell a different story, break through the clutter, and win more customers by marketing less* ,Mc Graw hill education , P5

<sup>11</sup> Ibid , P6

### 1.3.1 Definition of inbound marketing

*“Inbound marketing is a high-performance strategy designed to generate and retain customers. It's a digital marketing strategy that enables companies to become their own media. The principle is to attract prospects via relevant content rather than soliciting them through advertising.”*<sup>12</sup>

It is often referred to as "pull marketing," which involves attracting people to a business by sharing helpful and pertinent information and generating high-quality content. To meet these criteria, inbound marketing utilizes a range of techniques that are now widely employed online.

### 1.3.2 Inbound and outbound marketing

According to Hassan Aljohani(2020)<sup>13</sup>the difference between inbound and outbound marketing can be summarized in the following:

- Outbound marketing, also known as traditional or interruption marketing, is an approach where the marketing strategy involves pushing products to customers, while inbound marketing aims to attract the interest of the target audience.
- While inbound marketing is permissive because the customer consents to be identified and targeted and is not bothered by the company's communication with them, outbound marketing is intrusive.
- Inbound marketing efficiency is superior to outbound marketing efficiency because it allows for better audience targeting and more tailored communication from the company .For example, if persons have subscribed to the newsletter, the conversion rate is 750% higher than the newsletter addressed to people who haven't shown an interest in the company or its products / services
- The outbound marketing methods have lost their effectiveness compared to inbound marketing due to the vast number of advertisements that overwhelm customers and the need to enhance marketing creativity to compete in the market. This shift has led to a new inbound approach focused on sharing useful and creative information, pulling customers in rather than pushing ads to them.
- Outbound marketing focuses on short-term transactions and immediate sales without prioritizing the development of long-term relationships with customers.

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<sup>12</sup><https://blog.comexplorer.com/inbound-marketing>

<sup>13</sup> Hassan Aljohani(2020) , *A Review of Research on Inbound Marketing*, Journal for Research on Business and Social Science (ISSN (Online) 2209-7880) Volume 3 Issue 4,p04

- Inbound marketing relies on tactics such as social media marketing, content marketing, blogs, and search engine optimization, while outbound marketing relies on print advertisements, TV, and paid social media advertisements.

Table 01 : Differences between traditional and digital inbound marketing

	<b>Traditional marketing</b>	<b>Inbound digital marketing</b>
<b>Basis</b>	Interruption	Organic
<b>Focus</b>	Finding customers	Getting found by potential, existing and aspirational consumers
<b>Aim</b>	Increased sales	Creating long lasting relationships by reaching and converting qualified consumers
<b>Target</b>	Large audiences	Interested prospects
<b>Tactics</b>	Print advertisements TV advertisements Outdoors advertising Cold calling Trade shows Email lists	Blogs , eBooks , papers Videos on social media, search engine optimization tactics Infographics Webinars Feeds, Social media marketing tactics

Source : Alin OPREANA, Simona VINEREAN (2015), *A New Development in Online Marketing: Introducing Digital Inbound Marketing* , Expert Journal of Marketing

**1.3.3 Component of inbound marketing**

According to Hassan Aljohani(2020) <sup>14</sup> , inbound marketing comprises several techniques or components :

- Content marketing : Digital inbound marketing relies heavily on content as its foundation. Opreana and Vinerean (2015) suggest that organizations can effectively engage potential customers, retain existing ones, and convert aspirational consumers by creating valuable content that prospects find useful.It is crucial for this process to be seamlessly integrated into the overall marketing strategy with a focus on media ownership and not media landing

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid, p06

- search engine optimization : SEO is a marketing method aimed at enhancing the online visibility of a website and its content, making it easier for potential customers to find the company's content on search engines.
- social media marketing : Creating a business page on social networks enables a company to distribute its content and strengthen its brand. Social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn, and Twitter can also be used to establish connections with customers, facilitating the exchange of information between businesses and potential customers. This approach will help digital marketers improve the brand's image and increase customer loyalty, potentially turning them into brand advocates in virtual communities
- Brand-Focused Marketing Communication : This communication is how companies inform, persuade, and remind consumers about their products and brands. Essentially, marketing communications, such as storytelling, brand experience, and brand identity, act as the voice of the brand and serve as tools for initiating conversations and fostering relationships with customers

#### 1.3.4 Inbound marketing methodology

The Inbound marketing process involves four phases or actions that help transform strangers into loyal customers and eventually promoters of the business<sup>15</sup> :

- Attracting visitors : The goal is to attract individuals to the company's website through effective inbound strategies such as blogging, SEO, and social media publishing, which heavily rely on high-quality content.
- Converting visitors to leads : Convert individuals into potential customers by obtaining their contact details through offering something valuable in exchange, such as eBooks, newsletters, free tips, software, membership, trials, tutorials, webinars, and other beneficial content
- Closing sales : This is when email marketing becomes crucial. Often, potential customers are not immediately ready to take action. However, a sequence of emails containing valuable and pertinent information can build trust and increase readiness to buy. For companies with a high volume of leads, utilizing CRM and email automation can be extremely helpful in this stage.

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<sup>15</sup>Zlatko bezhovski (2015) , *Inbound marketing - a new concept in digital business* , Journal of economic literature , Volume 5, Issue 2



- Reconverting customers to loyal, lifelong customers and brand promoters : this phase is all about turning a customer into a promoter , so in order to keep customers satisfied and promote ongoing business growth, the marketing efforts must extend beyond the acquisition stage by providing engaging content, exceptional client service, and actively seek and listen to customer feedback.

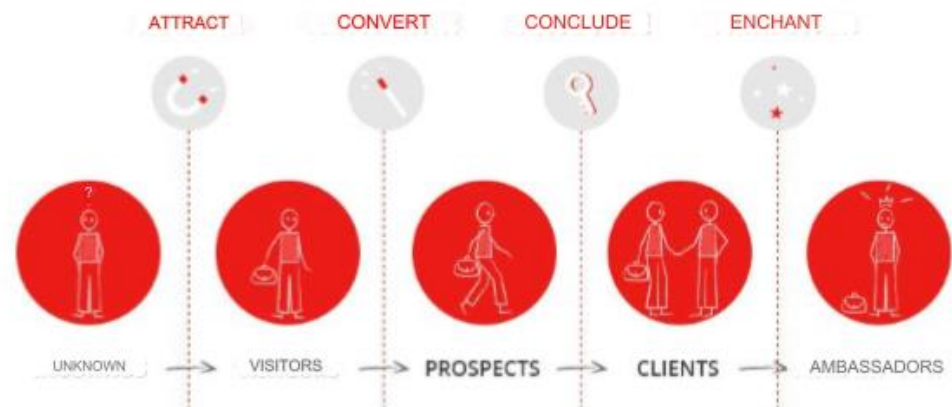


Figure01:Inbound marketing steps

Source :Truphème et Gastaud (2018, p.18)

#### 1.4.The importance of content marketing in the digital era

In the era of digitalization, the significance of digital marketing has grown consistently over the years. This form of marketing has become an integral part of the strategies employed by organizations of all sizes and industries. Given that digital marketing requires the existence of a content marketing, the success or the failure of the company's online communication depends to a significant extent on the quality of its content marketing

The internet has revolutionized how consumers gather information and make buying choices. In the past, businesses depended on conventional sales and advertising techniques like television and print advertisements, as well as personal interactions, to boost sales. However, the internet has made information universally accessible, allowing individuals to conduct their own research without the necessity of direct contact with a company unless they desire it . That is why the importance of content marketing has dramatically increased in recent years Considering over 3.6 billion people use social media worldwide . Compelling content whether textual t, visual , or in emerging formats like podcasts and interactive content acts as a powerful magnet and gives organizations a way to reach buyers who are independently researching a potential solution to a specific problem or need.

When companies deliver high-quality content that establishes credibility, this can motivate prospects to reach out to learn more and ultimately convert <sup>16</sup>

The Global Digital Content Creation Market is expected to reach \$38.2 billion by 2030 , with that in mind Here are some points in content marketing's growth over time <sup>17</sup>:

- ✓ Content marketing helps establish credibility and expertise on your own platform, not rented land : it is created as well as shared by the company itself, such as through its own social media platform. from the consumer's perspective, there are no external parties involved
- ✓ Content marketing grows trust with your audience : it focus of providing a relevant and valuable content rather than directly promoting products or services
- ✓ Content marketing costs less than traditional marketing : traditional marketing usually depends on advertising, which operates on a pay-to-play basis. Once you stop paying, the ads disappear, reducing your visibility. Meanwhile, content marketing costs are primarily centered on the content creation process. Once a piece is created and published, you no longer have to pay for its existence or visibility.
- ✓ Consumers would rather see content than ads :Consumers now have entirely different expectations. They are bored with traditional advertising and are blocking ads on their computers and phones now more than ever and are showing a stronger preference for informative and engaging content
- ✓ Content marketing helps you rank in search engines and increases visibility : The key to achieving high rankings on search engines is to produce content of exceptional quality
- ✓ content helps people understand complex topics : Content authors often simplify complex topics by breaking them down into smaller, more manageable chunks of information.
- ✓ Increased brand recognition

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<sup>16</sup><https://www.aha.io/roadmapping/guide/marketing/content-marketing>

<sup>17</sup> McCoy, J. (2022, 12 Novembre). *Why is content marketing important ? 9 reasons to use content.* Search Engine Land. <https://searchengineland.com/why-content-marketing-is-important-389290>

### 1.5 Content marketing formats<sup>18</sup>

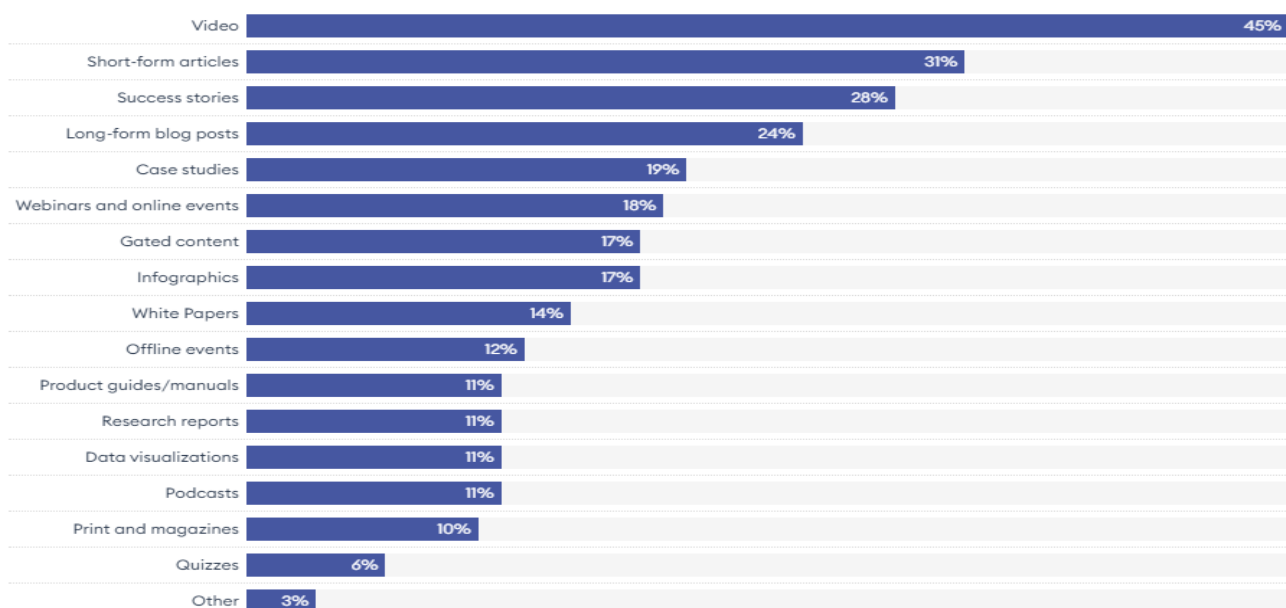
Blog posts:articles published on a website or blog and can also be shared on social media. To attract new and recurring visitors, blog posts should be published regularly and focus on providing valuable content for the targeted audience. This will encourage readers to share and forward them on social media platforms

- **Ebooks:**A comprehensive and in-depth resource of information on a specific subject can be provided by this type of content. E-books are often seen as a lead generation tool in online marketing because potential clients usually need to provide their contact information to gain access to the free resource. The result is that both consumers and the organization behind the ebook gain access to valuable information, creating a new opportunity for their business.
- **Infographics :** This type of content can present information in a visually appealing way, making the transmission of information more engaging and compelling. Infographics are useful for presenting vast amounts of data and information in a way that is easier to comprehend and more clearly expressed.
- **Videos :** On social media, this content format has the highest level of interaction and virality. It can be used to illustrate product features, break down complex problems, or captivate audiences with compelling storytelling .
- **Podcasts :**Podcasts are pre-recorded interviews and edited radio shows intended to discuss various subjects relevant to a company's target audience .
- **Guides :** a content marketing tool that provides step-by-step instructions for achieving specific tasks and using certain products.
- **Tip sheets and Checklists :** This content format provides useful guidance and practical advice for potential customers looking to achieve a specific task.
- **Webinars :** This type provides information about a specific topic, company, or product. Webinars are usually compiled as a series, where experts and leaders in a specific field gather to share their perspectives on the main topic
- **Case Studies. :** This strategy can motivate potential customers to take action. Companies use case studies to share their success stories and demonstrate how their offerings have helped clients solve specific problem

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<sup>18</sup>Vinerean, S. (2017). Op.cit

- **Surveys/Research Reports** : Surveys are commonly used by companies as a content marketing strategy to assess public opinion on industry trends or to persuade potential customers about the benefits of a specific product or service.
- **User-generated content** : this content can be created by loyal customers and reused and shared by the organization to enhance its visibility and gain credibility among customers
- **Memes** :Memes are humorous or relatable images, videos, or text that spread rapidly across the internet, often through social media platforms. Memes are primarily used for entertainment purposes, but they can also serve as a tool in content marketing to attract viewers and enhance brand recognition. Companies often utilize memes that resonate with their target audience, integrating brand messaging or themes to engage with consumers in a more casual and relatable manner.



**Figure 02** : The Best Performing Content Marketing Formats

**Source** : <https://www.forbes.com/advisor/business/software/content-marketing-statistics/>

## 1.6.Content distribution

The success of any content marketing strategy relies heavily on effective distribution. There are numerous channels to explore in order to maximize the visibility and impact of your content :

### 1.6.1 Owned Media Channels

Owned media refers to the channels that a company owns and has control over. Essentially, these platforms belong to the organization, granting them full authority over the content they publish. They tend to be the simplest form of distribution, requiring less effort.

- **Blog :**

*“A blog is a simplified version of a website, in the form of an online journal managed by an editor and accessible to Internet users worldwide. In content marketing, introducing this type of content is becoming increasingly ideal, as one of the pillars of content strategies”*<sup>19</sup>

Establishing a consistent dialogue with customers is vital for businesses, but abruptly halting it is detrimental. It's better to not engage at all than to abruptly halt communication. Research from IBM reveals that 85% of corporate blogs have published five posts or fewer. This indicates that brands excel at initiating content projects but struggle to maintain consistency.<sup>20</sup>

A well-crafted blog can serve as a dynamic platform for communication, engagement, and brand building by :

- ✓ Sharing Information
- ✓ Encouraging Interaction
- ✓ Creating Brand Identity
- ✓ Building Relationships
- ✓ increasing Visibility
- ✓ Staying Relevant

- **Email newsletter :**

Despite the proliferation of several other forms of digital advertising tools, emails have never lost its charm in connecting with people given there are 281.1 billion emails sent and received daily worldwide<sup>21</sup>

Email newsletters stand out as powerful tools for engaging audiences and driving business objectives, and their success hinges on several key factors :

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<sup>19</sup>Stéphane Truphème (2019), *Content marketing*, Dunod, P90

<sup>20</sup> Joe pulizzi ,(2013) ,Op.cit, p161

<sup>21</sup><https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0969698920313576>

- ✓ Ensure your email newsletter avoids being perceived as spam by obtaining permission
- ✓ from recipients and providing opt-out links at the bottom of each email communication.
- ✓ Utilize your email newsletter as an effective platform for promoting additional content such as webinars, e-books, white papers, live events, and more.
- ✓ Maintaining a regular schedule of sending emails ensures that subscribers know when to expect updates and helps to build anticipation

- **Website :**

*“A website is a collection of publicly accessible, interlinked Web pages that share a single domain name. Websites can be created and maintained by an individual, group, business or organization to serve a variety of purposes”<sup>22</sup>*

- **Social media groups :**<sup>23</sup>

social media promotion plays a crucial role in achieving online content marketing success in the present era. A strong social media strategy is an indispensable component of any comprehensive content marketing plan.

With billions of active users across various platforms, social media offers a great opportunity for brands to connect with their target audience on a massive scale. It serves as a dynamic platform for brand visibility, enabling companies to reach and engage with diverse demographics worldwide by using various content formats such as stories, reels, and images.

Figure 03 : social media icons



Source : <https://www.vecteezy.com/free-vector/social-media-icons>

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<sup>22</sup><https://www.techopedia.com/definition/5411/website>

<sup>23</sup><https://buffer.com/library/social-media-sites/#21-threads-by-instagram-%E2%80%94-100-million>

- ✓ Facebook : Facebook is the most widely used social networking site, boasting a staggering 3 billion monthly users. This equates to approximately 37 percent of the global population being active on Facebook . With over 200 million businesses utilizing Facebook tools and more than seven million advertisers actively promoting their businesses on the platform, it's a reliable choice for establishing your social media presence
- ✓ whatsapp : With approximately 2.78 billion users, WhatsApp is a widely used messaging application. Originally intended for personal use, it has now become a favored platform for brands since the introduction of WhatsApp Business in 2018. Boasting over 200 million monthly active users as of June 2023, WhatsApp Business enables businesses to offer customer support and keep customers informed about their purchase
- ✓ Youtube: YouTube is a popular online platform with 2.49 billion users who spend countless hours watching an astonishing number of videos every single day. Therefore, incorporating video content into a business's promotional efforts necessitates including YouTube in its overarching marketing strategy
- ✓ Instagram : In a platform with 2.04 billion users, brands can establish an Instagram business profile where a diverse range of content can be shared, including static images, dynamic videos, ephemeral Stories, succinct Reels, and live video broadcasts
- ✓ Tiktok: TikTok enables users to produce and distribute videos ranging from 15 seconds to 10 minutes in duration. The application offers a wide selection of sound effects, short music clips, and filters, which can be used to amplify the videos' quality and attractiveness.
- ✓ Snapchat An application renowned for its emphasis on ephemeral photos and short video content, commonly referred to as snaps. By incorporating interactive elements such as filters, stickers, and augmented reality effects, brands can enhance their content appeal to their teenage audience.
- ✓ Telegram : Telegram, a messaging application offered for free, operates seamlessly across various devices and boasts unrestricted capacities for handling media of any size. Its distinctive feature is its implementation of end-to-end encryption, ensuring

comprehensive security across all forms of communication, including individual chats, group exchanges, and media dissemination among participants.

- ✓ **LinkedIn:** With approximately 424 million users engaging on a monthly basis, LinkedIn has evolved from a simple job search tool and resume website into a platform for professionals to connect, share valuable content, and build their personal brand.
- ✓ **Twitter :** Twitter is a platform that allows users to post and interact with messages known as "tweets." By utilizing concise tweets, hashtags, and compelling content, brands can enhance their visibility and position themselves as industry leaders.
- ✓ **Pinterest :** Pinterest is a convenient platform for discovering inspiration and exploring new ideas and products. Users engage with the platform by "pinning" images linked to diverse online sources, including websites, product pages, and blog posts, among other content formats. This feature makes it an excellent tool for directing visitors to your own website.

### 1.6.2 Earned media channels

Also called “shared” channels, these rely on others sharing your content. The distinguishing factor of these channels is that anyone who shares your content does so without compensation, hence the term 'earned'. Gaining promotion and recommendations through earned media is a challenging feat, yet highly valuable due to its credibility and extensive reach. We find <sup>24</sup> :

- **Professional blogs :** where professionals share their expertise, insights, opinions, and experiences related to a specific industry, brand, or topic . It is one of the best ways to expand your reach and increase brand recognition. Additionally, they can facilitate the establishment of enduring relationships with professionals in your industry.
- **Posts in online communities or social networks :** refers to content shared within online communities or social networking platforms such as Facebook groups, LinkedIn groups, or specialized forums.it provide spaces for like-minded individuals to connect, share information, seek advice, and engage in conversations related to specific interests, industries, hobbies, or topics.

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<sup>24</sup><https://flippingbook.com/fr/blog/marketing-tips/top-content-distribution-channels>



- **Podcasts** : Podcasts are a collection of audio recordings that are regularly published as episodes. In recent times, podcasting has experienced significant growth. When a brand is mentioned or showcased positively on a podcast, it can lead to increased exposure, greater recognition, and enhanced credibility among listeners. This typically occurs when hosts or guests naturally discuss or endorse a brand based on their genuine experiences or personal opinions.
- **Online ratings and reviews** : the assessments and feedback provided by users on digital platforms regarding products, services, or experiences. These reviews often include a numerical rating or score, such as stars or points, along with written comments detailing the user's opinions, satisfaction levels, and experiences.

### 1.6.3 Paid media channels

These types of channels require payment for the content distribution . Unlike earned or owned media, which rely on organic exposure or owned platforms, paid media involves investing financial resources to amplify a message or content <sup>25</sup> :

- **Pay-per-click (PPC) advertising** : Pay-per-click (PPC) requires payment each time an online user clicks on an ad or a link. This way, the advertiser pays when users interact with ads. PPC is paired with an SEO strategy, and, if done right, it can bring quality leads.

Search engine advertisements, most frequently found in Google, are among the most popular PPC formats.. To persuade visitors to click on search advertising, you need to employ relevant keywords, interesting content, and a compelling call to action (CTA) copy .

- **Paid influencer marketing** :Refers to employing leading content creators and celebrity influencers in your business niche to promote your brand , this helps increase brand awareness, boost traffic to your website.

Since people mostly believe reliable brands, influencer marketing is gaining popularity: customers would rather trust people they already admire than companies selling products and services they may or may not use.

- **Sponsored content** : a type of promotional media that's paid by the advertiser, but created and shared by another brand, influencer, or publisher. Marketers that distribute their content

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<sup>25</sup><https://flippingbook.com/fr/blog/marketing-tips/top-content-distribution-channels>

by partnering up with publishers see a 50% higher brand lift than those who make their own content.

Sponsored content makes your brand look more trustworthy and engages potential customers. It can be shared by a person or brand and includes all types of media: images, videos, podcasts, and more.

- **Paid social ads** : include advertisements published images or videos , on popular social media platforms and targeted at a specific audience , it can pop up in anybody's newsfeed if he was a part of the target audience.

## Section 02 :Brand Content

Brand content is a critical aspect of contemporary marketing, playing a vital role in how businesses communicate their values and messages to consumers. In this section, we will provide a comprehensive definition of brand content, differentiate it from content marketing, and outline the essential steps to create an effective brand content strategy.

### 2.1 Brand content definition <sup>26</sup>

Brand content refers to any content created or curated by a brand to promote its products, services, or values through **storytelling** and the creation of a unique world.

The aim of this content is to convey the brand's values and vision to its consumers, reaching out intimately to the target audience to create a close emotional bond with them. The objective is to engage deeply with the intended audience and establish a strong emotional connection with them.

Brand content is not primarily about selling a product, but about captivating an audience with the brand's principles. Instead of focusing solely on the product, brand content centers on broader topics. By conveying its values, a brand aims to secure the commitment and devotion of potential customers.

The importance of storytelling :

It is a key component in a brand's content strategy, which is simply the art of telling a story using narrative conventions while conveying an idea, message, or emotion—all within advertising communication.

People remember stories much better than they remember facts or data. The intended audience should be able to relate to and identify with the story, which will encourage them to embrace the values of the brand. Stories have the power to captivate and emotionally resonate with audiences, inspiring action and behavior change. This is what will help brands differentiate themselves from competitors.

Storytelling can also help build trust and credibility with consumers. By sharing honest, transparent stories about their brand journey, values, or impact, companies can establish themselves as trustworthy and reliable.

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<sup>26</sup><https://www.marketing-management.io/blog/brand-content-definition>

the following points highlight key aspects that underscore the value of storytelling in shaping brand identity :

- Engagement
- Memorability
- Building Connection
- Differentiation
- Inspiring action
- Building Trust

## 2.2 Creating a brand content strategy

Here are the steps to follow to put in place a relevant and effective brand content strategy<sup>27</sup> :

### 2.2.1 Know the audience

This step involves researching and analyzing demographic, psychographic, behavioral, and technographic factors to acquire a deep understanding of the target audience, their interests, concerns, and the way they engage with content.

Define What the Brand Stands For :

The second step is as essential as knowing the right audience because what a brand believes is what makes it unique. Defining the brand's identity, values, and positioning will ensure that the content aligns with the brand's core principles and resonates with the target audience.

- Communicate what the brand offers and its purpose
- Highlight what makes the brand unique and sets it apart from competitors.
- Identify the problems the brand can solve for the audience
- Define the desired perception or associations people should have when encountering the brand.
- Determine the tone of voice and style that best represents the brand's personality and values.
- Consider the emotions the content should evoke in the audience.
- Outline the actions the content is intended to inspire in the audience.

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<sup>27</sup><https://flippingbook.com/fr/blog/guides/branded-content>

### 2.2.2 Craft the Brand's Story

Identify the distinctive elements of the brand to emphasize and craft a compelling narrative that communicates the brand's history, mission, values, and unique selling points. Every brand has a story to tell, that should be authentic, relatable, and emotionally resonant.

### 2.2.3 Choose the Right Format

With countless content formats and channels available it is crucial to select the ones that align with the brand's goals and connect with the target audience whether it's articles, videos, podcasts, infographics.

### 2.2.4 Create Valuable Quality Content

Focus on producing high quality content that captives and benefits your audience and aligns with the brand's objectives and values and prioritizes quality over quantity. 3 kinds of content can be used :

- ✓ **Informative:** It focuses on providing the latest news, updates, and insights relevant to the industry and sharing recent developments or research findings. This content can take the form of webinars, interviews with industry experts, or even articles.
- ✓ **Entertaining:** It aims to captivate the audience through compelling and enjoyable content and storytelling with engaging narratives, real-life stories, or humor. Brands can also incorporate trending topics, themes, or formats into their content, such as social media trends, challenges, and memes.
- ✓ **Educational:** It focuses on providing valuable information, resources, and guidance to the audience on how to use the brand products effectively. This kind of content establishes the brand as a helpful and authoritative resource within the industry, nurturing trust and loyalty among audience.

### 2.2.5 Pick the Best Channels for Distribution

Identify the channels and platforms where the target audience is most active and engaged to ensure that the message reaches the right people at the right time, whether it's social media platforms, websites, or email newsletters.

### 2.3 Brand content and content marketing

The terms "content marketing" and "brand marketing" are often used interchangeably or mistakenly perceived as synonymous. Upon closer inspection, it becomes clear that these two approaches have separate conceptual frameworks and strategic orientations that differentiate them.

Table 02 : Deference between brand content and content marketing

	<b>Brand content</b>	<b>Content marketing</b>
<b>Approach</b>	Brand-centric	Customer-centric
<b>Focus</b>	Promoting the brand, expressing core principles and values and ,creating a sense of belonging	Promoting the advantages of a product or service and its benefits to consumer
<b>Technique</b>	Storytelling	Valuable, relevant, consistent and useful content
<b>Duration</b>	Short-termcampaigns	Long termcampaigns
<b>Type of content</b>	Images, videos, infographics, case studies, press releases	Articles, white papers, webinars
<b>Aim</b>	Create brand loyalty and build a community	Encourage action, such as subscription or purchase
<b>Target</b>	Broad	Brecise
<b>Source</b>	The brand	The brand or a third intermediary

Source :<https://www.eskimo.co.uk/brand-content/>

## 2.4 Brand content functions

Brand content is a unifying tool, but it must also be understood as a practice that encourages innovation and proximity to the target market. The functions of brand content can be listed as follows<sup>28</sup>:

- It accompanies and enriches the product and educates the consumer in its use. It encourages the company to become a pole of attraction in its field, and also motivates internal partners.
- It enables brands to increase their sales, as it leads to greater visibility.
- It can be a source of innovation and diversification.
- It creates and/or reinforces a brand identity.

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<sup>28</sup>Min-Wook Choi, (2015), *A Study on the Branded Content as Marketing Communication Media in the Viewpoint of Relational Perspective*, Indian Journal of Science and Technology, Vol 8 , p118

## Section 03: Sponsored Content

In nowadays sponsored content is offering a unique approach to brand promotion through subtle and engaging means . This section will provide the defining sponsored content , examine the relationship between sponsored content and influencer marketing in Instagram and how to build a sponsored content campaigns .

### 3.1 Sponsored content definition

*“Sponsored content is often in the form of product reviews where the SMI creates and publishes a post promoting the product through his/her channel on e.g., Instagram, YouTube, a blog or Twitter, and thereby receives compensation from the brand sponsor”<sup>29</sup>*

Sponsored content is a type of promotional media that is funded by an advertiser but produced and distributed by a different brand, influencer, or publisher. It is important to sponsor a company or influencer who caters to your target audience and already covers subjects that are in line with your brand. This way, any mention of your brand in the content should seamlessly integrate with the overall message, rather than being perceived as an intrusive advertisement.

This strategy is favored by companies because it feels more like a recommendation from a friend, fostering trust in the brand and delivering meaningful content to the reader.

### 3.2 Sponsored content and influencer marketing

Sponsored content and influencer marketing have become integral strategies for brands seeking to enhance their reach and engagement. They combine to create a powerful tool for brand promotion in the digital age.

#### 3.2.1 Influencers definition

Brown & Hayes (2008) defined the word ‘influence’ as *“the power to affect a person, thing, or course of event”<sup>30</sup>*

<sup>29</sup> Carolina Stubba , Jonas Colliande (September 2019 ) , *This is not sponsored content – The effects of impartiality disclosure and e-commerce landing pages on consumer responses to social media influencer posts* , Computers in Human Behavior , Elsevier Ltd, Volume 98, , Pages 210-222

<sup>30</sup> Rong-Ho Lin , Christine Jan , and Chun-Ling Chuang (2019) , *Influencer Marketing on Instagram* , International Journal of Innovation in Management, Vol. 7, No. 1, p. 33-41



Influencers are “*Everyday, ordinary Internet users who accumulate a relatively large following on blogs and social media through the textual and visual narration of their personal lives and lifestyles, engage with their following in digital and physical spaces, and monetize their following by integrating “advertorials” into their blog or social media posts*”<sup>31</sup>

These influencers are social media users who have garnered significant attention and have built a substantial following. Their followers have a keen interest in social media posting, as evidenced by their subscriptions to the influencers' channels and their reception of regular updates.

Influencers' content serves as a valuable source of information for their followers, providing both educational and entertaining content . With a large community of devoted followers, it is no wonder that businesses seek out influencers to enhance the impact of their social media posts because Instead of looking at companies as they did in the past, consumers now look at each other and their favorite personalities to make their choices.

Brand now can choose between various types of influencer depending on their marketing strategy : <sup>32</sup>

- Bloggers and Vloggers
- Social media sensations
- Reality tv stars
- Mainstreamcelebrities
- Micro Influencers
- Nano Influencers
- Charityappeals and Activists

### 3.2.2 Influencer marketing definition

Influencer marketing is “ *identifying key communities and opinion leaders who are likely to talk about products and have the ability to influence the opinions of others*” <sup>33</sup>

This type of marketing is based on collaborating with influencers and opinion leaders who are compensated for their efforts with cash, free products, or services to promote a brand.

<sup>31</sup>Mariah L. Wellman a, Ryan Stoldtb, Melissa Tully b, and Brian Ekdal (2020), *Ethics of Authenticity: Social Media Influencers and the Production of Sponsored Content* , Journal of media ethic

<sup>32</sup> Wilson Ozuem , Michelle Willis(2022) , *Digital marketing strategies for value co-creation* , p213-219, palgravemacmillan

<sup>33</sup> Ida Kristin Johansen & Camilla SvebergGuldvik (2017), *Influencer Marketing and Purchase Intentions :How does influencer marketing affect purchase intentions?* , Master thesis in Marketing and Brand Management , NORWEGIAN SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS , p14

For years, brands have been reaching out directly to influencers they are interested in. Due to changes in social media marketing and the increasing demand for more services, new companies have emerged.

These companies have created databases that collect influencers from various fields, helping them find influencers who are a good fit for their brand or product/service easily within their database. This will help streamline their social media marketing by identifying the most suitable influencers and reducing the time spent searching for them.

### **3.2.3 Types of influencer marketing campaigns**

One influencer may participate in various influencer marketing campaigns, each of which can yield success for certain companies while falling short for others. Therefore, it's essential for brands to carefully select campaigns that align with their product, target audience, and goals. Moreover, brands must consider the suitability of the influencer, ensuring that the chosen source of influence resonates effectively with the intended audience and brand message .

These influencer marketing campaigns are<sup>34</sup> :

#### **3.2.3.1 Product placement**

This strategy, initially employed in films, TV shows, and events, has now extended into the digital realm, where social media influencers seamlessly integrate products into their content whether through videos, photos, or written posts . influencers showcase products without overt promotion or endorsement and can authentically demonstrate product use in real-life scenarios depending on contractual agreement .

#### **3.2.3.2 Unboxing**

Influencers showcase the process of unpacking and revealing a product, providing their audience with an authentic and immersive experience, and sharing their initial impressions and reactions. It generates excitement and curiosity among viewers, which makes them want to try the product.

#### **3.2.3.3 Pre\_release**

The strategy is similar to unboxing; the only difference is that a brand gives influencers exclusive access to products and services before they are available to the public. That's how they can provide their audience with an insider's glimpse into upcoming offerings.

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<sup>34</sup>Wilson Ozuem , Michelle Willis (20022) , opcit, p221-224

### 3.2.3.4 Brand ambassador

In this type of campaign, influencers are often referred to as "brand ambassadors." These individuals, typically well-known personalities, celebrities, experts, or influencers, actively promote a brand by consistently posting content about it over a prolonged period. Through their endorsement, brand ambassadors aim to build trust with their audience and encourage them to align with the brand they endorse, thus solidifying their role as the brand representative .

### 3.2.3.5 Theme or hashtag campaigns

Influencers employ hashtag symbols across various styles of content to leverage the potential of user-generated content. The shared usage of a singular hashtag unifies different campaigns associated with the brand, allowing them to gain popularity and spread rapidly on various social media platforms.

### 3.2.3.6 Contest and giveaways

This campaign offers people and customers an opportunity to win free products or discounts through a contest promoted by an influencer to reach a broader audience. Participants engage by completing specific tasks, such as answering trivia questions, participating in challenges, or sharing and commenting to win.

### 3.2.3.7 sponsored content

Sponsored content involves promotional media funded by an advertiser but created and shared by a separate entity such as a brand, influencer, or publisher. When choosing to sponsor a influencer, it's crucial to select someone who resonates with your target audience and regularly covers topics aligned with your brand.

## 3.2.4 Instagram as a tool of influencer marketing <sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Michael Haenlein, ErtanAnadol, Tyler Farnsworth, Harry Hugo, Jess Hunichen, and Diana Welt (2020) , *Navigating the New Era of Influencer Marketing: How to be Successful on InStagram, tiktok, & co* , University of California , Article reuse guidelines: [sagepub.com/journals-permissions](https://www.sagepub.com/journals-permissions) , p07

Among the numerous social media platforms available, Instagram has emerged as the most relevant channel for influencer marketing and the favored platform for influencers to share posts related to brands. This helps shape the audience's attitudes through online activities and increases brand awareness.

When compared to other social media platforms, we see that Instagram holds the most potential for influencer marketing. The reason why Facebook and Twitter have limited appeal for influencer marketing might be because of how people use these platforms. Facebook is mainly used to keep in touch with friends and family, while Twitter is used for news updates. These usage patterns determine why people visit these sites and how networks are formed.

The underlying factors that drive user engagement on Instagram fundamentally differ, with entertainment and the desire to pass time occupying a more prominent position. Therefore, on Instagram, it is easier to gain influence as users often follow others purely for their entertainment value, regardless of any real-life connection. Furthermore, Instagram provides a diverse range of content formats such as images, videos, reels, and stories.

The platform focuses on a key factor, which is entertainment, facilitating the effectiveness of influencer marketing compared to text-based platforms like Twitter.

### **3.3 Distinguishing sponsored content from different forms of content**

Understanding the nuances between various forms of content is essential for marketers aiming to leverage them effectively. By distinguishing sponsored content from other forms of content, such as paid advertisements and brand content, marketers can better strategize and optimize their campaigns

#### **3.3.1 Sponsored content vs Paid advertisement**

The key differences between sponsored content and paid advertisements lie in their format, context, disclosure and control <sup>36</sup> :

##### **3.3.1.1 The format**

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<sup>36</sup><https://www.activecampaign.com/blog/sponsored-content>

- **Sponsored Content:** typically refers to organic-looking posts or content created by influencers or content creators that feature a brand's product, service, or message. It is integrated into the influencer's regular content feed and aligns with their style and tone.
- **Social media advertising :** paid advertisements that are presented as separate posts on social media platforms, created and managed directly by the brand or advertiser, rather than by independent influencers. Platforms such as Facebook Ads and Instagram Ads are commonly utilized to distribute these advertisements.

### 3.3.1.2 The context

- **Sponsored Content:** is usually presented within the context of the influencer's or content creator's own content feed. It blends in with the rest of their posts and is designed to resonate with their audience's interests and preferences.
- **Social media advertising:** distinct from organic content and appear as sponsored advertisements within the social media platform's feed. They may be targeted to specific audience demographics or interests set by the advertiser.

### 3.3.1.3 The disclosure and transparency

- **Sponsored Content:** it requires disclosure and transparency. Influencers are typically required to disclose their partnership with the brand through hashtags (#sponsored, #ad, #brand name) or other clear disclosures, but the integration may still feel more organic and less overtly promotional.
- **Social media advertising:** advertising posts are clearly labeled as paid advertisements within the social media platform's interface. They are often accompanied by a tag or label indicating that they are "sponsored" or "paid".

### 3.3.1.4 The control

- **Sponsored Content :** brands typically have some level of control over the content and messaging in sponsored content, but influencers or content creators retain creative freedom to integrate the brand message into their own style and voice.
- **Social media advertising :** brands have more direct control over the content and messaging since they are created and managed by the advertiser. They can specify the content, format, targeting, and placement of the sponsored posts within the social media platform.

### 3.3.2 Sponsored content vs Branded content :

The key differences between sponsored content and branded content lie in their publications outlets , content creation , content reach and metrics and measurement <sup>37</sup> :

### **3.3.2.1 Publication Outlets**

- Sponsored content : after collaborating with the brand, the content is published on the influencer's social media account. It seamlessly fits into the influencer's feed, maintaining the aesthetic and tone that their audience knows and loves.
- Branded content : the brand takes on the role of its own publisher rather than relying on external voices. The content is integrated into a company's website, blog, or social media account.

### **3.3.2.2 Content creation**

- Sponsored content : a collaborative effort between the brand and the influencer. The content produced should present the brand in a positive light and remain consistent to the publisher's tone and style .
- Branded content : when it comes to producing branded content, it is either done by an internal team or outsourced to an agency to avoid any potential confusion that may arise from working with external collaborators.

### **3.3.2.3Content reach**

- Sponsored content : collaborating with an influential publisher helps brands gain consumers' attention because the content is delivered through a credible source, avoiding the appearance of traditional advertisements and fostering a more genuine connection with the audience.
- Branded content : this one may have a more limited reach ; It tends to engage individuals who are already actively exploring a company's website or following the brand on social media

### **3.3.2.4 metrics and measurement**

- Sponsored content : typically , it include engagement rates, reach, and impressions, as well as more qualitative measures such as sentiment analysis and brand affinity

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<sup>37</sup><https://roopco.com/sponsored-content-vs-branded-content-theyre-right/>

- Branded content :Brands have access to detailed analytics and insights through their own website analytics tools and social media platforms. They can track metrics such as website traffic, conversions, and audience demographics

### 3.4 The process of creating sponsored content

The process of creating sponsored content can be organized in 7 steps <sup>38</sup> :

#### 3.4.1 Identifying Objectives and Target Audience

When it comes to crafting the ideal content's messaging, format, and tone that genuinely connect with the audience's sensibilities and address their particular needs and concerns, it is imperative to have a thorough understanding of your intended audience. This comprehension includes demographic attributes, online presence, and content consumption behaviors .

#### 3.4.2 Choose the right format and platform

A wide range of content forms and distribution channels can be intelligently used to distribute sponsored content in a way that aligns with your strategic goals and the preferences of your target audience. For example, if you wish to present the features of your product, you may consider creating a video or a series of images on Instagram. If you desire to share your knowledge or viewpoint, you could opt for writing a blog post or recording a podcast.

#### 3.4.3 Choose your partner

Simply having an influencer post about your business on their account is insufficient; you also need to consider the potential value that the influencer's selection may have for the campaign. When an influencer's campaign fails, we can't automatically assume that he's not good at what he does , it might be that their usual social media approach and image simply do not align with the company's intentions .That's why there are some characteristics to take into consideration while choosing your influencer : <sup>39</sup>

- Trustworthiness : refers to the credibility of the source and their ability to convince their audience to accept an endorsement because audiences are more likely to engage with sponsored content if they perceive the creator as trustworthy.
- Expertise: When we talk about influencers' expertise, we do not mean certified qualifications in the category their content is based on. It means that their content is

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<sup>38</sup><https://www.upfluence.com/influencer-marketing/how-to-run-an-influencer-marketing-campaign-in-7-steps>

<sup>39</sup> Wilson Ozuem , Michelle Willis , Op.cit, p255

somehow related to the brand industry, and they provide high-quality content. For instance, if you're a travel agency, you will consider working with an influencer who posts about his travel experiences.

- **Personality:** Displaying the influencer's personality, whether through humor, empathy, or thoughtfulness, helps humanize the brand and establish strong emotional connections with the target audience.
- **Identity Match:** The perceived alignment between the brand, the influencer, and the target audience in terms of values, beliefs, interests, and characteristics.
- **Engagement :** refers to the level of which sponsored content prompts likes, comments, and shares from the audience. One of the key things to consider when looking for a high degree of engagement is the number of follower.

#### **3.4.4 Briefs and contracts**

- **Creating campaign brief :** every new campaign should have a brief that includes crucial information about content production and message tone, dos & don'ts, as well as a timeline
- **Negotiation :** A crucial component of any cooperation is negotiation , aim for collaborations that benefit both parties .
- **Creating the contract :** A contract serves to establish terms of engagement , reduce risks and ensure transparency in the partnership.

#### **3.4.5 Content Creation**

Influencers now have the responsibility of developing compelling and relevant content that aligns with the campaign objectives and resonates with the target audience. Before proceeding to the next step, marketers running the campaign can review and validate the content if necessary.

#### **3.4.6 Publication and Promotion**

When publishing content, influencers are required to disclose sponsored content clearly and transparently to their audience. They often use hashtags like #ad, #sponsored, or #partner.

Scheduling content publication, reposting the content on the brand's social media channels, and responding to comments can effectively reach more people and maximize engagement.

#### **3.4.7 Monitoring and Measurement**



It is essential to monitor your key performance indicators (KPIs) at the end of your campaign to evaluate its effectiveness. They help in tracking progress, identifying areas for improvement, and making data-driven decisions.

**Conclusion :**

As we have seen , chapter one has explored the multifaceted landscape of brand content in the digital era and highlighted the importance of content marketing , emphasizing their critical role in modern marketing strategies and their unique ability to attract customers through valuable and relevant content . The concept of sponsored content and its relationship with influencer marketing demonstrates how brands can leverage influencer credibility to enhance their message and image

In conclusion, we can conclude that brand content has become an indispensable element in the digital marketing landscape. By leveraging various content marketing strategies, brands can effectively engage with their audience, build trust, create a good image and drive consumer loyalty.

We can therefore conclude that content marketing an influencers in this time have a huge impact on how consumer shape their ideas about a brand and how they act toward it . That is why we will study the influencer of sponsored content on consumer's brand perception being the first step of the process that lead to purchase . The second chapter will study the perception of consumers and after that an analyze of the impact of sponsored content on consumer's brand perception in the third chapter. .

# **CHAPTER 02 : THE BRAND PERCEPTION**

## Introduction

In today's market, there are a multitude of products and services, each with its own attributes, particularities, and ways of expressing and communicating in the marketplace. For consumers, it would be hard to distinguish between products and services without the presence of a brand. Therefore, making a purchase decision and choosing one product over another would be meaningless.

A brand encompasses more than just a name or logo; it represents a comprehensive set of attributes that distinguish the products or services of one seller from those of competitors. Brands are not only identifiers but also powerful influencers of consumer behavior and perceptions. This refers to how consumers perceive a brand based on their interactions, experiences, and the information they receive. In our case, it is influenced by the sponsored content they interact with or see.

The first part of this chapter is devoted to defining the brand through different definitions according to authors, its signifiers, its components and its functions . In the second section, we will delve deeper into the topics of perception and brand perception, exploring how consumers perceive brands and the factors that influence and help shape their perceptions.

## Section 01 :Brand concept

Brands have become a cornerstone of modern business, evolving significantly over time to meet the changing needs and preferences of consumers. In this section, we will delve into the historical evolution of brands, providing a comprehensive definition and exploring the various signifiers that distinguish one brand from another. We will examine the purpose and function of brands, outlining their constituent elements and the different types that exist in today's market .

### 1.1 Historical evolution of the brand<sup>40</sup>

The word "Brand" entered Anglo-Saxon culture from the Old Norse word "brandr" which means to burn. For over 4,000 years, brands have been used for the identification of livestock and cattle , farmers with a particularly good reputation for the quality of their animals would find their brand much sought after, while the brands of farmers with a lesser reputation were to be avoided or treated with caution .Thus, the utility of brands as a guide to choice was established, a role that has remained unchanged to the present day.

Some of the earliest manufactured goods in “mass” production were clay pots where potters used brands to identify the ownership of their goods . a potter distinguished his pots by imprinting his thumb on the moist clay at the base or by leaving his signature mark, such as a fish, star, or cross.

During the Industrial Revolution, factories aimed to broaden their customer base by selling their mass-produced goods to a larger market. In order to distinguish their products from locally made ones, these factories began physically marking their logo or emblem on the barrels they used for shipping. This expanded the definition of "brand" to include a trademark.

After logos, product associations with celebrities come into play, personalities like Aunt Jemima and Quaker Oats evoke a feeling, such as the comforting presence of the spokesperson. In 1940, companies soon realized that consumers were not just buying products, but brands, which resulted in a surge of commercial awareness. By 1980, brands were becoming increasingly valuable, acquiring the same capital value as any other asset.

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<sup>40</sup> Dr. s.rajaram (2012),*History of branding* , international journal of social sciences & interdisciplinary research , vol.1 no. 3 , p.100-p102

## 1.2 Brand definition

We will try to explain the brand concept better by giving several definitions according to several authors :

According to Kotler , a brand is “ *A name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of these, that identifies the products or services of one seller or group of sellers and differentiates them from those of competitors*”<sup>41</sup>.

LENDREVIE and Levy said that : “*The brand is a name and a set of signs that indicate the origin of an offer, differentiate it from competitors, influence the perception and behavior of customers through a set of mental representations, and thus create value for the company*”.<sup>42</sup>

In their work, KAPFERER and THOENING said that “*The brand is a central phenomenon in modern economies, both as a factor in their competitiveness and as a catalyst for relations between the various economic actors*”<sup>43</sup>.

Branding has become so strong that now almost everything is marked with a brand , salt is packaged in branded containers , basic nuts and bolts come in packaging with a distributor's name, and even car components , even everyday items like fruits, vegetables, dairy products, and poultry are now associated with a specific brand.

Brand helps both buyers and sellers ,buyers who consistently purchase a particular brand are well aware that they will get the same features, benefits, and quality each time they buy .For sellers, branding offers several advantages too. The brand name and trademark provide legal protection for unique product features that might otherwise be copied by competitors. It also helps the seller to segment markets. For example, instead of offering just one general product to all consumers, Toyota can offer different brands like Lexus, Toyota, and Scion, each with numerous sub-brands such as Avalon, Camry, Corolla, Prius, Yaris, Tundra, and Land Cruiser.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>41</sup> Philip kotler (2018), *Principles of marketing* , 17e , Pearson , London , P.250

<sup>42</sup> LENDREVIE (J) et LEVIE (J) (2014), *Mercator tout le marketing a 1ère numérique* , 11ème édition , Dunod, Paris ,P.787.

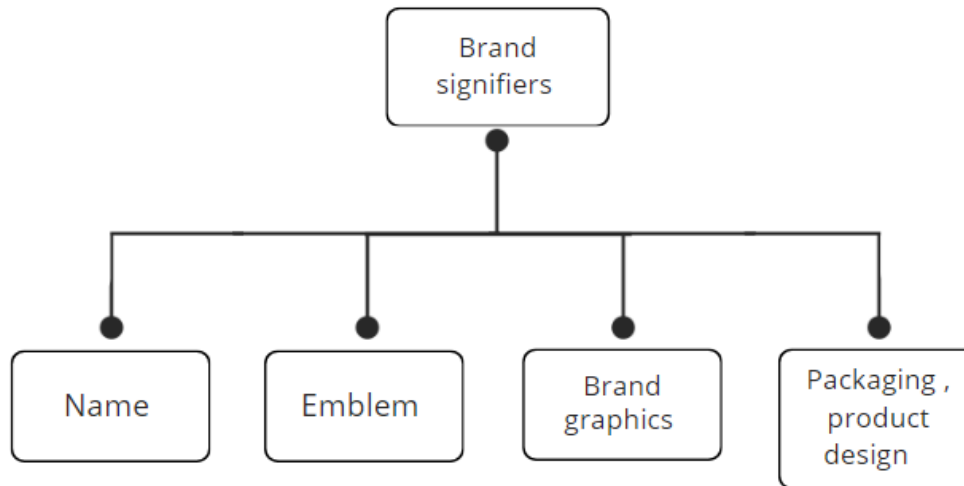
<sup>43</sup>J.N.KAPFERER ET J-C. THOENING (1944) , *La marque* , Ediscience international, Paris , p121

<sup>44</sup>David A. Aake(1996) , *Building Strong Brands* , the free press , New York , p12

### 1.3 Brand signifiers

Brand signage refers to the collection of signs that establish brand recognition. The different senses of the customer are utilized to attract attention to the brand, facilitate identification, and communicate its promises<sup>45</sup>.

Figure 04 : Brand signifiers



source : J.LENDERVIE and others(2006) , « Théorie et pratique du marketing », , Donud, Paris, , p 776

#### 1.3.1 The brand name

It is a word or combination of words that serves as the primary identifier of a product, service, or company within the market. Finding the right name that is legally available is a gargantuan challenge. Naming requires a creative, disciplined, and strategic approach<sup>46</sup>

##### 1.3.1.1 Qualities of an effective name:<sup>47</sup>

- Meaningful : it communicates the brand's core message and reinforces the desired company image.
- Distinctive: it is unique, memorable, easy to pronounce, and spell. It is differentiated from the competition .
- Future oriented : it's designed to support the company's growth, adapt to changes, and lead to long-term success

<sup>45</sup> . J. LANDERVIE and others (2006),*Théorie et pratique du marketing* , 7th ed, Donud, Paris,P776.

<sup>46</sup> Aleena whiner (2009), *DesigninBrand\_Identity : An\_Essential Guide f or the Whole Branding\_Team* ,3<sup>rd</sup> edition , John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Hoboken, New Jersey , p 20

<sup>47</sup>Ibid , p 21

- Modular: it makes it simple for a business to create brand expansions.
- Protectable : it can be owned and trademarked.
- Positive : it's crafted to evoke positive feelings and associations among customers and stakeholders , this means When individuals come across the brand name, they think of qualities like trust, quality, reliability, or innovation, depending on what the brand represents.
- Visual : it can be effectively represented through graphics, whether in a logo, text, or overall brand architecture.

### 1.3.1.2 Types of brand name :<sup>48</sup>

- Founder : many companies are named after their founders, such as the Walt Disney Company, founded by Walt Disney and his brother, and McDonald's Corporation, originally established as a barbecue restaurant by Richard and Maurice McDonald. This naming convention combines personal identity with corporate identity.
- Descriptive : these names convey the nature of the business, such as Toys “R” Us, Find Great People, or E\*TRADE. Descriptive names can effectively communicate the purpose of a company. However, as companies expand or diversify, their name can become limiting and may require additional branding strategies.
- Fabricated : an invented title, such as Kodak, Xerox, or TiVo ,it is unique and easy to copyright but , introducing it to the market requires substantial capital and effort to educate consumers about the brand's identity, products, or services.
- Metaphor : this type uses places , animals or mythological names to evoke imagery, emotions, or concepts related to the brand's identity, values, or offerings and create associations that go beyond literal meanings.
- Acronym : a shorter, more memorable brand identifier is created by using initials or a combination of letters from a longer name or phrase. It can be catchy and easy to pronounce, such as IBM and NASA.
- Magic spell : the meaning of this name is not linked to the products or the brand's activity, such as Apple, Netflix, or Google. Brands use this approach to create a distinctive and protectable name.

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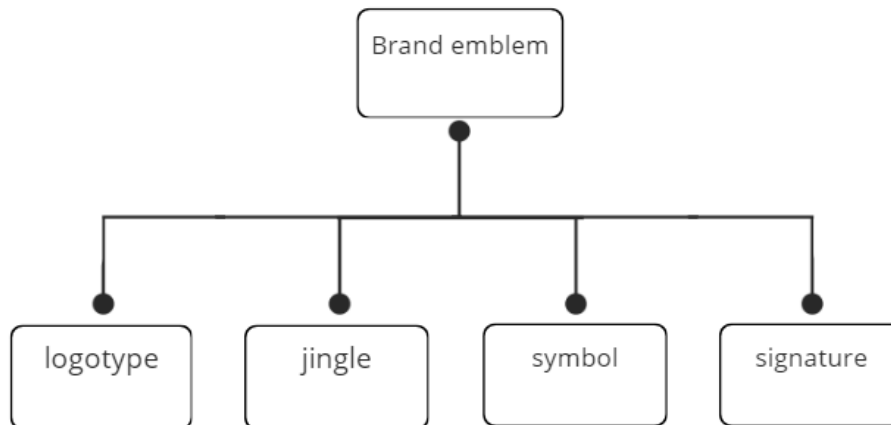
<sup>48</sup>Ibid , p22



### 1.3.2 The emblem

The brand identity is viewed as asset that seizes every opportunity to build awareness, increase recognition, communicate uniqueness and quality, and express a competitive difference

Figure 05 : Components of the brand emblem



Source : J.LENDERVIE and others , « Théorie et pratique du marketing », , Donud, Paris, 2006, p 776

#### 1.3.2.1 Components of the brand emblem :

- Logo : a logotype is a word (or words) in a determined font, which may be standard, modified, or entirely redrawn. it serves as a company's major graphical representation . By utilizing colors, fonts, typography, and imagery, a logo can convey the brand's identity, values, and personality <sup>49</sup>.
- Jingle : a jingle is a form of sound symbolism or a brief song that accompanies a brand name. It permanently identifies a brand, establishes an emotional bond with consumers, and increases brand recall <sup>50</sup>. Some famous brand jingles are :
  - The "I'm Lovin' It" jingle of mcdonald's.
  - The famous netflix jingle, known as the "ta-dum" .
  - The Sony Pictures Entertainment company jingle .
- Simbol : it can be incorporated or named in the logo. it can be characters (Michelin's Bident-dum) or animals (Lion, Eagle, etc.).

<sup>49</sup>Ibid , p 137

<sup>50</sup> Richard R. Klink & Lan Wu (2013) , *The role of position, type, and combination of sound symbolism imbeds in brand names* , Springer, New York , p02

- Signature (slogan / taglines) : a brief and unforgettable statement that captures the very essence of a brand., its values, unique selling proposition, or the benefits it offers to customers. It is often used in advertising, marketing campaigns, and other promotional materials to create brand recognition and resonate with the target audience . Some famous examples include Nike's "Just Do It," McDonald's "I'm Lovin' It," and Apple's "Think Different."

Essential characteristics of slogan :

A slogan is a vital element of a brand's identity, designed to leave a lasting impression on the audience. To be effective, a slogan must exhibit several essential characteristics : Short , Unique , Easy to say and remember , Differentiated from its competitors , Captures the brand essence and positioning , No negative connotations , Displayed in a small font , Difficult to create , Evokes an emotional response , has No negative connotations , and Can be protected and trademarked <sup>51</sup>

### 1.3.3 Packaging and design

A packaging is “ “a physical structure suitable for a product, which is designed to protect it from damage and deterioration, enable its dividing into portions and transport (utility functions) as well as to provide information on the product and present it aesthetically ”.<sup>52</sup>

**The most distinctive features of packaging :**

- Protection of the product during its storage, transportation, and sometimes usage.
- Necessary information about a product.
- Psychological impact on a potential customer through appropriate presentation of a product.

### 1.3.4 Brand graphics

It refers to a set of elements, such as colors and staging, that promote and facilitate the brand's external and internal communication in the market.

<sup>51</sup> Aleena whiner(2009) , *Op.cit* , p 36

<sup>52</sup> JoannaWyrwa, AnettaBarska ( 2016) , *Packaging as a Source of Information about Food Product* , University of ZielonaGóra, Faculty of Economics and Management, Elsevier , p03

## 1.4 Constituent Elements of Brands

These components of a brand serve as reference points that combine tangible and intangible values, providing consumers with relatable aspects to connect with. These elements can be grouped into six main categories<sup>53</sup> :

### 1.4.1 Elements of communication

- Name : the primary identifier that consumers use to recognize and refer to the brand .
- Slogan : the catchy phrase that accompanies the name and encapsulates the brand's essence, promise, or key message.
- Logo/symbols : the visual representations that serve as visual identifiers of the brand.
- Advertising : a strategic tool used to promote their products or services, build brand awareness, and influence consumer perceptions. It involves creating and disseminating persuasive messages through various media channels to reach the target audience.

### 1.4.2 Reference cultures

- Period : this refers to the historical or contemporary context within which the brand operates.
- Country : the country or region where the brand originates or is primarily based .
- Social group : the specific group of people that a brand targets within society, based on demographics, lifestyles, interests, or values.

### 1.4.3 Reference individuals

- Founders : in many companies, the founding individuals are at the heart of the internal identity , their role is not always limited to an internal one. Bill Gates fights systematically for MICROSOFT .
- Personalities : personalities that associate their personal image with the company or the brand such as brand ambassadors, influencers, or spokespersons .
- Imaginary characters : fictional or created personas that represent the brand's values, personality, and can also be associated with a voice. such as the **Michelin Man** “**Bibendum**”, it is depicted as a humanoid figure made of tires, symbolizing strength and durability .

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<sup>53</sup>Coumauj.b., gagne j.f., jossierand e. (2005), *Manager par la marque* , Édition d'organisation, P67

#### 1.4.4 Offered services

- Product/service : the product is the core offering of a brand, whether it's tangible products or intangible services. It answers a particular need and offers added value.
- Associated services : the augmented product that surrounds the core benefit and actual product by offering additional consumer services and benefits such as delivery and after-sales services.<sup>54</sup>
- Price : the sum of the values that customers exchange for the benefits of having or using the product or service, and it is the only element in the marketing mix that produces revenue.<sup>55</sup>

#### 1.4.5 Formulated elements

- Values : core beliefs and principles that guide an organization's decisions, actions, and interactions both internally and externally
- Vision/mission : long-term aspirations, goals, and desired future state, providing a sense of direction and purpose for the organization.
- Promise : the brand promise is a commitment made to customers regarding the value, benefits, and experience they can expect when interacting with the brand.
- Positioning : means owning a credible and profitable “position” in the consumer’s mind, either by getting there first, or by adopting a position relative to the competition, or by repositioning the competition.<sup>56</sup>

#### 1.4.6 Behaviors of organizationmembers

- Employee behavior : the behavior of employees at all levels of the organization impacts the brand's reputation, customer interactions, and overall organizational culture.
- Behavior of manager: managers have an important role in setting the tone for organizational culture and behaviors. The way they lead, communicate, make decisions, and treat their

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<sup>54</sup> Philip kotler ( 2018) , *Op.cit* , p246

<sup>55</sup>Idem , p309

<sup>56</sup>Rita Clifton and John Simmons (2003) , *Brand and Branding* , London , Profile Books Ltd , p96

employees influence morale, productivity, and employee commitment to the brand's values and mission .

- Directors' behavior : board directors and senior leaders behavior and commitment to the brand's vision and values reflect on the brand's reputation and stakeholder trust.

The table below summarize the six components elements of the brand :

Table 03:Constituent elements of a Brand

Categories	Vectors
<b>communication</b>	Name
	slogan
	logotype
	advertising
<b>Reference cultures</b>	period
	country
	Social group
<b>Reference individuals</b>	founders
	personality
	Imaginarycharacters
<b>Offered services</b>	Product/service
	Associated services
	price
<b>Formulatedelements</b>	values
	Vision / mission
	promise
	postioning
<b>Behaviors of organizationmembers</b>	Employeebehavior
	Behavior of managers
	Director'sbehavior

Source.: COUMAU J.B., GAGNE J.F., JOSSERAND E., (2005), « Manager par la marque », P 67.

## 1.5 Brand functions

By examining the roles a brand plays for the consumer and the company, business can better understand how to leverage branding strategies effectively <sup>57</sup> :

### 1.5.1 The role of the brand for the consumer

The brand plays three main roles for the consumer: identification, reduction of perceived risk, and personalization.

- Identification :

The unique characteristics of a brand help consumers quickly identify products within its range, these elements , such as the logo, colors, and shapes associated with the brand serve as reference points that make it easy for consumers to recognize their preferred brand without much effort .

This feature is typically very important for mass market brands because buyers usually only take 5 to 12 seconds to select a brand from a shelf in a certain category.

Furthermore, the brand helps consumers quickly recall past decision-making processes, which saves them time and energy by enabling identical repurchases.

- Reduction of perceived risk :

By branding its products, a brand reveals their origin and establishes a contract with consumers, committing to consistent quality regardless of purchase location or time. This is crucial for a brand because consumers cannot easily assess the product's quality before purchase.

- Personalization :

The brand also plays a role on psychological and social levels. Its specific characteristics allow the consumer to assert their uniqueness, signify their belonging to a group (social class, tribe...), or feel valued by wearing or consuming it . The brand now becomes a language code, a sign of recognition for oneself and others. This is particularly true for clothing and luxury brands, but not exclusively.

### 1.5.2 The role of the brand for the company

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<sup>57</sup>Chantal Lai , Isabelle Aimé,( 2016) , *La marque*, DUNOD , p 23-24-25

Brands make it possible to appropriate and authenticate signed products or services, which can be a source of competitive advantage for the company.

- Appropriation :

The primary function of the brand is for the organization to demonstrate its ownership of the product or service. The brand enables the company to legally protect certain aspects or exclusive characteristics of the product through intellectual property rights especially in today's increasingly complex and crowded markets .

- Authentication :

Signing a product with a brand allows for its authentication and certification of origin, providing the manufacturer's or issuer's endorsement and guarantee . However, it's important to mention that when there are multiple mergers, acquisitions, and divestitures, it might lead to misunderstandings over the true identity of the business behind the brands .

For example, " La Laitière" yogurts are no longer produced by Nestlé but by Lactalis.

Competitive Advantage:

It's when a brand gives a product unique meanings and associations that set it apart from competitors. This differentiation allows satisfied customers to repurchase, fostering brand loyalty. This loyalty is a guarantee for the company of future sales and profits, while also complicating the entry of competing products.

## Section 02 :Brand Perception

Understanding how consumers perceive brands is critical for effective brand management .In this section, we will begin by defining perception and then narrow our focus to brand perception specifically. We will explore the perceptual process and the main psychological responses that consumers exhibit towards brand stimuli. Additionally, we will identify the factors that influence brand perception and discuss why it is crucial for brands to manage these perceptions carefully.

### 2.1 Perception definition

*“ Perception is a constructive process that depends not only on the stimulus but also on the mental apparatus of the perceiver, the organization of the sensory and motor systems in the brain”*<sup>58</sup>

Perception can be defined as the intricate process through which individuals attain awareness and understanding of sensory information. It involves not only observing a stimuli ) but also forming mental images and comprehending the knowledge gained from these observations. Our perceptual systems also enable us to see the world around us as stable, even when the stimulus we receive is incomplete or changing.

Perception is highly personalized, influenced by an individual's beliefs, expectations, and attitude, which are psychological tendencies to evaluate objects along a degree of favor or liking. To perceive something, one needs exposure to it, as perception relies on stimuli presented to an individual and interpreted in a specific and personal manner. Overall, perception is a dynamic cognitive process that involves processing sensory inputs to create a unique understanding of the world based on individual experiences and interpretations.<sup>59</sup>

### 2.2 Brand perception

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<sup>58</sup>Kandel, E. R., Jessell, T. M., Schwartz, J. H., Siegelbaum, S. A., & Hudspeth, A. (2013, January 1). *Principles of Neural Science*, 5th Edition ,McGraw Hill Professional., p370

<sup>59</sup> . McDonald, S. M. (2011, November 11). *Perception: A Concept Analysis. International Journal of Nursing Terminologies and Classifications*,International Journal of Nursing Terminologies and Classifications , <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-618x.2011.01198.x>



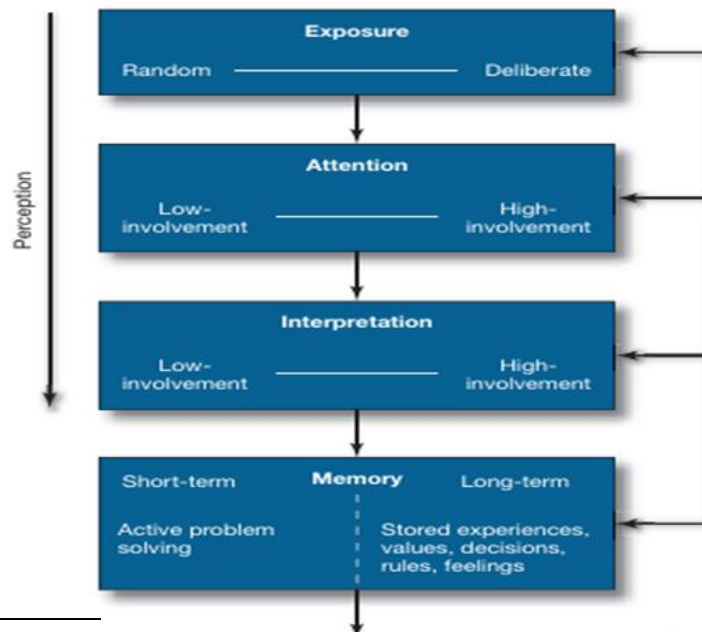
Brand perception is a critical psychological factor that significantly influences consumer behavior. Unlike what brands may intend or project, it is ultimately consumers who control how brands are perceived , Marty Neumeier in his book “The Brand Gap” said that “*Brand is not what you say it is. It’s what they say it is*” .

In marketing, perception is reality, which means that it's what people believe a brand represents, rather than what a brand says it represents ,It encompasses the beliefs, attitudes, feelings, and opinions . Brand perception refers to how consumers perceive and interpret a brand based on their experiences, interactions, beliefs, and feelings after being exposed to certain stimuli. This stimulus is one of the factors that help shape consumer perception about a brand.<sup>60</sup>

Every marketer today must have a deep understanding of what perception entails because customers rely on their perception about a particular brand before actually buying or using the product. Therefore, managing and shaping brand perception through strategic branding, communication, and customer experience initiatives is paramount for businesses aiming to create positive consumer attitudes, foster brand loyalty, and drive meaningful interactions with their target audience.<sup>61</sup>

2.3 The perceptual process <sup>62</sup>

figure 06: the perceptual process



<sup>60</sup>Qurat-Ul-Ain Zafar , MahiraRafique , *Impact of Celebrity Advertisement on Customers’ Brand Perception and Purchase Intention* , Asian Journal of Business and Management Sciences , Vol. 1 No. 11 ,

<sup>61</sup> M. Guliyev, S. (February 18 ,2023). *the impact of brand perception and brand image on consumer purchasing behavior in azerbaijan*. Science, Education and Innovations in the Context of Modern Problems, 6(1), 137–144. <https://doi.org/10.56334/sei/6.1.5>

<sup>62</sup> David L. Mothersbaugh and Delbert I.Hawkins (2017) *Consumer Behavior:BuildingMarketing Strategy*, 11th EDITION, New York: McGraw Hill, p279-293

source :David L. Mothersbaugh and Delbert I.Hawkins, (New York: McGraw Hill, 2017) Consumer Behavior:BuildingMarketing Strategy

Figure (06) suggests a linear flow from exposure to memory. However, these processes occur virtually simultaneously and are clearly interactive . For example, a person's memory influences the information he or she is exposed to and attends to and the interpretations the person assigns to that information. At the same time, memory itself is being shaped by the information it is receiving .

### 2.3.1 Exposure

Initial stage of the perceptual process.it occurs when a stimulus is placed within a person's relevant environment and comes within range of their sensory receptor nerves . Exposure provides consumers with the opportunity to pay attention to available information but in no way guarantees it. For example, have you ever been watching television and realized that you were not paying attention to the commercials being aired? In this case, exposure occurred, but the commercials will probably have little influence due to your lack of attention.

Individuals are exposed to information through two kind of exposure:

- **Intentional exposure** : occurs when individuals consciously and purposefully interact with specific stimuli. This could include actively choosing to watch a video, listen to music, read a book, etc.
- **Accidental exposure** : occurs when individuals encounter stimuli without actively seeking or intending to do so. This can happen unexpectedly or by chance . such as hearing a song playing in a store, seeing an advertisement while scrolling through social media, or noticing a billboard while driving.

### 2.3.2 Attention

Attentionis *“the taking possession by the mind in clear and vivid form, of one out of what seem several simultaneously possible objects or trains of thought”*<sup>63</sup>.

It when our sensory organs receive a stimulus from the environment and transformed from input energy into neural activity.

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<sup>63</sup> William James (1890), *Principle of Psychology* , Henry holt company , Vol. 1

In order to capture and retain the attention of consumers, marketers use various marketing techniques such as using attention-grabbing visuals, compelling headlines, unique selling propositions (USPs), storytelling, humor, or interactive elements.

Attention is influenced by :

- **Stimulus Factors:** physical characteristics of the stimulus such as size, intensity, attractive visuals, color and movement, position, isolation, format, contrast and, information quantity.
- **Individual Factors:** are characteristics that distinguish an individual from another such as affective state, motivate and ability (refers to the capacity of individuals to attend to and process information).
- **Situational Factors:** include stimuli in the environment other than the focal stimulus, which refers to the context or environment in which consumers encounter stimuli, such as clutter (Clutter represents the density of stimuli in the environment) and program involvement (program involvement refers to how interested viewers are in the program or editorial content surrounding the ads).

#### 2.3.4 Interpretation

Refers to the cognitive processes through which consumers comprehend, make sense and assign meaning to the stimuli they have been exposed to, Interpretation is the assignment of meaning to sensations. Interpretation is related to how we comprehend and make sense of incoming information based on characteristics of the stimulus, the individual, and the situation.<sup>64</sup>

### 2.4 The main consumer psychological responses to brand stimuli

#### 2.4.1 Perception

The term "brand perception" describes how customers view and understand a brand in light of their interactions, experiences, beliefs, and emotions following exposure to particular stimuli.

#### 2.4.2 Learning

Learning is defined as any change in the content or organization of long-term memory or behavior. It is the result of information processing, which involves a series of activities where stimuli are perceived, transformed into information, and stored. Consumers learn about a brand's features,

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<sup>64</sup> Kenyon, G. N., & Sen, K. C. (2014, November 26). *The Perception Process: Approaches to Understanding Sensory*, Springer eBooks, p41 [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4471-6627-6\\_5](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4471-6627-6_5)

benefits, and values through advertising, product experiences, word-of-mouth, educational content ,and other marketing communications. These sources inform their decisions and future interactions with the brand .<sup>65</sup>

### 2.4.3 Memory

Memory is the total accumulation of prior learning experiences and it is critical to learning , it consists of two interrelated components: short-term and long-term memory., short-term memory (STM), or working memory, is that portion of total memory that is currently activated or in use. Long-term memory (LTM) is that portion of total memory devoted to permanent information storage. The main objective of branding is to create memorable experiences and associations that are stored in consumers' long-term memory. <sup>66</sup>

### 2.4.4 Product positioning

It refers to how a brand is perceived relative to competitors in the minds of consumers . Product positioning has a major impact on the long-term success of the brand, presuming the firm can create the desired position in the minds of consumers.<sup>67</sup>

### 2.4.5 Motivation

Motivation is the reason for behavior. A motive is a construct representing an unobservable inner force that stimulates and compels a behavioral response and provides specific direction to that response. Brands use motivational messaging, incentives, and emotional appeals to engage consumers and motivate them to choose their products or services over competitors.

### 2.4.6 Emotion

Emotions are strong, relatively uncontrolled feelings that affect behavior. They are strongly linked to needs, motivation, and personality and characterized by positive or negative evaluations. Consumers actively seek products whose primary or secondary benefit is emotional arousal. That's why products and brands that generate positive consumption emotions increase consumer satisfaction and loyalty.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>65</sup>David L. Mothersbaugh and Delbert I.Hawkins(2017), *Consumer Behavior:BuildingMarketing Strategy*, ELEVENTH EDITION, New York: McGraw Hill, p318

<sup>66</sup>Ibid, p319

<sup>67</sup>Ibid, p344

<sup>68</sup>Ibid, p378

## 2.4.7 Attitude

An attitude is the way one thinks, feels, and acts toward some aspect of his or her environment . Attitudes have three components: cognitive (beliefs), affective (feelings), and behavioral (response tendencies).

- **Cognitive Component** : The cognitive component consists of a consumer's beliefs about an object. For most attitude objects, people have a number of beliefs. Beliefs can be about the emotional benefits of owning or using a product (one can believe it would be exciting to own or drive a convertible) as well as about objective features.
- **Affective Component** : Feelings or emotional reactions to an object represent the affective component of an attitude. This overall evaluation may be simply a vague, general feeling developed without cognitive information or beliefs about the product A consumer who states "I like Diet Coke" or "Diet Coke is a terrible soda" is expressing the results of an emotional or affective evaluation of the product.
- **Behavioral Component** : The behavioral component of an attitude is one's tendency to respond in a certain manner toward an object or activity. A series of decisions to purchase or not purchase certain product or to recommend it or other brands to friends would reflect the behavioral component.

## 2.5 Factors Influencing Brand Perception

Numerous factors contribute to shaping a customer's perception of a specific brand.<sup>69</sup>

### 2.5.1 Brand identity

It is a crucial factor that shapes how people perceive a brand. It encompasses both the tangible aspects, like logos and packaging, as well as the intangible aspects, such as the brand's personality and values.

### 2.5.2 Brand reputation

Reputation is built on the collective opinions of customers, stakeholders, and the public. These opinions are based on a brand's past actions and behavior. For example, the way a company handles a crisis can have a huge influence on its reputation.

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<sup>69</sup><https://www.bynder.com/en/glossary/brand-perception/>

### 2.5.3 Brand awareness

How well a brand is recognized and known among its target audience makes up brand awareness. Strengthening brand awareness has a positive impact on how consumers perceive and make decisions regarding the brand.

### 2.5.4 Customer experience

Interactions between consumers and a brand play a pivotal role in brand perception. Positive experiences contribute to cultivating a favorable brand perception, while negative interactions can lead to a poor brand perception.

### 2.5.5 Advertising and marketing

The way a brand communicates through advertising, social media, and other channels influences the overall perception of the brand. Consistent and authentic messaging is vital in shaping a strong brand perception .

### 2.5.6 Reviews and testimonials

Customer opinions and recommendations carry substantial weight in shaping brand perception. Consumers often rely on other people's reviews, which can either bolster a brand's image or diminish it.

### 2.5.7 Social media presence or lack of one

Social media is crucial for consumers to gather information, discover products, and receive recommendations. Brands that actively engage positively can shape consumer perceptions, generate excitement, and facilitate word-of-mouth marketing. Conversely, those lacking consistency may miss opportunities to engage with consumers, potentially leading to a negative impact on perception, especially among digitally savvy audiences .

### 2.5.8 Partnerships

Collaborations with other companies, influencers, or groups have the power to influence how people perceive a brand by connecting it with different entities and transferring its image<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>70</sup><https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/brand-perception>

### 2.5.9 Reviews and testimonials

Customer opinions and recommendations carry substantial weight in shaping brand perception. Consumers often rely on other people's reviews, which can either bolster a brand's image or diminish it.<sup>71</sup>

### 2.6 Importance of brand perception

Brand perception is a crucial factor that influences consumers buying decisions, loyalty, and advocacy. In a competitive market, where customers have many choices and alternatives, having a positive and consistent brand perception can give you an edge over your rivals. The importance of brand perception cannot be overstated. Here are some key reasons why brand perception matters for business success<sup>72</sup>:

- **Differentiation:** a strong brand perception helps your company stand out from the competition in a crowded market. It helps consumers recognize and remember your brand, creating a distinct identity that makes you stand out.
- **Customer Trust and loyalty:** positive brand perception builds trust and loyalty among your customers. When customers have a favorable perception of your brand, they are more likely to remain loyal and recommend your products or services to others.
- **Premium Pricing:** brands with a positive perception can command higher prices for their products or services. Customers are often willing to pay a premium for brands they perceive as high-quality, reliable, and trustworthy.
- **Competitive Advantage :** brand perception can give you a competitive edge over rivals. If customers perceive your brand as superior or unique, they are more likely to choose you over competitors offering similar products or services.
- **Attracting Top talent :** companies with a positive brand perception can attract and retain top talent. A strong brand image makes your organization an attractive place to work, leading to a higher caliber of employees and improved company culture.
- **Crisis Management :** building a strong brand perception helps protect your business during times of crisis. If you have established a *positive perception*, customers are more likely to give your brand the benefit of the doubt and remain loyal even when facing challenges.

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<sup>71</sup><https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/brand-perception>

<sup>72</sup><https://fastercapital.com/topics/the-importance-of-brand-perception.html>

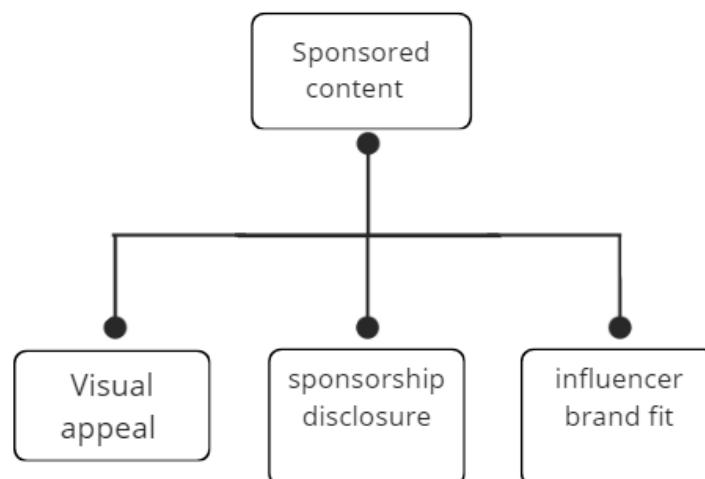
### Section 03 : the impact of sponsored content on brand perception : developing a research model

This section delves into the intricate relationship between sponsored content and brand perception, aiming to unravel the underlying dynamics that influence consumer attitudes and beliefs. It centers around three pivotal dimensions: **influencer brand fit, sponsorship disclosure, and aesthetic evaluation**, each playing a crucial role in shaping how audiences perceive and engage with brands in the digital realm.

#### 3.1 Variables definition

In our study, three key dimensions of sponsored content were explored to understand their impact on brand perception: sponsorship disclosure, influencer brand fit, and visual appeal . Together, these dimensions provide a multifaceted approach to understanding the dynamics of sponsored content and offer valuable insights into its impact on consumer perception which serves as the dependent variable in this research mode.

Figure (07) : sponsored content dimensions



Source : Author's elaboration

**3.1.1 Visual appeal :** visual appeal refers to the attractiveness and aesthetic qualities of something that can be perceived through sight . aesthetic evaluation intended to measure the degree to which a person views something as being visually attractive . It aims to gauge how well a visual stimulus resonates with individuals.

**3.1.2 Sponsorship disclosure :** sponsorship disclosure or transparency refers to the degree to which consumers can easily recognize that a message or content is sponsored or paid for, and the sponsor is clearly visible. This concept has gained significant attention in recent years, particularly in



discussions related to influencers. Regulatory bodies such as the Advertising Standards Authority of the U.K. (ASA) and the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) have recognized the importance of creating guidelines to safeguard global consumers against advertising deception. These guidelines ensure that both the influencer and the endorsing partner adhere to legal requirements by maintaining transparency in sponsorship arrangements.

Before sponsorship transparency was legalized, influencers would be paid and in return would post content showcasing and reviewing products in an attempt to convince the consumers to like or purchase the products. Due to this, it became unclear whether content regarding products, especially recommended products, were endorsements or personal opinions of the influencer. It is this lack of clarity that necessitated sponsorship transparency as consumers felt misled.<sup>73</sup>

**3.1.3 Influencer brand fit :** influencer brand fit refers to the measure of how individuals perceive the relationship between an influencer and a product, indicating whether the pairing is perceived as a "good fit." This concept is often assessed using a measure known as "relatedness," which evaluates the degree of alignment or congruence perceived by individuals between the influencer's image and the brand they are endorsing. This variable explores the extent to which consumers view the collaboration between the influencer and the brand as authentic, relevant, and credible, influencing their attitudes and behaviors towards the product or brand being promoted.<sup>74</sup> Choosing the best-suited and most effective influencer is a challenging decision that brand managers must face because a slight mismatch would have a negative consequences on brand reputation, image and perception.

**3.1.4 Familiarity with Sponsored Content:** or what REDER and his colleagues (1992) described as "feeling of knowing" in studies of problem solving. It means whether respondents are familiar with this type of content or not. This variable is not considered as a dimension of sponsored content itself but rather a characteristic of the respondents.

**3.1.5 Brand perception :** brand perception is our dependent variable, it captures consumers' beliefs, attitudes, feelings, and opinions about a brand, formed through their experiences, interactions, and emotions when exposed to various stimuli.

<sup>73</sup>Ali, huriaabdulkadir, (june 9, 2020), *sponsorship transparency on purchase intention*, school of business, society and engineering, mälardalen university

<sup>74</sup>PRISKA LINDA BREVES, NICOLE LIEBERS, MARINA ABT and ANNIAKUNZE, (august 2019), *The Perceived Fit between Instagram Influencers and the Endorsed Brand*, JOURNAL OF ADVERTISING RESEARCH

### 3.2 Theoretical Foundation and variables choice

To the best of our knowledge, no study has yet tested the validity of model that supports all the sponsored content dimensions as latent variables (measured from individuals' verbal statements on questionnaires), in the specific context of the impact of sponsored content on brand perception. This partly explains the lack of empirical studies addressing the topic through a quantitative approach in this specific domain.

There are multiples studies and works discussing sponsorship disclosure, influencer brand fit ,visual appeal and brand perception , often focusing on individual aspects or different dependent variables. For instance, a study conducted by LelasariSijabat, Danny I. Rantung, and Deske W. Mandagi from the Magister ManajemenFakultasEkonomidanBisnis at UniversitasKlabat, Manado, Indonesia, explored the effect of Social Media Influencers (SMIs) in shaping customer brand engagement and brand perception.

Their research highlighted the effectiveness of SMIs and demonstrated that they have a positive and significant impact on customer engagement. Additionally, the study revealed that SMIs also exert a favorable and significant influence on brand perception. According to their findings, customers' positive perception of social media is notably influenced by the presence and influence of social media influencers.

Another study by HuriaAbdulkadir Ali and MaditlhareLebohangElsyKalane on June 9, 2020 has explored the impact of sponsorship transparency on purchase intention, which can be closely linked to brand perception serving as an intermediary between sponsorship transparency and purchase intention.

Familiarity also plays a crucial role in marketing and advertising and is a common subject of study in these fields. A notable study by Teresa Garcia-Marques, titled "Familiarity Impacts Person Perception," investigated how familiarity influences cognitive processing. The study explored whether familiarity would lead to increased non-analytic processing, thereby reducing attention to and the impact of individuating information.

These examples represent previous studies that are relevant to our research .however , our study goes beyond previous evidence by considering sponsored content as an all-encompassing variable, rather than analyzing each dimension in isolation as previous studies have done .

By investigating how sponsored content can influence brand perception, we aim to demonstrate to brands how they can build an effective digital strategy to influence their target audience. Before making a purchase, consumers often have multiple ideas and opinions about a brand, and shaping and influencing these ideas positively can streamline the buying process, making it easier for consumers to make informed decisions.

The choice of our model variables is based on several considerations :

- An Instagram Reel serves as a stimulus, offering an authentic and real-time platform for brand-consumer interactions with a large user base. This makes it an ideal environment to study how consumers perceive information in this type of content.
- Instagram is widely used by influencers to promote brands, products, and services. By leveraging "Instagram Reels," we can assess the influence of influencer-brand fit on brand perception and consumer behavior.
- The visual content is going vital in Instagram, making it suitable for assessing the aesthetic evaluation of sponsored content. This plays a significant role in capturing audience attention and shaping their perceptions and impressions of the brand presented in the content.
- Sponsorship in this type of content plays a crucial role in fostering transparency in brand-consumer relationships and building trust between brands and consumers. When viewers are aware that a post is sponsored, they approach the content with a different mindset.
- Familiarity with sponsored content can build recognition and trust, as consumers accustomed to such content may be more likely to trust the message and the brand being promoted. This familiarity also makes consumers more aware of the persuasive intent behind the content, which can influence their perception by making them either more skeptical or more accepting if they appreciate the transparency.
- Brand perception being a crucial element in the buying process, because where customers have many choices and alternatives, having a positive and consistent brand perception can give you an edge over the competitors.

Let's refine our hypotheses, the cornerstone of our study. Our hypotheses posit that :

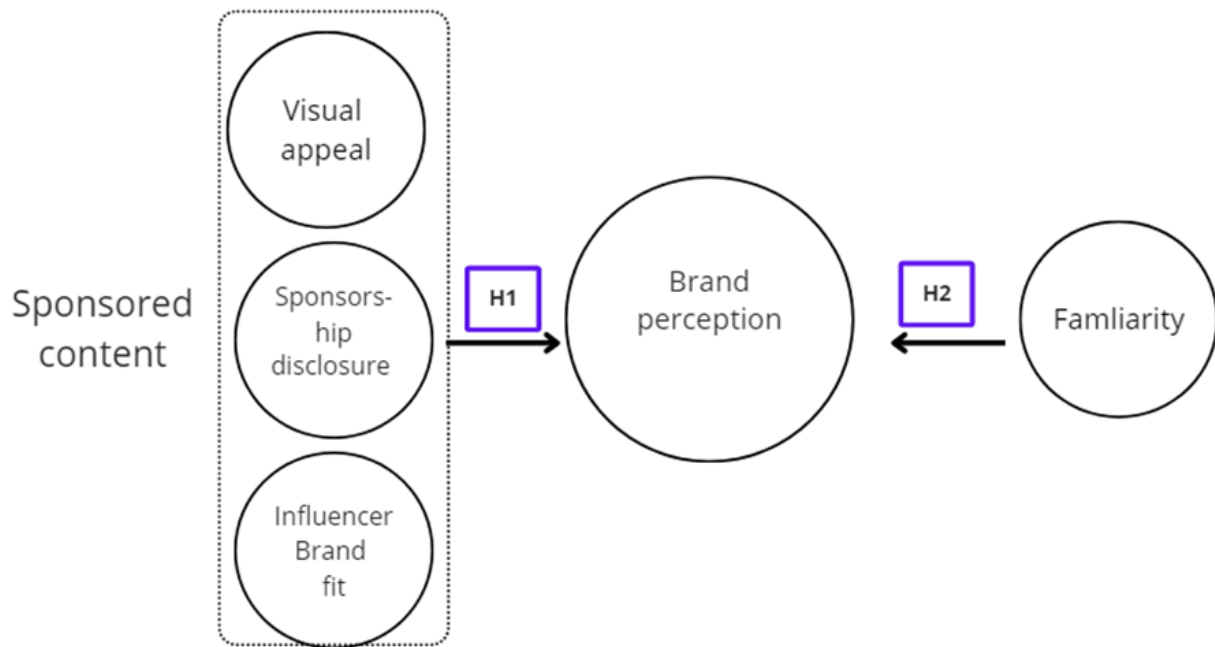
**H1 : There is a significant positive relationship between the visual appeal of sponsored content, sponsorship disclosure and influencer brand fit and consumers' perception of the sponsoring brand.**

**H2: Brand perception differs between those who are familiar with this type of content and those who are not**

.

Taken together, the relationship among variables in this study and the corresponding hypotheses is summarized in figure (08) :

Figure 08: Research Framework



Source: Authors' elaboration

## Conclusion

As we have seen, the second chapter has explored the multifaceted landscape of brand perception, emphasizing the importance of understanding how brands evolve and are perceived in the digital era. This chapter provided an in-depth examination of the historical evolution of brands, their various signifiers and constituents elements . By analyzing the factors influencing brand perception and the psychological responses of consumers to brand stimuli, we highlighted the significance of effectively managing brand perception to build trust and drive loyalty.

In conclusion, we can say that brand perception has become an indispensable element in the digital marketing landscape. By comprehensively understanding and strategically managing how consumers perceive their brand, companies can effectively engage with their audience, build trust, create a positive image, and foster consumer loyalty

The digital age has had a significant impact between a brand's digital presence and consumers' perception of the brand. For the last chapter, we are going to present our empirical research that will measure the impact of one of the most commonly used digital marketing strategies, "Sponsored content," on brand perception.

# **CHAPTER 03 : EMPIRICAL RESEARCH**

## **Introduction**

The agro-food sector dedicated to cereal supply stands as one of the pillars of the Algerian economy, with a consistent annual growth rate. In a market characterized by its vitality and dynamism, this sector plays a crucial role in the country's food security, providing essential raw materials for a variety of food products.

In a highly competitive market where numerous brands share the landscape, we find many domestic brands such as SIM , MAMA , SAFINA .

In recent years, there has been a digitalization trend among brands, leading to an increasingly significant presence of consumers on social media platforms. Brands have hastened to position themselves in this digital landscape, expanding their competition beyond the physical market .As part of this digital evolution, brands have adopted diverse digital marketing strategies to engage with consumers effectively. Our study specifically focuses on sponsored content, which has emerged as a prominent strategy within the realm of digital marketing.

This chapter will focus on the impact of sponsored content on brand perception , specifically that of the SIM brand. To begin, we will introduce the SIM brand, delving into its history, mission, values, and its presence in Algeria. Finally, we will present our survey findings, analyzing the results and addressing the various questions posed.

## Section 01 : Host organism presentation

### 1.1 General information about the company

The company was founded in 1994 as a small family business in the milling and semolina industry, where it served as a pioneer as the first private company in this sector in Algeria. Starting from humble family dimensions at its inception, SIM experienced active and sustained growth in its early years of operation, evolving from 1998 onwards into a prominent national industrial, commercial, and financial group.

In addition to expanding and developing its core milling business, the SIM Group has diversified its activities by establishing several subsidiaries in various sectors, including mineral water, healthcare, real estate development, cereal trading, juices and preserves, and livestock feed. SIM AGRO is a SPA company with a registered capital of 5,665,000,000 Algerian dinars

Figure (09) : SIM-AGRO company logo



#### 1.1.1 SIM Agro's profile

- Name: SIM / Semoulerie Industrielle de la Mitidja
- Address: Industrial Zone of Ain Romana, BP 51 bis, 09210 Blida, Algeria
- Phone: 025 24 79 60/62
- Fax: 025 24 78 59/025 38 11 05
- Web site: <http://www.groupesim.com>
- Nature of Business: Producer, Exporter, and Importer
- Shareholders: TAIEB - EZZRAIMI and his sons
- Social Capital (in DZD): 5,665,000,000 Dinars
- Affiliation: Subsidiary of the SIM Group



- Legal Form: SPA (Algerian Public Limited Company)
- Commencement Date: 1994
- Workforce: 1176
- Ownership: Private
- Commercial Registry: 03 B 080004290
- NIS: 0003091601956430
- NIF: 000309080429064
- Tax Registration: 09280052310
- Certification: ISO 9001:2008 (transitioning to 2015 version) and ISO 14001:2004.

### **1.1.2 The various subsidiaries of the SIM Group**

**1.1.2.1 AGRO SIM :** an agro-food subsidiary responsible for supplying cereals for the group's own needs and those of the Algerian market. This 20,000 m<sup>2</sup> site houses silos with a capacity of 80,000 tonnes in Mouzaia, Blida, and a modern laboratory for quality control and bacterial analysis of wheat arrivals. Sim Agro offers a diverse range of high-quality grain-based products:

- Semolina
- Flor
- Pasta : pasta range is extensive, featuring lasagna, vermicelli, bird's tongue, plomb, small elbow pasta, spaghetti , and other shapes such as coquille, coquillette, ressort, escargot, and tiliti
- Couscous

**1.1.2.2 AQUASIM :** AQUASIM currently encompasses the only two naturally carbonated mineral water sources across the entire Algerian territory, comprising 4 units :

- Mineral Water Unit: composed of two sources, one located in the Blida province (Mouzaia) and the other in the Bouira province (Ben Haroun).
- Main Products: Naturally carbonated mineral water, flavored beverages, sodas "MOUZAI"
- PET Production Unit: its Main Products is PET injection (Polyethylene Terephthalate) and molds.
- Canning Unit: its Main Products are tomato concentrate, jams, harissa, and juice concentrate
- CO<sub>2</sub> Gas Unit: its main Products is Bulk or bottled CO<sub>2</sub> gas.

**1.1.2.3 Promo SIM :** it was established in 2006 and commenced its operations with the implementation of a major project covering an area of two hectares in the heart of Blida, on

Mohamed Boudiaf Boulevard. It is dedicated to real estate development and the management of sports and leisure facilities .

It consists of two complexes:

A multifunctional complex:

- A shopping center and a 200-space parking lot.
- Business center and 44 high-end residential units.

A sports complex:

- Two pools, including a semi-Olympic pool.
- Four multipurpose halls, an indoor sports hall, a massage room, and play areas.

**1.1.2.4 SIM Sanders Algeria** : a Franco-Algerian joint venture between SIM Spa Group and SANDERS (a subsidiary of the Avril Group), established in 2011 in the industrial zone of Ain Defla province, 140 kilometers west of the capital. It manufactures quality animal feed with a mission: to provide technical support and tailored food solutions adapted to the needs and means of Algerian breeders, aiming to improve herd management and product quality (milk, white meat, and red meat), while reducing production costs for better livestock profitability.

This state-of-the-art industrial facility is the first Algerian animal nutrition plant built entirely to European standards. Through this investment, SIM Sanders Algeria aims to become a leader in animal nutrition in the country, leveraging the expertise of Sanders, a leader in animal nutrition in France, and SIM Spa Group, a leader in cereal processing in Algeria.

**1.1.2.5 AGC HUILE** : AGC Huile's product portfolio includes a variety of edible oils, such as vegetable oil, sunflower oil and olive oil .

On an area of approximately 138,000 square meters, the complex includes various facilities:

- **Preparation and Crushing Workshop:** Includes processes such as grinding, flattening, cooking, and pressing.
- **Oil Extraction Workshop:** Involves the extraction of oils, neutralization, and refining of crude oils.
- **Storage Areas for Refined and Crude Oils:** Designated zones for storing both refined and crude oils.
- **Chemical Storage Area:** A zone specifically for storing chemicals.
- **Loading and Unloading Area:** Dedicated areas for the loading and unloading of products.
- **Water Treatment Station:** Facility for treating water used in the complex.
- **Cooling Towers:** Structures used for cooling processes within the facility.
- **Containment Basin:** Basin designed for containing spills or overflow.

- **Liquid Waste Treatment Station:** Facility for treating liquid waste before disposal.

**1.1.2.6 MEDICAL CLINIC :** It is a medical-surgical clinic with an infrastructure capacity of 82 beds, operating more like a small hospital. The clinic enjoys considerable renown due to the various services it offers and its proximity to Algiers. It provides a range of specialties:

- General consultation and specialized units.
- Surgical unit (operating theater) with 3 operating rooms and 1 septic room for endoscopic explorations and minor surgeries.
- 24/7 medical-surgical emergency unit.
- Obstetrics and gynecology unit.
- Intensive care unit.
- Hemodialysis unit with 16 stations.
- Medical imaging unit.
- Biological exploration unit.

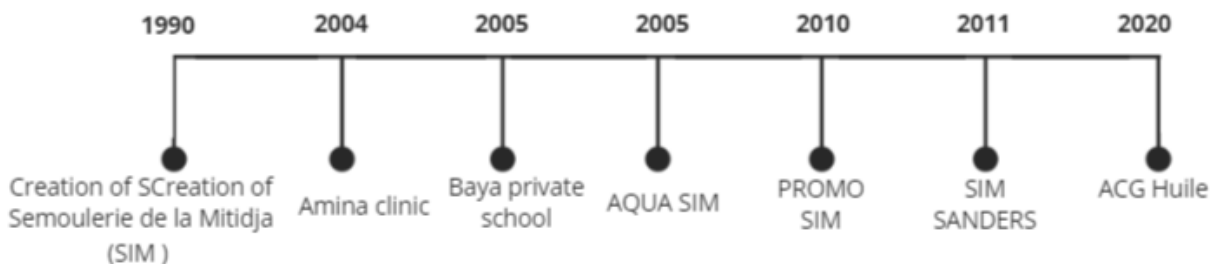
It occupies an area of 6700 m<sup>2</sup> and employs 190 staff members, including 25 practitioners.

**1.1.2.7 A multi-level school complex :** The first private school in Blida, founded by Mr. TaiebEzzraimiAbdelkader, initially located on Avenue Amara Youcef in Blida before relocating to its new premises at the PROMOSIM Residence on Boulevard Mohamed Boudiaf. It provides education across various levels:

- Primary, middle, and secondary education at Boulevard Mohamed Boudiaf.
- Nursery and preschool at the Amara Youcef branch.

**1.1.3 The company evolution over time**

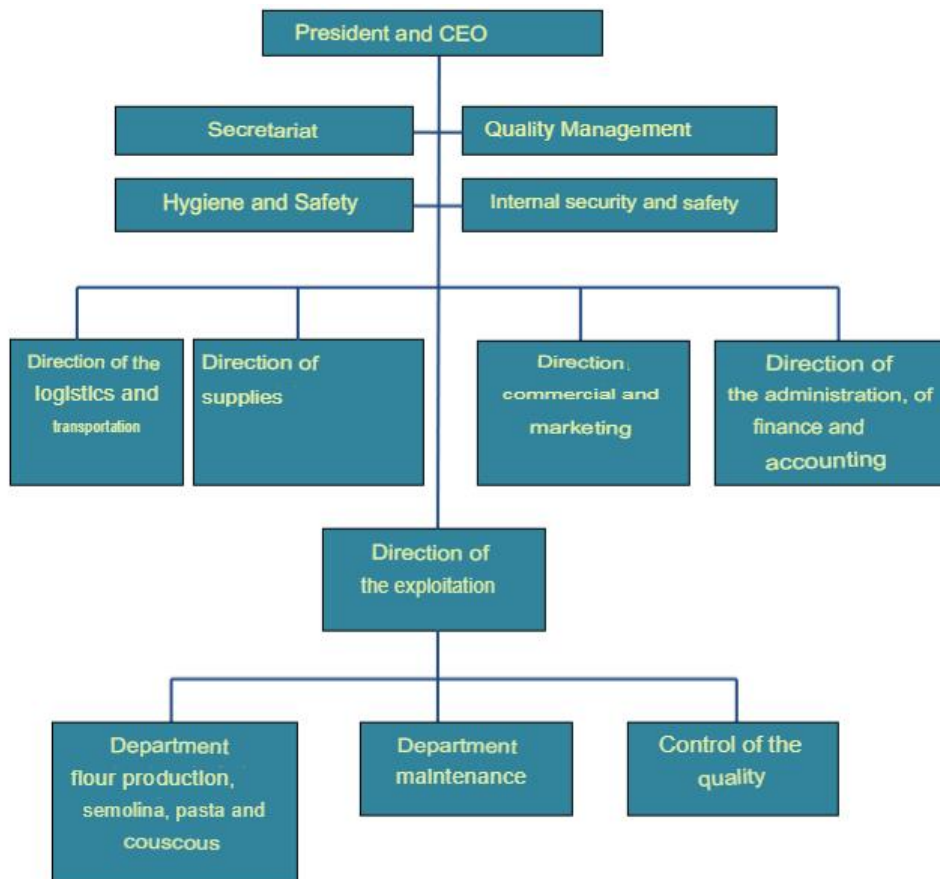
Figure 10: Sim evolution over time



Source : author’s elaboration based on the documentation

1.1.4 SIM-AGRO organization chart

Figure(11): Organization’s chart



Source :internal document provided by SIM AGRO

**Comment :** The organizational chart of Sim Agro, illustrates a well-structured hierarchy designed to ensure efficient operations and clear lines of responsibility .

At the top of the hierarchy is the (direction general ) , that oversees the entire organization. Directly reporting to the direction general are critical support functions, including the secretariat, quality management, hygiene and safety, and internal security and safety, highlighting the company's commitment to quality, safety, and security.

Below these functions are the operational departments, such as the direction of logistics and transportation, direction of supplies, commercial and marketing, and administration, finance, and accounting. These departments are integral to the company's day-to-day operations, managing everything from supply chain logistics to financial oversight and marketing strategies. The Direction of exploitation oversees the core production processes, supported by the flour, semolina, pasta, and couscous production department, maintenance department, and quality control department .

This structure ensures that all aspects of production, maintenance, and quality assurance are meticulously managed. Overall, the organizational chart reflects Sim Agro's comprehensive approach to managing its diverse functions, emphasizing efficiency, quality, and safety in its operations.

### **1.2 Sim marketing communications**

Marketing communication combines the channels and tools that a company uses to communicate the message it needs to its target group.

SIM employs a comprehensive marketing communication strategy to promote its products and engage with its target audience. The company utilizes a variety of communication channels to ensure that its marketing messages reach a wide and diverse audience effectively :

#### **1.2.1 Advertising**

- **Television:** Utilizing traditional media channels, Groupe SIM SPA airs commercials on TV to create widespread brand awareness and reach a diverse demographic.
- **Street Displays:** Billboards and posters in strategic locations increase visibility and attract the attention of passersby, reinforcing brand messages in high-traffic areas.

#### **1.2.2 Public Relations**

- **Press Releases and Media Relations:** Regular press releases and media engagements announce new products, partnerships, and significant developments, ensuring positive coverage and enhancing SIM's reputation
- **Events and Sponsorships:** Participation in industry events, trade shows, and sponsorship of community activities increases visibility and demonstrates the company's commitment to community engagement.

#### **1.2.3 Sales Promotion**

- **Discounts and Offers:** Periodic promotions and special offers attract customers and boost sales. These promotions are advertised through various channels, including social media, email, and in-store displays.

- Sampling and Demonstrations: Offering free samples and product demonstrations at retail locations and events allows consumers to experience the quality of the products firsthand.

1.2.4 Digital Marketing

1.2.4.1 Social Media: SIM is active on the most popular platforms : Facebook, Instagram, , and LinkedIn .This allows the company to interact with customers, share updates, promote products, and run targeted ad campaigns.

➤ Facebook :

Figure (12) : SIM Facebook page interface



Source :[https://www.facebook.com/groupesim/?locale=fr\\_FR](https://www.facebook.com/groupesim/?locale=fr_FR)

➤ Linkden :

Figure (13) : Sim linkden page interface



Source :<https://www.linkedin.com/company/acg-sim-spa>

➤ Instagram :

Figure (14) : Sim Instagram page interface



Source :<https://www.instagram.com/groupeSim/>

**1.2.4.2 Website:** The company’s website serves as an information hub, featuring product catalogs, news updates, and contact details, ensuring easy access to information for customers



figure (15) : sim website interface

source : <https://instudio.fun/>

### 1.3 The use of influencers in sim digital strategy

In today's digital age, the utilization of influencers and sponsored content has become a pivotal component of modern marketing strategies. SIM SPA, recognizing the power of these tools, has effectively integrated them into its digital communication efforts to enhance brand perception and engagement

Influencers with significant social media followings and the ability to affect the SIM's target audience play a crucial role in Groupe SIM SPA's marketing strategy. Among the various social media platforms, Instagram stands out as the most popular for engaging with influencers. Instagram's visually-driven format, coupled with its extensive user base, makes it an ideal platform for showcasing products and interacting with potential customers through influencer collaboration. By partnering with influencers, the company is able to tap into their established credibility and reach, thus amplifying its brand message to a broader audience. Influencers provide a relatable and trustworthy voice, making the brand's products more appealing to potential customers.

#### 1.3.1 List of influencers

Table (04): influencers who took part in SIM's influencer marketing strategies

Influencer profile name	Content type	Marketing campaigns
Hichem_cook	cooking content	Sponsored content
Mysscook	Cooking content	Sponsored content
Besmacheff-sanahilwa	Cooking content	Sponsored content
Abed_samir	Cooking content	Unboxing
Yansoun	Life style / food	contest and giveaways
Zacs .bakery	Cooking content	Unboxing

#### 1.3.2 Our influencer choice

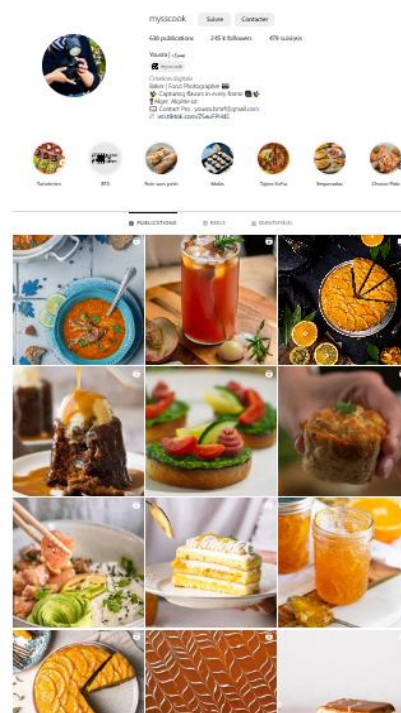
In our study, the influencer chosen for this campaign is "**Mysscook**," a talented content creator specializing in culinary arts and food photography with 244 k followers. Their Instagram page



showcases a variety of beautifully presented dishes, highlighting their expertise and passion for cooking.

Her content style is vibrant and visually appealing, focusing on high-quality images and engaging recipes that inspire their audience to explore new culinary adventures. Her posts consistently receive significant engagement, with numerous likes and comments, reflecting a strong and active community.

Figure 16 : the influencer “Mysscook” instagram page interface



Source : <https://www.instagram.com/mysscook/>

Why Mysscook’s reel was chosen :

➤ **Quality and photography of the video**

- Visual appeal: Mysscook’s reel stands out due to its exceptional quality and professional photography. The visuals are vibrant and eye-catching, making the content more engaging and appealing to the viewers.
- Aesthetic presentation: the food photography in Mysscook’s reel is aesthetically pleasing, with careful attention to lighting, composition, and presentation.

➤ **Content format and creativity**

- **Short, engaging Videos:** unlike other influencers who produce long videos with extensive talking, Mysscook uses short, concise reels that are more dynamic and engaging. The brevity of the videos ensures that the content is consumed quickly, holding the viewers' attention throughout.
- **Creative elements:** the reel incorporates creative elements such as close-up shots, quick transitions, and step-by-step visual instructions that make the cooking process look more interesting and accessible. This creativity helps in maintaining the viewers' interest and enhances the overall impact of the content.

### ➤ **Audience engagement and retention**

- **Attention-grabbing content:** Mysscook's reel is designed to capture and retain the viewers' attention quickly. The high-quality visuals and engaging format make it more likely that viewers will watch the entire video and respond to the survey questions afterward.
- **Positive viewer experience:** The content is crafted to provide a positive and enjoyable viewing experience. By focusing on visually appealing and concise presentations, Mysscook ensures that the audience is more likely to stay engaged and motivated to complete the survey.

### ➤ **Fit with research objectives**

- **Effectiveness for Surveys:** The main goal of the research is to measure the impact of sponsored content on brand perception through viewer surveys. Using Mysscook's engaging and high-quality reel increases the likelihood of viewers paying attention and providing thoughtful responses to the survey questions.
- **Alignment with interviewer Needs:** The interviewers need content that is not only visually appealing but also concise and to the point .

## Section 02 : Quantitative study methodology

The quantitative approach is the one we're using for our research. This research approach typically begins with a specific theory, whether newly proposed or previously established, which leads to specific hypotheses that are then measured quantitatively and rigorously analyzed and evaluated according to established research procedures.<sup>75</sup>

In our research, the objective is to explore the existence of a direct causal link between the dimensions of sponsored content and brand perception. This study employs a **pre-experimental design**, specifically the **One-Shot Case Study**, to assess the immediate effects of a video stimulus (sponsored content) on participants' perceptions of a brand.

### 2.1 Research design

Before discussing the conclusive research design used in this study, it is important to note that information was gathered to precisely define the research problem and gain a deeper understanding of the topic and its dimensions.

The main goal is to offer insights into and a better understanding of the issue facing the researcher. This process is utilized when there is a need to define the problem more precisely, identify relevant courses of action, or gain additional insights before developing a comprehensive strategy.

This study requires gathering additional information to develop a robust theoretical framework on sponsored content and its components that can impact brand perception.

#### 2.1.1 Conclusive research

The objective of this research is to test specific hypotheses and examine relationships a process that is typically more formal and structured than exploratory research. This type of research relies on large, representative samples and involves quantitative analysis of the data. The outcomes of this research are seen as conclusive and are used to inform managerial decision-making.<sup>76</sup>

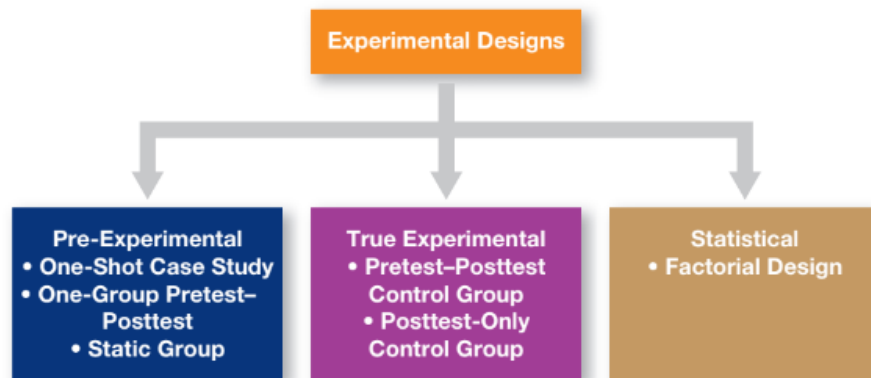
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<sup>75</sup>Swanson, R. A., & Holton, E. F. III (Eds.). (2005). *Research in Organizations: Foundations and Methods of Inquiry*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, p 76

<sup>76</sup>Ibid, p86

### 2.1.1.1 Definition of experimental design

An experimental design is a structured approach used in research to test hypotheses and establish causal relationships between variables. It is a type of quantitative design that includes: (1) specifying the independent variables or treatments to be manipulated, (2) identifying the dependent variables to be measured, and (3) detailing the methods for controlling extraneous variables.<sup>77</sup>



figure(17):A Classification of Experimental Designs

Source : Malhotra, N. K. (2015, January 1). Essentials of Marketing Research, Pearson Education Limited , p187

According to Malhotra (2015), the research design we're using (experimental) is the "Pre-Experimental Design: One-Shot Case Study." While this method might not be popular among some master's students, it allows for a preliminary exploration of the impact of the treatment or condition.

### 2.1.1.2 Definition of “Pre-Experimental Design : One-Shot Case Study”

Pre-experiments are the simplest form of experimental research designs , it includes one or more than one experimental groups to be observed against certain treatments. The pre-experimental design does not have a comparison group. This means that while a researcher can claim that participants who received certain treatment have experienced a change, they cannot conclude that the change was caused by the treatment itself.<sup>78</sup>

Also known as the after-only design, the one-shot case is “when single group of subjects is exposed to a treatment (X), and then a single measurement on the dependent variable is taken (O1). This type of design is constructed using a nonrandom sampling process in which the subjects are self-

<sup>77</sup> Ibid , p184

<sup>78</sup><https://www.voxco.com/blog/pre-experimental-design-definition-types-examples/>

selected or selected arbitrarily by the researcher. Without randomization, the observed dependent variables are subject to the influences of several extraneous variables”<sup>79</sup>

Why our research design is Considered Pre-Experimental ?

- **Single Group Exposure:** in our study participants are exposed to a treatment or a stimuli (viewing an Instagram reel of sponsored content ) and then their reactions are measured
- **No Pre-Test (post-test only ) :** There is no pre-test or baseline measurement taken before the participants view the sponsored content. The impact is assessed solely based on the post-exposure measurements.
- **No Control Group:** which means there is no comparison with other control group (not exposed to the stimuli ) and all participants receive the treatment
- **Measurement of Effect:** we are measuring the effect of the stimulus on the respondents' perceptions of the brand.

According to Malhotra (2015), due to the lack of randomization and the absence of a control group, this design is clearly weak in terms of internal validity. For this reason, the one-shot case study is more appropriate for exploratory rather than conclusive research .

## 2.2 Questionnaire survey methodology

After exposing our research sample to the content of the influencer “Mysscook” sponsored by the company SIM , sample individuals were asked to complete a survey questionnaire to assess the study variables.

A questionnaire is “an information-gathering tool designed to verify a research problem and quantitatively confirm or refute survey results. It makes it possible to cross-reference data from a wide audience, focusing on statistical data, and to establish relationships or numerical comparisons.”<sup>80</sup>

### 2.2.1 Survey Instrument

The survey is a crucial component of this methodology, designed to capture the participants' perceptions of the brand immediately after they have viewed the sponsored content. The survey

<sup>79</sup> Malhotra, N. K. (2015, January 1). *Op.cit* , p188

<sup>80</sup>Samlak, (2020 ) , *The Fundamentals of Scientific Research in the Humanities*, Linguistic and cultural diversity , Vol. 1 No. 1

includes questions targeting various dimensions of the independent variables and the dependent variable. It is divided into 3 sections :

- Section 01: the questions in this section are designed to assess respondents' reactions to sponsored content after they have been exposed to it. It focuses on the three key dimensions: visual appeal, sponsorship disclosure and influencer brand fit.
- Section 02 : the questions in this section are designed to measure respondents' perceptions of the brand after they have viewed the sponsored content.
- Section 03 : the questions in this section are designed to collect essential demographic data to ensure a diverse and representative sample, and to contextualize the responses.

### 2.2.2 Administration method

The choice of questionnaire administration mode depends on several criteria. According to Evrard et al. (2006) and Jolibert and Jourdan (2006), the key factors are cost (with self-administration being less expensive than face-to-face), questionnaire characteristics (length, complexity, need for interviewer presence), anticipated response rate, and desired geographical dispersion.

For our research the Google Forms platform was utilized to build and run the questionnaire which enables responses to be designed, collected and returned in the form of an Excel file. The questionnaire is therefore self-administered via the Internet.

### 2.2.3 Questions types

#### Closed Questions with a Single Answer :

- Are you familiar with this type of content?
- Is this your first interaction with this brand ?
- Gender?
- Age range ?
- Profession ?

#### Five -point semantic differentials questions:

- How would you rate the visual appeal of this reel ?
- How confident are you in recalling the specific product or service offered by the brand in the sponsored content you saw ?
- How would you describe your overall impression of the brand based on the sponsored content ?

- Do you associate positive/negative emotions with the brand "SIM" after seeing the sponsored content?
- Has your perception of the brand "SIM" changed after viewing the sponsored content ?
- To what extent did the sponsored content influence your confidence or assurance in the brand "SIM”

### **Likert Scale Questions :**

- Regarding the transparency of the sponsorship, please rate from “1 = Strongly disagree” to “5 = Strongly agree ”
- Regarding the fit between the influencer and the brand, please rate from “1 = Strongly disagree” to “5 = Strongly agree”

### **Open-Ended Questions :**

- What specific attributes or qualities come to mind when you think of the brand featured in the sponsored content?

#### **2.2.4 Survey target**

Since the products offered by SIM (flour, pasta, couscous, etc.) are mass consumption products, their consumption is shared by all members of the household. The purchase decision for a similar product can be influenced by all household members, even though the roles of decision-maker and purchaser are primarily attributed to the parents, with the homemaker being more specialized in this case. Therefore, we have chosen to study the impact of content on brand perception independently of the relationship between the product and the respondent (consumer, purchaser, influencer, user). The study population is constituted of Algerian consumers, men and women aged 18 and more using Instagram social network.

#### **2.2.5 Sample and Sampling Technique**

Participants will be selected using a non-probability convenience sampling method. This method is chosen due to its practicality and the ease of accessing a specific target audience that is exposed to sponsored content.

The research target was women and men aged 18 and over, and the sample size for this study was 108 respondents.

### **2.3 Measurement scales**

In this part , we present the choice and adaptation of measurement scales adopted from the marketing literature to measure the various concepts in our research model.

To give a general idea of the constructs to be measured, the table below summarizes the variables in our model and their dimensions.

Table (05) : Research model variables and dimension

<b>Role</b>	<b>Independents variable</b>			<b>Dependent variable</b>
<b>Variable</b>	<b>Sponsored content</b>			<b>Brand perception</b>
<b>Dimensions</b>	Visual appeal	Sponsorship disclosure	Influencer brand-fit	Unidimensional

**2.3.1 Visual appeal**

Table (06) :visual appeal measurement scale

<b>Scale name</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Items</b>
Aesthetic evaluation	Five -point semantic differentials	1. Offensive / enjoyable 2. Poor-looking / nice-looking 3. displeasing / pleasing 4. unattractive / attractive 5. bad appearance / good appearance 6. ugly / beautiful

Source : Gordon C. Bruner II(2009) , *Marketing scale handbook* ,GCBII Productions ,USA

**2.3.2 Sponsorship disclosure**



Table (07) : sponsorship disclosure measurement scale

Scale name	Type	Items
Sponsorship disclosure	Likert Scale (1= strongly disagree, 5= strongly agree)	1. There was a clear presence of a brand in the reel 2. The content was clearly sponsored 3. The influencer made the sponsor's name "Sim" very evident 4. The influencer mentioned that it was sponsored 5. The influencer clearly conveyed the brand that was being promoted

Source : Adapted from Wojdyski et al (2018), *Measuring Sponsorship Transparency in the Age of Native Advertising* ,Journal of Consumer Affairs

2.3.3 Influencer brand fit

Table (08) : influencer brand-fit measurement scale

Scalename	Type	Items
Influencer brand-fit	Likert Scale (1= strongly disagree, 5= strongly agree)	1. The influencer is an appropriate choice to represent the SIM brand. 2. The influencer brings benefits to the SIM brand.. 3. The influencer can naturally attract the target

		audience of the SIM brand through their content.
--	--	--------------------------------------------------

Source : Adapted from Breves, P. L., Liebers, N., Abt, M., &Kunze, A. (2019, August 29). The Perceived Fit between Instagram Influencers and the Endorsed Brand. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 59(4), 440–454. <https://doi.org/10.2501/jar-2019-030>

**2.3.4 Brand perception**

Table (09): Brand perception measurement scale

Scale name	Type	Items
Confidence in recall	Five -point semantic differentials	Not at all confident / Very confident
Overall Impression of the Brand	Five -point semantic differentials	Negative / Positive
Emotional Association with the Brand	Five -point semantic differentials	Negative / Positive
Change in Brand Perception	Five -point semantic differentials	Changednegatively / Changedpositively
Influence on Confidence/Assurance in the Brand	Five -point semantic differentials	Not influenced /Highlyinfluenced

Source :Adapted from Burn Schmitt (2011) , *Consumer Psychology of brands* ,Journal of consumer psycholog , Elsevier

**2.4 Data analysis and Hypotheses Verification Method** :after collection data , we used the computer software SPSS version 29 to analyze it .

**2.4.1 Descriptive analysis**

Provide a summary of the data, to give an overview of the sample characteristics and key variables.

**2.4.2 Reliability analysis**

Assess the consistency and reliability of the measurement scales used in the study, such as Cronbach's alpha for internal consistency.

**2.4.3Multiple Regression**

Examine the impact of visual appeal, sponsorship disclosure, and influencer brand fit on brand perception . in order to confirm the first 3 hypotheses .

**2.4.4 Independent Samples T-Test**

Compare brand perception scores between respondents familiar with sponsored content and those who are not .

**Section 03 : Data analysis**

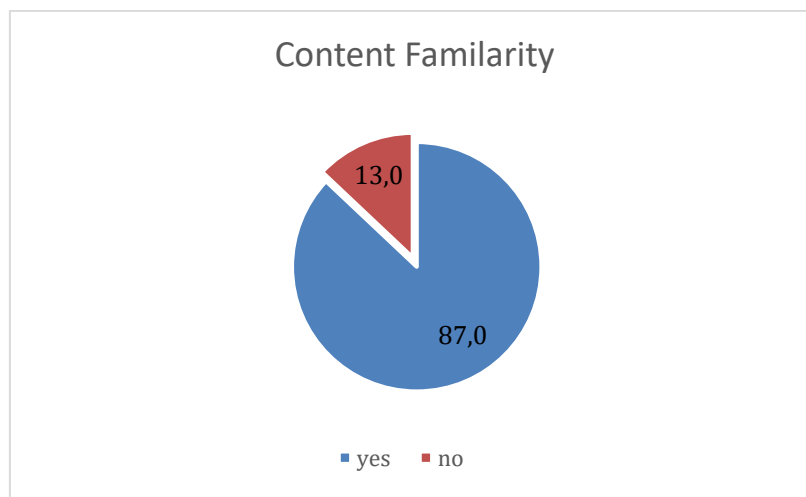
This section will be dedicated to presenting the results of our survey provided by the univariate and multivariate analysis using SPSS version29 data processing software

**3.1 Descriptive analysis - the ‘flat sort’ method**

This part will be devoted to carrying out the flat sort, some of the questions of will be dealt with and analyzed independently.

**Question 01 :Are you familiar with this type of content?**

Figure 18 : Content familiarity



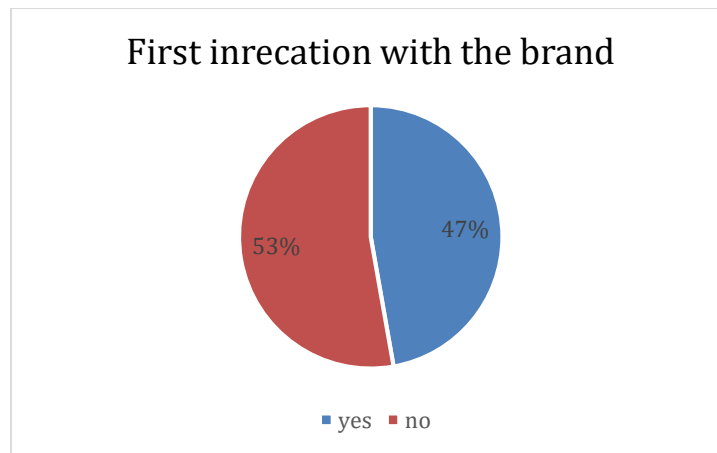
Source : Personal effort using Excel

**Comment :**

the majority of respondents (87%) are familiar with the content that they’ve exposed to (Instagram reel ) , while a smaller portion (13%) are not. This suggests that the content has a high level of familiarity among the respondents.

**Question 02 : Is this your first interaction with this brand?**

Figure 19: First interaction with the brand

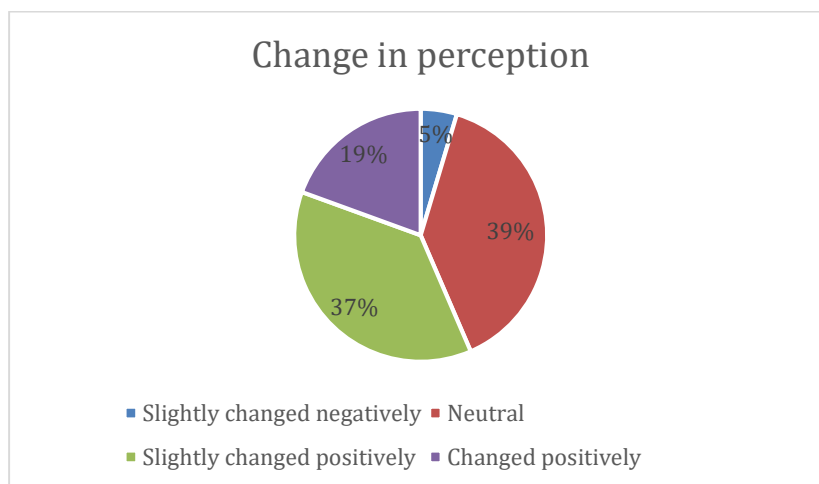


Source :Personal effort using Excel

**Comment :** the chart suggests that slightly more than half of the respondents (53%) have had previous interactions with the brand, while the remaining 47% are experiencing the brand for the first time

**Question 03 :** Did your perception of the ‘SIM’ brand change after viewing the sponsored content?

Figure 20: Change in brand perception



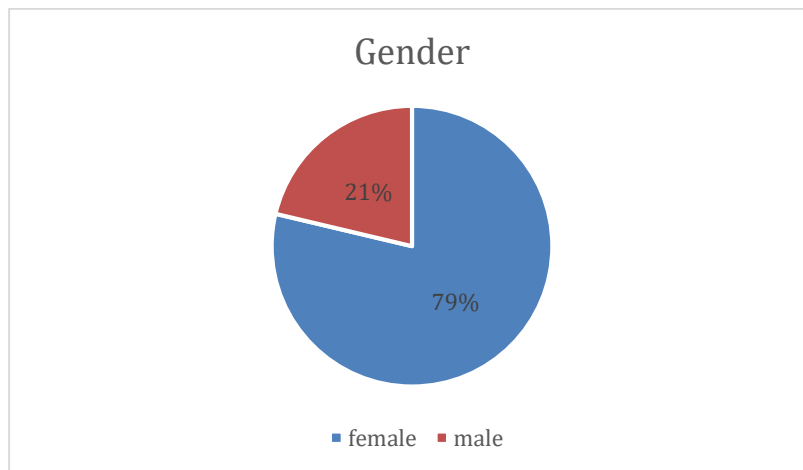
Source :Personal effort using Excel

**Comment :** A total of 56% of respondents experienced a positive change in perception, with 37% slightly changing positively and 19% changing positively. Meanwhile, 39% of respondents remained neutral with no change in perception. A small percentage, 5%, experienced a slight

negative change in perception. Overall, the brand interaction led to a predominantly positive shift in perception among respondents, with a significant portion remaining neutral and a minor percentage experiencing a negative change.

**Question 04 : Are you ?**

Figure 21 : Respondent’s gender

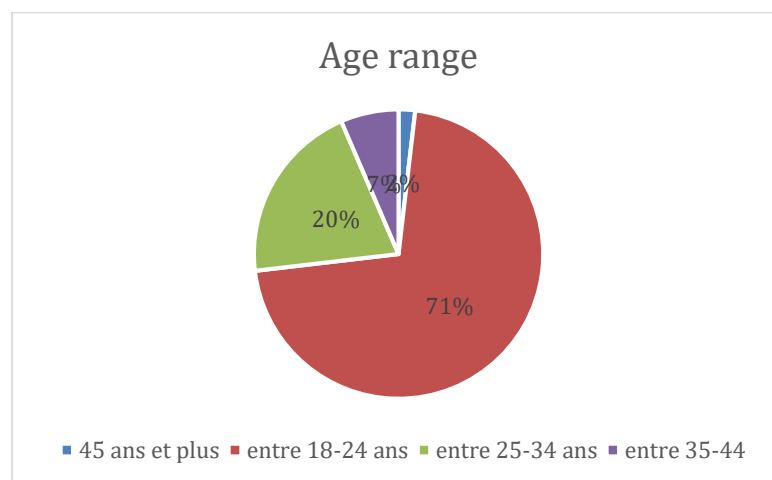


Source : Personal effort using Excel

**Comment** : Of the 108 respondents 23 (21%) were male and 85 (79%) were female.

**Question 05 : Age range ?**

Figure 22 : respondent’s age range



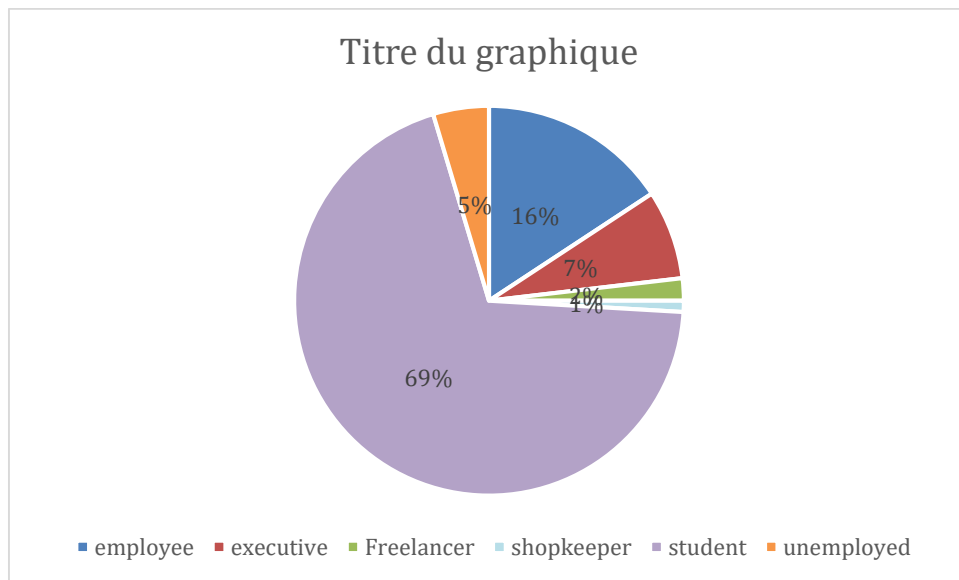
Source : Personal effort using Excel

**Comment** : Figure 24 above shows that the most of our respondents were in the 18-24 years old interval representing 71% . 20% percent of respondents were in the 25-34 years old age category .

seven percent were between 35 and 44 years old interval, while only seen presents were above the age of 45

**Question 06 : Profession ?**

Figure 23 : Respondent's profession



Source : Personal effort using Excel

**Comment :** Regarding the professions of our respondents, 69% are students, 16% are employees, and 7% are executives. Freelancers make up 2% of our respondents, while shopkeepers represent only 1% .

**3.2 Reliability analysis**

Reliability analysis of items, such as assessing internal consistency using Cronbach's alpha coefficient

is conducted to evaluate the coherence or reliability of the measures used in a scale or questionnaire. Specifically, it aims to determine how well the items in a scale or test measure the same underlying construct. This ensures that the instrument yields reliable and repeatable results under consistent conditions

An alpha value of 0.9 or higher denotes excellent reliability, suggesting the items are highly consistent in measuring the construct. Values between 0.8 and 0.9 indicate good reliability, where the items are fairly consistent. An alpha between 0.7 and 0.8 is considered acceptable, meaning the items have a reasonable level of consistency. Alpha values between 0.6 and 0.7 raise questions

about reliability, indicating the need for potential review and improvement of the items. Poor reliability is indicated by values between 0.5 and 0.6, where the items may not consistently measure the construct. An alpha below 0.5 is deemed unacceptable .<sup>81</sup>

**3.2.1 The visual appeal variable**

Refers to the attractiveness and aesthetic qualities perceived through sight. It measures how visually attractive the content is to an individual

Table 10 : The Cronbach alpha value for the visual appeal

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0,884	6

Source : Personal effort using SPSS

The Cronbach's alpha value of 0.884 for 6 items indicates good reliability, suggesting that the items consistently measure the visual appeal of the sponsored content

**3.2.2 The sponsorship disclosure variable**

Sponsorship disclosure or transparency pertains to how easily consumers can identify that a message or content is sponsored, with clear visibility of the sponsor.

Table 11: The Cronbach alpha value for the sponsorship disclosure

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0,889	5

Source : Personal effort using SPSS

A Cronbach's alpha value of 0.884 for six items signifies strong reliability, indicating that these items consistently gauge the visual appeal of the sponsored content

**3.2.3 The influencer brand fit variable**

The assessment of how people perceive the connection between an influencer and a product, determining whether the pairing is seen as a suitable match.

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<sup>81</sup>JumNunnally and Ira Bernstein(1994), *Psychometric Theory* ,McGraw-Hill , 3<sup>rd</sup> edition

Table 12 : The Cronbach alpha value for the influencer-brand fit

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0,902	3

Source : Personal effort using SPSS

According to the value of Cronbach's alpha 0.902 , the 3 items are highly consistent in measuring the construct

### 3.2.4 The brand perception variable

Table 13 : The Cronbach alpha value for the brand perception

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0,841	5

Source : Personal effort using SPSS

Same for brand perception , the five items effectively measure our dependent variable according to Cronbach's alpha value 0.841

- This confirms that our measurement model is robust and the items used effectively gauge the intended constructs, ensuring reliable and consistent assessment of the visual appeal, sponsorship disclosure, and influencer brand fit.

### 3.3 Hypotheses Tests

In order to test the research hypotheses below , a linear regression analysis is conducted .

**H1 : There is a significant positive relationship between the visual appeal of sponsored content, sponsorship disclosure and influencer brand fit and consumers' perception of the sponsoring brand.**

**H2 : Brand perception differs between those who are familiar with this type of content and those who are not.**



The predictors of each regression are the mean of each items on their scales. Sponsored content dimensions are considered as independents variables :

- 1- visual appeal : the mean of the questions 3, 4,5 ,5,6,7 and 8.
- 2- sponsorship disclosure : is the mean of items in question 9
- 3- influencer brand fit : is the mean of items in question 10.

While brand perception is considered as dependent variable :

- 4- Brand perception : the mean of the question :11,12,13,15 and 16

**3.3.1 Test of the sponsored content dimensions hypotheses**

As part of our study on the impact of sponsored content on brand perception, we have identified three key dimensions: visual appeal, sponsorship disclosure, and influencer brand fit. To analyze the significance of these dimensions and their collective impact on brand perception, we will use multiple regression analysis. This approach allows us to assess the overall model's quality and the individual contributions of each dimension.

**3.3.1.1 Screening data for regression**

Before conducting a multiple regression analysis, it is essential to verify that certain preliminary assumptions are met to ensure the data's suitability for regression analysis.

- Sample size

In multiple regression analysis, it is recommended that the sample size includes at least fifteen responses for each independent variable. Since our model includes three independent variables, we should have a minimum of 45 respondents to ensure the validity and reliability of our analysis. Since we have 106 respondents, our sample size is more than sufficient to meet this requirement.

- Multicollinearity

Table 14: correlation matrix

	Brand Perception	visual_appeal	sponsorship	BrandFit
BrandPerception	1,000	0,300	0,378	0,310
visual_appeal	0,300	1,000	0,217	0,337
sponsorship	0,378	0,217	1,000	0,610
BrandFit	0,310	0,337	0,610	1,000

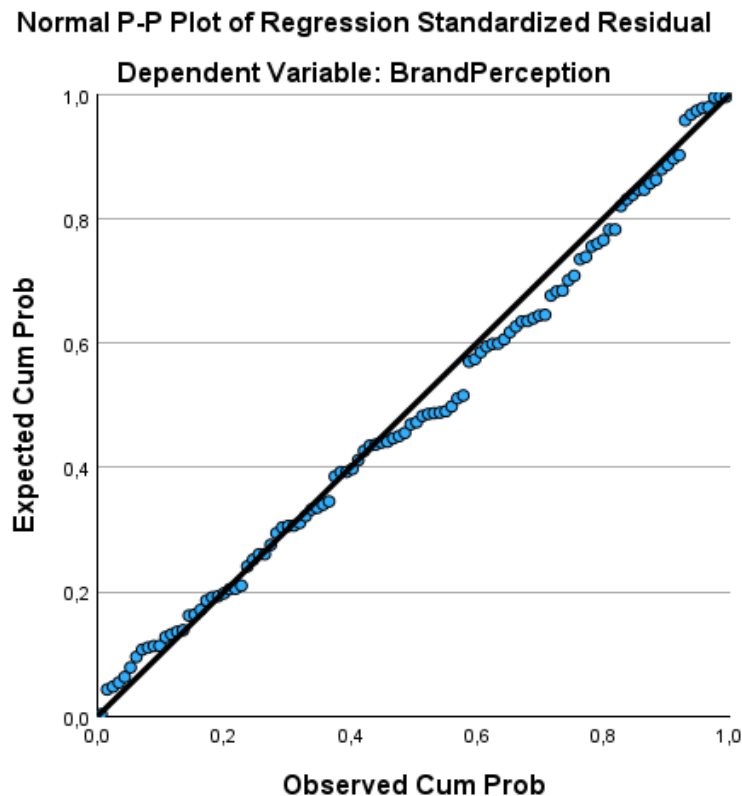
Source :Personal effort using SPSS

Multicollinearity occurs when independent variables are highly correlated with each other (correlation  $\geq 0.90$ ). As shown in the coefficient correlations table, all correlations are below 0.9. Therefore, we can conclude that multicollinearity is not a concern in this analysis.

- Normality

Normality is checked if residuals are close to the diagonal line and form somehow a straight line.

Figure 24 : Normal P.P Plot



Source : Personal effort using SPSS

The figure above indicates that the residuals are aligned along a diagonal line. This alignment suggests that the distribution of residuals approximates a normal distribution.

- Outliers

The absence of outliers is verified when all Mahalanobis distances are lower than the chi-square critical value, with the number of independent variables serving as the degrees of freedom and using 0.001 as the level of significance,  $\chi^2(3, 0.001) = 16.17$

According to SPSS, in our case all Mahalanobis are lower than the chi-square critical value, which means outliers are absent.

- Auto correlation

Durbin-Watson is the test used to identify the existence or the absence of autocorrelation.

Table 15: model summary

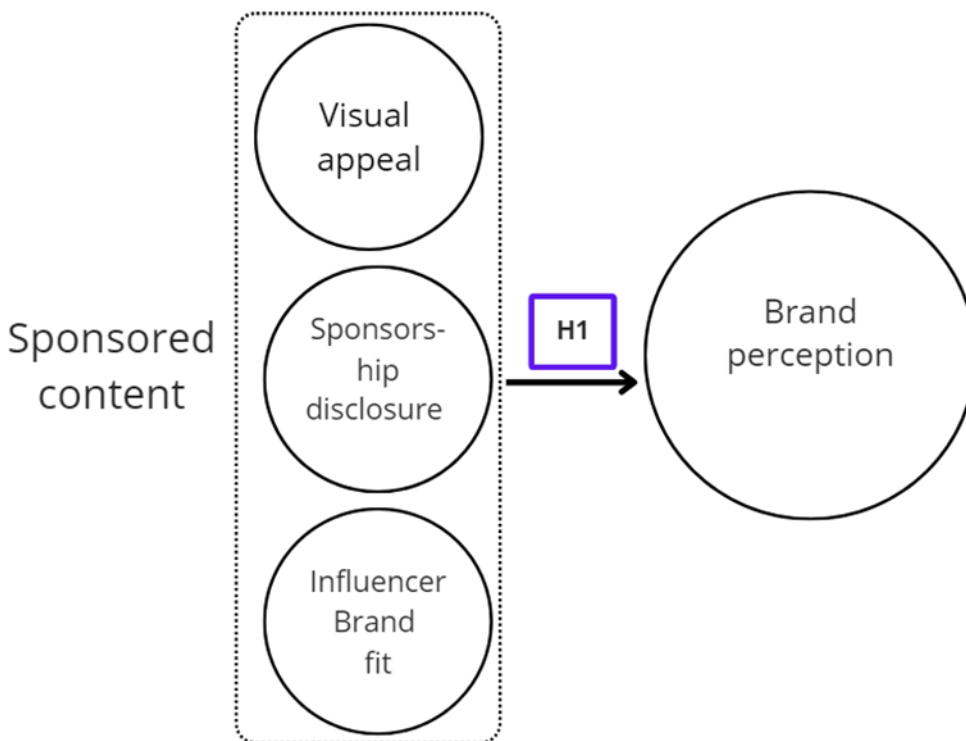
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	,441 <sup>a</sup>	0,195	0,171	0,62814	0,195	8,381	3	104	0,000	1,948

Source : Personal effort using SPSS

For our case , the critical value is  $D(3,106)=(DL1.482 DU1.604)$  , while Durbin-Watson =1.948 . This leads us to say that there is no autocorrelation which means that our respondents answered the questionnaire independently.

3.3.1.2Model interpretation

Figure 25 : Regression model of sponsored content dimensions



Source :Authors' Elaboration

- Significance of the model

Table 16: Anova

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	9,920	3	3,307	8,381	<,001 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	41,034	104	0,395		
	Total	50,954	107			

Source : Personal effort using SPSS

According to table M above , the model is significant for alpha 5%, because the calculated Fisher value (8.381) is superior to the critical Fisher value  $F(3,104) = 2.692$

- Usefulness of the model

For the model to be useful, the calculated Fisher value must be 4 to 5 times superior to the critical Fisher value.

In our case  $8.381/2.692=3.11$  , this means that our model is not useful and despite the fact that the model is statistically significant, SIM cannot base its decisions on this model.

- Strength of association

Table 17 : model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				Durbin-Watson	
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2		Sig. F Change
1	,441 <sup>a</sup>	0,195	0,171	0,62814	0,195	8,381	3	104	0,000	1,948

Source : Personal effort using SPSS

According to adjusted R square , 17% of variation in Brand perception is explain by the variation of the three independents variables

- Parametric evaluation

Table 18: Parametric evaluation

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2,118	0,363		5,843	0,000
	visual_ap peal	0,190	0,082	0,216	2,316	0,023
	sponsorsh	0,219	0,082	0,298	2,679	0,009
	BrandFit	0,039	0,081	0,056	0,482	0,631

Source : Personal effort using SPSS

As we already said , the model is statistically significant however only Sponsorship and influencer visual appeal are the independent variables that can individually contribute to the variation of the dependent variable (p-value)

Visual appeal contributes to the explanation of the variation of brand perception .The sign of the coefficients indicates the direction of the relationship , in this case  $\beta > 0$  ,which means when the visual appeal of sponsored content improves consumers' perception of the sponsoring brand also improves .

As we already said sponsorship disclosure contributes in the variation of brand perception , and it contributes in a positive way , this implies that enhancing the transparency and clarity of sponsorship disclosure in sponsored content enhances consumers' perception of the sponsoring brand

By comparing standardized coefficients obtained in the table, we find that  $\beta = 0.298$  is the biggest value among other coefficients . therefore , sponsorship disclosure is the most important predictor of brand perception and has the biggest impact with a standardized beta of 0.298

Influencer brand-fit in the only variable that is not statistically significant and does not contribute in the variation of brand perception . In simpler terms, the fit between the influencer and the brand does not have a meaningful impact on how people perceive the brand

### ➤ Hypothesis H1:

**The first hypothesis** that claims that there is a significant positive relationship between the visual appeal of sponsored content, sponsorship disclosure and influencer brand fit and consumers' perception of the sponsoring brand is the hypothesis is **partially accepted**

**3.3.2 Test of the familiarity hypothesis**

Our last hypothesis claims that there is a significant relationship between consumers' familiarity with this type of content and their perception of the brand . for testing this hypothesis we used independent simple t-test .it allows us to determine if there is a statistically significant difference in the means of the brand perception variable between the two groups between respondents who are familiar with sponsored content and those who are not .

		Levene's Test for		t-test for Equality of Means							
		F	Sig.	t	df	Significance		Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence	
						One-Sided p	Two-Sided p			Lower	Upper
BrandPerception	Equal variances assumed	2,479	0,118	1,121	106	0,132	0,265	0,22128	0,19745	-0,17019	0,61275
	Equal variances not			0,945	15,543	0,180	0,359	0,22128	0,23415	-0,27629	0,71884

Table19 : Independent sample t-test

Source : Personal effort using SPSS

**3.3.2.1 Levene's Test for Equality of Variances**

Levene's test checks if the variances between the two groups are equal , Since the p-value (Sig.) is 0.118 which is greater than 0.05,we can assume equal variances for the t-test.

**3.3.2.2 T-test**

The p-value for the two-tailed test is 0.265, which is greater than 0.05 which means that there is no statistically significant difference in brand perception between those familiar with the type of content and those who are not. Therefore, familiarity with the type of content does not significantly influence brand perception in this sample

➤ **Hypothesis H4**

That leads us to **reject** the **fourth hypothesis** , that said that there is a significant relationship between consumers' familiarity with this type of content and their perception of the brand

**3.4 Summary of Findings**

This study attempts to better understand the impact of sponsored content on consumer brand perception, focusing specifically on the dimensions of visual appeal, sponsorship disclosure, and influencer-brand fit , and explore if being familiar with this kind of content help influencing the brand perception .

The study measures the perception of brands among consumers exposed to a sponsored content of our choice , investigating how the visual appeal of the content, the transparency of sponsorship disclosure, and the alignment between the influencer and the brand contribute to shaping consumer opinions and perception

After collecting data and analyzing them , we achieved the goal of this section and of the entire research which is to accept or reject the initial study hypotheses .The high reliability of the items, as indicated by Cronbach's alpha values, further supports the validity of our findings

Our findings reveal that both the visual appeal and sponsorship disclosure of sponsored content created by influencers and sponsored by the company SIM positively influence brand perception. . Visually appealing content captures attention and is often associated with positive attributes, enhancing consumers' perceptions of the brand.

Surprisingly, sponsorship disclosure emerged as the most significant influencer. This may be because consumers value honesty and transparency; when they perceive sponsored content as clearly disclosed, they are more likely to trust the message and the brand behind it. This suggests that transparent communication about sponsorship can build trust and credibility with consumers, ultimately shaping their perception of the brand in a positive way

On the contrary, our research indicates that factors such as the alignment between the brand and the influencer, as well as the familiarity with this type of content, do not significantly influence brand perception

Table 20 :summary of findings

H1 : There is a significant positive relationship between the visual appeal of sponsored content, sponsorship disclosure and influencer brand fit and consumers' perception of the sponsoring brand	<b>Partially accepted</b>
H2 : Brand perception differs between those who are familiar with this type of content and those who are not	<b>Rejected</b>

### Conclusion

In Chapter 03, we provided an in-depth portrayal of SIM AGRO company along with one of its digital marketing communication strategies. Specifically, we focused on the utilization of "sponsored content" as a key communication tool.

Through quantitative methodologies including multiple regression and independent sample t-tests, our study investigated the impact of this communication strategy on brand perception. By analyzing the data, we aimed to uncover the extent to which sponsored content influences how consumers perceive the SIM AGRO brand.



# **GENERAL CONCLUSION**

The rapid evolution of the internet has introduced new communication channels, including social media platforms. These platforms have garnered widespread usage among consumers, providing access to an expansive audience. Consequently, consumer behaviors and habits have undergone substantial transformations, prompting businesses to allocate resources towards digital marketing endeavors.

As sponsored content being one of the most used communication strategies in social media and influencer marketing, it seems very important to highlight the importance of it and to what extent does it influence consumers brand perception

The primary objective of this study is to examine “ **To what extent does sponsored content influence consumers brand perception**” focusing specifically on SIM AGRO, a prominent Algerian company in the food industry

To achieve this goal, the research aims to address the following inquiries :

- Do visual appeal of sponsored content, sponsorship disclosure and influencer brand fit have a positive impact on consumers' perception of the sponsoring brand ?
- Do consumers perceive the brand differently when they are familiar with the type of sponsored content?

First, we conducted an extensive literature review to examine existing research on the impact of sponsored content on brand perception or any relative topics. This review allowed us to build a conceptual model that outlines the relationship between sponsored content and consumer perceptions of a brands

To test the research assumptions derived from this model, we employed a pre-experimental design using a questionnaire survey. Data was collected from participants who interacted with an Instagram reel created by an influencer, who is part of the SIM social media communication partners network. Participants viewed the reel, which contained sponsored content, and subsequently answered questions designed to measure the influence of the sponsored content on their brand perception.

This approach enabled us to assess how exposure to sponsored content via social media impacts consumer attitudes and perceptions toward the brand featured in the content

Through our exploration, we have seen that sponsored content has significantly altered how consumers perceive brands through its just 2 dimension : visual appeal and sponsorship disclosure . According to the findings presented in the third chapter, particularly in third section, sponsorship disclosure is the most important variable that influence positively on how the brand presented in the content is perceived

**Research limitations :**

- The sample size was limited, with only a few individuals exposed to sponsored content created by specific influencers and sponsored by a particular brand, SIM.
- The study's focus on a particular brand (SIM) and influencer may limit the generalizability of the findings to other brands
- The sponsored content is represented by only few dimensions where in fact it's important to recognize that the concept is multifaceted and may encompass additional dimension
- The sampling method utilized in this research may not be suitable for generalizing the findings to the broader population

**But it is also important to highlight several key advantages :**

- This study utilized high-quality references and up-to-date information from recent books and articles ensuring a current and relevant foundation.
- The measurement scales used were meticulously adapted from established literature
- The high Cronbach's alpha values indicate excellent internal consistency, confirming that the items effectively measure the intended constructs
- The topic itself is new and up to date, reflecting contemporary trends.
- This study contributes to the existing literature by addressing a gap in research on the impact of sponsored content on brand perception.

**Recommendation :**

- Ensure that all visual content across social media platforms is of high quality and aligns with the brand's aesthetics and values.
- Maintain consistent visual branding elements such as colors, fonts, and imagery style to reinforce brand identity.
- Emphasize transparency in all sponsored content. Clearly disclose any partnerships, collaborations, or sponsorships to maintain trust with audience

Further studies may extend or confirm our study findings, especially by exploring different types of sponsored content and various social media platforms. Additionally, the use of a more rigorous experimental procedure, such as a randomized controlled trial, can be beneficial to provide stronger confirmatory evidence and further validate the impact of sponsored content on brand perception. This would enhance the reliability and generalizability of the results, offering deeper insights into how sponsored content influences consumer attitudes and behaviors across diverse contexts

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# Appendices

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Le contenu sponsorisé et la perception de la marque

# Le contenu sponsorisé et la perception de la marque

Bienvenue dans notre enquête sur "l'impact de contenu sponsorisé sur la perception de la marque", votre avis est précieux pour nous aider à comprendre comment les consommateurs comme vous perçoivent les marques présentées dans du contenu sponsorisé, notamment via des plateformes telles que les réels Instagram.

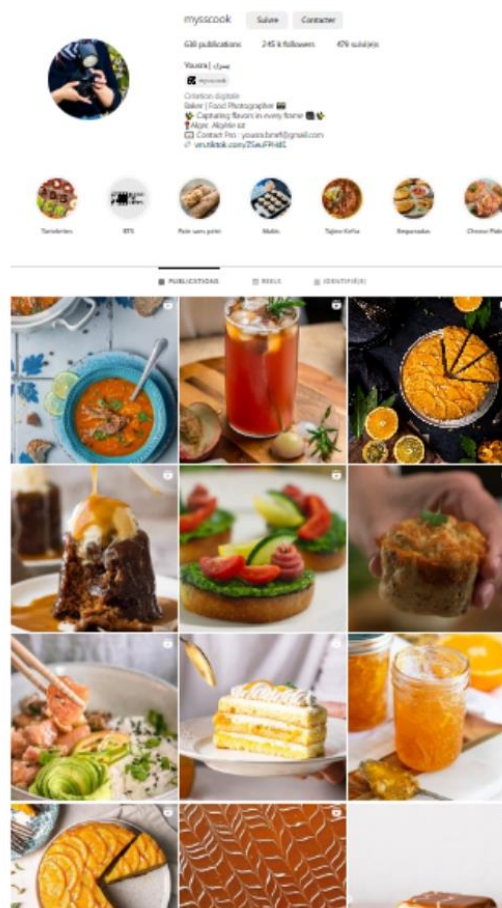
\* Indique une question obligatoire

Avant de continuer avec le questionnaire, nous vous demandons aimablement de prendre un moment pour vous familiariser avec le contenu de l'influenceur associé à ce questionnaire. Vous avez le choix de :

1-Cliquer sur le lien suivant pour visiter directement la page Instagram de l'influenceur

<https://www.instagram.com/mysscook?igsh=MXJhbWx5aTY2cTh4Yw==>

2-Consulter la photo de la page Instagram de l'influenceur ci-dessous



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Le contenu sponsorisé et la perception de la marque

Ensuite, nous vous demandons gentiment de répondre à quelques questions portant sur votre expérience et vos perceptions après avoir examiné ce contenu (réel) :



[http://youtube.com/watch?v=Y43FhY-](http://youtube.com/watch?v=Y43FhY-5qb0)

[5qb0](#)

1. Êtes-vous familier avec ce type de contenu ? \*

*Une seule réponse possible.*

Oui

Non

2. Est-ce votre première interaction avec cette marque ? \*

*Une seule réponse possible.*

oui

non

3. Quelle est votre évaluation de l'attrait visuel de ce réel ? \*

*Une seule réponse possible.*

1 2 3 4 5

Offe      agréable

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Le contenu sponsorisé et la perception de la marque

4. \*

*Une seule réponse possible.*

1 2 3 4 5

De r      de bonne apparence

5. \*

*Une seule réponse possible.*

1 2 3 4 5

Dép      plaisant

6. \*

*Une seule réponse possible.*

1 2 3 4 5

Peu      attrayant

7. \*

*Une seule réponse possible.*

1 2 3 4 5

Aspe      aspect bon

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Le contenu sponsorisé et la perception de la marque

9. Concernant la transparence du sponsoring , veuillez noter de « 1 = Pas du tout d'accord » à « 5 = Tout à fait d'accord » : \*

*Une seule réponse possible par ligne.*

	Pas du tout d'accord	Pas d'accord	Plus ou moins d'accord	D'accord	Tout à fait d'accord
<b>Il y avait une présence claire d'une marque dans le réel</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>le contenu était clairement sponsorisé</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>L'influenceur a rendu le nom du sponsor "Sim" très évident</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>L'influenceur a mentionné que c'était sponsorisé</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>l'influenceur a clairement véhiculé la marque qui était promue</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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Le contenu sponsorisé et la perception de la marque

10. Concernant l'adéquation entre l'influenceur et la marque , veuillez noter de « 1 = \*  
Pas du tout d'accord » à « 5 = Tout à fait d'accord » :

*Une seule réponse possible par ligne.*

	Pas du tout d'accord	Pas d'accord	Plus ou moins d'accord	D'accord	Tout à fait d'accord
<b>L'influenceur est un choix approprié pour représenter la marque SIM</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>L'influenceur apporte des avantages à la marque SIM.</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>L'influenceur peut attirer naturellemen t le public cible de la marque SIM grâce à son contenu .</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

la perception de la marque "SIM "

11. À quel point êtes-vous confiant dans le rappel du produit ou service spécifique \*  
offert par la marque dans le contenu sponsorisé que vous avez vu ?

*Une seule réponse possible.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
Pas (	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Très confiant

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Le contenu sponsorisé et la perception de la marque

12. Comment décriez-vous votre impression globale de la marque basée sur le contenu sponsorisé ? \*

*Une seule réponse possible.*

1 2 3 4 5

---

nég:      positive

13. Associez-vous des émotions positives/négatives à la marque "SIM" après avoir vu le contenu sponsorisé ? \*

*Une seule réponse possible.*

1 2 3 4 5

---

nég:      positive

14. Quels attributs ou qualités spécifiques vous viennent à l'esprit lorsque vous pensez à la marque présentée dans le contenu sponsorisé ? \*

---

15. Votre perception de la marque "SIM" a-t-elle changé après avoir visionné le contenu sponsorisé ? \*

*Une seule réponse possible.*

1 2 3 4 5

---

a ch:      a changé positivent

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Le contenu sponsorisé et la perception de la marque

16. Dans quelle mesure le contenu sponsorisé a-t-il influencé votre confiance ou votre assurance envers la marque "SIM" ? \*

*Une seule réponse possible.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
n'a f	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	a influencé

#### Section sans titre

17. vous êtes ? \*

*Une seule réponse possible.*

- homme  
 femme

18. votre tranche d'âge \*

*Une seule réponse possible.*

- moins de 18 ans  
 entre 18-24 ans  
 entre 25-34 ans  
 entre 35-44  
 45 ans et plus



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Le contenu sponsorisé et la perception de la marque

19. votre profession \*

*Une seule réponse possible.*

- étudiant
- cadre
- salarié
- commerçant
- profession libérale
- retraité
- sans emploi

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