

**DEMOCRATIC AND POPULAR REPUBLIC OF
ALGERIA
MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND
SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH**

ECOLE SUPERIEURE DE COMMERCE

**A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the
Requirements for
Master's Degree in Commercial Sciences
Specialty: Marketing & Communication**

**THE IMPACT OF PERSUASIVE SOCIAL
MEDIA TACTICS ON CUSTOMER'S
ENGAGEMENT**

Case study: ITComp

(Information Technology)

Submitted by:

TELLAA Sara

Supervised by:

Pr. CHIBANI Amina

Training address: ITComp, Bir Mourad rais-Algiers. Algeria

Training period: from 5 to 30 May 2024.

Academic year: 2023/2024

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Dedication

This work is lovingly dedicated to the greatest man I have ever known: my beloved father, who is no longer with us. His memory continues to inspire and guide me every day. May

Allah bless his soul!

'' اللهم افسح للموتى في قبورهم مدّ بصرهم ، وافرش
قبورهم من فراش الجنة ''

To my mother, the most hopeful and believing person I have ever known, whose unwavering optimism and steadfast faith have been a guiding light in my life.

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Introduction

Introduction:

The evolution of digital communication is evidenced by the history of social media. Online communication and information exchange were made possible by the first computer networks and bulletin board systems. Platforms like Facebook, MySpace, and Friendster arose as technology developed, altering the idea of social networking and bringing people together globally. Instagram concentrated on visual storytelling, whereas Twitter brought the capability of microblogging. Ephemeral material was first presented by Snapchat, and sharing of short videos was transformed by TikTok. Every platform offered distinct features and experiences that catered to various user demographics and preferences. Social media has completely changed how we connect, communicate, and consume information in the current world. Its development is ongoing, with new platforms and trends appearing frequently to influence the future of social media and impact on society.

Social media has grown at an incredible rate in recent years, completely changing how people interact, exchange information, and communicate. 62.3% of the world's population uses social media. The average daily usage is 2 hours and 23 minutes (January 2024). The emergence of social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Twitter has completely changed the online environment by opening up new channels for communication and content production.

A fundamental change in the way business's function and engage with their target consumers has also been brought about by the rise of social media. For a lot of organizations including business, nonprofits, and governmental agencies use of social media very often begins in Marketing. Acknowledging social media's enormous potential as a tool for marketing, businesses are using these platforms more and more to connect and interact with their clientele.

Businesses have never-before-seen possibilities to increase consumer involvement, establish brand awareness, and even carry out market research thanks to social media. Customers experience a brand privilege while using a product or service and also when interacting with a company. Brand awareness starts with the experiences of the employees of a company. If a company is approachable, people-friendly, then the company must make itself visible by inclusion on the web. Nowadays, businesses can communicate with their target market directly, gain their input, and adjust their marketing plans in response to real-time findings.

Furthermore, a new generation of influencers and content producers has emerged as a result of the growth of social media. These people have developed sizable fan bases and have great sway over their respective audiences. Persuasive communication is communication that

aims to change attitudes, beliefs and behaviour of people or groups that are the goal of persuasion.

Influencer marketing has become a potent promotional strategy as brands have realized the ability of influencers to sway consumer perceptions and purchase decisions. Influencers work with brands to provide real, interesting content, use their devoted following to advertise goods and services.

In the realm of social media marketing, persuasion tactics play a vital role in capturing the attention and interest of users, influencing their behaviour, and ultimately driving them towards making a purchase or taking a desired action. These tactics encompass a range of strategies aimed at appealing to consumers' emotions, desires, and needs.

The borders between marketing and persuasion are blurry. In fact, marketing is another name for persuasion, as in business, one does not come without the other. The job of marketers and web marketers consists of developing persuasion techniques, as they allow them to reach out to more potential clients as well as growing their portfolio of customers.

However, as every product is different, marketers' resort to various persuasion tactics to appeal to customers and play a role in their decision to purchase.

Persuasion tactics are used in the context of digital marketing to capture consumers and inspire them to perform particular actions. Digital marketers employ a variety of tactics to strategically use social proof, influencer partnerships, and captivating storytelling to effectively impact consumer behaviour. Marketers can engage with their target consumers, foster trust, and eventually increase conversions by creating compelling content. Targeted advertising and personalization increase the persuasive impact by presenting messages that are specifically customized to the requirements and preferences of each individual. Furthermore, evoking feelings of exclusivity, scarcity, and urgency can appeal to customers' FOMO (fear of missing out) and motivate them to take immediate action. Effective calls to action, compelling content, and social media interaction allow digital marketers to use persuasive strategies to drive success in the ever-evolving landscape of digital marketing.

Problematic Research Questions:

The growing presence of Algerian businesses on social media platforms is a significant development, and these businesses have no choice but to employ persuasive tactics in their strategy in order to establish meaningful interactions with their customers. As a result, the primary objective of this research is to address the following central question:

- How do social media persuasion tactics impact customer engagement?

The data collected attempt to find answers to further following research questions:

1. Are some tactics more effective than others in capturing customer engagement?
2. Do customers perceive persuasive social media tactics as manipulative or honest?
3. How do different demographic factors (e.g., age, gender, socio-economic status) influence customer responses to persuasive social media tactics?

These research questions aim to explore the impact, effectiveness and psychological processes of persuasive social media tactics on customer engagement. They provide a basis for investigating the relationship between persuasive tactics and customer behaviour in the context of social media marketing.

Research Hypotheses:

- **H1:** Expertise is the best tactic in influencing customer engagement.
- **H2:** Customers perceive persuasive social media tactics as manipulative when they involve tactics such as artificial scarcity or influencers.
- **H3:** Customers' demographic factors, such as age and gender, will significantly moderate the relationship between persuasive social media tactics and customer engagement.

Reasons of choosing the research:

➤ **Personal reasons:**

Being passionate about social media marketing, which enhance motivation and dedication throughout the research process.

➤ **Objectives reasons:**

This topic is highly relevant in today's digital era. With the increasing importance of social media platforms in business marketing strategies, understanding how these tactics can effectively engage customers is crucial for businesses to stay competitive. Algerian businesses may face unique challenges in effectively utilizing social media platforms and engaging with their customers. Exploring these challenges and identifying strategies to overcome them can provide practical guidance to businesses operating in similar contexts.

The importance of the research:

The importance of the topic of persuasive social media tactics and their impact on customer engagement lies in several key aspects:

1. Understanding consumer behaviour: By exploring the impact of persuasive social media tactics on customer engagement, this research can provide valuable insights into consumer behaviour in the digital age. Understanding how consumers respond to these tactics can help businesses tailor their marketing strategies to effectively engage their target audience and drive favourable consumer outcomes.

2. Enhancing marketing effectiveness: social media has become an integral part of marketing strategies for businesses across industries. By investigating the effectiveness of persuasive tactics on social media platforms, this research can help businesses optimize their marketing efforts, allocate resources more efficiently, and increase their return on investment (ROI) in digital marketing initiatives.

3. Informing strategic decision-making: The findings of this research can inform strategic decision-making processes for businesses operating in the Algerian market and beyond. By understanding the persuasive tactics that resonate with consumers, businesses can make informed decisions regarding content creation, campaign design, platform selection, and customer engagement strategies.

4. Fostering customer relationships: Building and maintaining strong relationships with customers is crucial in today's competitive business landscape. By identifying effective persuasive tactics, businesses can nurture meaningful interactions with their customers, enhance customer loyalty, and foster long-term relationships that drive repeat purchases and positive word-of-mouth.

5. Supporting business growth: Effective customer engagement through persuasive social media tactics can contribute to business growth. Engaged customers are more likely to make repeat purchases, become brand advocates, and influence others' purchase decisions. This research can provide insights and strategies to help businesses leverage social media platforms as powerful tools for business growth and success.

6. Adapting to the digital landscape: As technology continues to evolve, businesses need to adapt to the changing digital landscape to remain competitive. This research can shed light on the evolving dynamics of consumer engagement in the digital sphere and help businesses stay abreast of the latest trends, techniques, and best practices in utilizing social media platforms for effective customer engagement.

The objectives:

Gaining a deeper knowledge of online persuasion strategies is the main goal of this research. Finding the connection between these strategies and consumer behaviour is the aim. Furthermore, the study attempts to assist ITComp in implementing the best plan in order to help the business fulfil customer expectations on the internet.

Research methodology:

Based on the problematic, the resulting variables (social media persuasive tactics “independent variable” and online customer’s engagement “dependent variable”) and the proposed hypotheses: two types of research will be used, the qualitative and quantitative also any secondary data related to the subject:

Quantitative methods: can provide statistical insights into consumer perceptions and behaviours.

Qualitative methods: can offer in-depth understanding and context. so, we use the analytic methodology.

a. Quantitative Data:

- Surveys: Develop a structured survey to collect quantitative data on consumer perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours regarding persuasive social media tactics.
- Analytics: Analyse data from content of social media posts or other relevant sources.

b. Quantitative Analysis:

- statistical tools (e.g., IBM SPSS version 26) to analyse survey data.
- Conduct descriptive statistics to understand trends and patterns.
- Apply inferential statistics (e.g., regression analysis) to examine relationships between variables.

c. Qualitative Analysis:

- Utilize thematic analysis for qualitative data from interviews.
- Identify recurring themes related to consumer perceptions, attitudes, and experiences with persuasive social media tactics.

• **Triangulation:**

Combine findings from both quantitative and qualitative methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research questions.

Dissertation structure:

The research will be divided into three chapters as follows:

Introduction: in this part a brief introduction on the research is presented.

Chapter I: a literature review on social media marketing, highlighting social media and then the persuasive tactics used by companies, at the end a brief literature about manipulation and its techniques used on advertising

Chapter II: a literature review on online customer engagement, then on social media engagement, at the end it will be discussed more aspects including customer engagement cycle and how do businesses measure it.

Chapter III: in this chapter the company host is presented first, then the research methodology will be highlighted, secondly the research findings will be presented along with the interpretations.

Conclusion: in this part a summary of the whole research is presented.

Chapter I

Social media and marketing

Chapter 1 : Social media and marketing***Introduction***

This chapter contains two main topics: social media marketing and persuasion and manipulation.

It presents past studies on social media marketing, as it gets deeper to the main persuasive tactics that companies use nowadays to enhance their customer. This survey of literature focuses on the primary study objectives:

- Improve understanding of social media marketing and identifies the common persuasive tactics.
- Understanding manipulation and its techniques used on social media.

By achieving the aforementioned goals, a major contribution to research is attempted. To begin, a simple definition of social media will be presented and discussed. Second, a review about social media marketing. Finally, a careful analysis of persuasion and manipulation.

Section 1: Literature on social media**1. Social media history**

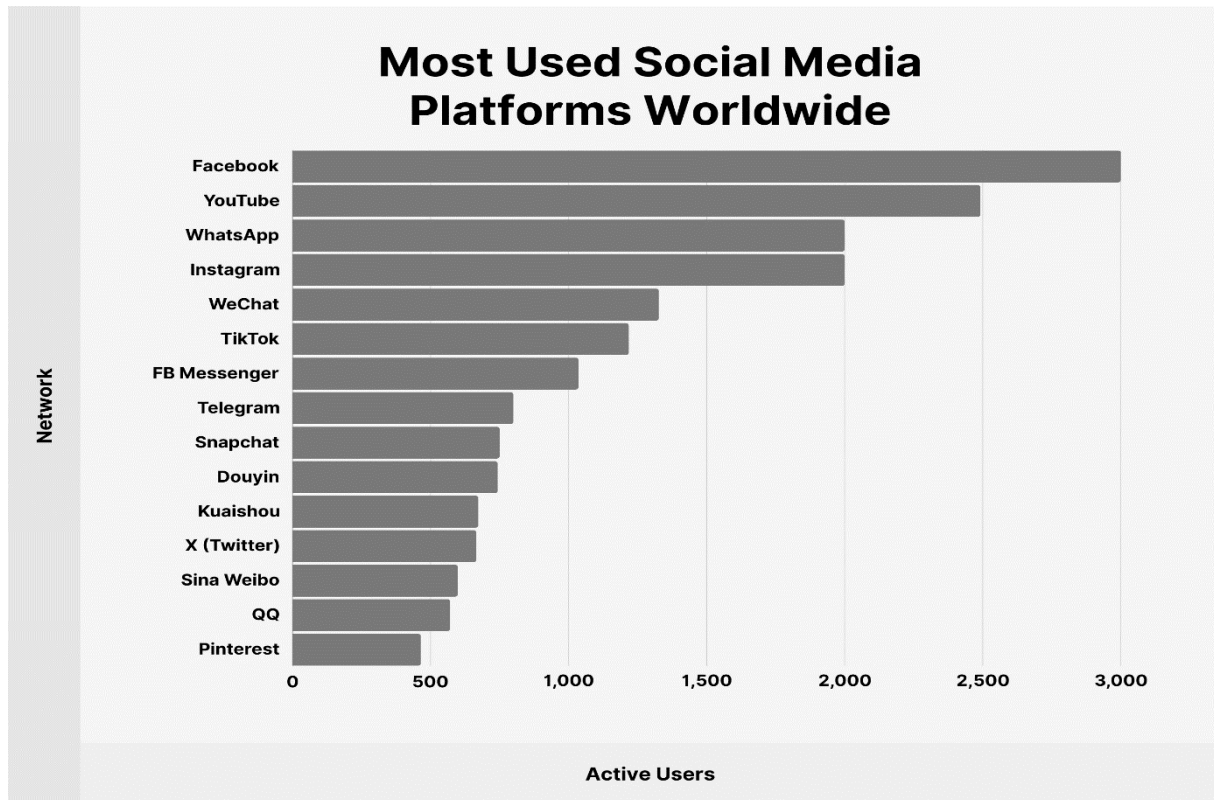
Social media has completely changed how individuals connect, communicate, and exchange information worldwide. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Twitter have given people and companies new and unheard-of chances to interact with one another, create communities, and have their views heard. Social media's ascent has changed not just how people communicate with one another but also how politics, marketing, education, and entertainment are all conducted in society. Social media is one of the easiest ways for you to connect quickly and collaborate with your colleague's media influencers and others.

Social media's interactive features, which allow users to actively participate in the creation and distribution of content, are among its distinguishing features. Social media platforms, in contrast to traditional media channels, enable two-way communication, enabling users to exchange ideas, opinions, and experiences as well as have live conversations with other users. Social media's dynamic and interactive qualities have greatly boosted its widespread use and sway in the current digital environment. New web technologies have made it easy for anyone to create and, most importantly distribute their own content. A blog post, tweet, or YouTube video can be produced and viewed by millions virtually for free.

Advertisers don't have to pay publishers or distributors huge sums of money to embed their messages; now they can make their own interesting content that viewers will flock to.¹ Social media has also been very important in influencing public opinion, igniting social movements, and promoting the spread of knowledge. It now serves as a forum for people to discuss a variety of subjects, share news and current events, and voice their opinions. People now have more power than ever to share their opinions and shape public policy on a scale never previously possible because to their ability to connect and engage with communities and like-minded individuals. But social media has numerous advantages, and there are drawbacks as well. Concerns about social media's addictive qualities, privacy, online harassment, and fake news have drawn attention and sparked discussions about the platform's effects on both people and society at large. It is critical to overcome these obstacles and look for solutions for maximizing social media's benefits while reducing its drawbacks.

¹ Dan zarella The Social Media Marketing Book First Edition (2009)

Figure 1 Number of users of each social media platform worldwide 2023



Source: <https://backlinko.com>²

2. Social media definition

Social media is as a set of software and web tools that help users interact online, share content and develop a personalized network of friends, colleagues or organizations.³ According to Kaplan and Haenlein, “social media is a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content”.⁴

Social media refers to online platforms and technologies that enable individuals, communities, and organizations to create, share, and exchange information, ideas, and content in virtual spaces. It encompasses a wide range of internet-based applications and websites that facilitate user-generated content, interaction, and collaboration. Social media platforms provide individuals with the ability to connect and engage with others, form virtual communities, and express themselves through various forms of media such as text, images, videos, and audio.

² <https://backlinko.com> (visited at 10AM April 5 2024)

³ <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1016/j.intmar.2015.09.005?journalCode=jnma>; (visited at 10PM, march 13th 2024).

⁴ Kaplan, A. M., & Haenlein, M. (2010). Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of Social Media. *Business horizons*, 53(1), 59-68.

These platforms typically offer features such as profiles or user accounts, where individuals can create personal or professional identities and share information about themselves. Users can establish connections with other users, which can range from personal friendships to professional networking relationships. Social media platforms also enable users to publish and consume content in real-time, allowing for the rapid dissemination of information and the potential for content to go viral.

One of the defining characteristics of social media is its interactive nature, as it enables users to engage in two-way communication and participate actively in the creation and dissemination of content. Users can like, comment on, and share posts or content created by others, fostering a sense of community and facilitating conversations and discussions on a global scale. Social media has become an integral part of modern society, influencing various aspects of life, including communication, information sharing, entertainment, marketing, and even political activism. It has transformed the way individuals and businesses communicate, collaborate, and engage with each other.

Social media platforms have also given rise to new forms of digital marketing and advertising, providing businesses with opportunities to reach and engage with a vast audience and target specific demographics. However, social media is not without its challenges and concerns. Issues such as privacy, online harassment, misinformation, and the impact on mental health have emerged as significant considerations in the context of social media usage. As the digital landscape continues to evolve, social media will likely continue to shape and redefine the way individuals and societies interact, communicate, and share information in the digital age.

3. Social media importance for businesses

Social media has become the defining trend of the past ten years and is still changing how people communicate and interact with each other, with the government, with businesses, and with each other's communities. Researchers and marketers are battling the deep effects of social media's quick evolution on user-generated material that goes viral, how it shapes consumer perceptions, and how the environment is always shifting for creating business cases that involve proactive stakeholder engagement. Alongside the growing opportunity to listen to customers on company-managed channels and independent review sites, including social media pages, there are growing obstacles in reacting in real-time to these conversations across the digital world. This means that marketing departments must drastically change the way they interact and communicate with consumers.

The world is changing; technology is pervasive and has an impact on society with every swift transformation it goes through. The most thrilling technological advancement a

few decades ago was television, which had an unparalleled social transformation. Similar changes are occurring now thanks to the Internet and the growth of social media. In actuality, social media has the potential to drastically alter society. It is simple to underestimate social media's actual disruptive potential, which is a changing target because it is always evolving.

For instance, the line between the public and private domains of life is rapidly blurring as a result of social media's broad acceptance. Every detail about a person, including likes and dislikes, personal information, and other everyday activities, may be found on social media, regardless of their position; CEO, president of a nation, or common person. Actually, nothing can be kept a secret anymore everything said and done is now part of the public record. There is a silver lining to social media besides the general dread and gloom associated with this lack of privacy: social media has significantly increased societal transparency. social media marketing is a process whereby retailers are encouraged to promote or offer their product or service through social media channels and to communicate with customers social media marketing is a mechanism to create more website visits by generating interest among consumers via social media channels. Additionally, it is crucial that marketers know the needs of their consumers. This is important because it enables marketers to communicate with consumers in a personal way contend that the biggest advantage of social media marketing for retailers is that they can collect significant amounts of information about customers. This information can be used in various ways, for example in the development of new products, feedback and selection of segments. An important aspect of social media marketing is content.

Content must be relevant, fit within the corporate culture, business goals and deliver customer value. Social media content can be used in advertisements to influence consumer behaviour. Moreover, content that consumers attract is more likely to be shared with their own network. High quality content is therefore essential and can encourage consumers to engage.

Section 2: Social media partner marketing**1. The history of marketing on social media**

The nature of marketing has shifted significantly over the previous decade, with corporations restructuring their marketing activities. This shift is caused by the rise of technology and social media. Consumers have become more involved in the marketing process as mobile phones have evolved, such as providing their own content on various digital platforms. The most popular social networking sites nowadays are Facebook and Instagram, where users create and share information on their profiles.⁵

For a modern marketer, it is critical to remember that user-generated information about products or services is highly valued by other users since it provides honest recommendations and insight into the value the product or service has to provide the consumer. Furthermore, Djafarova and Rushworth (2017) demonstrate that the identical communication activities carried out directly by brands do not have the same level of credibility from the consumer's perspective.

Social media and networking platforms have led to everyday sharing of personal information, including images and videos.⁶

Consumers can share their experiences, comments, and reviews of products and services. Booth and Matic (2011) argue that social media has increased consumer influence to unprecedented levels. Consumers may now influence attitudes and behaviour in ways that firms struggle to control. When it comes to brands and how they can communicate with consumers, there are numerous options available; one of the most prominent is social media marketing. Instagram allows marketers to communicate with their target audience through actions such as following, like, and commenting on posts.

2. Important aspects of marketing on social media**2.1 Brand awareness**

Social media offers a chance to raise awareness and visibility for brands. Through consistent engagement on various social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, and others, businesses can exhibit their brand identity, disseminate insightful material, and expand their audience.

2.2 Audience Engagement

Social media makes it possible to communicate with clients directly and instantly. Through direct messages, shares, likes, and comments, businesses can interact with their

⁵ <https://www.statista.com/statistics/272014/global-social-networks-ranked-by-number-of-users/> (visited at 4 PM April 10 2024)

⁶ Kaplan, A. M., & Haenlein, M. (2010). Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of Social Media. *Business horizons*, 53(1), 59-68.

audience, establishing rapport and starting conversations. This interaction facilitates the knowledge of client preferences, the collection of feedback, and addressing queries promptly.

2.3 Content Marketing

Social media sites act as conduits for the exchange and advertising of content. In order to inform, entertain, and engage their target audience, businesses can produce and disseminate a wide range of content forms, including blogs, videos, infographics, and podcasts. Content that is valuable and shareable fosters brand loyalty by drawing in and keeping followers.

2.4 Targeted Advertising

Advanced targeting capabilities for advertising are provided by social media networks. Utilizing user data, businesses may develop highly targeted advertising campaigns based on habits, interests, and demographics, among other things. This enables companies to boost the efficacy of their ad expenditure, target particular client demographics, and encourage conversions.

2.5 Influencer Marketing

On social media, influencer marketing has grown in popularity. Companies work with influencers that are well-known in their respective fields and have sizable fan bases. These influencers promote products or services to their audience, helping businesses expand their reach and tap into new customer segments.

2.6 Customer care

Social media sites act as avenues for customer care and support. Businesses can reply to questions, grievances, or criticism from customers in a public or private setting. This openness and promptness contribute to the development of trust and the effective resolution of problems.

2.7 Insights and Analysis

Social media companies give users access to analytics tools that give them useful information on engagement metrics, content performance, audience demographics, and other topics. Businesses may improve their content, hone their methods, and gauge the success of their social media marketing initiatives by examining this data.

2.8 Exploring the Depths of Social Media Marketing

Businesses must create a clear social media plan that is in line with their overarching marketing goals. To guarantee efficient and fruitful social media marketing efforts, this approach should take into account the target audience, platform choice, content development, interaction strategies, and assessment of key performance indicators (KPIs).

When delving deeper into social media marketing, keep the following extra factors in mind:

2.9 Social Media Platforms

The user demographics and distinctive features of every social media platform vary. Businesses can select platforms that best suit their target audience and marketing objectives by being aware of the features of each. For instance, LinkedIn is concentrated on business networking and caters to B2B customers, but Instagram is well-known for its visual content and ability to reach a younger demographic.

2.10 Content Approach

Creating a content plan is essential to the success of social media marketing. Companies ought to make a content calendar that specifies the kinds of material that are to be shared, how often they should be posted, and the objectives for each piece of content. Maintaining a healthy balance between promotional content and informative, interesting, and inspiring information for the audience is crucial.

2.11 Visual Content

Infographics, films, and other visual components are important in social media marketing. Visuals that are striking can draw viewers in, effectively communicate ideas, and boost interaction. Companies should make the investment to produce top-notch graphics that complement their brand identity and appeal to their target market.

2.12 Hashtags

On social networking sites, material is categorized and found using hashtags. They can aid in boosting post visibility and extending the audience for company material. To expand your audience and participate in discussions about particular subjects, look into trending and pertinent hashtags in the sector.

2.13 Intimate Hearing

Social media gives you the chance to keep an eye on discussions about a company, sector, or related subjects. Monitoring business-related mentions, remarks, and conversations is known as social listening. Businesses can find chances for innovation or improvement, solve customer problems, and obtain insightful information by actively participating in these conversations.

2.14 Influencers Working Together

Engaging influencers in partnerships can increase the visibility and effect of social media marketing campaigns. In certain domains, influencers have built a devoted following and credibility. Collaborating with influencers who are pertinent to the brand's sector or intended audience can assist companies in expanding their reach, fostering credibility, and producing genuine content.

2.15 Paid Promotion

Social media networks provide a range of advertising choices in addition to organic reach to increase visibility and target audiences. Businesses can target their adverts using paid advertising by using factors like interests, behaviours, and demographics. To optimize campaigns and increase return on investment, it's critical to establish clear goals, track ad performance, and make necessary adjustments.

2.16 Listening Tools for Social Media

Businesses may monitor brand mentions, follow and analyse social media conversations, and assess the success of their social media campaigns with the aid of a number of social media listening tools. These resources offer insightful information and data that can help with strategy optimization and decision-making.

Section 3: Social media persuasion & manipulation tactics

1. Persuasion definition

An "attempt to change actor preferences and to challenge current or create new collective meaning" is what is meant by persuasion. Persuasion is in fact regarded as the primary means of creating and reassembling social realities.⁷ According to Finnemore (1996), "persuasive normative claims become powerful and prevail." Persuasion is also "the process by which agent actions become social structure, ideas become norms, and the subjective becomes the intersubjective" according to Finnemore and Sikkink. As a result, marketers need to carefully consider how best to communicate with their target audience.

Achieving the persuasion required for a favourable outcome involves focusing on the consumer's cognitive or emotional behaviour or attitude. The process through which communications from other individuals affect a person's attitudes or conduct without putting them under pressure. There are other factors that influence an individual's conduct and views, such as physiological states, physical coercion, and verbal threats. Not all communication aims to persuade; other communication goals are to inform or amuse. Since manipulating others is a common part of persuasion, many people find the practice repugnant. Some might counter that human society descends into disorder in the absence of some kind of social control and mutual accommodation, such as that attained through persuasion. When the alternatives are taken into account, persuasion acquires moral acceptability in this way.

In Winston Churchill's assessment of democracy as a system of governance, persuasion is the worst social control strategy. Advertising is the medium through which persuasion is most evident. By separating communication (as the source or stimulus) from the resulting changes in attitudes (as the effect or reaction), the persuasion process can be briefly examined.

1.1 The process of persuasion

A sequence of phases that a person goes through when they are persuaded has been defined through analysis. The message is first made available to the recipient, who then pays attention to it and understands its contents (including the main point being made and possibly the supporting data). In order for persuasion to be successful, the target must concede to or accept the argument being made, and unless the most immediate benefit is the only thing that matters, they must hold onto their new viewpoint long enough to take action. Persuading someone (or a group) to adopt the behaviour suggested by the new attitude is the ultimate goal

⁷ Payne, 2001 Payne, G. T. (2001). Understanding family business cultures: A qualitative case study approach. *Family Business Review*, 14(2), 105-116

of the persuasive process; an example of this would be someone enlisting in the military or someone eating a certain brand of cereal for breakfast.

Not all theories, but some do highlight the connections between persuasion and education. They contend that teaching new information through informative communication and persuasion are quite similar. They therefore conclude that since repetition in communication alters learning, it must also have a persuasive effect and that persuaders employ verbal learning and conditioning concepts extensively and profitably (e.g., by strategically repeating television commercials). The emphasis of the learning strategy is typically on message retention, comprehension, and attention.

The message and one's perception or interpretation of it both play a significant role in determining how someone responds to persuasive communication. If words in a newspaper advertisement are printed in red rather than black, they may have distinct persuasive effects. Persuasion, according to perceptual theorists, modifies a person's view of any item associated with his attitudes. Evidence that the recipient's preconceptions play at least as big of a role in shaping what is understood as the message content further supports perceptual techniques. The strategy emphasizes comprehension and attention.

1.2 Elaboration Likelihood Model

- **Definition**

Richard Petty and John Cacioppo created the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), a dual analytical approach to consumer behaviour change. The heuristic systematic model of information processing created by Shelly Chaiken is another paradigm that is comparable. Depending on the subject's level of interest and involvement,⁸ the ELM model explains how attitudes and persuasion develop. The communication can go in one of two directions, depending on how involved the consumer is with the product and/or how it is consumed. This means that the persuasive action's effectiveness will mostly determine whether or not the subject agrees to participate.⁹

This model theoretically revives two major paradigms. The first is the paradigm of attitude transformation as it is presented by McGuire (1985), who focuses on the information processing process. The second relates to Greenwald's theory of cognitive response Greenwald (1968), which holds that each subject's unique cognitive responses to a persuasive message determines the message's effectiveness.

⁸ Chaiken, S. (1980). Heuristic versus systematic information processing and the use of source versus message cues in persuasion. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 39(5), 752.

⁹ Petty & Cacioppo, 1986 Petty, R. E., & Cacioppo, J. T. (1986). The elaboration likelihood model of persuasion. In *Communication and persuasion* (pp. 1-24).

- **The Central Route of ELM**

Petty and Cacioppo's initial information processing pathway, known as the "central route," is mostly used in cases with significant implication and is based primarily on a cognitive approach. Put another way, for which the arguments in the message are crucial. The receiver's cognitive elaborations are the focus of this route. When a high degree of cognition is directed toward the persuasive problem, a person is said to process centrally¹⁰. Presenting a message to customers, for example, as two-sided, suggests a high level of cognitive elaboration, which could lead to a high degree of attitude certainty. A consumer's attitude certainty typically increases when they have knowledge and balance the positive and negative aspects. Accordingly, increased certainty indicates a shift in the recipient's behavioural attitude brought about by cognitive cues.¹¹

- **The Peripheral Route of ELM**

The second path is known as the "peripheral route," which employs peripheral signals related to the message, like directly affective aspects, and is primarily used in cases of low participation. When people choose this route, their opinions about the product are typically shaped by incidental, surface factors rather than the arguments and advantages of the product that are discussed in the message. Basic heuristics are employed by them.

This information processing approach is used when people lack the motivation to think deeply about a subject or when they have limited cognitive resources available to complete the task, as it requires less cognitive effort. Attitudes from the peripheral route are less solid and less robust to counter-arguments.¹²

Research has demonstrated that attitudes derived via the core route, or attitude certainty, are more resilient and long-lasting. Additionally, studies have demonstrated that this strategy influenced customer attitudes and resisted attempts to modify views. The primary elements influencing an individual's decision to take the centre path are their ability and drive to digest information. Ultimately, "a deeper comprehension of attitude certainty, when combined with the work on the ELM, will aid in the design of an even more effective risk communications".

The ELM holds that a person's motivation level and ability to digest information dictate the course they take. When motivation and ability are high, central route processing is more likely to take place, leading to more intentional and sustained attitude alteration.

¹¹ Rucker, Petty, & Brinol, 2008) Rucker, D. D., Petty, R. E., & Briñol, P. (2008). What's in a frame anyway? A meta-cognitive analysis of the impact of one versus two sided message framing on attitude certainty. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 18(2), 137-149.

¹² Petty & Cacioppo, 1986 Petty, R. E., & Cacioppo, J. T. (1986). The elaboration likelihood model of persuasion. In *Communication and persuasion* (pp. 1-24).

Peripheral route processing, however, is more common in circumstances with low motivation and skill, which results in less intentional and persistent attitude adjustments.

2. Persuasion tactics

2.1 Scarcity

Many brands have started using scarcity messages to promote limited edition (LE) products, according to research.¹³ There are two main types of scarcity messages that brands can use for LE products: limited-time scarcity (LTS) versus limited-quantity scarcity. The main goal of offering LE products is to make target consumers feel special, unique, and valuable. Previous studies have provided empirical evidence that these messages cause consumers to perceive LE products as valuable, special, and unique, and that leads to a positive impact on their product evaluation. Scarcity is, in some ways, the most powerful persuasive tool since it elicits a deeply ingrained emotional response. The godfather of persuasion, Robert Cialdini, listed scarcity as a key persuasion lever in *Influence* because of its immense impact. Something becomes more valuable and urgent when it is thought to be rare. This also applies to opportunities.

- **How scarcity works**

Scarcity, like other persuasive tools, is an evolutionary feature. Things that are more difficult to obtain or keep onto are typically more valued. Because the human brain is so lazy and enjoys heuristics and shortcuts, it evolved to use scarcity as a shortcut for value.

Your brain severely overrides reason if it perceives something as scarce. Your mind will inflate the value of the scarce item, come up with good characteristics for it, and overstate how much you would enjoy owning it.¹⁴

Scarcity is frequently used in the social media arena to compel users to act immediately or make a choice. Here are some examples of how scarcity is employed as a persuasive device:

1. Limited-time offers: In the case of LTS (limited time scarcity) messages, brands encourage consumers to buy as many LE products as possible for a limited duration of time.¹⁵ By presenting time-limited promotions, discounts, or special deals, marketers frequently install a sense of urgency.
2. Limited edition goods: in the case of LQS (limited quantity scarcity) messages, only a limited number of products are available for purchase.
3. Introducing limited edition goods or services is a popular strategy to encourage behaviour motivated by scarcity. A restricted quantity of products with distinctive

¹³ Balachander, S., & Stock, A. (2009). Limited edition products: When and when not to offer them. *Marketing Science*, 28(2), 336-355.

¹⁴ <https://jaredcruzaedo.medium.com> (visited at 9AM April 2 2024);

¹⁵ Aggarwal, P., Jun, S. Y., & Huh, J. H. (2011). Scarcity messages. *Journal of Advertising*, 40(3), 19-30.

features, special packaging, or joint ventures with influencers or artists may be released by brands. People are more likely to take action if they wish to possess something uncommon or special.

2.2 The bandwagon

The bandwagon effect is a psychological phenomenon in which people act primarily because others are doing so, regardless of their own beliefs, which they may disregard or overrule. A herd mentality refers to people's inclination to align their opinions and behaviours with those of others. Sundar et al. (2008) proposes several heuristics (mental shortcuts), including the bandwagon heuristic.¹⁶ The bandwagon heuristic is activated when a person believes that something is popular or good because a huge group of others agree on it, which leads to hasty judgments of the statement without careful consideration of the substance. This heuristic influences the perceived credibility of online information.

- **The reason the Bandwagon effect Happens**

The bandwagon effect is mostly due to psychological and sociological reasons. People are inherently programmed to be social and prefer to be part of a group. Conforming to a group's behaviour can lead to feelings of belonging and acceptance. People also like being on the winning team and expressing their social identity. To do so, they adopt the behaviour of the group around them, which becomes desirable or usual as a result of proximity and repetition. The bandwagon effect is a persuasive technique commonly employed in marketing, politics, and social media.

- **The impact of the bandwagon**

According to Li and Chen (2005), buyers choose to buy products with greater star ratings, sales rank, and customer reviews because they have a more favorable perception as a result of the bandwagon heuristic. According to Kim et al. (2015), the bandwagon effect positively impacts consumers' purchasing intentions and attitudes towards items by influencing their message perception, assessment, judgment, and behavior. According to Sundar et al. (2008), a strong bandwagon effect improves consumer perceptions of credibility, quality, and value by increasing positive feedback on products.

- **Bandwagon Effect and Perceived Credibility**

According to Chaiken (1987) and Sundar et al. (2008), the bandwagon effect occurs when a big group of people share the same viewpoint and information in online comments. This leads to individuals following others' opinions. As a result, collective voices or perceived others' viewpoints via online comments alter information perception, such as perceived

¹⁶ Sundar, S. S., Knobloch-Westerwick, S., & Hastall, M. R. (2007). News cues: Information scent and cognitive heuristics. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 58(3), 366-378.

legitimacy, because information supported by the majority can trigger the bandwagon heuristic. According to Kim et al. (2011), favourable remarks boost others' perceptions of information legitimacy by increasing perceptions of bandwagon.

2.3 Framing

Framing is less about the actual world and more about how people interpret it. A frame can introduce an anchor or maintain the status quo.¹⁷ It can point out sunk expenses or point you in the direction of supporting data.

Several research have established the impact of framing on marketing decision-making. Ganzach and Karsahi (1995) looked at how message framing affected consumers' purchasing decisions. They discovered that the gain-framed communication had a far less impact than the loss-framed statement. This research will focus on price framing.¹⁸

Price decrease expressed as a % seemed more important for the low-price goods than the same price reduction expressed in dollars, and the opposite was true for the high-price product. Additionally, when compared to discount campaigns offering the same savings, coupon promotions were found to be more positively appraised and to have a greater impact on subjects' purchase intentions. Del Vecchio et al. (2007) discovered that frame influences how customers view the promoted price and how much importance they give it. Their results show that, in comparison to cents-off promotions, high-depth percentage-off promotions result in higher post-promotion price expectations. Similarly, post-promotion options are High-depth promotions are more effective when presented in percentage terms, rather than cents. Consumers compare the current price of a good to a reference price (the last price they paid) and find that buying when prices have risen causes more disutility than buying when prices have declined.

- **Positive Frame:** Emphasize the benefits and success of using the product.
- **Loss Aversion Frame:** The corporation may highlight the benefits that prospective buyers will miss out on if they don't buy the product.
- **Price Framing:** The firm may utilize several framing tactics to influence consumer perception of product pricing. The company intends to make the product more appealing by structuring pricing to meet client preferences and perceived value.

2.4 Influencers

Influencers are those who have amassed a sizable following, experience, or influence in a certain industry or business. According to Belanche et al. (2021), using influencers has

¹⁷ Hammond, J. S., Keeney, R. L., & Raiffa, H. (1998). Even swaps: A rational method for making trade-offs. *Harvard Business Review*, 76(2), 137-149.

¹⁸ Ganzach, Y., & Karsahi, N. (1995). Message framing and buying behavior: A field experiment. *Journal of Business Research*, 32(1), 11-17.

become a more popular marketing tactic in recent years. Belanche et al. (2021) assert that including influencers into the marketing mix yields more results than utilizing conventional celebrities. Being a friend and a celebrity in the relationship between an influencer and a follower could be a significant aspect. Social media users that have amassed a sizable following and actively work to foster strong relationships with them are known as influencers. Influencers have the power to alter followers' attitudes, behaviours, and thoughts by establishing this kind of relationship. This becomes much more crucial to take into account if a business wants to appeal to younger consumers. According to Sudha and Sheena (2017), influencer marketing has emerged as a very successful tactic as it becomes more difficult to please younger people.¹⁹

- **The importance of influencers in today's marketing**
- Influencers typically have a huge following on social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and blogs. Their reach varies from a few thousand to millions of followers, allowing them to communicate with a significant number of people.
- Influencers specialize in fashion, cosmetics, fitness, travel, technology, and lifestyle. They gain experience and authority in their chosen field, which increases their credibility and attracts followers who share similar interests.
- Influencers engage their audience with personal experiences, stories, and insights, demonstrating authenticity and relatability. They provide a sense of genuineness and relatability, causing followers to feel connected and trust their recommendations.
- Influencers create content in various formats, such as photographs, videos, blog posts, and live streaming. Their content is intended to engage their target audience and appeal to their special interests. They regularly cooperate with brands to market products or services to their target audience.
- Influencers have persuasive power with their following. By sharing their ideas, experiences, and suggestions, they can influence their followers' attitudes, behaviours, and purchasing decisions. Their recommendations are generally regarded as more credible and real than traditional advertising.
- Influencers frequently collaborate with brands to develop partnerships and sponsorships. They may promote products, services, or events in exchange for money or free merchandise.

¹⁹ Sudha, M., & Sheena, K. (2017). Impact of influencers in consumer decision process: the fashion industry. *SCMS Journal of Indian Management*, 14(3), 14-30.

2.5 Social Proof

Social proof is a psychological and social phenomenon in which people mimic the acts of others in order to adopt normative conduct in a specific setting.²⁰ Social proof, also known as informational social signals, is widely used in everyday life. The distinction between social proof in society and marketing is quite distinct; social proof in social situations is used when people are unable to determine the appropriate mode of behaviour, whereas social proof in marketing is used to convey a sense of reliability of the seller or the product to the consumer. When a person in society is unable to determine the acceptable manner of behaviour, he or she employs social proof by observing the actions of those around them to better understand the circumstance. This concept is also utilized in marketing when a customer is unsure whether they want to buy a product or not. Social proof is a sort of conformity, akin to social pressure/influence in adolescents. Social proof is a phenomenon based on the concept of "fitting-in" that is highly valued among growing adolescents because they spend the majority of their time in social situations with friends rather than family members as they did in previous stages of their lives. This causes people to comply to societal norms in order to be liked or accepted by others.

- **Types of social proof:**

There are several ways in which social proof can appear. Typical forms include the following:

- **Expert social proof:** When making decisions, people seek guidance from credible authorities or experts in a certain field. A well-known professional's endorsement of a product, for example, has the potential to influence client behaviour.
- **Celebrity social proof:** The actions or preferences of influencers or celebrities may impact the decisions of their fans or followers.
- **User social proof:** People are influenced by the decisions and interactions of other users or clients. Social proof indications include endorsements, comments, ratings, as well as likes and shares on social media.
- **Crowd social proof:** When people believe that many other people are doing something, they feel popular and are more likely to do the same.
- **Social evidence from friends or peers:** People are influenced by the decisions and actions of their friends and peers. This is visible in situations where people change their preferences or activities in order to fit in or get acceptance from others.

²⁰ Abdul Talib & Mat Saat, (2017): "Social proof in social media shopping: an experimental design research". SHS Web of Conferences

- **Influence on decision-making:**

Social proof has a significant impact on decision-making processes. It allows them to make decisions more quickly and with less uncertainty. People may gain an understanding of what is acceptable or good in a certain scenario by seeing the behaviour of others. Social proof influences decisions on what to buy, where to eat, how to proceed, and how to form opinions on many topics.

2.6 Expertise

Expertise is the vast knowledge, skills, and abilities that an individual has gained in a specific topic or field of study through considerable education, training, and experience. Expertise is typically acquired over time and is distinguished by the ability to do difficult activities, make accurate judgments, and solve issues more effectively than novices or less experienced persons. Ericsson and Lehmann (1996) discovered that the formation of expertise often necessitates at least ten years of deliberate practice, which includes effortful and focused actions directed at performance improvement.²¹

Chase and Simon (1973) claimed that professionals flourish in their fields because they can swiftly identify and understand patterns, allowing them to obtain relevant knowledge and make quick decisions.

- **Characteristics of expertise:**

- Depth of knowledge: Specialists are extremely informed about a specific topic, including its complexities, ideas, and principles. They are capable of applying the precise knowledge they have acquired.
- Experts have extensive expertise with various scenarios, challenges, and problems in their industry. They have practical experience. This interaction increases their ability to apply what they've learned in practical situations.
- Professionals possess strong problem-solving skills, including the ability to analyse complex challenges, gather relevant data, and develop effective solutions. They frequently identify linkages, patterns, or alternative techniques that non-experts would overlook.
- Specialists prioritize lifelong learning and stay up-to-date on industry innovations. They can change and improve their skills because they are aware of current advancements.

- **Experts and persuasion**

Brinol and Petty (2009) discovered that when communicators are viewed as experts, their arguments are more compelling, even if the actual arguments are comparable to those

²¹ Ericsson, K. A., & Lehmann, A. C. (1996). Expert and exceptional performance: Evidence of maximal adaptation to task constraints. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 47(1), 273-305.

delivered by non-experts. Expertise can be a powerful persuasive tool, as people are more willing to listen to those who are regarded to be competent and credible in a certain topic.

Wood and Eagly (1981) discovered that expert sources can be more effective in persuading people who are initially averse to the message because their perceived competence can assist them overcome their scepticism. Brinol, Petty, and Tormala (2004) found that when people regard a communicator as an expert, they are more likely to be persuaded, even if they initially opposed the message.

- **Expertise and credibility**

Expertise can assist build trust and credibility, all of which are required for effective persuasion. Experts are widely recognized as trustworthy sources of information due to their proven experience, dependability, and track record. Their reputation is built on a track record of precise, consistent, and observant contributions to their field. Cialdini (1984) discovered that people are more likely to be convinced by sources believed to be highly knowledgeable and credible in the relevant topic. Other specialists, professional organizations, or educational institutions attest to their qualifications. Hovland and Weiss (1951) found that messages from reliable sources are more effective at changing attitudes and beliefs than messages from less credible sources. Experts have the power to influence ideas, decisions, and practices within their profession. Their ideas and opinions are valuable and widely sought after by others. Hovland, Janis, and Kelley (1953) hypothesized that communicators viewed as trustworthy and credible are more effective at changing attitudes and beliefs.²²

3. Definition of manipulation

In addition to persuasion, the term "manipulation" has been defined in a variety of ways by numerous academics. In other words, manipulation can be characterized as "a devious way to control the others" or as "a deliberate and successful attempt by one person to get another person by appeals to reason to freely accept beliefs, attitudes, values, intentions, or actions."²³ Therefore, as Van Dijk (2006) puts it, manipulation is a communicative and interactional activity in which the manipulator is the one who handles other people and typically goes against their will and best interests.

Furthermore, Karamova et al. (2019) concur that when someone manipulates another, they are also influencing the addressee's subconscious to alter their perception of the world, or "the construction of incentives beneficial to the addressee action."

²² Hovland, C. I., Janis, I. L., & Kelley, H. H. (1953). Communication and persuasion; psychological studies of opinion change.

²³ Philips, L. (1997). The social construction of qualitative research. *Journal of Gender Studies*, 6(2), 131-139.

All of these definitions agree that the manipulated individual is ultimately under control and is compelled to alter their own interests from the start, even though this is done unintentionally. Furthermore, manipulators aim to take advantage of their target audience's "emotional needs," or vulnerabilities. According to Karamova et al. (2019), those who are more easily swayed are also more easily influenced by others, meaning that they are "susceptible to suggestion, allowing themselves to be manipulated, without noticing the very fact of introducing motives of behaviour that are beneficial to the manipulator".²⁴

Many times, in a manipulative speech, the truth principle is broken. In other words, in order to successfully carry out manipulation and lessen the manipulative force of their tone, persuaders occasionally prefer or must use persuasion; in such cases, the persuader transforms into a manipulator and the persuasive discourse becomes a manipulative one. One of the primary distinctions between persuasion and manipulation is that the former entails the abuse of power and authority by the manipulator over the manipulated individual, whereas the latter allows the persuaded person "to believe or act as they please",²⁵ regardless of whether they accept the arguments of the manipulator as true or not. However, as stated by Cabrejas Peñuelas (2015), "Manipulation should be differentiated from any of the forms of legitimate persuasion (e.g., education, information), in which persuaders attempt to convince their interlocutors by using (legitimate) means for example, by giving proving and thoughtful arguments."

As a result, it may be claimed that the manipulator's primary objective while controlling the addressees is to persuade an individual or group of individuals to believe or act in a way that serves the manipulator's interests, even if it means working against those interests. Thus, manipulation denotes the use of speech to wield an unlawful kind of influence. In addition to persuasive speech, manipulative discourse will also be examined in this study as a type of interaction, with an emphasis on the impact the discourse has on the public as a result of the manipulator's manipulation strategies. That's what this section's discussion will centre around.

4. Manipulation techniques

Lexical-syntactic, lexical-semantic, and lexical-pragmatic tools are the three categories of language manipulation tools. Manipulators must be proficient in their use in order for manipulative speech to occur. Using a metaphor, Bogart (1973) says, "...persuasion techniques are like sharpened knives." Since these are tools, the individual using them should

²⁴ Karamova, G., Prikhodko, A., Prikhodko, I., Akhmetova, Z., & Khairullina, N. (2019). Manipulative a communicative strategies and tactics in modern advertising discourse. *Journal of Social Studies Education Research*, 10(3), 407-426.

²⁵ van Dijk, T. A. (2006). Discourse and manipulation. *Discourse & Society*, 17(3), 359-383

obviously have moral integrity. Put another way, a persuader will turn into a manipulator if they misuse these instruments and compromise their moral standards. The lexical-semantic tools correspond to linguistic manipulation at the lexical level based on pragmatics aspects; the lexical-pragmatic tools relate to linguistic manipulation at the lexical level based on pragmatics aspects; and the lexical-syntactic tools include tools for linguistic manipulation, that is, changes in phraseological units.²⁶ This study will concentrate on the examination of the lexical-pragmatic devices that are frequently used in manipulative discourses, i.e., words with specific meanings and indirect nominations like labels and euphemisms.²⁷ According to Saussure (2005), a pragmatist's typical approach in a manipulative discourse is to discuss not just understanding but also the intricate process that goes from comprehension to belief.²⁸

In light of this, the lexical-pragmatic tools and their accompanying approaches and tactics have been selected in accordance with Pesina et al. (2020) and Saussure (2005):

- **Fake news:** In practically every manipulative conversation, inaccurate information about a fact or a twisted reality are presented. Many manipulators utilize pseudo-statistics to deliberately deceive the audience about the facts presented in their discourse, leading them to believe something that is not real based on their faith in the data. Furthermore, most manipulators utilize introduction phrases and formulations like "it is obvious" or "it means..." to cover up the cause of a concept by directly exposing its consequences while concealing its source. This technique is known as "replacement by effect" of an idea.
- **Removal of some vocabulary phrases from public discourse:** When disseminating false information, the manipulator often replaces out-of-date terms that are unimportant to the public with new acronyms, allusions, etc. Saying "LOL" rather than "laughing out loud" is one way to do this, and English speakers will easily understand the meaning of this abbreviation. In addition to removing unusual terms, people now days substitute dysphemism's with euphemisms in order to convey a better impression
- **Analogies without purpose:** According to Saussure (2005), manipulators employ them to create an environment in which assumptions—even unconscious beliefs—are present in the listener's cognitive environment. They usually link things that are somewhat similar by presenting them as metaphors or similes.

²⁶ Pesina, S., Solonchak, T., & Pestova, L. (2020). Language Manipulation Tools. In S. Pesina & T. Solonchak (Eds.), *Cognitive Linguistics and Lexical Change* (pp. 331-349). Springer, Cham.

²⁷ Sternin, I. A. (2001). *Introduction to Linguistic Manipulation*. Istoki.

²⁸ Saussure, L. (2005). *Manipulation and Cognitive Pragmatics: Preliminary hypotheses*.

- **Labelling:** in this instance, this tactic is giving a false and unfavourable interpretation to a concept in order to accomplish the manipulators' aim of getting the audience to reconsider and reject it.
- **Mapping:** By emphasizing the notion's prestige and advantages, the manipulator can draw the audience to their pushed thought. However, the manipulator usually makes up the prestige and perks, so they are simply claiming it for their own gain.
- **Authority:** In a communicative act, the speaker has the position of authority. The manipulator can exert pressure on the general population to follow their instructions when they present themselves as a self-assured and genuine individual. Consequently, the manipulative power increases with the degree of the public-authority interaction. For example, some people are aware of giveaways on social media, where participants must adhere to certain rules in order to win.
- **Fear:** When manipulators are trying to market a product, they frequently try to persuade the target that something bad will happen if they don't follow their instructions or don't buy "x."
- **Accomplishment:** In exchange for compliance, manipulators present addressees with the chance to do something. The recipients would not be able to get the award if the manipulation was disregarded. However, because they will be the only ones to benefit in this scenario, the manipulator gives the audience a false sensation of success.

Conclusion

The importance of social media and persuasive marketing strategies in today's corporate environment has been discussed in this chapter. First, we defined social media as dynamic online communities that facilitate the production and sharing of user-generated content. These platforms are becoming necessary tools for companies to interact and establish connections with their target markets.

The conversation then shifted to the rapidly expanding area of social media marketing, emphasizing the ways in which businesses are using these online platforms to increase brand recognition, cultivate client connections, and boost conversion rates. Persuasive strategies used by marketers, like influencer endorsements, framing, and social proof, are essential to this endeavour. The goal of these strategies is to gently sway the opinions and actions of customers.

The chapter did, however, also recognize that these convincing strategies could cross the line into manipulation. We looked at ideas like false claims and scarcity messaging as instances of how the language surrounding advertising can go beyond moral bounds. Customers are becoming more and more aware of these deceptive tactics, thus it is necessary for firms to continue being genuine and transparent in their social media marketing.

In the end, the most effective social media marketing plans will be those that carefully balance using persuasion to draw in viewers with maintaining moral standards of decency and honesty. In the ever-changing digital landscape, businesses can establish enduring, mutually beneficial connections with their customers by doing this. Businesses need to be alert in their attempts to engage and convince their target markets through moral, customer-focused strategies as the social media ecosystem develops more.

Chapter II
Online
Customer engagement

Chapter 2: Online Customer engagement

Introduction

This chapter is a literature review that presents past studies on online consumer interaction, particularly social media customer engagement, which is more relevant to the research. Thus, it will examine the primary elements impacting social media involvement. This survey of literature focuses on the primary study objectives:

- Improve understanding of client engagement on social media and identify key factors that drive it.
- Understanding engagement processes and metrics.

By achieving the aforementioned goals, a major contribution to research is attempted. The key elements impacting online customer behaviour will be assessed. To begin, a simple definition of online consumer engagement and customer experience will be presented and discussed. Second, a careful analysis of social media client engagement. Finally, a summary of the customer engagement process and how firms track it.

Section 1: Customer engagement and customer experience

1. Definition of online customer engagement

Customer engagement refers to a customer's continuing and interactive relationship with a company or brand. It refers to the multiple encounters, experiences, and touchpoints that occur along the customer journey. Customer engagement is to foster good and meaningful connections, increase loyalty, and improve the entire customer experience. It entails both proactive attempts by the company to engage customers and active engagement and interaction by the customers themselves. Customer engagement can occur through a variety of channels, including in-person interactions, websites, social media, email communications, mobile apps, and customer service interactions. It seeks to foster a sense of value, trust, and contentment, which will eventually lead to improved customer loyalty, advocacy, and long-term partnerships.

This section examines the various definitions of customer engagement offered by marketing researchers in order to acquire a thorough grasp of the topic:

Some practitioners describe customer engagement from an organizational standpoint as activities that facilitate recurrent contacts and deepen a customer's emotional, psychological, or physical interest in a brand. Hollebeek (2011), for example, defined customer engagement as the level of a customer's motivational, brand-related, and context-dependent state of mind, as evidenced by certain levels of cognitive, emotional, and behavioural activity during brand encounters.²⁹ According to Brodie et al. (2011), consumer engagement is a "psychological state that occurs by virtue of interactive, co-creative experiences with a focal agent/object (i.e. a brand) in a focal service relationship". Bowden (2009) describes engagement as a process that leads to loyalty.

Bowden (2009) defines it as a:

“Psychological process that models the underlying mechanisms by which consumer loyalty forms for new consumers of a service brand, as well as the mechanisms by which loyalty may be maintained for repeat purchase consumers of a service brand.”

When Sashi (2012) perceived it as a process, he stated that it embodies interactive consumer experiences, with social media serving as tools to enable and facilitate these experiences; others address it from a different perspective, stating that customer engagement behaviours extend beyond transactions and are defined as a customer's behavioural

²⁹ Hollebeek, L. D. (2011). Exploring customer brand engagement: definition and themes. *Journal of strategic Marketing*, 19(7), 555-573.

manifestations that have a brand or firm focus, beyond purchase, and are driven by motivation.³⁰

2. Definition of customer experience

Initially, Abbott (1955) and Alderson (1957) concentrated on the broader idea that “what people really desire are not products but satisfying experiences”. In the 1980s, experiential theorists (e.g., Hirschman and Holbrook 1982; Holbrook and Hirschman 1982; Thompson, Locander, and Pollio 1989) advocated for a more comprehensive understanding of human behaviour, emphasizing the significance of emotional factors in decision making and experiences. Marketing has also embraced the study of consumer experience. Pine and Gilmore (1998) distinguish “experiences” from commodities and services, stating that consumers acquire experiences to interact in a personal way through a sequence of memorable events organized by a corporation.

The literature contains multiple definitions of customer experience. Schmitt (1999) categorizes experiences into five types: sensory, affective, cognitive, bodily, and social-identity.³¹ Verhoef et al. (2009) define customer experience in retail as a multidimensional construct that encompasses cognitive, affective, emotional, social, and physical responses to the retailer. Brakus, Schmitt, and Zarantonello (2009) define brand experience as the subjective and behavioural responses that consumers have to brand-related stimuli. Schmitt (2011) identifies four distinct but connected elements of brand experience: sensory, emotive, intellectual, and behavioural. According to Grewal, Levy, and Kumar (2009), customer experiences in retail can be classified as part of the retail mix, which includes price and promotion experiences. According to De Keyser et al. (2015), customer experience encompasses the cognitive, emotional, physical, sensorial, spiritual, and social aspects of a customer’s interaction with other market actors. It is the raw data from all interactions that contribute to the overall experience. McCarthy and Wright (2004) define four threads of experience that guide our understanding of technology: sensory, emotional, compositional, and spatio-temporal. The customer experience can be viewed from various perspectives: the firm’s, the customers, or a cocreation perspective. Scholars and practitioners agree that the customer experience is complex, including cognitive, emotional, behavioural, sensory, and social components.

³⁰ Sashi, C. M. (2012). Customer engagement, buyer-seller relationships, and social media. *Management decision*, 50(2), 253-272.

³¹ Schmitt, B. H. (2003). *Customer experience management: A revolutionary approach to connecting with your customers*. John Wiley & Sons.

Section 2: Customer engagement in social media

1. Understanding Social Media Engagement

In social media, engagement is defined as an individual's cognitive response, personal or emotional connection, and/or activities.³² After producing a social media post, engagement can take several forms (shares, likes, and comments), all of which contribute to the positive impact of a brand's product. Studies discovered a significant and favourable eight. A. Barlas, Y. Stamboulis, and A. Vleioras investigated the relationship between a firm's social media marketing techniques and user consumption and engagement contribution, demonstrating the value of social media marketing efforts in engaging users online.³³ Acquiring user interest is necessary for businesses to expand their client base, but it is also important to establish long-term "user loyalty" to avoid present consumers from becoming unsatisfied and departing). Ryan and Jones (2012) propose that effective social media marketing relies on nuanced consumer connection and "leaving the sledgehammer approach to product promotion at home" when communicating with customers via the Internet. This is primarily the product of effective customer service rather than forced advertising. social media can help to humanize a brand by linking it with customers and giving it more personality. This is significant since social media's effectiveness stems from two-way communication. Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2012) have also discussed brand policies that encourage social media users to express themselves, as well as their success in leveraging crowd knowledge to solve business problems.

Social media enables brands to learn exactly what their customers are interested in and then modify their products and services to fit those demands. They can be defined as the "umbrella term for the web-based software and services that allow users to come together online and exchange, discuss, communicate, and participate in any form of social interaction", and are one of the central features of Web 2.0, allowing for greater interaction between groups of people over the Internet.

Word-of-mouth, positive and neutral comments, and the importance of user interaction in the volume of content about a brand are the most important elements influencing them. User behaviour can be classified based on the amount of content produced during engagement with a community.

³² Li, C., Berens, G., & de Maertelaere, M. (2013). Corporate Twitter channels: The impact of engagement and informedness on corporate reputation. *International Journal of Electronic Commerce*, 18(2), 97-126.

³³ Mishra, A. (2019). Antecedents of consumers' engagement with brand posts on social media. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 37(4), 386-400.

Previous research has found that posting frequency, posting time, message modality, and message appeal can all have an impact on content management efficacy. In contrast to traditional media advertising, such as television, which primarily seeks to raise exposure, social media marketing frequently serves two functions: producing corporate visibility and managing brand relationships with customers.

2. Social media metrics

According to the Marketing Science Institute, 46% of social network users discuss news topics, while half of Facebook users share news via external links (MIS 2016). Customers now have complete control, as online social networks have evolved into a platform for user-distributed content or a two-way communication tool. According to Khan (2015), social media may be described as follows: many-to-many, participatory, user owned, conversational, open, mass collaborative, connection oriented, and free and easy to use.³⁴ The author defines two forms of social media: static and dynamic (response in real time).

Social media is also defined as "online platforms where users chat, share videos and pictures, companies create fan pages, and many more." These acts might be seen as indicators of social media participation. Indeed, scholars and practitioners describe social media engagement as the behaviour of like, commenting on, and sharing branded content. These actions can be classified as behavioural manifestations.³⁵ As a result, purchasing a product is not the only way to assess involvement in social media platforms. Another type of behaviour observed with the introduction of social media is eWOM, a form of interaction. Social media simplified the conveyance of information to others. Some authors describe eWOM as any good or negative words about a product or firm made by potential, existing, or past consumers and made available to a large number of individuals and institutions over the Internet. Khan additionally classified social media behaviours and metrics as likes, dislikes, shares, visits, views, clicks, tagging, mentions, hovering, check-in, pinning, embedding, endorsing, uploading, and downloading, as shown in Table 1.

³⁴ Kucukemiroglu, S., & Kara, A. (2015). Online word-of-mouth communication on social networking sites: An empirical study of Facebook users. *International Journal of Commerce and Management*.

³⁵ Bradford, R. W. (2012). *Engagement Marketing: How Small Business Wins in a Socially Connected World*. John Wiley & Sons.

Table 1 Metrics Used on Social Media Platforms

Like	Expressing a positive feeling towards a content.
Dislike	Expressing a negative feeling towards a content.
Share	Distribute content to their social network.
Visit	Count the number of website visitors.
View	The number of times content has been seen.
Click	Count the number of clicks on a hyperlink content.
Tag	Assign content to a person.
Hover	Move the cursor over social media content.
Check-In	Announce and share their arrival at a location.
Pin	Show interesting content at the top of the page.
Embed	Incorporate social media content into a blog or website.
Endorsement	Approve other people, products or content
Upload	Add content to a social media platform.
Download	

Source: Social Media Engagement: Content Strategy and Metrics Research Opportunities (2018)

These metrics are one method of measuring engagement and can be used to forecast customer motivation to consume more. or their ability to respond to brands.³⁶ The fundamental issue in social media is to quantify the return from each published material. ROI aren't the ideal metrics to assess engagement according to some practitioners, there are three objective categories for metrics: brand awareness, brand engagement, and word-of-mouth.³⁷ These three categories include the number of fans, likes, comments, and shares, as well as measures like video valence.

³⁶ Yang, S., Lin, S., Carlson, J. R., & Ross Jr, W. T. (2016). Brand engagement on social media: will firms' social media efforts influence search engine advertising effectiveness? *Journal of Marketing Management*, 32(5-6), 526-557.

³⁷ Hoffman, D. L., & Fodor, M. (2010). Can you measure the ROI of your social media marketing. *MIT Sloan Management Review*, 52(1), 41.

3. The Role of Social Elements in driving Customer Engagement

Several social elements have been postulated to drive customer involvement. Furthermore, Jahn and Kunz (2012) highlighted that one of the most pressing customer needs is in the content-oriented domain, which is based on functional and hedonic values. Brands are one of the primary objectives of consumer engagement, therefore elements such as customer perceptions of the brand and perceptions that the brand meets their expectations will influence the level of engagement. According to Jahn and Kunz (2012), customer engagement is driven by specific human requirements such as obtaining prestige or the desire for diversion.

3.1 Social Interaction Ties

Social media's interactive nature allows for two-way contact between customers and brands, as well as between customers and each other. More and more brands are embracing social media channels to better communicate with their customers, raise brand exposure and awareness, and boost customer engagement in order to manage customer relationships. The connection in a brand-related social media platform includes engagement with the brand as well as interaction with other users. Social interaction ties are the level of interaction and intimacy of relationships between community members in a social network. According to Chang and Chuang (2011), strong links and direct ties among community members enhance the intensity and sustainability of knowledge exchange in virtual communities. Chahal and Rani (2017) shown that tie strength has a considerable influence on customer participation in brand social media. Luarn et al. (2016) discovered that tie strength had a beneficial effect on user involvement in WOM on social networks. Jahn and Kunz (2012) discovered that both social interaction value and brand interaction value influence fan page engagement.³⁸

3.2 Trust

Because social media are interactive communication channels, users not only listen to what the company says, but they actively engage in conversation with the brand and other community members. Communication in virtual communities occurs between a client and other unfamiliar community members or the brand. Community trust is defined as relying on the honesty, reliability, and trustworthiness of other community members, and it is an important aspect in interactions on brand-related social media (Kang et al., 2016; Lu et al., 2010). Trust has been proposed as a predictor of consumer engagement in several research. Kucukemiroglu and Kara (2015) found that trust had a beneficial effect on opinion seeking behaviour in Facebook brand communities. Chu and Kim (2011) confirmed that community

³⁸ Jahn, B., & Kunz, W. (2012). How to transform consumers into fans of your brand. *Journal of Service Management*.

trust influences customer eWOM behaviour. Tamjidyamcholo et al. (2013) discovered that trust strongly influences information sharing intention in online virtual communities. Similarly, Chiu et al. (2006) investigated the role of trust in information sharing in virtual communities. Furthermore, various studies investigated and demonstrated the moderating influence of brand community trust in brand social media engagement.

3.3 Social Identification

Identification relates to a customer's emotional belongingness and shared depiction of themselves within a social group (Simon et al., 2016). Customers who have a sense of belonging to a brand community and believe they are an important and valuable member of the community are more likely to participate in community activities and establish long-term relationships with the community. Customers also associate more with companies that reflect their self-image and see them as an extension of themselves, and they utilize social media to promote their self-image by displaying their community membership (Simon et al., 2016). Identification with the brand and community increases community involvement by improving group-oriented attitudes and motivation to share knowledge, as well as deepening customer brand ties.³⁹ Previous research on customer involvement found that social identity is a strong predictor of brand social media engagement. Huang et al. (2013) explored the impact of social identity on three engagement dimensions (consuming, contributing, and creating) and discovered that identification had a significant impact on all types of virtual engagement. Tsai and Men (2017) conducted a cross-cultural study of the factors influencing customer involvement on brand pages and discovered that community identity is a good predictor of engagement. Chiu et al. (2006) found that identification had a favourable and significant effect on information sharing behaviour.

3.1 Reciprocity

Adams (1965) defined reciprocity as "the equality of exchange between parties". Community members anticipate reciprocity to balance their investments and benefits from the community.⁴⁰ Their predicted future returns could be exchanged for in-kind or other forms of assistance. Previous research found that the norm of reciprocity is a crucial driver of information exchange and knowledge sharing behaviours in online environments. Tha'er and Bohari (2016) discovered that reciprocity is the most important element influencing participation in knowledge contribution in virtual networks. Similarly, Chiu et al. (2006) found that reciprocity boosted the quantity of knowledge sharing in virtual communities.

³⁹ Men, L. R., & Tsai, W. H. S. (2013). Motivations and antecedents of consumer engagement with brand pages on social networking sites. *Journal of interactive advertising*, 13(2), 76-87.

⁴⁰ Mathwick, C., Wiertz, C., & De Ruyter, K. (2008). Social capital production in a virtual P3 community. *Journal of consumer research*, 34(6), 832-849.

3.2 Perceived Usefulness

Perceived usefulness is "the extent to which an individual believes that using an information system will enhance their productivity".⁴¹ Hussein and Hassan (2017) define perceived utility as the amount to which users believe social media serves their various needs, such as sociability, information, and enjoyment of using social media. However, most studies distinguish between useful and entertaining content and defined perceived usefulness as customers' rational evaluations of their ability to access useful, helpful, accurate, relevant, and up-to-date content. When clients sense good information quality, they see social media as a useful and efficient instrument for obtaining up-to-date information and recommendations. Access to high-quality material encourages people to closely follow a brand's social media channels and feel involved. It will be impossible to ensure the long-term use and engagement in brand social media activities unless customers see the value of brand social media. Chahal and Rani (2017) discovered that information availability as a consumer-based factor influences customer involvement with social media.

De Castro (2017) stated that information, defined as people's desire to expand their knowledge, is a driver of customer engagement with online brand communities, and information has been shown to be a driver of passive engagement behaviour. Cheung and To (2016) revealed the effect of perceived usefulness on attitude toward co-creation in social media. Reitz (2012) hypothesized that perceived information quality positively influences all of cognitive, affective and participative customer engagement dimensions. Their results showed that customers who perceive information quality in brand Facebook page are likely to be cognitively engaged.

3.3 Perceived Enjoyment

Perceived delight is defined as "an intrinsic motivation that emphasizes the usage process and reflects the pleasure and enjoyment associated with using a system". According to Calder and Malthouse (2005), clients engage in online activities based on hedonic or emotional elements such as the content's interestingness and enjoyment, as well as utility or quality. While the quality of social media content is critical, clients may lose interest if the information is not engaging. Enjoyment has been shown to improve customer participation, excitement, and attentiveness in online activities. Many people utilize social media for leisure or relaxation purposes. Chiang (2013) discovered that a comparable notion, perceived playfulness, which defines the perceived fun and enjoyment of social media activities, had a significant influence on sustained usage of social media. Online communities are used for not

⁴¹ Davis, F. D. (1989). Perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and user acceptance of information technology. *MIS quarterly*, 319-340.

only exchanging knowledge but also socializing with other members; thus, perceived enjoyment can be defined as both the interestingness/enjoyment of the content and the pleasure of engaging in brand-related interaction on social networks in an engagement context.⁴² Gretzel and Yoo (2008) discovered that enjoyment motivations favourably promote engagement with eWOM. Several research have established the impact of enjoyment on customer participation in brand-related social media. Yesiloglu (2018) investigated the effect of enjoyment on consuming and contributing engagement types and discovered that enjoyment had a favourable effect on consuming and contributing brand/product-related social media postings. Reitz (2012) explored the impact of entertainment on cognitive, emotional, and involvement dimensions. Similarly, Huang et al. (2017) conducted a study on the vigor, dedication, and absorption aspects. Both studies found that reported enjoyment correlated strongly with all engagement characteristics.

3.4 Remuneration

Economic incentives have been considered an extrinsic motivator and are linked to monetary rewards known as remuneration. Remuneration relates to customers' expectations of receiving benefits and economic incentives. Companies recommend a wide range of incentives, such as awards, promotions, discounts, and coupons, to improve customer motivation and involvement on social media. Previous research found that economic benefits motivate customers to maintain relationships with brands, read online reviews, share information, participate in eWOM, join brand communities, and engage in brand-related social networks.

3.5 Self-Image Enhancement

Brand social media helps clients improve their self-image by providing them with a space to present themselves. Dholakia et al. (2004) describe social enhancement as the perceived value of being recognized or approved by other members of a social network for one's contributions to and ties with a brand. Aside from social and economic rewards, acquiring recognition and reputation among other community members and the focal brand is a powerful motivator for customers to participate in community activities.⁴³ By participating in community events, customers can convey their self-concept, shape perceptions of themselves, and obtain recognition and reputation from others. Simon et al. (2016) discovered that the self-image enhancing value of brand pages has a positive influence on brand community involvement, and they concluded that customers see brand pages as valuable

⁴² Yesiloglu, S. (2018). Understanding the relationship between brand engagement and brand loyalty in social media communication.

⁴³ Simon, F., Tossan, V., & Maggetti, M. (2016). The self-image enhancing value of brand pages. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*

stages for self-presentation and building favourable impressions, which they use through engagement. They also discovered that self-image enhancement promotes client brand identification. Similarly, Jahn and Kunz (2012) demonstrated that a high self-concept value leads to increased fan page participation.

3.6 Altruism

Price & al. (1995) describe altruism as "the intention to benefit others as an expression of internal values, regardless of social or motivational reinforcement". It refers to caring for others without expecting anything in return.⁴⁴ Customers can reach a wide number of individuals via social networks and contribute their brand-related knowledge and experiences to assist them in obtaining the essential information or making purchasing decisions. Consumers tend to support not only other members of the community, but also the firm, by sharing their experiences and ideas that improve the brand and its products or services in exchange for a positive customer experience. Yesiloglu (2018) distinguishes between altruism and aiding the firm, stating that the former is focused on other community members as the object, whereas the latter is focused on the brand as the object. Helping motivates customers to engage in behaviours such as sharing information or brand created material with others, writing reviews, or generating brand-related blogs or Ewom. Marbach et al. (2016) hypothesized that benevolence is positively related to the cognitive, emotional, and behavioural dimensions of involvement.

⁴⁴ Luarn, P., Yang, J. C., & Chiu, Y. P. (2015). The network effect on information dissemination on social network sites. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 51, 1097-1102.

Section 3: The models and measurements of customer engagement

1. Customer engagement cycle

The Customer Engagement Cycle is a conceptual framework that defines the stages of customer engagement and emphasizes the necessity of developing client relationships throughout the customer journey.

The process of increasing customer involvement is known as a customer engagement cycle. In this study, it was determined to follow the consumer engagement cycle proposed by Sashi (2012). This approach includes connection, interaction, satisfaction, retention, commitment, advocacy, and engagement.

4.1 Connection

Connection is the first phase in the Customer Engagement Cycle model. A connection between a seller and a buyer is the first and most important stage in developing an emotional link with the customer. This relationship can be developed in a variety of ways. Traditionally, this was done through offline techniques such as one-on-one communication between a salesman and a consumer. While this type of communication is still commonly used, technological advancements, notably Web 2.0, have enabled individuals and businesses to communicate on a completely new digital platform, namely social media.⁴⁵

1.2 Interaction

Customers are now connected, allowing them to communicate with sellers and other customers. In the past, consumers would ask others for their comments on a particular brand, product, or place, which was referred to as Word of Mouth (WOM) in marketing literature. The scope of such interaction was confined to a small group of friends or family via various communication channels such as letters or phone calls. The advancement of computer-based communication has enabled the exchange of personal thoughts and opinions via the internet.⁴⁶

The internet also enables merchants to have an ongoing dialogue with customers, tap into knowledge shared by groups of customers with similar interests, and broaden the reach and scope of customer interactions to include competitors' or prospective customers.

1.3 Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is a measure of how well a company's products or services meet or exceed the expectations of its customers. Satisfied interactions between sellers and buyers,

⁴⁵ Sashi, C. M. (2012). Customer engagement, buyer-seller relationships, and social media. *Management decision*, 50(2), 253-272.

⁴⁶ Pollach, I. (2006). Electronic word of mouth: A genre analysis of product reviews on consumer opinion web sites. In *System Sciences, 2006. HICSS'06. Proceedings of the 39th Annual Hawaii International Conference on* (Vol. 3, pp. 51c-51c). IEEE.

as well as among community members, lead to increased involvement. Satisfaction with interactions during a buying process can occur before or after the purchase, whereas discontent at any step might interrupt the process and lead to client leave.

Satisfaction can lead to the spread of favourable word-of-mouth through social networking technologies. Online evaluations and word-of-mouth recommendations are becoming more essential information sources due to the apparent independence of the message source.

1.4 Retention

Customer retention might stem from either overall pleasure or very favourable emotions. Overall pleasure is frequently achieved through repeated purchases and may result in a long-term connection even in the absence of happy feelings. Satisfaction or discontent with a past experience is important since it might influence expectations for the next purchase, influencing customer retention or motivating contemplation of switching "brands". This means that positive impressions and attitudes have the potential to provide a significant competitive advantage. Maecker et al. (2016) propose that client interactions generate engagement value for the organization, which improves customer retention.

Favourable customer experiences encourage social media engagement, which in turn have a favourable impact on customer retention. Customer engagement, namely participation in positive e-WOM, enhances commitment and social identification with the business and the brand community, resulting in higher customer retention.

1.5 Commitment

Commitment has two dimensions: affective commitment and calculative commitment. Calculative commitment, also known as continuous commitment, is defined as the "perceived cost associated with leaving the organisation". Customer cost recognition is evaluated using both switching costs and the availability of other alternatives. Calculative commitment is often associated with the development of "rational bonds" or utility-driven bonds between the service provider, brand, and customer, and it is frequently criticized for failing to take into account the emotional bonding between a provider and a customer.⁴⁷

Affective commitment is the emotional attachment to an item. It is the force that bonds customers together through want, liking, and favourable feelings for the organization. A

⁴⁷ Hess, J., & Story, J. (2005). Trust-based commitment: multidimensional consumer-brand relationships. *Journal of consumer marketing*.

variety of elements contribute to affective commitment, including increased customer satisfaction and trust.⁴⁸

1.6 Advocacy

Customers who are pleased with a product, brand, or company may keep their feelings to themselves, or they may communicate with others in their social networks to spread the word about their positive experiences. Loyal customers in long-term connections with a product or service form emotional bonds and are more likely to become advocates for the product, service, or company.

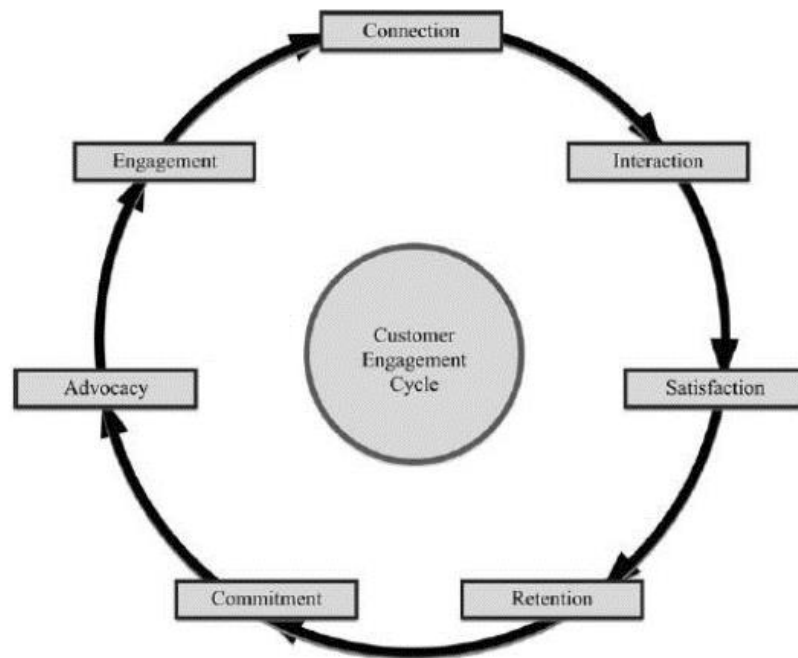
Online consumer evaluations not only provide information from real customers about products and services, but they also serve as word-of-mouth recommendations. Exposure to online consumer reviews enhances consumers' willingness to acquire a product and increases the likelihood that they will purchase a suggested product. Senecal and Nantel (2004) observe that product recommendations from other consumers are much more relevant to prospective purchasers when an experiential product (e.g., intangible services such as tourism) is involved rather than a tangible commodity.

1.7 Engagement

Engagement is the cycle's final step, as well as its overarching goal. When customers become advocates for a product, brand, or organization, it lays the groundwork for customer engagement, which is a crucial phase in the cycle. Customer involvement requires mutual communication, which social media facilitates. Social networking sites enable consumers to interact with other customers in order to obtain information about goods and services or to express their ideas, behaviours, purchasing decisions, and post-purchase evaluations. They provide a platform for businesses to market their products, strengthen their brands, and build customer relationships.

⁴⁸ Bansal, H. S., Irving, P. G., & Taylor, S. F. (2004). A three-component model of customer commitment to service providers. *Journal of the academy of marketing science*, 32(3), 234-250.

Figure 2 The cycle of customer engagement



Source: *An examination of social media* By Arya Presanna Mohan

2. Measuring online customer engagement in the business world

Financial organizations use a variety of criteria to calculate ROI on investments; however, it is more challenging to quantify marketing ROI on client interaction. There is no standard definition of customer engagement metrics (CEM).

Engagement refers to how your customers interact with the company through social media accounts. To ensure accurate consumer engagement, the creation of a comprehensive (CEM) is necessary, both stated and implied, and help to make data-driven decisions.

There are three degrees of CEM.

Basic CEM:

- Metrics from social media platforms, such as Facebook Insights and Twitter Analytics.
- Bounce Rate is the percentage of visitors who leave your site after seeing only one page.
- Click-through. The rate is the percentage of people who used a hyperlink to get to your website.

Advanced CEM comprises the Basic CEM and the following:

- Improved social media audience growth rate indicates increased engagement.
- "People Talking About This" is a Facebook engagement metric that counts the number of unique individuals who interacted directly with the company by actions such as liking, sharing, mentioning, commenting, attending an event, or uploading a picture.

- Reach - the number of potential members who may see your messages, including those who have subscribed to a page and their online connections.
- Reach is calculated by multiplying the number of "People Talking About This" by the average user's number of Facebook friends.
- Average Engagement Rate - the percentage of existing social media audience that takes an action, such as a like, share, comment, retweet, favourite, or bookmark.
- Visitor Frequency Rate (VFR) - the percentage of referrals originating from social media. The VFR divides viewers into new and returning visitors. Return visitors reflect the level of involvement you have with the clients, as well as the strength of the social networks.
- **The importance of customer engagement metrics**

Customer engagement analytics provide a clear indication of whether the company's content is appealing to its target audience. They can advise the company on whether it needs to adjust tactics, modify goods, or reallocate resources. They can also be utilized for business intelligence purposes, such as analysing competitors' social media activities. The company can publicize its accomplishments, attracting new and return visitors.

Conclusion

A thorough review of the key ideas pertaining to customer experience, social media engagement measurement, and online customer interaction has been given in this chapter.

To start, we defined online customer engagement as the extent of a customer's relationship and communication with a business, made possible by digital touchpoints. The concept of customer experience was then defined as the totality of a consumer's perceptions of a brand, melded by all of their interactions and touchpoints. Positive experiences are more likely to be had by engaged customers, and vice versa, therefore these two concepts are intimately intertwined.

After that, the conversation focused on the particular dynamics of user interaction on social networking sites. These digital platforms offer distinctive chances for businesses to develop communities, encourage two-way conversations, and gather insightful data from consumer interactions. It was mentioned that metrics like likes, shares, comments, and click-through rates are important measures of social media activity.

Additionally, the customer engagement cycle was examined, which delineated the cyclical procedure for drawing in, keeping, and fostering a customer base via tactical social media campaigns. For brands to effectively drive engagement and provide excellent consumer experiences, they must continuously assess, monitor, and adjust their social media activities.

In the end, organizations looking to optimize the impact and return on their digital marketing investments must possess the capacity to precisely measure and analyse social media interaction. Businesses can learn more about the preferences, actions, and general state of their social media presence of their customers by utilizing an extensive array of engagement metrics.

A sharp focus on developing online consumer involvement will continue to be a crucial competitive advantage as the digital landscape changes. Through the skilful application of social media engagement measurement, brands can improve their customer experience strategies and establish deeper, more meaningful relationships with their target audiences by making data-driven decisions.

Chapter III

Empirical Research

Chapter 3: Empirical Research

Introduction

The research approach that will be applied in this study is covered in full in this chapter. First, a concise explanation of the research design—which includes both exploratory and conclusive research—is given. Secondary data and qualitative research are components of exploratory research, whereas causal and descriptive designs are part of conclusive research. Second, a description of the main scaling methods and measurement scales is provided. Thirdly, a brief description of the design of the questionnaire and the procedures used in sampling. Lastly, a draft data analysis plan is discussed.

In summary, this chapter provides information about the research methods used to test hypotheses and provide answers to the sub-questions of the study.

- **Main research question:** How do persuasive social media tactics impact consumer engagement?
- **Sub-questions**
 1. Are some tactics more effective than others in capturing customer engagement?
 2. Do customers perceive persuasive social media tactics as manipulative or honest?
 3. How do different demographic factors (e.g., age, gender, socio-economic status) influence customer responses to persuasive social media tactics?

These research questions aim to explore the impact, effectiveness, psychological processes, and ethical aspects of persuasive social media tactics on customer engagement. They provide a basis for investigating the relationship between persuasive tactics and customer behaviour in the context of social media marketing

- **Hypotheses**
 - H1: Expertise and social proof are the best tactics in increasing customer engagement.
 - H2: Customers perceive persuasive social media tactics as manipulative when they involve tactics such as artificial scarcity or influencers.
 - H3: Customers' demographic factors, such as age and gender, will significantly moderate the relationship between persuasive social media tactics and customer engagement.

Section 1: Presentation of IT sector in Algeria

1. Definition of IT

The term "information technology" (IT) describes the processes involved in creating, processing, storing, securing, and exchanging all types of electronic data and information using digital tools, systems, and resources. It includes a broad spectrum of technologies, such as digital media, networking, telecommunications, computers, software, and hardware. IT is a vital component of contemporary business, helping companies to boost output, spur innovation, make better decisions, and provide customers with better goods and services.

2. Algeria's IT Industry

Algeria's efforts to embrace digital transformation and modernize its economy have resulted in a steady rise of the IT sector in recent years. This is a quick synopsis of Algeria's IT industry:

2.1 Market Size and Growth

The Algerian IT market is anticipated to reach a valuation of approximately \$2 billion by 2023, and it is expected to develop at a 5-7% annual rate over the next several years. The bulk of the nation's IT spending is allocated to the telecommunications and internet services sectors, which dominate the industry.

2.2 Infrastructure and Connectivity

Algeria has been making significant investments to upgrade its fiber-optic network coverage and mobile broadband infrastructure. Internet usage in the nation has been steadily rising, with over 60% of people using it as of 2023. This has created potential for the expansion of e-commerce and digital services.

2.3 Government efforts

The Algerian government has put in place a number of efforts to help the industry's expansion and encourage digital transformation, acknowledging the significance of the IT sector. These projects include creating IT training programs, building technology parks, and putting laws in place to promote foreign investment in the industry.

2.4 Important Players and Sectors

Telecom companies that offer a variety of internet and communication services, such as Djezzy, Mobilis, and Ooredoo, dominate the Algerian IT market. Software developers, IT service providers, and startups in industries like cloud computing, fintech, and e-commerce are some of the other important participants.

2.5 Challenges and Opportunities

The Algerian IT sector has obstacles that can impede its growth and innovation, including legislative barriers, a lack of capital, and a skills deficit. Nonetheless, there are a lot of prospects for the IT industry in Algeria to grow given the nation's sizable and youthful population, the rising demand for digital services, and the government's dedication to digital transformation.

All things considered, Algeria's IT industry is expected to grow further as the nation uses digital technologies to boost industry competitiveness, diversify its economy, and improve public services.

Section 2: Presentation of ITComp

Introduction:

In order to contextualize the study, the company ITComp is used as a case study, with research conducted on its consumers. As a result, the practical internship takes place at the Algiers-based ITComp company. The internship lasted one month (5 to 30 May).

1. Presentation of “IT Comp”

(The sources are 'the company's internal documents')

IT Comp is a digital services provider with a strong 23-year experience in the field. As a technology solutions integrator, it is committed to delivering innovative and customized solutions to meet the specific needs of its clients. IT Comp takes pride in being an accredited training centre, offering high-quality training programs in various technological domains.

Over the years, it has expanded its scope and has become an accredited certification centre, allowing its clients to validate their skills and knowledge in key technological areas. Since its establishment in 1999 in Algeria, IT Comp has experienced continuous growth, reflected in its steadily increasing revenue. Currently, it relies on a team of highly skilled and permanent employees. Through its dedication and expertise, IT Comp has established over 500 client references, demonstrating the satisfaction and trust its clients have in its services. In 2010, IT Comp expanded its presence by establishing itself throughout the Francophone Africa, further reinforcing its commitment to providing top-notch technological solutions on the continent. Its goal is to continue innovating and evolving to meet the ever-changing digital challenges and help its clients succeed in a perpetually transforming digital world.

2. Technological Partnership

Figure 3 Partners of ITComp



Source: The company's internal documents

3. Business domains

Development

- Development of information systems (Web)
- Development of mobile applications
- Development of solutions (Standard Products)

- Development of ERP modules/components

Integration

- Integration of complex IT platforms
- High Availability (HA) / Resilience Site configuration
- Migration of IT platforms (Inter / Intra)
- Monitoring of IT platforms

Tech assistance

- Support contract (Palliative, curative)
- On-Demand Technical Assistance
- Post-project support / warranty services
- Resource placement / allocation

Training

- Official publisher training: Microsoft, Oracle, PECB, ...
- IT Comp training for publisher products / Open source
- Specific workshops
- Knowledge transfer
- IT Comp Academy
- Unique Oracle University Centre in Algeria
- Certified Microsoft Partner & Training Centre
- Unique Android Training Centre in Algeria
- PearsonVue Certification Centre
- IT Academy

4. Digital communication of “IT Comp”**4.1 Website**

(<https://itcomp-dz.com>):

- The website's design is modern, responsive, and visually appealing, reflecting the company's corporate identity and principles.
 - The homepage offers a comprehensive summary of the company's services.
 - The website's navigation structure is clean and logical, making it simple for visitors to find the information they need.
 - The "Services" section should include extensive descriptions of the company's solutions, as well as case studies or client testimonials to demonstrate its experience.

4.2 Social media

- LinkedIn allows the organization to maintain a professional profile while also sharing updates about new offerings.
- Two Facebook pages (ITComp and ITComp Academy) to target the appropriate population.
- Two Instagram pages (itcomp_dz and itcomp_academy) each feature a consistent brand identity, tone of voice, and graphic components to enhance the company's image.

4.3 Email Marketing

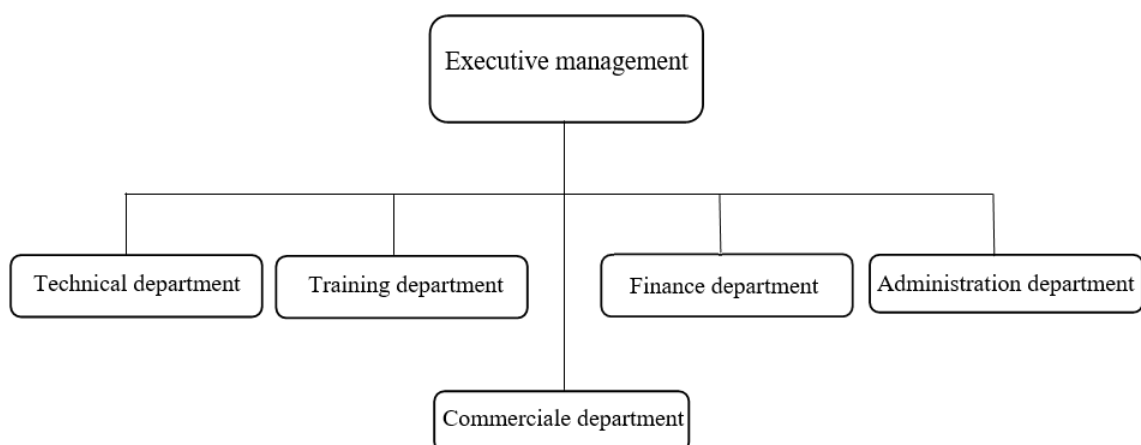
- The company designs a newsletter template that is consistent with their brand identity and contains relevant information, such as featured services and forthcoming events.
- The message includes a clear call to action, asking recipients to visit the website, request a consultation, or interact with the company in some way.
- Email marketing initiatives are regularly reviewed and optimized using indicators such as open and click-through rates.

4.4 Online Advertising

- Social media advertising on sites such as Facebook and Instagram is used to promote specific services and boost brand awareness.
- Online advertising campaigns are thoroughly researched, tested, and optimized to maximize return on investment.
- Detailed tracking and analysis of campaign effectiveness are carried out to find the most effective strategies and make data-driven decisions.

5. The Organizational Structure

Figure 4 Organizational Structure of ITComp



Source: The company's internal documents

Section 3: Research methodology and findings

1. Research Design

Based on the problem, the resulting variables (social media persuasive methods "independent variable" and consumer engagement "dependent variable"), and the offered hypotheses, two types of research will be conducted: exploratory and conclusive study. This work uses a survey to collect data, guide the research, and confirm or refute the ideas proposed in previous chapters.

1.1 Exploratory Research

This strategy is used in the study to better identify the research challenge and gain a deeper grasp of the subject.

In this study, exploratory research is required to gather additional information in order to establish a credible theoretical framework for social media persuasive methods that influence online client engagement. Secondary data is the most commonly employed method in explanatory research.

1.2 Secondary Data

Secondary data refers to data that has previously been obtained from primary sources and made available for scholars to utilize in their own research. It refers to previously acquired data. Secondary data sources include books, journals, newspapers, websites, and government records. Secondary data are known to be available and requires very little research and need for manpower to use compared to primary data especially with the advent of electronic media and the internet. The current study used secondary data analysis, in which both internal and external secondary data were collected and reviewed. The previous chapter, 'Literature Review', shows the most essential information collected after examining secondary data on the topic of this research.

1.3 Conclusive Study

Conclusive research is formal and systematic. "It is based on large and representative samples, and the data obtained are subjected to quantitative analysis".⁴⁹

The primary goal of conclusive research is to test theories and investigate links. Conclusive research designs can be descriptive or causal, whereas descriptive research designs can be cross-sectional or longitudinal.

⁴⁹ Malhotra, N. K. (2010). Marketing research: an applied orientation (6th ed.). Boston, Pearson.

1.4 Descriptive research

Descriptive research is used to describe phenomena or traits in consumers, companies, or market segments. It is also used to calculate the proportion of units in a given population that exhibit a specific behaviour.

Descriptive research aims to determine perceptions of product qualities, the degree to which various variables are connected, and make specific predictions.

Descriptive research methods are divided into two types: cross-sectional (information is collected once from a sample of population elements) and longitudinal (the same people are researched over time and the same variables are examined).

1.5 Causal research

Causal research examines cause-and-effect correlations. Malhotra (2010) explains that the goal is to identify the independent and dependent variables that contribute to a phenomenon, as well as the relationship between them.

Because the research questions are difficult to answer and the offered hypotheses require examination, descriptive single cross-sectional research is carried out. In single cross-sectional designs, only one sample of respondents is selected from the target population, and information is acquired from this sample only once.

1.6 Population of the research

The research population is a group of people or items with comparable characteristics. Individuals in the same population must share one or more distinct characteristics. The research population varies from study to study, depending on the topic of interest. In this work, the research population consists of those who actively use social media. It is also looking at engagement of people with each persuasive.

1.7 Research Sampling

The samples are chosen for a specific demographic. Sampling is faster and more cost-effective than gathering data from the entire population.

For this study, a sample size of 250 respondents was used. The online survey (Appendix A) takes into account 125 completed questionnaires, the respondents were ITComp clients.

Thompson describes two types of sampling methods: probability sampling and non-probability sampling. In this study, non-probability sampling, specifically convenience/accidental sampling, is used. Convenience sampling is a process in which persons or things in a community are chosen based on ease of access (convenience) rather than random chance.

1.8 Questionnaire Design

- **Adoption of questions**

Scale development was based on research of the most relevant literature on online consumer involvement, as well as contemporary social media marketing breakthroughs.

Table 2 variables

variables	source
Persuasive tactics:	
Scarcity	Robert Cialdini (2008)
Bandwagon	Sundar et al (2008)
Framing	Ganzach and Karsahi (1995)
Influencers	Belanche et al. (2021)
Social proof	H. Rao, H.R. Greve and G.F. Davis (2001)
Authority and expertise	Karmarkar and Tormala (2010)
Customer engagement	Li, Berens, and de Maertelaere, (2013)
Perceived manipulation	Fairclough (1989)
Demographic factors:	Personnel effort
age	
gender	
occupation	

The questionnaire, which comprises the study's research questions, was developed in one form with three sections. The first segment includes four questions about social media engagement. The first is a single-choice question about how much time is spent on social media, the second is a single-choice question about how frequently people interact with businesses on social media, the third is a multiple-choice question about which persuasive tactics influence respondents the most, and the fourth is a 7-point Likert scale that measures the impact of these tactics on respondents' engagement.

The second segment contains interval scales in which 7-point Likert scale questions are asked. The participants rate the six persuasive strategies' dependability. The respondents' answers were determined by assigning 7 points to the option "Strongly honest" and 1 point to the option "Strongly manipulative".

In the third section of the questionnaire, there were two single-choice questions and one dichotomous question about demographics. The first question regarding age is regarded a ratio scale, whereas the second and third questions about gender and occupation indicate a nominal scale.

- **Type of questions**

To test the given hypotheses and gather empirical data, an online, self-administered survey is established.

The questionnaire is made up of various types of questions selected based on the type of information sought. It contains 13 questions separated into three sections, including the following question forms:

- Multiple-choice questions.
- Single-choice questions.
- Ask scale questions.

The first question looks into how many hours netizens spend on social media, while the second seeks to determine how frequently online customers interact with firms on social media. Section 1 questions 2–4 assess engagement with the chosen tactic. Section 2 questions 5–10 assess perceived manipulation of each tactic. Section 3 questions 11–13 focus on demographic characteristics. The items in section 2 are rated on a seven-point Likert scale, from strongly manipulative to strongly honest. The data collection approach for the research was carried out between May 16 and 30, 2024. The study's sample consisted of social media users. Within this period, the respondents were reached via Facebook and e-mail. The questionnaire was answered by giving link to google forms where it was made. The questionnaire was answered by 125 respondents.

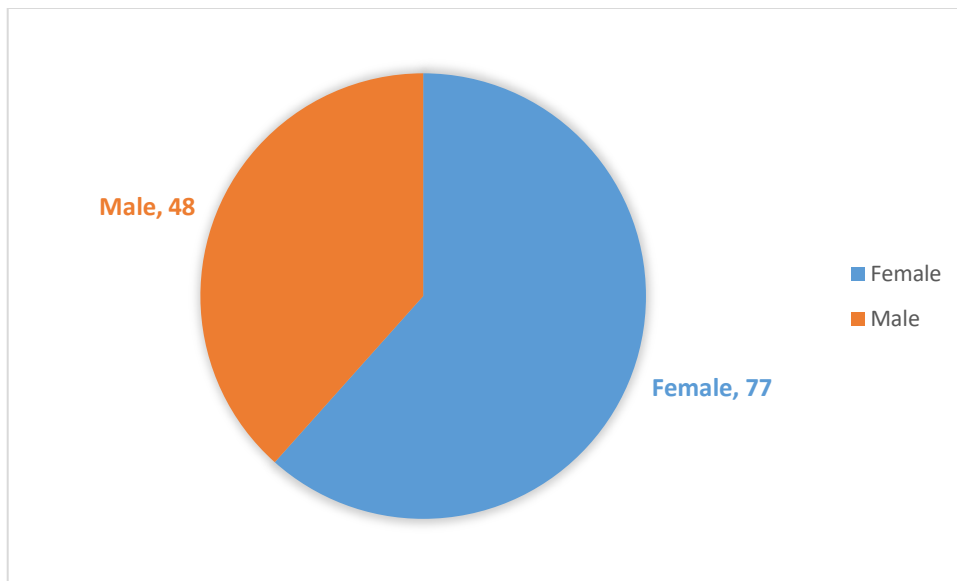
2. Findings

2.1 Descriptive analysis

The research chose a descriptive analysis to analyse the respondents' attributes. Creating the respondent profile and compiling the data pertaining to the sample under study were the goals.

- Respondent's gender

Figure 5 Respondent's Gender

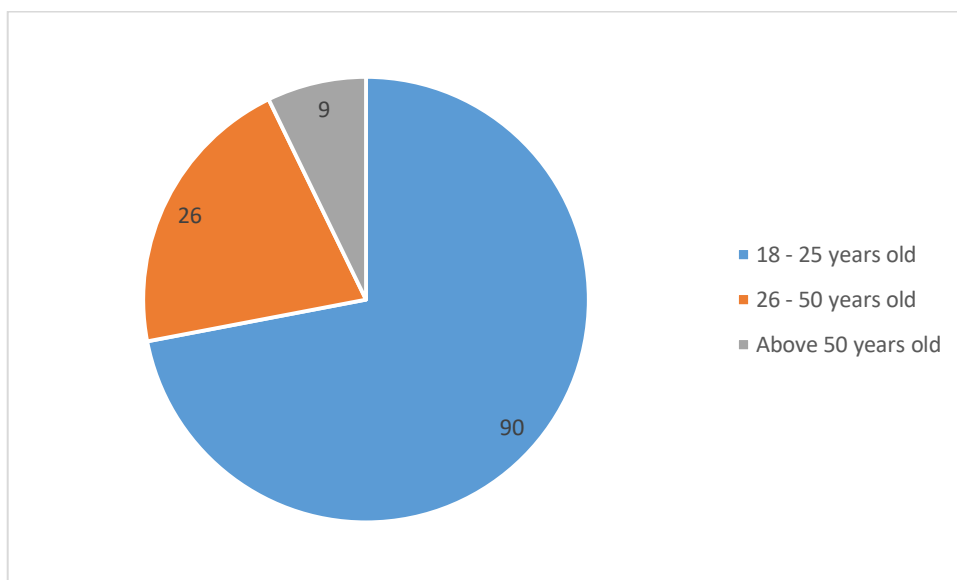


Source: Personal effort using Excel

Respondents were asked to check the appropriate option (male or female) to indicate their gender. 48 (38%) were males and 77 (62%) of the 125 respondents were females.

- Respondent's age

Figure 6: Respondent's Age

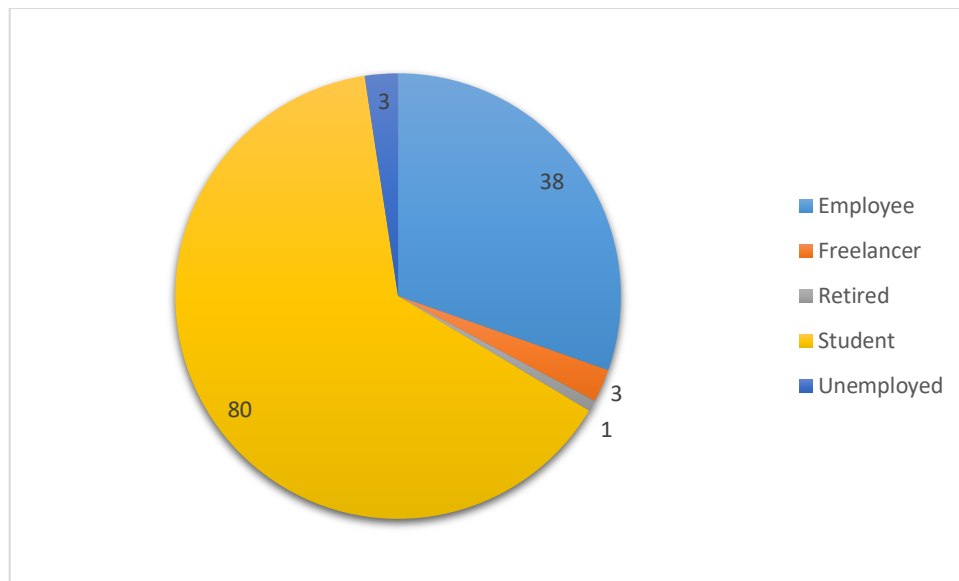


Source: Personal effort using Excel

Participants were asked to check the corresponding age group. Eighty-two replies, or 72 percent of the sample, fell into the 18–25 age group. Twenty-one percent (26 participants) were in the age range of 26 to 50. Only 9 participants (7%) were above 50 years old, while none of the respondents were less than 18 years old.

- **Respondent's occupation**

Figure 7 Respondent's Occupation

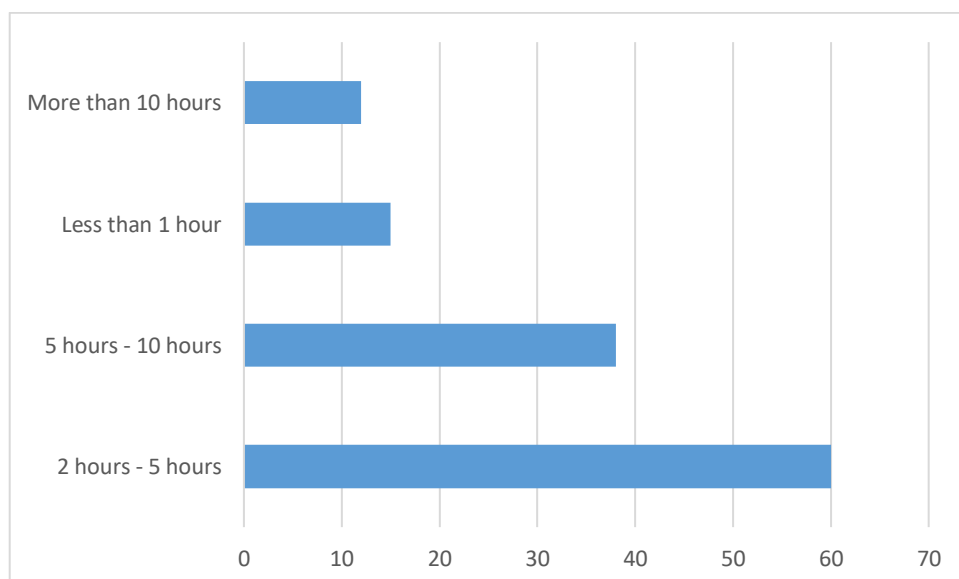


Source: Personal effort using Excel

Of the respondents, 38 were working people (30%), and 64 percent were mainly students. The remaining three were independent contractors, three were jobless, and one was retired.

- **Hours spent on social media**

Figure 8 Hours spent on social media

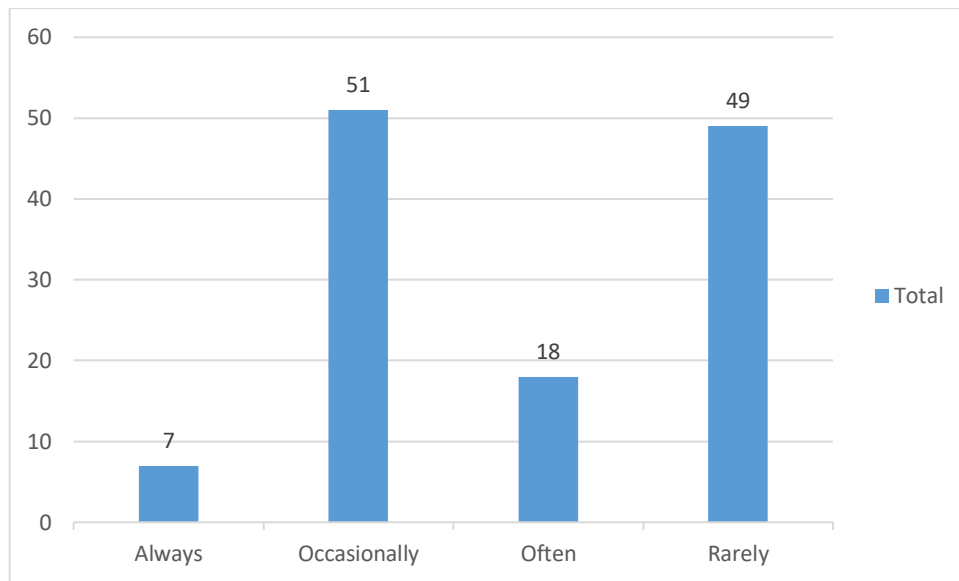


Source: Personal effort using Excel

Figure 8 above shows that most respondents use social media between two and five hours per day.

- **Frequency of interaction with businesses on social media**

Figure 9 Frequency of interaction with businesses on social media



Source: Personal effort using Excel

Most respondents communicate with business occasionally or rarely.

- **Level of engagement with these tactics**

Table 3 Level of engagement with these tactics

	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative percent (%)
Strongly ineffective	6	4.8	4.8
Moderately ineffective	7	5.6	10.4
Slightly ineffective	19	15.2	25.6
Neutral	24	19	19.2
Slightly effective	45	36	80.8
Moderately effective	15	12	92.8
Strongly effective	9	7.2	100
Total	125	100	

Source: Personal effort using SPSS

The Descriptive frequency analysis above show that persuasive tactics are effective in influencing customer engagement. In fact, 36% of respondents rate these tactics as slightly effective, 12% of respondents rate them at moderately effective and 7.2% see them as strongly effective. Meanwhile 15.2% of the respondents rate the persuasive tactics as slightly ineffective, 5.6% of them say they are moderately ineffective and 4.8% of respondents see the tactics as strongly ineffective. The rest 19% are neutral.

3. Test of the hypothesis

3.1 The first hypothesis

The first hypothesis claims that expertise is the best tactic in influencing customer engagement. A multiple response frequencies analysis is conducted to test this hypothesis.

Table 4 most tactics influencing customer engagement

		N	Percent	Percent of cases
Persuasive tactics	Influencers	21	8,3%	16,9%
	Social proof	71	28,2%	57,3%
	Framming	56	22,2%	45,2%
	Scarcity	14	5,6%	11,3%
	Experts	46	18,3%	37,1%
	Bandwagon	44	17,5%	35,5%
	Total	252	100,0%	203,2%

Source: Personal effort using SPSS

Table 4 shows that, with a percentage of 28.2%, social proof was the most popular method selected by respondents. Framing came in second with a percentage of 22.2%, followed by experts and the bandwagon with percentages of 18.3 and 17.5%. Influencers and scarcity rank lowest in frequency, with 8.3 and 5.6%, respectively. In summary, the most effective strategy to affect customer involvement is social proof, whereas the second-best strategy is framing. Experts and the bandwagon effect have less of an impact on participation. Influencers and scarcity are the final strategies to boost engagement, so disproving the theory that suggests expertise is the most effective strategy.

3.2 Test of the second hypotheses

According to the second hypothesis, customers view persuasive social media strategies that utilise influencers or scarcity as manipulative. To test this hypothesis a descriptive frequency analysis was conducted.

Table 5 credibility of persuasive tactics

	Scarcity	Influencers	Social proof	Framing	Bandwagon	Experts
N	125	125	125	125	125	125
Mean	2.62	2.91	4.45	4.00	4.05	4.72
Median	3.00	3.00	5.00	4.00	4.00	5.00

Source: Personal effort using SPSS

Table 5 makes it evident that scarcity and influencers have the lowest means, suggesting that respondents see them as manipulating the most. Thus, the second hypothesis is **accepted** since respondents believe that experts and social proof are the most reliable persuasive strategies.

- **Are levels of credibility are influencing levels of engagement**

To further understanding of the research, I would like to add a test to examine if there's a relation between customer's perception of the tactics and the level their engagement with these tactics. A simple regression analysis is conducted:

- **Correlations:**

Table 6 correlation matrix

	Engagement	Credibility
Engagement	1.00	,153
Credibility	,153	1.00

Source: personal effort using SPSS

All of the correlations between the variables are less than 90%, as can be seen in the coefficient correlations table below.

- **Significance of the model:**

Table 7 ANOVA

ANOVAa

Model	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Regression	7.388	1	7.388	0.593	0.088b
Residual	307.124	123	2.497		
Total	314.512	124			

Source: Personal effort using SPSS

From the ANOVA table:

The model is statistically insignificant for an alpha 5%, Fisher value is equal to 0.593 and lower than $F(1, 123, 5\%) = 3.95$. Therefore, the model is denied, that is customers perception of the tactics as if credible or manipulative has no impact on their engagement.

3.3 Test of the third hypotheses

According to the third hypothesis, Customers' demographic factors, such as age and gender, will significantly moderate the relationship between persuasive social media tactics and customer engagement.

An analysis of ANOVA is employed to test each demographic factor with levels of engagement.

- **Gender and engagement**

Table 8 Anova

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Engagement

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	0.811 ^a	1	0.811	0.318	0.574
Intercept	250,860	1	250.860	98.361	0.00
Gender	0.811	1	0.811	0.318	0.574
Total	3015.000	125			

Source: personal effort using SPSS

From table 8 the significance level is superior than 5% for that the model is statistically insignificant. Therefore, level of engagement is not described by gender.

- **Age and engagement**

Table 9 Anova

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Engagement

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	3.911 ^a	1	3.911	1.549	0.216
Intercept	382.941	1	382.941	151.647	0.000
Age	3.911	1	3.911	1.549	0.216
Total	315.000	125			

Source: personal effort using SPSS

From table 9 the significance level is superior than 5% for that the model is statistically insignificant. Therefore, level of engagement is not described by Age.

- **Occupation and engagement**

Table 10 Anova

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Engagement

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	0.000 ^a	1	0.000	0.000	0.990
Intercept	334.373	1	334.373	130.767	0.000
Occupation	0.000	1	0.000	0.000	0.990
Total	315.000	125			

Source: personal effort using SPSS

From table 10 the significance level is superior than 5% for that the model is statistically insignificant. Therefore, level of engagement is not described by occupation.

From the results we had None of the demographic factors is influencing engagement with the persuasive tactics, therefore the hypothesis that claims Customers' demographic factors, such as age and gender, will significantly moderate the relationship between persuasive social media tactics and customer engagement **is rejected**.

4. Experimentation

During my internship at ITComp company, I worked closely with my supervisor to conduct an extensive experimentation involving an online ad campaign on Facebook and Instagram. The goal of this campaign was to promote a new training program scheduled to commence on June 4 2024. There were two unique advertisements in the campaign. In addition to providing all the information that was required to understand the training program, the initial advertisement also used a number of persuasive devices, including scarcity, framing, and the bandwagon effect. These methods were purposefully used to increase the attraction and draw in possible participants.

On the other hand, the second advertisement purposefully left out any persuasive components in Favor of only communicating the most important details regarding the training

program. The two advertisements were released simultaneously and ran for ten days, from Sunday, May 12th, until Wednesday, May 22nd, 2024. It's interesting to note that the advertisements all had the same budget 2.5 euros to guarantee fair competition.

This extensive study sought to investigate how persuasive components affected the Campaign's efficacy. The team aimed to obtain important insights into how persuasive strategies affect engagement and conversion rates for the new training program by analysing the effectiveness of the two advertisements.

Together with my supervisor, we were able to obtain data-driven insights through this cooperative effort that may help guide future marketing plans and facilitate the optimization of advertising campaigns to more effectively meet business goals.

- **Results of the experiment**

Table 11 results of the experimentation

	Ad Messages	Reach	Impression
With persuasive tactics	56	19356	26893
Without persuasive tactics	19	8452	10495
Total	75	27808	37388

Source: meta-ad manager

Table 11 shows a major difference in results between the two ads. The ad that used persuasive tactics helped ITCComp gain 56 messages, while the ad without persuasive tactics gained only 19 messages. Meanwhile, the reach of the ad was higher for the one that used persuasive tactics.

Impressions refer to the number of times an advertisement is displayed or "seen" by users. Reach is the total number of unique users or accounts that were exposed to the advertisement.

So, in this case, the ad with persuasive tactics had a higher reach, meaning it was seen by more unique users, even though it only generated 56 messages compared to 19 for the ad without persuasive tactics.

5. Discussion of results

5.1 First hypothesis

The hypothesis was denied.

Social proof being the best persuasive tactic in influencing customer engagement shows that when interacting and connecting with businesses on social media, people have a tendency to follow and believe the opinions of others. This is consistent with the idea presented in Chapter 1 that people are driven to find approval and a sense of belonging in society. Consumers frequently believe reviews from other consumers more than statements made by the business regarding a good or service.

It's interesting to see that framing came up as the second most persuasive strategy. This implies that people who utilize social media are especially motivated to obtain comparable benefits at a lower perceived risk. Consumers are drawn to communications that showcases the product or service in a way that minimizes the downside or uncertainty.

It was quite unexpected to learn that influencers were the least successful strategy for increasing customer involvement. This suggests that social media users view influencers with some scepticism or lack of trust. It is noteworthy to acknowledge that the effectiveness of influencers can differ significantly based on the particular influencer and their connection to the intended audience.

5.2 Second Hypothesis

The hypothesis was approved.

In order to test the hypothesis that consumers would see these persuasive strategies primarily as manipulative, the research also looked at how customers saw these strategies, particularly those that involved influencers and scarcity.

The data mostly supported this idea. It is true that consumers frequently view strategies like influencer marketing and scarcity as being deceptive. This is probably the case with scarcity claims because it can be challenging for customers to confirm whether the company's statements regarding restricted availability are true. Consumers may believe that the business is pressuring them to interact or make a purchase by creating a sense of scarcity.

In a similar vein, influencers are no longer seen as real customer advocates but rather as extensions of the companies they support. Customers are becoming increasingly sceptical of influencers' endorsements as their perceived authenticity and authority have eroded over time.

The study did discover, however, that consumers' real levels of engagement were not considerably impacted by their opinions of these strategies as deceptive, genuine, or sincere.

Customers continued to interact with and respond to the company's messaging even when they perceived an approach as possibly deceptive. This shows that customer involvement is influenced by a variety of factors outside perceptions of manipulative intent.

5.3 Third Hypothesis

The hypothesis was denied.

The last hypothesis investigated the potential influence of demographic variables, such as age, gender, and occupation, on how engaged customers were with the various persuasive strategies. These demographic factors did not significantly affect involvement levels, according to the data study.

This implies that persuasive strategies have a generally universal impact on customer engagement across various audience categories. Beyond simple demographics, factors like human personalities, historical experiences, and psychological preferences probably have a greater impact on how consumers react to various social media marketing strategies.

In general, the discourse surrounding the research findings offers significant perspectives into the intricate dynamics of persuasive strategies and customer involvement on social media networks. Although certain hypotheses were validated, the results also revealed subtleties and unanticipated consequences that demand additional investigation.

5.4 Experimentation

The results of the experimentation clearly demonstrate that persuasive tactics significantly boost customer engagement on social media. This finding highlights the powerful effect that well-crafted, compelling strategies can have in capturing users' attention and increasing interaction on various platforms. It's important to note, however, that not all persuasive tactics were included in this experiment.

Conclusion

This chapter presents the methods used for data analysis, the study's findings, and a discussion of them. While some of the study's conclusions contradicted those of numerous comparable research on online customer interaction, other findings were found to be compatible with them. This is because the study's implementation context has an impact on variables, both internal and external.

all Three hypotheses were tested in this study, and the following were the findings:

- H1: Expertise is the most influential persuasive tactic on customer engagement. **Denied.**
- H2: Tactics as scarcity and influencers are perceived as manipulative. **Accepted.**
- H3: demographic factors moderate the relation between persuasive tactics and customer engagement. **Denied.**

A questionnaire was created and sent online to several types of respondents selected using the judgmental sampling technique in a non-probabilistic manner in order to evaluate these assumptions.

Conclusion

Conclusion:

In Algeria, where e-commerce is still in its infancy, it appears crucial to emphasize the elements that encouraged Algerian consumers to adopt this purchasing method and refer others to it.

Overview of the Research

The study's primary goal is to find out how social media persuasive strategies affect online consumer involvement. The following is how the fundamental research question is phrased: What is the effect of persuasive social media strategies on customer engagement?

Attempting to answer the main research question, three sub-questions are posed:

1. Are some tactics more effective than others in capturing customer engagement?
2. Do customers perceive persuasive social media tactics as manipulative or honest?
3. How do different demographic factors (e.g., age, gender, socio-economic status) influence customer responses to persuasive social media tactics?

The purpose of this research is to:

- Identify social media persuasive strategies; and
- Gain a deeper understanding of online customer engagement.
- Recognize how consumer engagement is impacted by persuasive strategies.

The current study is organized into three main theoretical and empirical chapters: The study began with a succinct introduction outlining the rise in social media use along with the research methodologies and aims.

In order to delve deeper into the primary persuasive strategies that businesses employ today to improve their customer experience,

Chapter One, "Social media marketing," summarizes previous research on the subject.

The main goals of this literature review are as follows:

- Enhance comprehension of social media marketing and pinpoint typical persuasion strategies.
- Understanding manipulation and its techniques used on social media. the background to the research problem, by stating the problem, specifying the research objectives, and laying out the research approach. The proposed methods and structure of the research are described.

Chapter two named "online customer engagement," which is more pertinent to the research, reviews earlier research on online consumer contact, especially social media customer engagement. As such, it looked at the main factors influencing social media use. The main goals of this literature review are as follows:

- Gain a better grasp of customer interaction on social media and pinpoint the primary drivers of this activity.
- Gain an awareness of engagement metrics and processes.

Chapter three

The third chapter, "Empirical research," begins with a succinct overview of ITComp, the host organization. It next looks at the specifics of the research design, the design of the questionnaire and sampling, and the procedure used to gather the data. Finally, it gives all of the research findings together with the results of the descriptive and statistical analyses and their interpretations. A summary of the findings is given for each hypothesis at the end of this chapter.

A **Conclusion** that summarises the findings is included at the end. Additionally, this section contains study limitations and recommendations. There are recommendations for additional research in the conclusion.

Major Finding

This study uses a quantitative approach, and a judgmental sampling method (a non-probabilistic sampling methodology) is used to carry it out. Out of the 250 participants that responded to the questionnaire via Facebook, email, and WhatsApp, only 125 were deemed suitable for further analysis. Ultimately, the examination of the study's preliminary conjectures yields the subsequent findings: Since the descriptive analysis revealed that social proof has a greater influence on online consumer engagement than expertise, the first hypothesis which states that expertise is the most persuasive approach that influences customer engagement is **rejected**. The second hypothesis, which claims that when persuasive strategies involve scarcity and influencers, consumers perceive them as manipulative is **accepted**. Descriptive frequency analysis of the model yields data that indicate buyers believe expertise and social proof to be the most credible persuasion strategies. The third hypothesis, which states that age, gender, and occupation are demographic characteristics that affect how persuasive strategies are used, is **rejected**. Anova analysis was used to get this conclusion, and all demographic factors showed that the model was highly insignificant.

At this point, the following responses can be provided to the sub-questions of this study:

- The greatest persuasive approach that influences consumer participation is social proof.
- scarcity is the tactic that customers see as manipulative the most.
- demographic considerations have little bearing on how customers engage with persuasive tactics.

Recommendations

Professionals can use the decision-making components from this study to create and implement more appropriate strategies.

1. **Effective use of social proof:** Companies should concentrate on proactively showcasing favourable client reviews, testimonials, and social engagement on their social media channels, since social proof has been shown to be the most persuasive strategy. As a result, the brand gains credibility and a feeling of social validation.
2. **Making strategic use of framing:** Using clever framing to highlight the value proposition and "what's in it for the customer" can be a great approach to increase engagement. Companies can try presenting their messages in a variety of ways to emphasize the advantages and lower dangers that customers perceive.
3. **Choosing influencers carefully:** The results indicate that influencer marketing on social media might not be as widely successful as previously thought. When selecting influencers, businesses ought to exercise extreme caution, giving preference to those who possess substantial reputation and a genuine affinity for the brand or product. Influencer marketing strategies that are unduly commercial are likely to come across as fake.
4. **Control consumer perceptions of manipulative tactics:** Despite the fact that the data indicates that customers' views of manipulative tactics—such as scarcity and influencers—do not genuinely affect engagement, it is nevertheless critical for firms to maintain transparency and steer clear of openly manipulative strategies. Achieving the ideal mix between authenticity and persuasion is crucial.
5. **Pay attention to the unique characteristics of each customer:** Rather than relying too heavily on traditional demographics, businesses should think about segmenting and targeting customers based on psychographic profiles, personalities, and prior experiences, as these factors don't seem to significantly influence receptiveness to persuasive tactics.

In general, these suggestions stress how crucial it is to establish authenticity, trust, and a customer-focused strategy while using persuasive techniques on social media. To maximize the effectiveness of these strategies, a nuanced, strategic, and data-driven strategy is essential.

Study Limitations

- Only a relatively small portion of Algeria was sampled for this study. In actuality, it only included a very tiny portion of e-consumers more specifically, a tiny portion of ITComp clients in its sample.
- The research's conclusions cannot be broadly applied due to the sampling strategy used. Therefore, it would be more reasonable to use a basic random sample.

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-
- Behavioural metrics or observational data might offer a more impartial evaluation of how clients really react to various strategies.
 - Beyond basic demographic information, the study lacked access to detailed customer-level data.
 - Further insights may be obtained by examining the individual client journeys, psychographics, and behavioural trends.
 - The determination of which approaches were considered "manipulative" was predicated on the subjective opinions of the customers.

Future Research Directions

It is evident that much broader research is needed in order to allow for generalization and to provide some suggestions for themes that could complement this study and be of interest to future researchers. For example:

- Examine how persuasive strategies are used and how successful they are on less-explored or more recent social media platforms, like Instagram Reels, TikTok, and newly developed AR/VR social experiences.
- Conduct the study again in various cultural and geographical situations to see whether persuasive strategies need to be modified in light of regional norms and preferences.
- Examine how customer trust and engagement are shaped by ethical considerations, authenticity, and openness.

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- <https://backlinko.com> (visited at 10AM April 5 2024)

Appendices

Appendices

Appendix A: The questionnaire (English Version)

1. How often do you use social media?
 - Less than one hour per day
 - 2 – 5 hours
 - 5 - 10 hours
 - More than 10 hours

2. How often do you communicate with businesses on social media?
 - Always
 - Often
 - Occasionally
 - Rarely

3. Among the persuasive tactics used on social media which of these are the most effective in influencing your engagement?
 - price offers (discounts, instalment payments)
 - influencer endorsements
 - social proof evaluations (testimonials, reviews)
 - limited stock, exclusive offers
 - expert opinions (doctors, certified specialists)
 - high engagement (likes, comments)

4. On a scale of 1 to 7, how effective are the persuasive tactics on social media in influencing your engagement with brands?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Strongly ineffective

Strongly effective

Appendices

5. On a scale of 1 to 7, to what extent do you think these elements are a scam?

	Strongly manipulative (1)	Moderately manipulative (2)	Slightly manipulative (3)	Neutral (4)	Slightl y credibl e (5)	Moderate ly credible (6)	Strongly credible (7)
price offers (discounts, installment payments)							
influencer endorsements							
social proof evaluations (testimonials, reviews)							
limited stock, exclusive offers							
expert opinions (doctors, certified specialists)							
high engagement (likes, comments)							

6. Please indicate your age:

- under 18 years old
- 18-25 years old
- 26-50 years old
- Above 50 years old

7. You are:

- Male
- Female

8. Please indicate your occupation:

- Student
- Employed
- Retired
- Freelancer
- Unemployed

Appendices

Sur une échelle de 1 à 7, dans quelle mesure pensez-vous que ces éléments sont une arnaque :

	Très arnaque (1)	Hautement arnaque (2)	Plutôt arnaque (3)	Neutre (4)	Plutôt fiable (5)	Hautement fiable (6)	Très fiable (7)
Évaluations de la preuve sociale (témoignages, retours)							
Affirmations d'influenceurs							
Offres de prix (remises, paiement par tranches)							
Stock limité, offres exclusives							
Avis d'experts (docteurs, spécialistes certifiés)							
Grand nombre d'interaction (j'aimes, commentaires)							

Age :

- Moins de 18 ans
- 18-25 ans
- 26-50 ans
- Plus que 50 ans

Vous êtes :

- Homme
- Femme

Votre occupation :

- Etudiant
- Salarié
- Retraité
- Travail libre
- Chômeur

Appendices

Appendix C: Advertising

ITComp Academy

Lancement de la deuxième session de

Formation

Data

analyste

+213770069836
03 Rue. Khodjet El Djeld, Les Sources, Bir Mourad Rais, Alger

ITComp Academy

La

Formation

que tout le monde attendait est maintenant disponible.

Data

analyste

Places très limitées

Mardi 04 juin 2024

+213770069836
03 Rue. Khodjet El Djeld, Les Sources, Bir Mourad Rais, Alger

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to look at online customer engagement in Algeria, specifically among ITComp customers. It also investigates persuasion strategies that could be utilized to influence online customer participation. Modern technology, particularly the internet, has a significant impact on how businesses operate, making this type of research extremely needed. This study's foundation is a survey of relevant literature and a questionnaire designed to collect empirical data from 125 respondents, a sample used in quantitative research. The findings indicate that persuasive tactics influence online client involvement. However, demographic characteristics have little effect on customer involvement when using these tactics. Similarly, the outcomes of this study show that a customer's perception of persuasive approaches has no effect on their online engagement level.

Key words: Online customer engagement, social media marketing, persuasive tactics, scarcity, social proof, influencers.

ملخص

الهدف من هذه الدراسة هو دراسة مشاركة العملاء عبر الإنترنت في الجزائر، ولا سيما مع عملاء شركة المعلومات ايتي كوم. وينظر أيضاً في التكتيكات المقنعة التي قد تستخدم للتأثير على مشاركة المستهلكين عبر الإنترنت. والاتصالات والطريقة التي يتم بها أداء الأعمال التجارية تتأثر بشدة بالتكنولوجيا الحديثة، وخاصة الإنترنت، التي تجعل إجراء هذا النوع من البحوث مبرراً جداً. والأساس الذي تقوم عليه هذه الدراسة هو دراسة استقصائية للأدبيات ذات الصلة واستبيان أنشئ لجمع بيانات تجريبية من 125 مجيباً، وهي عينة استخدمت في البحوث الكمية. وتبين النتائج أن مشاركة العملاء عبر الإنترنت تتأثر بنهج الإقناع. بيد أنه بهذه الاستراتيجيات، لا تتأثر مشاركة العملاء بالمتغيرات الديمغرافية. وبالمثل، تسلط نتائج هذه الدراسة الضوء على حقيقة أن المشاركة على الإنترنت لا تتأثر بتصور الزبون لتكتيكات الإقناع. **الكلمات الرئيسية:** إشراك العملاء على الإنترنت، تسويق وسائط التواصل الاجتماعي، أساليب الإقناع، الندرة، والإثبات، المؤثرين،

Résumé :

L'examen de l'engagement des clients en ligne en Algérie, en particulier avec les clients d'ITComp, est l'objectif de cette étude. Il examine également des tactiques persuasives qui peuvent être utilisées pour influencer l'engagement des consommateurs en ligne. La façon dont les affaires sont menées est fortement influencée par la technologie moderne, en particulier l'Internet, ce qui rend la réalisation de ce type de recherche fortement justifiée. La base de cette étude est un sondage de la littérature pertinente et un questionnaire qui a été créé pour recueillir des données empiriques de 125 répondants, un échantillon employé dans la recherche quantitative. Les résultats montrent que l'engagement des clients en ligne est influencé par des approches persuasives. Avec ces stratégies, cependant, l'engagement des clients n'est pas affecté par les variables démographiques. De même, les résultats de cette étude soulignent le fait que l'engagement en ligne n'est pas affecté par la perception d'une tactique persuasive par un client.

Mots clés : engagement des clients en ligne, marketing des médias social, tactiques persuasifs, pénurie, preuve sociale, influenceurs.

