POLITEHNICA **UNIVERSITY TIMIŞOARA**

FACULTY OF COMMUNICATION SCIENCES

MASTERCOM
Politehnica Graduate Student Journal
of Communication

MASTERCOM - Politehnica Graduate Student Journal of Communication

Volume 9, Issue 1, 2024

Contents

Empathic Communication as a Negotiation Technique within the Human Resources Department.
Case Study: FORVIA HELLA

Brigitta Viola Csáki

Abstract: *People communicate from the earliest moments in their lives and spend half their life at the workplace. The whole organisational communication process is fascinatingly complex, but what about including empathy for more efficiency? This paper presents the results of a research conducted on several specialists from the human resources department of a multinational company. The research aims to highlight the impact of empathic communication as a negotiation strategy and to reveal how the professional climate may change if specific factors are taken into consideration. It is proven that empathy completely changes the brain structure; it can build bridges between people, and even increase efficiency in solving some problematic situations and minimizing mistrust and conflicts. This paper is meant to serve as an empathic*

communication guide that can be used for both personal and professional purposes, focusing on seven key points.

1. Introduction

Negotiation is and has always been a complex process and equally an art. The art of negotiation primarily involves (but is not limited to) the ability to communicate effectively. According to several studies, perseverance, flexibility, patience, strategic thinking, and the ability to make decisions are the essential skills to be a good negotiator. Of course, negotiation is used in various fields, but in terms of notoriety, the business environment comes first.

New times demand innovative solutions. As such, empathic communication is the new way in the professional field. There is a wide variety of interpretations and definitions in the literature, which highlight different aspects of empathic communication. However, for those who are not familiar with this concept, empathic communication is essentially about improving interpersonal relationships through the language used. A single word spoken at the right time has the power to influence the expression of genes that regulate physical and emotional stress. Language shapes our behavior and each lexical unit used is loaded with personal meanings. That is why we should pay special attention to our communication style in the workplace (Newberg & Waldman, 2019, p.15). This new communication style has radically changed the rules of the game in the business world. Therefore, it can be strongly argued that the success of an organization is first and foremost due to its people. Engaged and motivated employees are its most valuable resource. But that is not all. Teams can use empathic communication as an innovative strategy to avoid difficult situations and to reduce stress, which compromises productivity and ultimately leads to exhaustion and even burnout.

In other words, analysing negotiation in terms of empathic communication is a distinct topic that deserves research, irrespective of the subject of the negotiation. This paper examines how the application of empathic communication impacts interpersonal relationships among professionals within a multinational corporation. It explores whether greater emphasis is placed on individual interest or relational development and analyses the negotiation strategies successfully employed by human resources professionals within the framework of internal communication processes.

2. Research methods

The research was conducted on specialists in the Human Resources (HR) Department at FORVIA HELLA in Timișoara, focusing on the personnel administration and recruitment teams by analysing their internal communication.

The methods employed to achieve the research objectives included personal interviews and experiments. Both methods are qualitative, chosen for their suitability in descriptive and informative research. As the term implies, qualitative research emphasises quality, offering insights beyond numerical data.

Steinar Kvale and Svemd Brinkmann (2009) define the interview as a method "based on the conversations of daily life and is a professional conversation; it is an inter-view, where knowledge is constructed in the inter-action between the interviewer and the interviewee. An interview is literally an interview, an interchange of views between two persons conversing about a theme of mutual interest". In other words, the interview cannot be defined as a simple conversation in everyday life, it is much more than that.

The second research method, the experiment, is a scientific method aimed at identifying a cause-effect relationship between two observable and measurable phenomena. Dascălu (n.d.) explains that "the experimental research is also called controlled observation, because

the researcher manipulates a certain variable, considered independent, to see the changes produced at the level of another variable, considered dependent. The researched phenomenon is, therefore, produced by the researcher". Hence, experimental research involves the deliberate manipulation of some variables to observe their effects on other variables.

3. Results

Interview results

The research methods mentioned above were used to achieve the objectives. In what concerns the interview, it was carried out with the recruitment specialist, whose identity cannot be disclosed; instead, her initials, D.D., will be used for reference.

The interview consisted of nine questions, designed to capture as much information as possible. The questions were organised into three parts: the first involved recognising and defining some concepts, the second was about the improvements that could be made within the team, whereas the last part focused on the advantages and disadvantages of nonviolent communication.

The results reveal that they use empathic communication in the HR department, especially during team meetings in which they discuss the difficulties encountered by each team member during task performance. Nonviolent communication is used within the professional group to bring its members closer, by willingly looking at a situation from the interlocutor's perspective as well.

According to the expert, the following cues can help to understand others' perspective and to show true empathy towards others: the tone of voice, the voice pace, non-verbal communication, facial expressions, gestures, and of course, a friendly approach. At the same time, the way people relate to each other indicates their degree of openness to interaction. In fact, at a more careful look, it seems that verbal communication is hidden behind non-verbal communication.

11

The biggest challenge faced by D.D. was creating a connection. Really connecting with the interlocutor and succeeding in gaining their trust requires a lot of effort. Only the right approach can help in this regard. The results prove that there is a real circuit when considering the importance of empathic communication.

Experiment results

For a better understanding of the communication process in the HR department, a sample of the collected data will be analysed.

ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 5, WHERE 1 IS NEVER AND 5 IS REGULARLY, HOW OFTEN DO YOU USE EMPATHIC COMMUNICATION IN YOUR PROFESSIONAL ENVIRONMENT?

Quite often
11.1%

Regular
44.4%
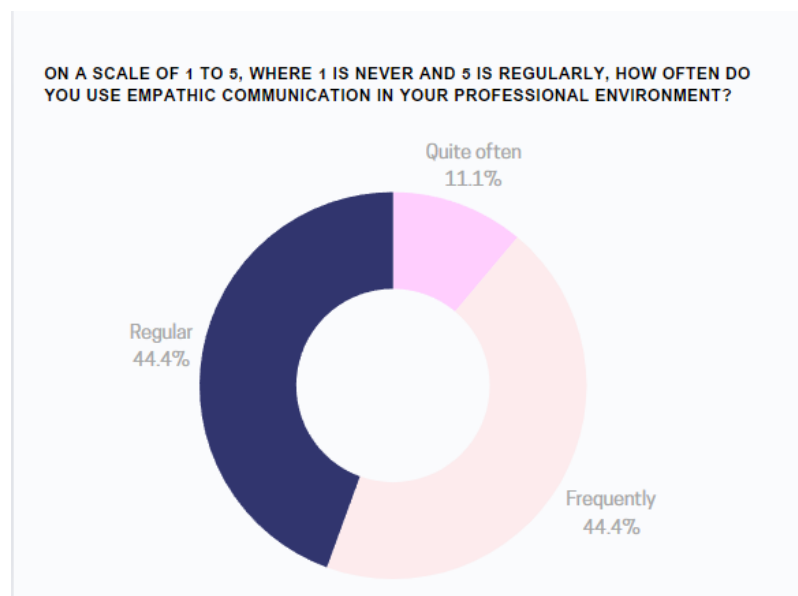
Frequently
44.4%

Fig. 1. The use of empathic communication
in the professional environment

Although there were five answer options, the responses were limited to three possibilities. Most female respondents use nonviolent communication "frequently" (44.4%) and "regularly" (44.4%) within the professional group. Only one person (11.1%) answered "quite often" to this question.
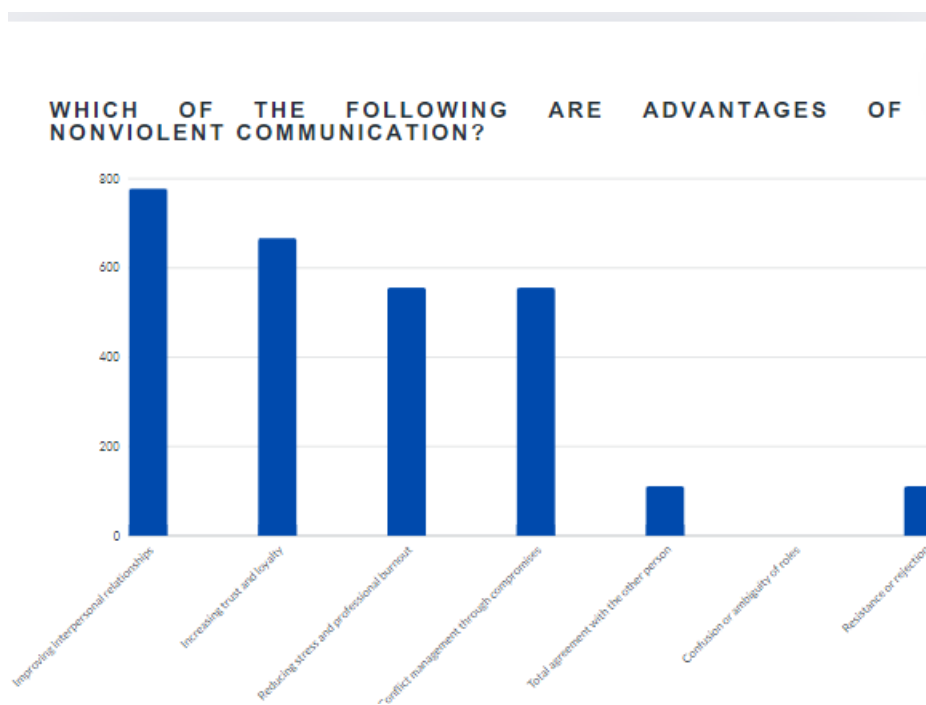
Fig. 2. The advantages of empathic communication

Figure 2 shows the results to the question about the advantages of empathic communication. This question was meant to test the respondents' knowledge on the topic and hence, it also included some disadvantages in the answer options. As illustrated above, the most voted advantage concerns improving relationships (77.8%), followed by increased loyalty and trust (66.7%). Some respondents failed the test, as

they selected two major disadvantages of empathic communication in professional settings.

There were no significant variations after introducing the two variables. The subjects are oriented towards solving difficult situations through communication, because it is known that communication is the key. Identifying the cause of difficult situations also receives increased attention. In addition, the respondents try to find solutions and capitalise on the skills of the employees as well as possible. This leads to a negotiation based on collaboration, which in turn results in a win-win situation.

4. Conclusions

Not only should professional groups be aware of the importance of empathic communication and the changes that occur with it, but they must also understand how it can be used as a strategy. It is highly recommended they use this type of communication to determine which factors affect interpersonal relations most and how they can make use of them.

In light of the present research, it can be argued that it is not easy to consider other perspectives and manage a difficult situation, but surely empathic communication can be very helpful in a work team. The findings only apply to the HR department at FORVIA HELLA Timișoara. There are, however, some general guidelines. The Empathic communication guide provides the following seven tips: Put yourself in the other person's position, Be honest, Listen actively, Be understanding, Investigate, Be supportive, and Make compromises.

The results confirm some of the theories, such as claiming that nonviolent communication is an intelligent strategy in the internal communication of an HR department. Empathy completely changes the work environment and increases communication quality. Moreover, it may even improve efficiency and facilitate authentic connections within a professional group. It is also interesting that empathic communication is an ingenious way to solve difficult situations or conflicts among group

members. As a negotiation strategy, the art of collaboration dominates in this context, because emphasis is placed more on relationships than on interest. Of course, creativity and out-of-the-box thinking can only bring advantages to the group. Channeling energy towards the creative resolution of any difficult situation is indisputable evidence that nonviolent communication can be used as a smart negotiation strategy, in both personal and professional life.

Bibliography:

1. Bento, C. &Leal, III. (2017). *4 Essential Keys to Effective Communication in Love, Life, Work--Anywhere!: A How-To Guide for Practicing the Empathic Listening, Speaking, and Dialogue Skills to Achieve Relationship Success*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.
2. Dascălu, D. (n.d.) *Note de curs: Metodologia cercetării în științe sociale.*
3. Kvale, S. & Brinkmann, S. (2009). *InterViews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing*. California: SAGE.
4. Newberg, A.& Waldman, M. R. (2019). *Cuvintele îți modelează creierul*. București: Curtea Veche Publishing.
5. Rosenberg, M. B. (2005*). Comunicarea nonviolentă-un limbaj al vieții.* n.p: Elena Francisc Publishing.
6. Seo, B. (2023). *Arta argumentării. Cum ne învață dezbaterea să ascultăm și să fim auziți*. București. Litera.
7. Wispe, L. (1991). *The Psychology of Sympathy*. New York: Springer.

Webography:

1. a.n. Răsfoiesc.com. *Metode de cercetare in psihologie - Metoda experimentala.* Available at: https://www.rasfoiesc.com/educatie/psihologie/Metode-de-cercetare-in-psiholo33.php.

2. Dr. Pragya, A. (2018). How To Create A Positive Workplace Culture. Available at: https://www.forbes.com/sites/davidjeans/2024/02/02/scale-ai-tiktok-bytedance-security-concerns/?sh=1cf107ce2733.

Diversity and Inclusion in Romanian Organisations

Andreea Işfan

Abstract: *Where do corporations stand when it comes to diversity and inclusion? Unfortunately, Romania lacks information not only on diversity and inclusion, but also on how corporations act towards implementing and promoting these new concepts within the workplace. This paper aims to provide an overview on how diversity and inclusion are perceived in Romania, and how companies respond to the needs and concerns of modern society regarding diversity and inclusion. This research highlights that Romanian companies struggle with implementing and promoting diversity and inclusion activities and processes due to employees' rigid mentality, which resists any changes coming from such initiatives. Experts state that Romanian organisations are still in an incipient stage, and taking a step forward means taking risks, which companies do not want to be responsible for. Even so, the increasing demand for diverse and inclusive workplaces lead organisations to allocate more and more resources and acknowledge that they must adapt to fulfill society's expectations. This paper addresses not only people who wish to gain a better understanding of the current status of diversity and inclusion on the Romanian market, but also specialists looking for up-to-date information on how diversity and inclusion are perceived in 2024 by corporations and employees, in order to get insights on what needs to be remodelled in the current business strategy.*

1. Introduction

Modern society is continuously evolving. Given their strategic position in society, along with their economic, social, and ethical responsibilities, organisations must adapt to current social expectations to maintain a positive public reputation.

In Romania, organisations have begun to embrace the concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and demonstrate their commitment to functioning as responsible corporate entities within society. However, the current state of diversity and inclusion in Romania remains an area of concern.

Over recent years, the workforce in Romania has become increasingly diverse, influenced by factors such as mass immigration resulting from political unrest in Europe and Eastern Asia, as well as a growing number of individuals openly declaring their sexual orientation or gender identity. These developments are reshaping the workforce landscape and directly impacting organisations operating in the local market. Furthermore, societal changes extend beyond these factors, as citizens adopt new personal values, principles, and beliefs.

Each organisation possesses its own values that reflect its business and corporate environment. Recently, there has been a shift in these values to align not only with corporate standards but also with social expectations. This shift results in new responsibilities, as public expectations now require corporations to go beyond superficial changes.

A practical approach is necessary, one that reflects societal values through initiatives, processes, and activities with tangible impacts. Consequently, organisations are expected to be seen as advocates for diversity and inclusion through their corporate culture, internal processes, and external activities. Diversity and inclusion, like CSR, have transitioned from being voluntary commitments to essential mandates influenced by societal expectations. Many organisations have begun

18

signing the Romanian Diversity Charter, publicly committing to supporting, protecting, and promoting diversity within the corporate framework.

This study aims to investigate how organisations in Romania perceive diversity and inclusion, highlighting the challenges faced in a society characterised by limited expertise in these areas and a division between those resistant to change and communities advocating for it. Moreover, this research provides factual data that may assist specialists seeking to better understand the implementation and promotion of diversity and inclusion strategies within Romania's local market.

2. Research Methods

The research employed three methods: content analysis, interview sessions, and an assessment form, each addressing different components of the study.

Content Analysis

The Romanian Diversity Charter has over 200 signatories, including multinationals, public institutions, embassies, and universities. From this list, five well-known corporations in software development were selected for analysis: Accenture, Vitesco Technologies, Luxoft, Yazaki, and FEV. The extent of their commitment to promoting diversity was evaluated through their public communications on their websites and social media, specifically focusing on their activities on LinkedIn as the primary platform connecting them with the public.

Interview Sessions

Interviews served as a valuable research method, facilitating the collection of key insights on diversity and inclusion from industry experts with over 15 years of experience. A strategic selection of ten questions covered aspects such as adaptability, challenges, and online visibility in relation to diversity and inclusion. Interviews were

conducted with five specialists across Human Resources, Marketing, and Communications from various sectors, including engineering, retail, consulting, and marketing. The aim was to gain a deeper understanding of how these concepts are perceived across different fields.

Assessment Form

The assessment form was designed to reach additional experts, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the efforts organisations are making towards diversity and inclusion, their current standing regarding internal implementation processes, and any challenges faced. The form was distributed to specialists in Human Resources, Marketing, Employer Branding, Corporate Social Responsibility, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DE&I), and Communication. Responses were collected from 21 specialists aged 21 and above, employed at medium to large companies with varying experience in the field.

The assessment form contained 24 questions, including socio-demographic inquiries, primarily focusing on diversity and inclusion within the respondents' organisations.

3. Results

Organisations in Romania are still in the early stages of promoting diversity and inclusion, both internally and externally. These concepts can often stir controversy, leading corporations to remain within their comfort zones rather than taking bold steps to enhance their visibility in this area.

Nonetheless, the outcomes of the few companies investing in diversity and inclusion initiatives frequently do not meet expectations, primarily because social media algorithms prioritise content that engages the audience, and topics related to diversity often fail to capture interest.

Some organisations focus on external visibility, while others take a more gradual approach, beginning with internal efforts directed at their employees. Despite ongoing attempts to embed diversity and inclusion within organisational culture, many employees do not perceive their workplace as being genuinely diverse and inclusive. Consequently, organisations may inadvertently project an impression of enforcing change rather than fostering authentic engagement with diversity and inclusion initiatives. Additionally, implementing a truly diverse and inclusive culture presents challenges due to the rigidity of some employees' mindsets, a lingering effect of Romania's past communist regime.

Unfortunately, educating employees about the benefits of diversity and inclusion requires substantial time and resources. When communicating diversity and inclusion initiatives, experts emphasise several key aspects: messages must be professional yet respectful towards minorities; they should reflect the organisation's acceptance of individual differences as valuable contributions to its culture; they must promote freedom of expression, and overall communication must convey a zero-tolerance policy against any form of discrimination.

At present, organisations find themselves in a challenging position. The lack of specialists with expertise in diversity and inclusion is a significant factor contributing to the hesitance to adopt new approaches; a dedicated specialist could provide guidance on best practices in this area. Nonetheless, organisations are perceptive and recognise opportunities as they arise. While many do not allocate a dedicated annual budget for diversity and inclusion programmes, they do not overlook potential investments, making ad-hoc decisions to maintain their status until a specialist is brought on board to lead the initiative.

The transition towards a diverse and inclusive workplace can be a positive experience for employees if companies actively listen to their needs and concerns and include them in decision-making processes by seeking feedback that highlights areas for improvement, thereby embracing a range of perspectives.

4. Conclusions

This study has offered valuable insights into the dynamics of diversity and inclusion as integral components of corporate strategy. Due to their relative novelty within Romanian culture, these concepts require further examination. The challenges organisations face are not indicative of an inability to progress; rather, they underscore a need for better comprehension of employee and public expectations in a rapidly evolving environment. Effecting change necessitates a period of acknowledgment and adaptation to the benefits that diversity and inclusion can bring to a thriving workplace.

Today, discussions surrounding diversity and inclusion often overlook the complexities involved. Organisations must adapt to the myriad aspects of diversity and inclusion, but this requires thorough preparation and a foundational approach.

Webography

1. Wong, K. (2024). Company core values: 25 inspiring examples. https://www.achievers.com/blog/company-core-value-examples/. Accessed on 05.06.2024.
2. Carta Diversității (n.d.). Despre Carta Diversității. *https://cartadiversitatii.ro/despre-carta-diversitatii*. Accessed on 05.06.2024.

The Importance of Online Communities for Business Success. Case Study: Companies in Romania

Larisa Loredana Munteanu

Abstract: *Social media and online communities have become vital components of the contemporary business environment, having a significant impact on how companies interact with customers and manage their reputation. The theoretical part of this paper explores various aspects related to social media and online communities in the business context. Furthermore, the paper also discusses the topmost influential social brands in Romania in 2023, according to the Top Social Brands ranking by "Biz" magazine, offering a frontline perspective on the impact of online communities in the Romanian business landscape. The practical part of the paper consists of a social media content analysis of the top four brands in the Social Brands ranking in Romania in 2023. This complex analysis provides relevant information regarding the strategies and activities carried out by these companies in the digital environment. Additionally, a questionnaire was used to assess the target audience's perception of the importance of*

online communities for business success, thus completing the picture with factual perspectives on the interaction between companies and online communities. This paper aims to provide an up-to-date understanding of the impact of social media and online communities in the business environment, both from a theoretical and from a practical, culture-specific Romanian perspective.

1. Introduction

People are social beings. The need for social interaction and belonging is at the center of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which suggests a deeply rooted desire for people to be part of a community where they are accepted and where they can leave their mark.

Years have passed, the digital revolution has taken place, and today we cannot talk about the business environment without including social media. In the context of the business environment, social media has become a crucial aspect of marketing and communication strategies for companies worldwide. A detailed academic approach to this field requires an in-depth understanding of the conceptualization and evolution of social media, as well as its impact on modern business practices.

A significant study in this regard was conducted following the 2018 International Conference on the topic "Business Remodelling: Exploring New Initiatives in Key Business Functions." This study carefully analyzes and defines key concepts of digital marketing and social media, offering an academic perspective on how they influence the contemporary business environment. Digital marketing, defined in the study as the promotion of products or services through digital channels, is a constantly evolving field within modern business practices. The study emphasises that digital marketing encompasses a diversity of strategies and tactics aimed at promoting brands and stimulating consumer engagement through digital media platforms.

Regarding social media, the study highlights its essential role in facilitating the creation, sharing, and exchange of information, ideas, and interests within virtual communities and networks. It acknowledges that social media has become a powerful tool for companies in managing customer relationships, brand promotion, and generating relevant content. Thus, the academic contribution of the study provides an important perspective on the interaction between social media and the business environment, underscoring the complexity and importance of this field within contemporary marketing and communication practices (International Conference on Business Remodelling: Exploring New Initiatives in Key Business Functions, 2018, p.8).

In the contemporary digital era, online communities have become an omnipresent and vital phenomenon in the social, economic, and cultural landscape. These digital communities, composed of individuals with common interests, experiences, and goals, are not only a manifestation of technological connectivity but also fertile ground for exploring human dynamics, virtual relationships, and knowledge exchange. Robert E. Kraut and Paul Resnick, authors of the book "Building Successful Online Communities: Evidence-Based Social Design," define online communities as any virtual space where people congregate to have conversations on a common interest topic, exchange information, play, learn, or just have company. The term applies to many social configurations, from small groups to sites with millions of users (Kraut & Resnick, 2011, p.1). Thus, the authors suggest that these virtual environments are not just simple spaces for digital interaction but places where individuals gather to meet various social and personal needs.

Currently, companies increasingly recognise the benefits they can gain from active participation in and management of online communities within their marketing and customer relations strategies. The authors of the book "Online Brand Communities" enumerate the benefits that an organization can gain from integrating into an online community, including: facilitating the creation and development of a brand, allowing companies to implement relationship marketing

strategies and increase customer loyalty, providing benefits related to proper market segmentation as they are directed towards very specific audiences, representing an additional source of information and an efficient communication channel, and facilitating the development and launch of new products (Lopez et al., 2015, pp. 193-195).

Thus, social media and online communities have become vital components of the contemporary business environment, having a significant impact on how companies interact with customers and manage their reputation.

2. Research methods

The research has been conducted on two of the most popular social media networks at the moment, Facebook and Instagram, by analysing the posts generated on social media in 2023 by the top four brands in the Social Brands ranking in Romania in 2023.

This complex analysis provides relevant information regarding the strategies and activities carried out by these companies in the digital environment. Additionally, through a questionnaire-based survey, the research explores the target audience's perception of the importance of online communities for business success.

The findings thus complete the picture with frontline perspectives on the interaction between companies and online communities. The survey was conducted online between May and June 2024 via the Google Forms platform, and the link was distributed on various social networks to ensure responses from diverse backgrounds. The sample was random, thus including everyone who wished to participate in the study during that period. The survey consisted of 14 questions, 5 of which were socio-demographic questions. In total, the sample consisted of 212 respondents.

3. Results

The first three positions in the Top Social Brands in Romania ranking are held by four leading brands that have consolidated their position through creative strategies and continuous involvement in the online community they have formed: the first place is shared by Lidl and Samsung, Kaufland comes second, while Banca Transilvania ranks third.

The analysis has revealed that all four brands use their Facebook pages to promote their offers and products. Their posts are accompanied by attractive images and details about the products included in promotions. Posts that encourage community engagement through questions, events, and contests are the most appreciated among the four businesses. These activities directly involve followers, thereby developing a sense of belonging and increasing engagement and interactivity. For this reason, such posts have the most likes, comments, and shares, compared to other types of posts.

Lidl, Kaufland, and Banca Transilvania post educational and informative content such as cooking tips, recipes, and money management advice. Such posts are appreciated within the community because the brand manages to position itself not just as a simple product provider, but also as a trusted partner in the daily lives of consumers. Social responsibility is highlighted by all four brands through posts that include images and information about their corporate social responsibility projects, donations, and other initiatives supporting the local community. This type of post is the least appreciated, with the lowest level of interactivity among the four companies. Customer relationship management is carried out by responding to the vast majority of comments in a kind, direct and informal manner.

On Instagram, the four businesses present their various products and services in a captivating and creative way, focusing on visual aspects. Collaborations with public figures are more visible, as well as meme-style posts intended to evoke amusement.

Table 1: Monitoring by type of Facebook post

	Communication of Offers and Promotions	Community Engagement	Educational and Informative Content	Social Responsibility and Sustainability	Feedback and Customer Relationship Management
I **Lidl**	x	x	x	X	
	< 5,000 likes < 300 com. < 90 shares	< 7,000 likes < 500 com. < 70 shares	< 300 likes < 50 com. < 20 shares	< 100 likes < 5 com. < 33 shares	x
I **Samsung**	x	x		X	
	< 60 likes < 10 com. < 2 shares	< 50 likes < 15 com. < 5 shares		< 30 likes < 5 com. 2 < shares	x
II **Kaufland**	x	x	x	X	
	< 2,000 likes < 45 com. < 30 shares	< 8,200 likes < 34.000com. < 993 shares	< 1.500 likes < 30 com. < 70 distribuiri	< 700 likes < 30 com. < 30 shares	x
III **Banca** **Trans.**	x	x	x	X	
	< 3,300 likes < 30 com. < 30 shares	< 4,800 likes < 440 com. < 60 shares	< 2.100 likes < 70 com. < 30 shares	< 1,100 likes < 80 com. < 30 shares	x

It can also be concluded that online communities have helped the four analysed brands to:

- increase sales and revenue: through the ability to create and maintain constant and meaningful interactions with community members, they have contributed to customer loyalty and brand consolidation.
- improve reputation and strengthen the brand: all four analysed brands place great emphasis on feedback and customer relationship management, and collaborations with public figures have helped create a positive and credible image.
- expand their customer base: campaigns with public figures have allowed the four businesses to reach new audiences that would not have been accessible through traditional marketing methods.

The results of the survey highlight the importance of online communities for the success of a business, providing a clear picture of how users interact with online communities across various social networks, and how these interactions influence purchase decisions and, consequently, business success.

A significant number of respondents (45.8%) interact with online brand communities occasionally, whereas 25% interact daily. This indicates that a large segment of the target audience is engaged in a relationship with brands on social networks, which increases customer loyalty and engagement.

Cât de des interacționați cu comunitățile online ale brandurilor?

212 răspunsuri
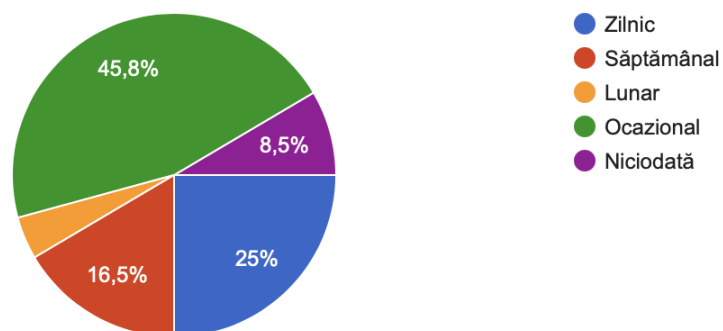
Fig. 1. Interaction with online communities

While 44.3% of the respondents consider the influence of online communities neutral, 39.6% are influenced by the posts within these

communities, and 79.7% have purchased a product because of a post in an online community.

Cum evaluați influența comunităților online asupra deciziilor dvs. de cumpărare?
212 răspunsuri

- Influentă
- Neutră
- Deloc influentă

44,3%   16%

39,6%
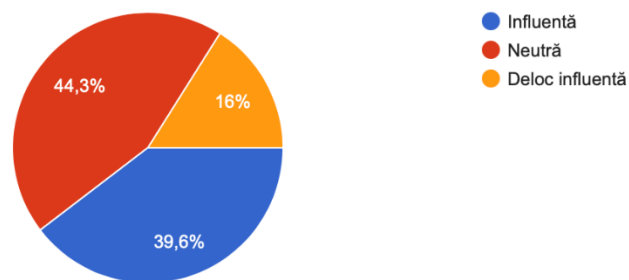
Fig. 2. The influence of online communities

Ați cumpărat vreodată un produs datorită unei postări dintr-o comunitate online?
212 răspunsuri

- DA
- NU

20,3%

79,7%
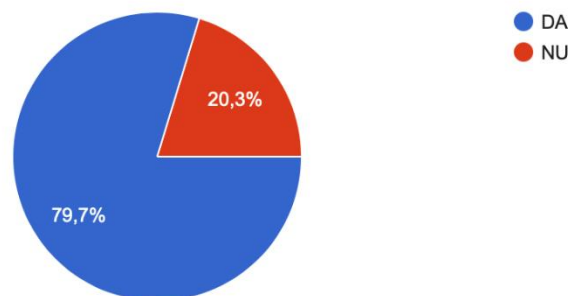
Fig. 3. Influence in the purchasing decision-making process

An overwhelming 82.5% of the respondents think online communities are important for the success of a business, while only 1.9% believe they are not important at all.

Cât de importantă considerați că este o comunitate online activă pentru succesul unei afaceri?

212 răspunsuri

- Importantă
- Neutră
- Deloc importantă

15,6%

82,5%
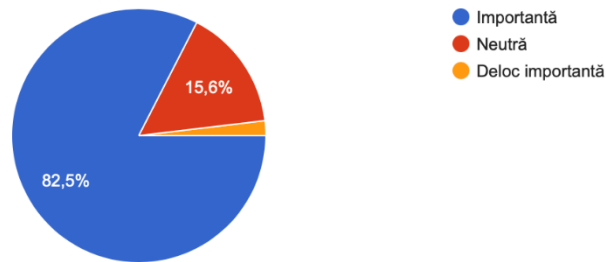
Fig. 4. The importance of online communities for business success

This highlights the clear perception of the target audience regarding the crucial role of online communities in the growth and success of a business.

4. Conclusions

Companies should place special emphasis on creating and actively maintaining an online community. Considering all the benefits that online communities bring to the business environment, it would be a shame for companies not to take advantage of the opportunities offered by social media.

In light of the present study, it can be agreed that some specific factors of online communities influence the success of a business. Also, online communities seem to be essential for business success, according to the participants in the survey.

Businesses must be active on popular social platforms, provide attractive and valuable content, stimulate interactions, and leverage the influence of reviews. A strong presence in these communities not only attracts new customers but also strengthens the loyalty and engagement of existing ones, thus contributing to the long-term growth and success of a business.

Bibliography

1. Khullar L.S. et. al. (2018). *International Conference on Business Remodelling: Exploring New Initiatives in Key Business Functions*. Nagpur, Tirpude Institute of Management Education.

2. Kraut R.E. & Resnick P. (2011). *Building Successful Online Communities: Evidence-Based Social Design*. London: The MITT Press.

3. Lopez et. al. (2015). *Online Brand Communities. Using the Social Web for Branding and Marketing*. Springer International Publishing.

The Realities of Corporate Social Responsibility. Case Study: Patagonia and Volkswagen Companies

Amina Poterașu

Abstract: *This study delves into the intricacies of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) by conducting a comparative analysis of two prominent companies, Patagonia and Volkswagen. Through an examination of their CSR practices, the research investigates corporate engagement with stakeholders, approaches to addressing social and environmental challenges, and ethical decision-making processes. Employing a mixed- method approach, including qualitative case studies and quantitative data analysis, the study evaluates the effectiveness and impact of CSR initiatives. Key themes explored encompass sustainability, business ethics, stakeholder involvement, and corporate governance. The findings highlight the various CSR strategies employed*

by Patagonia and Volkswagen, offering valuable perspectives on factors influencing CSR implementation and outcomes. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of CSR practices and their implications for corporate conduct and societal advancement.

1. Introduction

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) encompasses a range of interpretations that have evolved over time. The World Business Council for Sustainable Development offers a succinct and memorable definition: "CSR involves businesses continuously committing to enhance economic development while simultaneously enhancing the well-being of their employees, their families, and the broader community and society" (Anca et al., 2011, p. 8).

A shift in corporate mindset emerged post-World War II, as businesses recognised the imperative to contribute to post-war recovery and community welfare (Carroll & Shabana, 2010). This era laid the groundwork for the integration of philanthropy and ethics into corporate strategies.

The 1970s to 1990s marked a period of regulation and activism, catalyzed by rising environmental and social concerns. Events like Milton Friedman's influential book spurred debates on corporate societal roles (Friedman, 1970).

From the 1990s onwards, globalisation ushered in new challenges. Stakeholder Theory gained prominence, advocating for businesses to consider diverse stakeholder interests (Freeman, 1993). This paradigm shift has reshaped CSR, prioritising sustained relationships with employees, customers, communities, and the environment.

Although CSR is associated with positive outcomes, assessing its impact is not without challenges. This section will discuss common challenges and criticisms related to measuring CSR impact. For example, in their attempt to present themselves as responsible organisations, some companies engage in greenwashing, i.e. the exaggerated or misleading promotion of their CSR practices. This phenomenon complicates accurate impact assessment and increases skepticism among consumers and other stakeholders (Delmas & Toffel, 2008).

CSR is a multi-faceted concept encompassing voluntary actions undertaken by enterprises to address social, environmental, and economic concerns beyond legal and regulatory requirements (Gond, Kang & Moon, 2011). In the realm of the environment, companies increasingly recognise the need to adopt sustainable practices, reduce their ecological footprint, and contribute to broader environmental conservation efforts.

Environmental responsibility is a critical component of CSR, acknowledging the impact businesses can have on the natural world. This dimension involves minimizing negative environmental externalities and actively contributing to environmental conservation (Elkington, 1997). Companies embracing environmental responsibility seek to integrate sustainable practices into their operations, reduce resource consumption, and mitigate the environmental footprint associated with their products and services. Within Corporate Social Responsibility, ethics becomes a fundamental aspect as it pertains to how organizations consider and take responsibility for their impact on society and the environment in which they operate.

In CSR, ethics is applied in several ways:
- Morality: Here, morality refers to adhering to moral norms and principles in organisational activities and decisions. Companies must be careful not to cause harm to society or the environment in their pursuit of financial objectives.
- Responsibility: Ethics is closely linked to the concept of responsibility. Organisations have a moral responsibility to act in ways

that enhance or do not harm society and the environment. This involves considering the impact on employees, local communities, the environment, customers, and other stakeholders.

- Integrity: Integrity refers to the consistency and correctness of organizational actions and values. In the context of CSR, integrity involves honesty and transparency in communication and action. Organisations must uphold their promises and fulfill their commitments without compromising their ethical values.

The ethical principles underlying CSR initiatives are fundamental to guiding organisations toward responsible and sustainable actions. Here are some of these principles:

- Transparency: Transparency involves open and honest communication with all stakeholders about the organisation's actions and impact. Companies embracing CSR should be transparent about their business practices, environmental policy, employment policy, contributions to the community, and other relevant aspects.

- Fairness: Fairness refers to treating all stakeholders fairly and impartially, without discrimination or unfair favoritism. In the context of CSR, this may include ensuring fair working conditions, fair wages, equal access to opportunities and resources for employees and communities.

- Respect for diversity: Respect for diversity involves recognizing and appreciating cultural, social, economic, and individual differences. Companies should promote an inclusive work environment and commit to diversity within their teams, respecting and valuing the contributions of all members.

This study explores the landscape of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives, with a particular focus on the actions of renowned companies, including Patagonia and Volkswagen.

2. Research methods

To conduct an effective analysis of Patagonia's "Worn Wear" and Volkswagen's "Clean Diesel" campaigns, a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods was employed. Both questionnaire results and the Delphi method were integrated into the analysis to gain a comprehensive perspective and relevant insights.

The questionnaire analysed the opinions and perceptions of 80 respondents on CSR practices and moral awareness in the business environment. Its primary objective was to determine whether, if owning a company, respondents would prefer to conduct CSR activities directly with their target audience or to fund institutions without knowing specific investment details. Additionally, it aimed to assess respondents' awareness of moral and immoral actions in the business environment or whether this awareness was limited by a lack of information.

The Delphi method was chosen for the research on Patagonia and Volkswagen campaigns, engaging a group of five experts in corporate social responsibility and business ethics. This method involves repeated consultations with a select group of experts to achieve consensus on complex or uncertain topics. Given the complexity of the subject and the need to evaluate the ethical commitments of companies in these campaigns, involving a small group of experts was anticipated to provide a more detailed and objective perspective. Their diverse and recognised expertise in CSR and business ethics aids in identifying and validating trends and conclusions, thereby enhancing the credibility and depth of the analysis. Through the Delphi method and expert discussions, a clearer understanding emerged of how the Patagonia and Volkswagen campaigns are perceived and evaluated in terms of CSR and business ethics.

This approach enabled a deeper and more informative analysis, facilitating an understanding of key aspects and identifying potential directions for future research and action.

3. Results

Following the analysis of the questionnaire, it was found that the majority of the participants demonstrated an appropriate understanding of the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility. 49% of the respondents said that they possess knowledge about CSR to a moderate extent, while 34% stated that they have a considerable amount of knowledge about this concept.
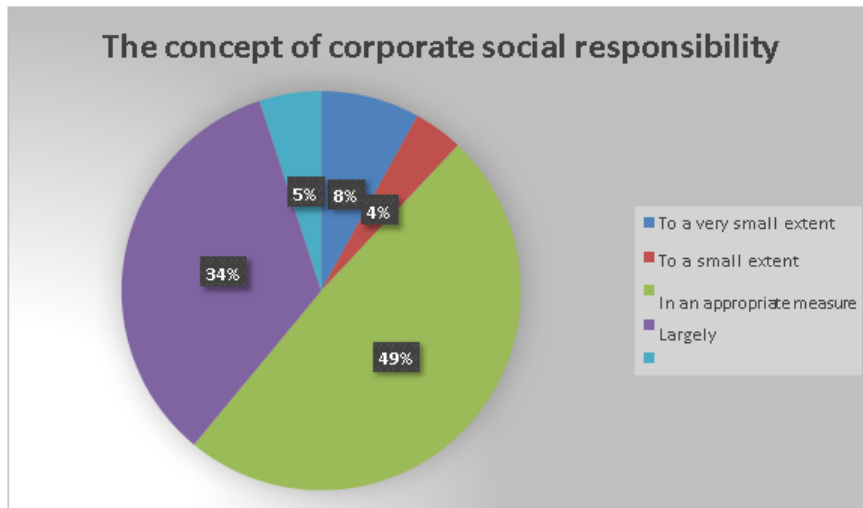
Fig. 1. The concept of corporate social responsibility

It is interesting to note that nearly half of the respondents (47%) consider a company's commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility to be significantly important in their decision to purchase products or services from that company.

This suggests that consumers are becoming increasingly aware of the impact their consumption choices have on the community and the environment, and are willing to support companies that adopt responsible practices. Conversely, 38% of the respondents stated that commitment to CSR is neither important nor unimportant in their purchasing decision. This segment of the population may be less influenced by social and environmental aspects when making purchase decisions, but this should not be overlooked, as there is still potential for raising

awareness and education in this area.
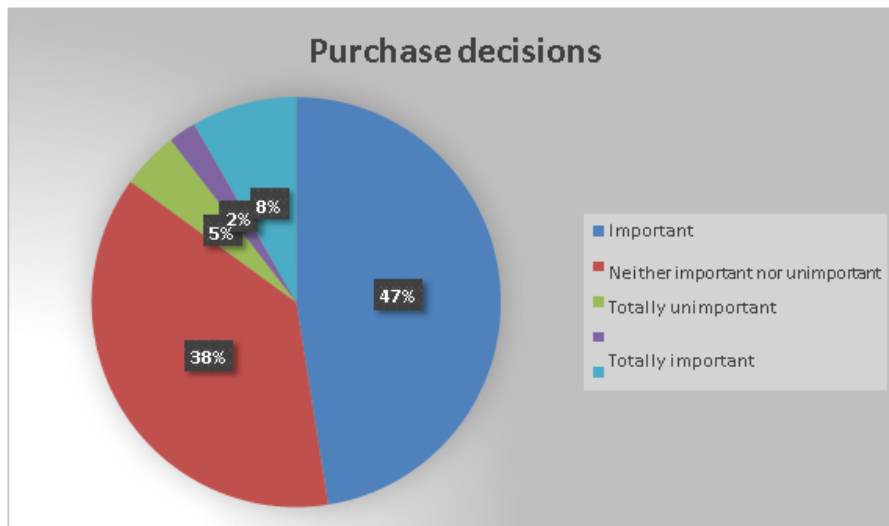
Fig. 2. Purchase decisions

Approximately 50% of the respondents believe that between 6% and 10% of a company's profit should be invested in CSR initiatives. This range reflects a balanced approach, where a significant portion of the profit is invested in CSR projects and programs without being excessive or jeopardising the financial sustainability of the company. Additionally, 28% of the respondents think that a 1% to 5% of the profit would be appropriate for CSR. This can be seen as a more conservative approach, where a smaller portion of the profit is invested in CSR initiatives, maintaining a balance between social responsibility and the need to maintain profitability and financial viability.

However, there is also a segment of 13% of the respondents who believe that more than 10% of the profit should be invested in CSR. This attitude reflects a more generous and committed vision regarding social responsibility, suggesting that these respondents believe in a stronger commitment to the community and the environment, and are willing to allocate more substantial financial resources for these purposes.
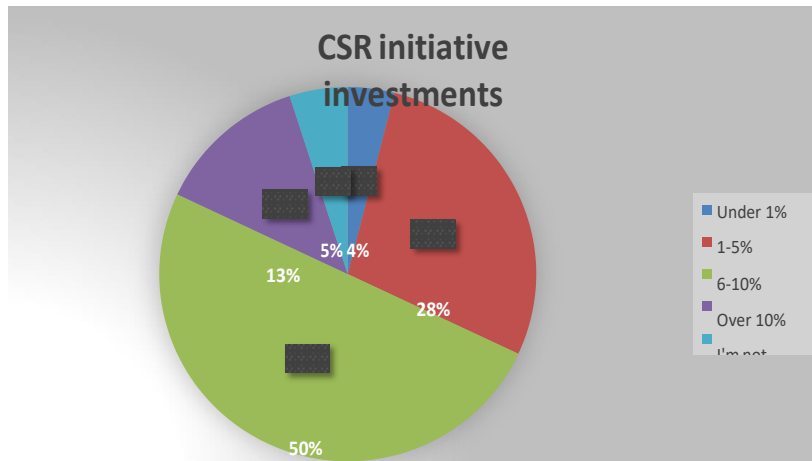
Fig. 3. CSR initiative investments

The results of the questionnaire also point to the increased awareness among respondents regarding the importance of investments in various areas within Corporate Social Responsibility. For environmental conservation, 28 respondents said that investments should be largely directed toward this goal. This underscores their concern for the protection and preservation of the environment, highlighting the desire to contribute to combating climate change and preserving biodiversity.

Regarding support for education and healthcare, 30 respondents consider that investments should be made to a moderate extent. This reflects an understanding of the importance of access to quality education and healthcare services for both individual and collective community development.

For the development of local communities, 42 respondents answered that investments should be made to a moderate extent. This approach suggests a deep concern for supporting and improving the quality of life at the local level through projects and initiatives that address community needs.

In terms of promoting gender equality and diversity, 29 respondents consider that investments should be made to a moderate extent. This highlights the importance of supporting diversity and inclusion within

organisations andcommunities.

Regarding innovation and technology for social good, 28 respondents believe that investments should be made to a moderate extent. This acknowledges the potential of innovation and technology to bring about positive changes in society and to address various social issues.

Overall, these responses reflect a broad and integrated vision of CSR, where investments are directed toward multiple key areas to contribute to sustainable growth and improve quality of life in communities. It was encouraging to see such awareness and commitment among the participants.
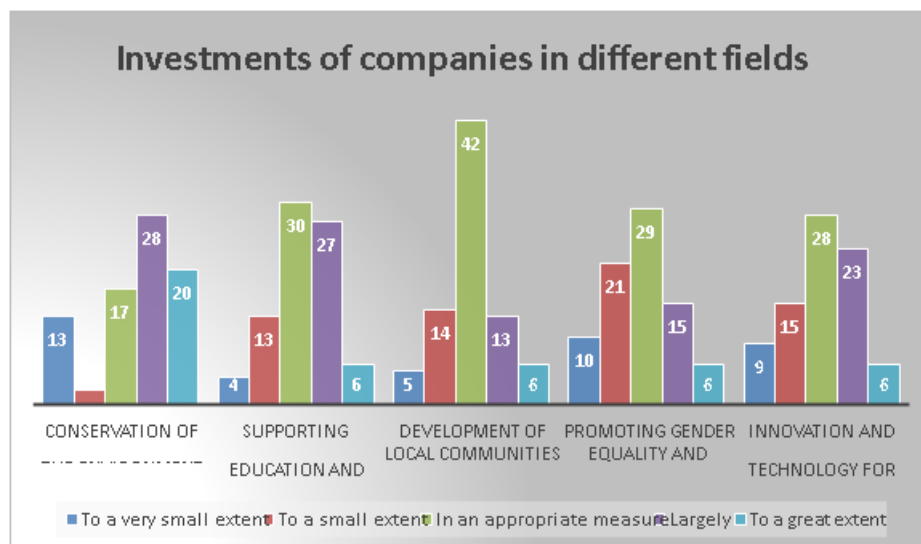
Fig. 4. Investments of companies in different fields

A significant number of respondents (39) consider it important to know exactly how the money they invest in campaigns is spent. This reflects a strong desire for transparency and accountability from companies or organisations conducting these campaigns. For these respondents, transparency regarding the use of their funds is essential in the decision-making process and in building trust in the brand or

organisation in question. Additionally, 30 respondents stated that it is neither important nor unimportant for them to know exactly how the money invested in campaigns is spent. This segment of the population may be less concerned with financial details and less influenced by transparency in this regard. In contrast, 6 respondents consider it extremely important to know exactly how the money invested in campaigns is spent. This attitude shows a very high concern for financial transparency and accountability, suggesting that these respondents attach particular importance to how their money is used.
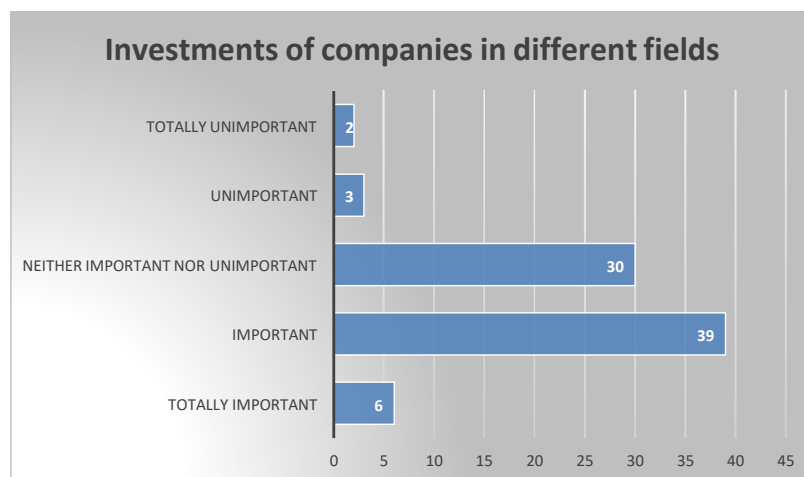
Fig. 5. Investments of companies in different fields

It was interesting to note the diversity of opinions regarding trust in non- governmental organisations (NGOs) when it comes to spending money for moral purposes. 38% of the respondents said that they have very little trust in NGOs to spend money for moral purposes. This suggests a certain lack of trust or skepticism regarding the transparency and financial ethics of such organisations.

At the same time, 35 respondents stated that they have a moderate level of trust in NGOs to spend money for moral purposes. This group

of respondents may consider that most non-governmental organizations are responsible and transparent in managing funds and achieving moral objectives.

Finally, 18% of the respondents mentioned that they have little trust in NGOs to spend money for moral purposes. This smaller percentage may reflect a higher level of skepticism or distrust in the ability of some NGOs to ethically and responsibly manage financial resources.
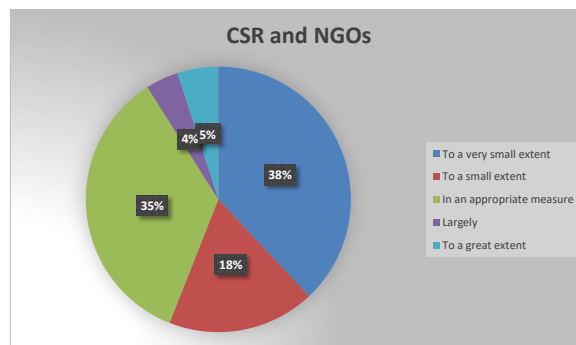
Fig. 6. CSR and NGOs

A significant number of the respondents agree to invest in CSR campaigns targeting the publics that have helped them develop. Here are the results:

- 45% of the respondents stated that they strongly agree with investments in CSR campaigns targeting these publics;
- 31.3% of the respondents indicated that they moderately agree with such investments;
- 17.5% of the respondents mentioned that they strongly agree with such investments.
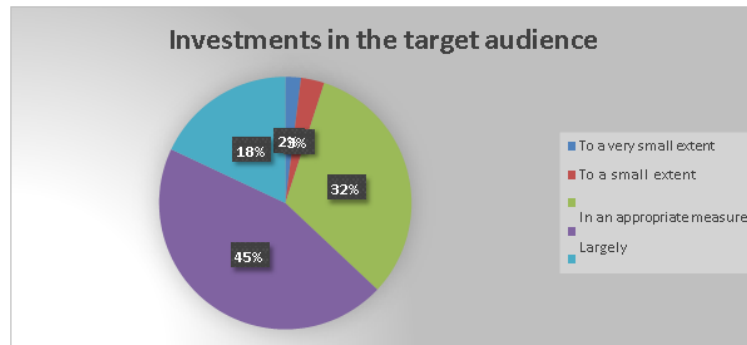
Fig. 7. Investments in the target audience

It is noteworthy that a significant number of respondents are willing to redistribute a part of the CSR investments to other non-governmental or non-profit organisations in need. Consider the results below:

• 43% of the respondents said that they are moderately willing to redistribute a part of the CSR investments to other organizations in need. This suggests that these respondents recognize the importance of solidarity and support among non-profit organizations and are willing to contribute to their efforts proportionally.

• 25% of the respondents mentioned that they strongly agree to redistribute CSR investments. This segment of the population reveals a high level of generosity and commitment to supporting other organizations in need and is ready to allocate considerable resources accordingly.

• 17% of the respondents stated that they strongly agree to redistribute CSR investments. These respondents are open to the idea of contributing to other non-profit organizations but may be more reserved about the level of involvement or resources allocated.

• 14% of the respondents only slightly agree to redistribute CSR investments. This segment of the population may be less willing to share resources with other non-profit organizations or may be more focused on the direct impact of investments on their own projects or initiatives.

44
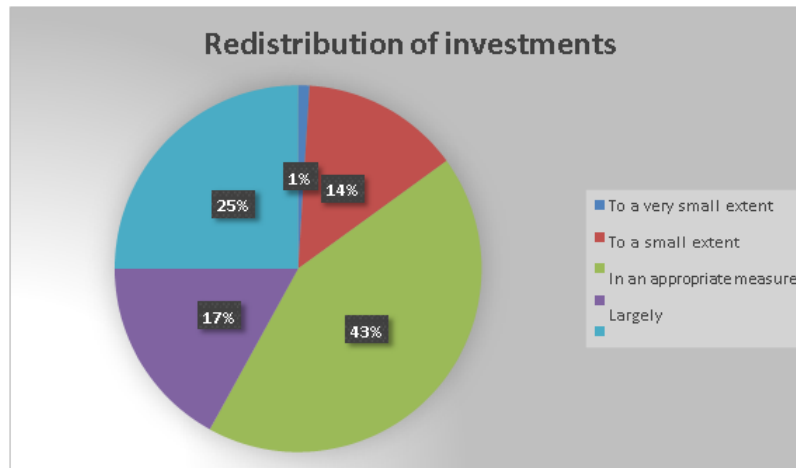
Fig. 8. Redistribution of investments

The Delphi analysis is particularly valuable in situations characterised by uncertainty or varying opinions on a topic where achieving a shared understanding or consensus is essential. This method provides a structured, systematic framework for gathering and synthesizing expert opinions, thereby supporting more informed decision-making and identifying future directions for development.

The following outlines the process undertaken in the Delphi analysis of the "Clean Diesel" and "Worn Wear" campaigns:

Defining Objectives and Developing the Analysis Grid

Initial steps involved outlining the objectives and clearly establishing the intended outcomes of the evaluation of the "Clean Diesel" and "Worn Wear" campaigns. A comprehensive evaluation grid was then developed, covering key criteria for assessing the success and impact of these campaigns, including campaign description, key points, context, purpose, objectives, authenticity, communication, transparency, social and environmental impacts, performance measurement and evaluation, lessons learned, and insights.

Selecting and Engaging Specialists

With objectives set and the analysis grid in place, a group of five specialists with expertise in CSR, marketing, or sustainability was identified and invited to participate. Selecting specialists with relevant knowledge and experience ensured a robust and relevant evaluation process.

Distributing the Analysis Grid and Collecting Initial Feedback

The analysis grid was distributed to the specialists, allowing them to assess it and suggest modifications or add details. Specialists were encouraged to provide open and honest feedback to enable a broad perspective on both the campaigns and the evaluation grid.

Refining the Grid Based on Feedback

After collecting feedback from the specialists, their comments and suggestions were analysed, and the grid was revised accordingly to better reflect their viewpoints and expertise.

Repeating Feedback Collection and Revising the Grid

The revised analysis grid was then re-sent to the specialists for additional feedback. Specialists were able to provide further details and suggestions based on the updated version.

Finalising the Grid and Achieving Consensus

Following several rounds of feedback and adjustments, a final version of the analysis grid was shared with the specialists. With no further comments or suggestions, consensus was reached regarding the content of the evaluation grid and the assessment criteria for the campaigns.

At the end of this process, a comprehensive and validated evaluation grid for the "Clean Diesel" and "Worn Wear" campaigns was developed. This grid was prepared to be utilized in assessing and comparing the effectiveness and impact of these campaigns within the industry. The Delphi analysis process ensured that the assessment was objective, thoroughly validated, and grounded in expert insights.

4. Conclusions

Following the thorough analysis of Patagonia's "Worn Wear" and Volkswagen's "Clean Diesel" campaigns, significant differences in ethics and responsibility emerge.

Patagonia's "Worn Wear" campaign stands out for its deep commitment to sustainability, engaging customers in clothing reuse and recycling while investing in environmental and social initiatives. In contrast, Volkswagen's "Clean Diesel" campaign was marred by the unethical promotion of diesel engines that failed to meet environmental standards, resulting in public disappointment and environmental damage.

To conclude, it can be argued that the need for consumer education is evident, as many may unknowingly support unethical practices. Companies must also prioritize transparency and ethical conduct to foster a more responsible business environment. Ultimately, both companies and consumers must share the responsibility for promoting ethical and sustainable practices.

Bibliography

1. Amazon. (2022). Amazon announces "The Climate Pledge" – Calls on Other Companies to Join – Signatories agree to meet the Paris Agreement 10 years early. Online] . Available at: https://press.aboutamazon.com/news-   releases/news-release-details/amazon-announces-climate-pledge-calls-other-companies-join

2. Apple Inc. (2022). Apple announces commitment to become carbon neutral for its supply chain and product by 2030.[Online] Available at: https://www.apple.com/newsroom/2020/07/apple-commits-to-be-100-percent- carbon-neutral-for-its-supply-chain-and-products-by-2030/

3. Banerjee, S. B. & Datta, S. (2018). "Corporate social responsibility in the global apparel industry: An exploration of Indian manufacturers' perceptions". *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 185, 740-749.

4. Bansal, P. & Roth, K. (2000). "Why companies go green: A model of ecological responsiveness". *Academy of Management Journal*, 43(4), 717-736.

5. Carroll, A. B. (1979). "A Three-Dimensional Conceptual Model of Corporate Performance". *The Academy of Management Review*, 4(4), 497-505.

6. Carroll, A. B. (1999). "Corporate social responsibility: Evolution of a definitional construct". *Business & Society*, 38(3), 268-295.

7. Carroll, A. B. (2015). "Corporate Social Responsibility". *Organizational Dynamics*, 44(2), 87-96.

8. Carroll, A. B., & Shabana, K. M. (2010). "The business case for corporate social responsibility: A review of concepts, research and practice". *International Journal of Management Review*, 12(1), 85-105.

9. Carroll, Archie B. "The Pyramid of Corporate Social Responsibility: Toward the Moral Management of Organizational Stakeholders." Business Horizons 34, nr. 4 (1991): 39-48.

10. Chouinard, Y., & Stanley, V. (2016). *The Responsible Company: What We've Learned from Patagonia's First 40 Years*. Patagonia Books.

11. Dahlsrud, A. (2008). "How Corporate Social Responsibility is Defined: An Analysis of 37 Definitions". *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management*, 15(1), 1-13.

12. Delmas, M. & Toffel, M. W. (2008). "Organizational responses to environmental demands: Opening the black box". *Strategic Management Journal*, 29(10), 1027- 1055.

13. Elkington, J. (1997). *Cannibals with forks: The triple bottom line of 21st century business*. New Society Publishers.

Political Advertising on Social Media

Adelina Anamaria Petrilă

Abstract: *"Tomorrow is full of unknowns" is what most people would say today. What is more, tomorrow is not guaranteed either. However, there are tasks that fall to us. Such a task would be getting as informed as possible about the leader of one's country and making others aware of how important this is. The leader of a country is a very important figure and plays an essential role in the organization of a country. The choice of the leader is in the hands of the citizens in countries such as Romania, which have a republican system of government. The ongoing evolution of technology and all the devices that help to use it, together with the introduction of new ones, have brought about new practices for their most careful functioning and operation. People with diverse backgrounds have had to adapt to current trends. Social networks such as Facebook, Instagram and TikTok are the best examples. From the advent of each individual social network to the present day, they have encountered and had to introduce and accept a long series of updates.*

Keywords: *politics, leader, social media platforms, technology*

1. Introduction

The world we live in is constantly changing. Designs do not stay the same, people evolve too, and so does technology. All these changes have caused quite a stir and brought along as many new things as possible, which have either supplanted existing practices or replaced them (Guyot, 1992).

In advertising, each change has had an impact. Advertising has the ability to mirror current trends so as to keep up with consumer needs and wants. This ability is essential to the development of the field, so that it can merge with other individual fields (Guyot, 1992).

Political advertising on social media plays a significant role for both sides. It can help the consumer who receives information, whether they seek it voluntarily or not, and it can better inform them about issues in the field, whereas for those working in the field, just accessing the pages and having as many people follow them as possible is a gain - the satisfaction that their work is appreciated (Guyot, 1992).

Although Romania was not a country to embrace advertising in all its various forms from the very beginning, advertising in Romania has managed to stand out and highlight all the benefits it brings along. It has equally managed to be acknowledged as very effective not only in attracting as many consumers as possible, but also in representing the image of the product, service or whatever else is being promoted.

The purpose of advertising is to make a product, brand, institution, person, service, activity or important cause as well-known as possible (Marhuenda, 2002).

2. Research methods

Two research methods have been used to investigate election advertising: content analysis and comparative analysis. The former involves a close examination of different aspects related to the communication of political information through social media. On the other hand, comparative analysis involves identifying as many

similarities and differences as possible between two or more election campaigns.

These research methods are very useful; if applied accurately, they greatly facilitate reaching the research objectives. Putting these methods into practice means paying special attention to important aspects such as the language used to address the public, the colours, symbols and slogans used, among others.

Hypothesis 1: Advertising varies greatly, depending on how it is carried out, as it involves a great deal of subjectivity, among other factors. In addition to creativity, advertising evolves with the people and with the passage of time. Advertising may also vary according to the size of the project; hence, some campaigns need to be bigger than others.

Hypothesis 2: Social media started to be used for this purpose, and consequently, political advertising has also moved in this direction. The popularity of political ads has increased with the help of political party members or political alliances. These ads ended up being viewed by more people than they would have been viewed, had they not appeared on social media.

3. Results

To analyse political advertising for the Romanian elections on 9 June 2024, two mayoral candidates from different political parties in Timișoara were selected, alongside two competing political alliances for the European Parliament elections held on the same day. A comprehensive analysis of their advertising on the Instagram social network was conducted, followed by a comparative analysis to contrast the campaigns.

Additionally, a comparison was made between an advertisement for a candidate in the local elections and one for a candidate in the European Parliament elections, focusing on their structure, similarities, and differences. The aim was to identify the key elements of successful election advertising and understand the efforts required to make campaign advertisements as engaging and appealing as possible to the

public. Both research methods provided support for the two hypotheses established at the outset of the study.

In line with the first hypothesis, advertising appears to vary significantly depending on its execution, influenced by a range of subjective factors. Alongside creativity, advertising evolves with society and over time. Additionally, the scale of the project plays a role, with some campaigns requiring a larger scope than others.

The second hypothesis aimed to demonstrate that social media has increasingly been utilised for political advertising. Political campaigns have shifted towards this medium, with the popularity of political ads growing due to the involvement of political party members or alliances. As a result, these ads reached a larger audience than they would have without the presence on social media platforms.

gheorghe_falca

111 aprecieri

gheorghe_falca Dragi prieteni,

Cu emoție și determinare, vă anunț că mă voi prezenta din nou în fața voastră pentru a candida pentru un nou mandat în Parlamentul European. A fost o onoare să vă reprezint și să lupt pentru interesele României și ale românilor în Uniunea Europeană.

În noul mandat, îmi propun să continui munca în domeniul transporturilor și infrastructurii, să veghez la gestionarea responsabilă a bugetelor europene, să promovez extinderea Spațiului Schengen și să lupt pentru o mai mare vizibilitate și recunoaștere a României și a românilor în cadrul Uniunii Europene.

Contez pe susținerea voastră și pe încrederea pe care mi-ați acordat-o în trecut. Împreună, putem construi un viitor mai bun pentru România și pentru întreaga Europă.

gabrielafirea ✓

492 aprecieri

gabrielafirea 🇪🇺 Ocup locul trei pe lista alianței PSD-PNL la alegerile europarlamentare din 9 Iunie. Vă mulțumesc că îmi sunteți alături!

dan.barna.usr

DREAPTA UNITĂ

VA FI

**PE BULETINUL
DE VOT
PE 9 IUNIE!**

DREAPTA UNITĂ

USR.

PMP | FORTA DREPTEI

224 aprecieri
dan.barna.usr Alianța Dreapta Unită va fi pe buletinele de vot din 9 Iunie.

✅ Înalta Curte de Casație și Justiție a anulat decizia nedemocratică a BEC, care, la cererea PSD și cu voturile PNL, a încercat să ne împiedice să participăm la alegeri în alianță.

4. Conclusions

This study combines two domains that tend to have opposing levels of interest among students: politics, a subject that young people often appear less engaged with, and social media, a medium they frequently access in their free time. Given the background in advertising studied during the master's degree in Communication and Public Relations, there was a strong interest in exploring political advertising on social media.

Bibliography:

1. Guyot, J. (1992). *Publicitate și reclamă*. Paris: Editura Hartman.
2. Marhuenda, J. (2001). *Publicitatea și mass-media în Bertrand*. Iași: Polirom.

Webography:

1. Falcă, G. https://www.instagram.com/gheorghe_falca/ last accessed on 03.06.2024 at 12:29.
2. Firea, G. https://www.instagram.com/gabrielafirea/ last accessed on 03.06.2024 at 18:34.
3. Fritz, D. https://www.instagram.com/dominicprimar/ last accessed on 02.06.2024 at 16:18.
4. Robu, N. https://www.instagram.com/nicolae.robu/ last accessed on 01.06.2024 at 13:22.

The Role of Humour in TikTok Communication

Denis Florinel Prună

Abstract: *Every day, significant hours are spent consuming content across social networks, with Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok being among the most frequently used platforms in Romania. A brief look at TikTok reveals a vast array of content types. "Variety" here encompasses aspects such as content quality, subject matter, presentation style, filming and content creation techniques, expression, strategic approach, and the influence of trending topics at the time of publication. This research was, therefore, initiated to investigate the role of humour in communication, particularly in relation to its potential to enhance a video's chances of going viral, foster community building, and improve organisational reputation.*

1. Introduction

Diana Cismaru, referencing various scholars, explores both the distinctions and commonalities among the terms *reputation*, *image*, and *organisational identity* (Cismaru, 2015). According to Fombrun (1996),

identity plays a foundational role in shaping a company's operations across all levels, from employee relations to responses in crises, ultimately shaping its reputation. Balmer and Gray (1999) share a similar perspective, emphasising that organisational communication is a process through which stakeholders collectively shape the organisation's image, identity, and reputation (Cismaru, 2015).

In contrast, Barnett et al. (2006) highlight the distinctions among these terms, suggesting that organizational identity encompasses the impressions formed by both internal and external audiences, while "reputational capital" is a qualitative, intangible economic asset attributed to reputation. Whetten and Mackey (2002) further discuss reputation as a social component of organisational identity. They propose that image and reputation are integral to the two-way communication process between the organisation and its key publics. Here, *image* refers to the unique and enduring qualities the organisation wishes its publics to perceive (Cismaru, 2015).

Social networks encompass various media that facilitate online communication for social purposes, such as blogs, wikis, and photo-video sharing platforms. Platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram serve as key social networks, enabling users to create personal profiles and engage in community interactions with friends or like-minded individuals (Scott, 2011).
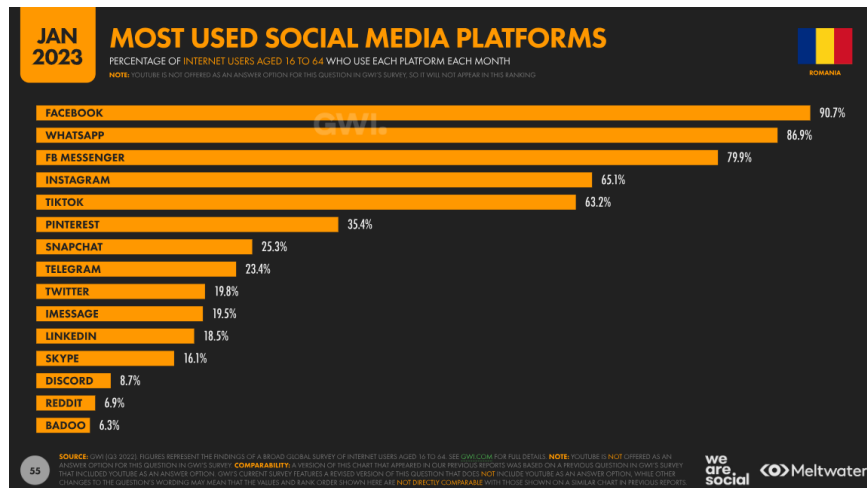
Fig. 1. TikTok in the ranking of most used social networks

The data presented in Figure 1 shows that users aged 16-64 in Romania have Facebook, WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, Instagram in their top preferences, and TikTok on 5th place.

Humour not only evokes emotions that we experience but also encourages us to share them with others. Its social dimension is highly influential, fostering interactions and supporting the development of interpersonal relationships. Berger (1993) highlights this role of humour as a bridge for interpersonal connections and as a complex form of communication, enabling the conveyance of information and expression of emotions in a way that others find enjoyable (Berger, 1993).

This analysis adopts the humor typology model proposed by Cătănescu and Tom (2001) for communication in broadcast and print media, which categorizes humor into types such as comparison, personification, exaggeration, puns, sarcasm, goofiness, and surprise (Taecharungroj & Nueangjamnong, 2015).

2. Research methods

This research employed both questionnaires and interviews to capture perspectives from both users and content creators. The questionnaire sample consisted of 45 young adults from Timisoara, aged 19 to 25.

Participants watched six videos and were then invited to describe how they would interact with each piece of content and explain their motivation for these interactions.

A questionnaire survey is a method of collecting data by posing standardised questions on a particular topic to a representative sample, allowing for consistency and comparability in responses (Cauc, Manu, Pârlea, & Goran, 2004).

For the interviews, five TikTok content creators from various for-profit and nonprofit organizations in Timisoara were selected. These interviews sought to gather their insights on using TikTok as a platform and their views on incorporating humour into communication on this social network.

The individual interview is a research method commonly used in program evaluation—in this case, to assess the use of humour on the TikTok platform. This approach involves a small number of participants who are asked a series of pre-determined questions during a meeting between the interviewer and interviewee (Gârboan & Șandor, 2006).

3. Results

The following section presents the research findings, starting with the questionnaire responses.

Regarding daily time spent on TikTok, a substantial portion of respondents—21 participants—indicated usage between one and two hours per day. This was followed by 15 participants who reported spending less than an hour daily, and 6 participants who noted spending between two and three hours. Only one respondent reported usage exceeding four hours per day.

This analysis reveals that videos focused on storytelling and educational content are generally less likely to be viewed in full compared to other types of videos. This may be attributed to their longer duration and the content's tendency to engage viewers less immediately, making it less compelling to watch in its entirety. Videos featuring pets top the viewership rankings, appealing strongly to audiences interested

in this type of content. Following closely are humourous, sarcastic, and exaggerated humour videos, which are simpler in production style. Food reviews and music-humour videos also rank highly.

A correlation was observed between the number of complete views and the levels of engagement metrics, such as likes, saves, and shares. An exception to this pattern is the music-humour video, which received only 18 likes from 36 complete views, compared to the educational video, which received 25 likes from 27 complete views. A similar trend is noted with pet videos, as well as humourous and sarcastic content, even for videos with fewer complete views, such as one featuring various humourous stories (which, with 11 complete views, received 7 likes).

User feedback provided valuable insights into motivations, perceptions, and behaviors regarding existing content on the analysed platform. To deepen the understanding of these findings, an additional method—interviews with content creators—was employed. The following section presents insights and perspectives from five TikTok creators, who graciously offered a "behind-the-scenes" look at their process. For clarity, respondents are identified by initials, and anonymity has been preserved to ensure the authenticity of responses and the quality of this research.

- **Why do you use TikTok?**

PJ: I believe that through TikTok I have the opportunity to reach people with similar interests to those that the brand I create content for supports, in a way that is closer to what the audience consumes.

BS: Promoting the organisation, observing new trends and marketing strategies/capturing audience attention, but also for entertainment.

GA: The main reason I use TikTok is to create a community where it is easy to communicate. Messages reach the audience more effectively and go viral more easily.

CG: I use TikTok to promote the association's activities and projects, but also to create educational or entertaining content for followers.

AC: It's the easiest way to go viral. If you have a good recipe for a particular TikTok, it's not very hard to have a video that becomes very popular. At work, we usually do reminisce videos or behind-the-scenes footage, sometimes funny, but if I have a brilliant idea that I can put into a video on my page, 100% I will.

All interview participants view TikTok as an effective channel for reaching their target audience. They describe it as a platform that enables them to build a community of followers and maintain engagement through various strategies, including the use of humour. A key approach, they note, is to be present where the audience is and to deliver information in a format that resonates with them. One content creator highlighted TikTok's potential for virality, mentioning that a successful "recipe" can lead to widespread reach, though they did not disclose specific details of this approach. From the interview responses, it appears there is no single formula for success on TikTok.

- **What is the process you go through when making a TikTok video?**

PJ: It differs a lot depending on the type of content and the message you want to convey. Sometimes, the easiest to do is trend-based content, which is also the most effective in terms of audience effort/feedback ratio. The easiest are obviously the CapCut templates, which seem to me to be a sort of offspring of the memes of a few years ago, where people make them relatable to the niche audience they're targeting. I'm not a fan of this type of content, I find it lazy and akin to fast food content. However, through these, the audience comes to notice that it is relatable. There's also informative TikTok, where we have a pre-written script and a clear idea of the message, but we allow ourselves to change things on

the fly if they don't fit (for example, it sounds weird when it's said but made more sense when it was written). We also have content where we try to put the audience front and center with questions.

BS: I check current trends, identify the needs and usefulness of promoting/approaching a particular topic, choose a suitable sound (if the trend doesn't contain an ideal one), shoot parts of the material several times until I get at least two good versions, edit the pieces of material, add or record sound, include effects if needed, subtitles if needed, and suggestive images to complement if needed. Then I send the result for feedback.

GA: Our process for making a TikTok starts with identifying our target audience and the message we want to convey. Once this is clear, we move on to brainstorming, looking for concepts that will attract and capture attention.

CG: The first step in making content is conducting research to discover what's trending and what's popular on the platform. After identifying the templates and the types of content to be created, we create a promotion plan (identifying the target audience, determining the frequency of posts and the message to be delivered). Finally, the team oversees filming and editing the videos, which are then posted.

AC: I can imagine it. I sit and think about what I envision TikTok to look like, and then I gather the resources I need - be it videos, pictures, sounds and all that stuff. If I don't have them, I make them, depending on the idea. After that I edit the video, of course, and at the end I sit back and think about whether it reached the quality I wanted. Often you simply must make a TikTok, and whether it goes viral is like flipping a coin.

In this respect, experts said that it differs greatly from one type of content to another. There are technically more complicated or simpler ways to make a video. Current trends on the platform, the target audience, the frequency of posts and the way content is delivered are considered. Interviewees also note the flexibility that is needed in the

writing of material, both in terms of content and quality. It is also difficult to ensure the virality and impact of a video, as it depends on many factors such as trends, placement in time, message, quality of editing.

- **What is, in your opinion, the purpose of communication on TikTok?**

PJ: I think the purpose of communication is to raise awareness and bring something useful to the table. "Useful" can also mean pure entertainment and amusement or relevant information conveyed in a less formal way. But it also depends on what you're looking for from your position as a content creator. If you're looking for exposure, okay. If you want brand partnerships, that's ok too. I can tell you based on what we do.

BS: Content promotion. You attract audiences from different places based on their preferences and that's how you reach your target audience. Communication is more flexible, a TikTok goes viral more easily than any other type of video. At the same time, TikTok allows people to use the "featuring" option to add comments to a video, in turn making a video of their own. The goal is to convey information in a way that is engaging and interactive, and that appeals to the audience's curiosity.

GA: I think the main purpose of communicating on this platform is to create a connection with a certain segment of the audience so that they are motivated to continue watching our clips. By strengthening this connection, we aim to increase the visibility and impact of the page.

CG: For a student association, the purpose of communicating on TikTok can be diverse:

   - Promotion of activities and events: TikTok can be used to announce and promote events, workshops, conferences or other activities organized by the association.

- Informing students: TikTok can provide useful information about available resources, rights, obligations, career opportunities, scholarships and other issues important to students.

- Engaging and recruiting members: Engaging content on TikTok can attract new members to the association by showcasing the benefits and opportunities offered by the organisation.

- Creating educational content: The association can produce short videos that explain academic concepts, provide study tips or discuss topics relevant to the field of study.

By using TikTok, a student association can reach a young and dynamic audience, maximising the impact of its messages and facilitating interaction with students.

AC: TikTok makes communication easier and somehow helps you to get the information out as quickly and as much as possible. The key to the platform is that you must grab attention instantly, otherwise your video becomes just a simple swipe up to the next one. Even so, on TikTok it's easier to be human and make even a brand more humanized and with a personality (Duolingo, for example).

Most agree that the purpose of communicating on TikTok is to raise awareness for a particular topic and to create a connection with the user. One interviewee argues that you can communicate on an even very wide range of topics on TikTok. It is also emphasised that information travels faster on TikTok, it is easier to understand and explain to the audience, who no longer invests time in documentation, but receives the information in a short, complete and already processed form.

- **Do you have a strategy for communicating on TikTok?**

PJ: For the most part, yes, but it's important in communicating on TikTok (and, I would say, everywhere) to allow yourself to be flexible and create content spontaneously, without wasting too much time. People are looking for authenticity on TikTok, not something heavily

edited and worked on (or at least not to give that impression, I would say, because you can work a lot on content, but you can make it so that the audience feels like it could have been them). We have some bigger benchmarks set, but we can afford to adapt things.

BS: Simple: observing the needs in society, approaching the issue in both Romanian and English, rendering it in an internationally known and liked trend, using key words or short phrases, expressions or a tone and language common to the current generation, and emphasizing the visual more than the auditory.

GA: Yes, in my organisation there is a person solely responsible for this aspect, and this position is rotating, changing every 4 months. The person in charge must have a strategy to be able to apply for this role.

CG: Among the communication strategies on TikTok, I frequently use creating interactive and engaging content, using hashtags, capitalising on trends and posting interviews or testimonials.

AC: No, I usually post whatever comes to mind. I'm not disputing the fact that on TikTok you could use a clear strategy, but I tend to believe that even without a strategy, you can somehow have a video with a bigger impact than you would expect. It's no different at work either, we don't use a clear strategy for TikTok, but I want to put more emphasis on TikTok in the future as it can bring a lot of image (positive or negative) to a brand very easily.

The strategies employed by content creators vary widely, offering a high degree of flexibility. Some creators focus on spontaneity and authenticity in their posts, while others aim for broader reach by using an international language and including subtitles. Certain organisations rotate their TikTok content creation team every four months to bring fresh perspectives. Approaches differ, with some emphasising a specific content type that performs well for their audience, while others post spontaneous content without a fixed strategy, believing that this can be equally effective.

- **Do you use humour in your communication on TikTok? How does humour help you achieve your communication goals on TikTok?**

PJ: Yes, of course. As I said above, it's a way to increase brand awareness, and the thought from the beginning was: you make relatable content, the audience interacts, they follow, you also create useful content, but in a way that is easy to consume. And things worked. Using pop culture references helps a lot, because that's how you get closer to your audience, showing useful things with inserts related to your content. But for that you need to constantly have an online presence and consume a lot of content to stay on top of trends.

BS: Yes. Humorous phrases keep your audience's attention. They don't allow boredom to intervene, so the audience doesn't immediately scroll to the next TikTok.

GA: Through various methods, including funny videos designed to bring a smile, we try to get as close as possible to students and be accessible to them. Humorous content helps us to capture attention and get our messages across in a more engaging and, I think, more memorable way.

CG: Yes, I use humour in my communication on TikTok. Humour helps by attracting the attention of a wider audience, facilitates emotional connection with the audience, simplifies some complex messages, and encourages content sharing.

AC: Yes, especially. Now, even more serious videos can catch on, but when you combine a more serious topic with humour you make it even easier to explain and make it accessible to a much wider mass of people. However, you can also post a nonsensical video and have it simply be something funny without a more complicated goal of making people laugh, but the platform has shaped itself into being something where you expect to find amusement and entertainment when you click on the icon.

When asked specifically about the role of humour in TikTok communication, all interviewees agreed that it is highly effective and widely used, often forming a significant part of their approach. They cite its benefits for boosting brand awareness, capturing audience attention, and making content more accessible and relatable. Understanding the audience and staying updated on platform trends are also considered essential for effective communication, whether for campaigns, regular updates, or entertainment purposes.

According to the interviewed specialists, TikTok serves as a critical platform for content creation and distribution, with strong potential for reaching target audiences effectively. They unanimously agree that success on TikTok does not adhere to a set formula; rather, it depends on factors like trends, audience demographics, and content quality. Flexibility and adaptability are viewed as essential in content production, with humour playing a central role in drawing attention and enhancing brand visibility. Overall, TikTok is seen as a dynamic platform where creativity and audience insight are key to success, and humor is a valuable tool for building awareness and fostering communities.

4. Conclusions

In the applied section of this paper, the analysis of questionnaire and interview responses from content creation specialists indicates that humour significantly boosts a video's likelihood of attracting views, likes, saves, and shares. With a well-crafted strategy, these interactions can enhance an organisation's reputation and broaden its visibility.

TikTok is highlighted as a powerful platform for content creation and distribution, offering substantial potential for reaching target audiences effectively. Specialists agree that TikTok success does not follow a one-size-fits-all formula; instead, it relies on adaptable factors like trends, audience preferences, and content quality. Flexibility and adaptability are crucial in content production, with humour serving as a valuable tool for capturing attention and building brand awareness. In

essence, TikTok is viewed as a dynamic space where creativity and audience insight are key, and humor is a strategic way to reach diverse audiences and foster community.

Interviews with content creators reinforce TikTok's role as an effective channel for motivating, informing, and engaging users through humour. It stands out as a platform where content can go viral with relative ease. Content creators confirm humour's effectiveness in raising brand awareness, drawing in audiences, and making content more accessible. Although each creator follows a similar process, adapted to their style and order, all emphasise the importance of understanding the target audience, staying aware of trends, and tailoring messages accordingly. On TikTok, humour is no longer optional — it is an essential ingredient for success.

Bibliography:

1. Berger, A. A. (1993). *An Anatomy of Humour*. New York: Routledge.
2. Cismaru, D.-M. (2015). *Managementul reputației în mediul online*. București: Tritonic.
3. Gârboan, R., & Șandor, S. D. (2006). "Metode calitative utilizate în evaluarea de proiecte". *Transylvanian Review of Administrative Sciences*, 16, 56-70.
4. Scott, D. M. (2011). *The new rules of marketing & PR*. Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
5. Șandor, S. D. (2013). *Metode și tehnici de cercetare în științele sociale*. Tritonic.
6. Taecharungroj, V. & Nueangjamnong, P. (2015). "Humour 2.0: Styles and Types of Humour and Virality of Memes on Facebook". *Journal of Creative Communications, 10(3)*, 288-302.

Webography:

1. https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2023-romania, accessed on: 29.05.2024.

Reading from Digital to Analogue. The Influence of Social Media

Andreea Veleanu

Abstract: *In contemporary society, individuals are continually exposed to enticing offers and discounts across various platforms, making it challenging to avoid the pervasive presence of consumer goods and services. The societal emphasis has largely shifted towards a culture centred around consumption, where purchasing is often perceived as a pathway to happiness. Research indicates that shopping activities can trigger an increase in dopamine levels within the brain, momentarily enhancing mood and satisfaction. However, this dopamine surge is typically short-lived, subsiding once the desired item is acquired. Consequently, individuals may experience a recurrent urge to engage in further consumption as a means of replicating this dopamine-driven sense of gratification.*

1. Introduction

Is it possible to influence individuals to purchase books, even if they do not consider themselves readers? In Romania, we are witnessing a decline in reading habits. According to a Eurostat study, 35% of Romanians have never read a book in their lifetime. While these figures are concerning, it is worth noting that 16% of Romanians read at least one book per month. Although this comparison highlights a troubling trend, it is encouraging to recognise that a segment of the population remains engaged with reading.

With the advent of the internet, it is clear that books have lost some of their former appeal. Nevertheless, they continue to be promoted online, albeit in reduced numbers. The rise of social media has further diminished the popularity of books, particularly among younger audiences who now seek entertainment through digital platforms. Even in the pursuit of information, books are frequently overlooked in favour of quick online searches. As economist Tyler Cowen remarked, "when access to information is easy, we tend to prefer the short, sweet and fragmented" (Cowen, 2011). It prompts one to wonder how many people choose a quick Google search over a thorough exploration of books when seeking information.

Social media serves as a venue for individuals to share their interests and hobbies. From makeup to sports, a plethora of posts can be found online. These posts help form communities that can wield significant influence. Additionally, when popular figures endorse specific products, their followers often express interest, leading many to make purchases based on these recommendations. This is the definition of an influencer. Influencers, according to Brittany Hennessy, should be divided into two categories: content creators and lifecasters.

Content creators encompass individuals who produce blogs, vlogs, and Instagram photos, showcasing their creativity. Lifecasters, on the other hand, present curated glimpses of their seemingly perfect lives on social media, often attracting followers due to the positivity reflected in

their feeds (Influencer: Building Your Personal Brand in the Age of Social Media).

Among the numerous topics shared online, posts about books emerge from those who enjoy reading. Furthermore, many influencers receive books from publishers, actively promoting reading in their content. A brief search reveals that the hashtag "books" has garnered 34,000 results on Instagram, 25,000 on Facebook, and 10,000 on TikTok, indicating a substantial presence; book influencers play a significant role in advocating for literature.

Just as certain individuals can persuade their followers to purchase particular products, this influence extends to novels as well. Although the primary audience for these promotions consists of readers, popular posts in this realm often resonate with non-readers as well. The TikTok algorithm frequently introduces users to videos they may not have actively sought out. Additionally, collaborations with various publishers involve compensating influential figures to discuss the books they submit for review.

Humans are inherently susceptible to influence. Therefore, if a product or idea is presented frequently or mentioned repeatedly, there is a reasonable likelihood that it will attract at least one buyer. Within the publishing and bookstore sectors, such advertising is often executed subtly, whether through strategic placement of a book at the centre of a display or its prominent listing on a bookstore's website.

Publishers also explore alternative avenues for promotion by collaborating with individuals who maintain book-related accounts. On platforms like Instagram, the process is straightforward: active accounts with a substantial following (typically a minimum of 2,000) may receive complimentary books from certain publishers in exchange for promotion. The terms of collaboration vary among publishers; for instance, some arrangements have no deadlines, allowing the influencer to read and review books at their convenience alongside representative photography.

Many individuals within this community engage in such collaborations, and it is encouraging to witness publishers sending books to genuinely passionate readers. However, there are instances where publishers distribute free books to those who do not necessarily have a strong interest in reading.

In 2023, an unnamed publisher found itself embroiled in controversy with the reading community on Instagram due to its demands on collaborators without providing compensation. The publisher requested numerous tasks from collaborators, effectively expecting them to fulfil the role of social media specialists without payment. While Bookstagram collaborators may not receive financial compensation for promoting literature, some publishers imposed requirements resembling those of social media internships.

This particular publisher pressured collaborators to create content for their Instagram and TikTok accounts without offering any remuneration. Promoting a book is one matter; however, creating posts specifically for the publisher should be the responsibility of someone who is compensated for that role.

One individual abandoned her video editing project that involved a script provided by the publisher due to the severe negative feedback she received, which took a toll on her mental health. It raises the question: is anyone compensated for such efforts? Disturbingly, I later observed public figures who had collaborated with this publisher creating videos for their platforms, undoubtedly receiving payment for each of those videos.

It is disheartening that celebrities are financially rewarded for their promotional content, while those who genuinely enjoy reading and wish to contribute meaningful content do not receive the same consideration. It appears that some publishers prioritise selling as many books as possible, opting to collaborate with celebrities who may not have a genuine interest in reading, thereby compromising their credibility.

Additionally, influencers can lose credibility when they endorse nearly any product without conducting adequate research. A notable

instance in Romania is the "King's Cheese" incident, where a Romanian vlogger set out to test whether influencers would promote an unfamiliar product simply for the sake of receiving something for free. The vlogger purchased a plain cheese, customised it, and sent it to several influencers, including Oana Roman and Ana Morodan.

These influencers promoted the counterfeit product to their followers, only to later discover that they had been duped. Upon realising the deception, they threatened legal action against the vlogger. This episode, which can be viewed on YouTube at this link, resulted in a significant loss of credibility for the influencers involved, and rightfully so.

This situation prompts reflection on whether we allow ourselves to be swayed into purchasing specific books. Insights gained from my research method shed light on this issue.

2. Research methods

The initial objective of this research was to assess the respondents' familiarity with the term "influencer" indirectly, followed by identifying a specific number of individuals who have been influenced to purchase books. Additionally, the aim was to ascertain the percentage of individuals influenced by platforms such as Instagram and TikTok concerning book purchases.

The intention is to explore not only whether readers are swayed by social media but also to determine if there is potential for non-readers to be influenced to some extent. Two questionnaires were selected as the primary research methods to capture insights from both demographics.

Furthermore, an analysis of an advertising campaign was conducted to evaluate the success of book marketing efforts. This research seeks to uncover whether readers can be persuaded to buy specific books and to investigate the influence exerted on non-readers.

The hypothesis posits that over 80% of readers have been influenced to purchase particular titles. The questionnaire method is

expected to provide valuable insights into the extent to which readers are swayed to enhance their libraries through books promoted by publishers via online platforms, paid advertisements, and contributors who receive books at no cost.

Moreover, the questionnaire aims to examine how readily readers are influenced regarding library enrichment. To better understand the potential impact of book covers, images of book titles will be included, as non-readers often select books based on their titles and covers. While readers may also use these criteria, it is anticipated that non-readers are more inclined to do so.

3. Results

The first questionnaire targeted Romanian readers, aiming to assess how easily they are influenced to purchase new books promoted by publishers, paid advertisements, or Bookstagram contributors. This survey was conducted anonymously among the Romanian population, featuring both closed and open-ended questions.

Three main objectives were established: to indirectly gauge respondents' familiarity with the term "influencer"; to determine the number of respondents influenced to buy books; and to identify the percentage of individuals influenced by Instagram and TikTok regarding book purchases. The questionnaire received 43 responses, with 60.5% of respondents aged between 18 and 25 years.

In contrast, the second questionnaire contained fewer questions and garnered a total of 28 responses. This survey comprised 14 questions tailored for readers, while a different approach was adopted for non-readers, based on the hypothesis that they might be more inclined to choose books based on their covers and titles. The factual questions mirrored those of the first questionnaire, ensuring anonymity and comprising both closed and open-ended formats to encourage respondents to express their thoughts freely.

The research objectives included assessing the extent to which respondents were indirectly influenced by TikTok. This highlighted the

algorithm's ability to present videos that might not typically align with users' interests. Another objective was to determine the number of respondents who had been influenced to buy books. Although not all respondents ultimately purchased the books, 44% reported feeling curious about a title after seeing it promoted by an influencer. As anticipated, a segment of respondents, 20%, indicated a lack of interest in purchasing the book.

The final objective focused on identifying a significant percentage of individuals who select books based on their covers. Many respondents confirmed that they chose books presented in images based on both cover design and title. This finding aligns with the understanding that readers, as well as non-readers, often select books by visual appeal rather than relying on reviews or recommendations, suggesting that there remains potential for young people to be influenced to buy and read novels.

The initial survey revealed that readers actively influence one another, as 97.7% reported following book-related accounts. Furthermore, 90.7% stated that they had purchased a book after encountering it on such accounts. This indicates that accounts dedicated to book promotion inspire more trust compared to influencers who receive free books in exchange for promotional content.

Regarding non-readers, it is suggested that they may also be indirectly influenced by TikTok, with the algorithm sometimes reaching individuals who do not read regularly. This research confirmed the initial hypothesis that consumers are indeed influenced to purchase books, while also yielding unexpected findings. Notably, 55.6% of respondents expressed trust in influencers who do not typically promote books, even if those influencers received the books as part of a publishing collaboration.

4. Conclusions

Books remain an inexhaustible source of knowledge. Whether individuals identify as readers or not, the value of novels is universally

acknowledged, and every book has the potential to find its audience. Influence from public figures or engaging book accounts may inspire this connection to reading.

The primary objective of this research was to establish that influencers and social media wield a more significant impact on book purchasing decisions than previously assumed. It is essential to approach purchases cautiously, as paid advertisements featuring influencers may not always offer reliable recommendations. Prioritising insights from dedicated readers over endorsements from popular figures is advisable.

To mitigate the risk of disappointment from impulsive book purchases, seeking diverse reviews and opinions from regular readers, rather than relying on influencers who may not have engaged deeply with the texts they promote, is recommended.

Bibliography:

1. Bouleanu, E. ***https://adevarul.ro/stiri-locale/alexandria/istoria-fascinanta-a-cartii-de-la-tablitele-din-1623362.html (accesat martie 2024).
2. Carr, N. (2012). *Superficialii. Efectele internetului asupra creierului uman.* Publica.
3. Cowen, T. (2011). *The Great Stagnation*. New York: Dutton.
4. Dragomir, C. ***https://www.doc.ro/lifestyle/10-beneficii-ale-cititului (accesat martie 2024).
5. Gomez, J. (2007). *Print is dead. Long live the digital book.* Palgrave Macmillan.
6. Hennessy, B. (2018). *Influencer: Building Your Personal Brand in the Age of Social Media.* Citadel.
7. Jacobs, A. (2011). *The Pleasures of Reading in an Age of Distraction*. Oxford University Press.

8. Magradean, V. ***https://www.mediafax.ro/social/studiu-romanii-au-cumparat-mai-putine-carti-in-pandemie-vanzarea-de-carte-in-librarii-a-scazut-cu-85-19468077 (accesat martie 2024).

9. Manea, I. ***https://historia.ro/sectiune/portret/epopeea-lui-ghilgames-si-dorul-nemuririi-584287.html#google_vignette (accesat martie 2024).

10. Murray, S. (2018). *The digital literary sphere*. Johns Hopkins University Press.

11. Tiron, M. ***https://www.mediafax.ro/economic/piata-de-carte-in-2022-costuri-in-crestere-preturi-mai-mari-cititori-putini-21438787 (accesat în martie 2024).

Webography:

1. ***https://www.digi24.ro/stiri/actualitate/un-numar-neasteptat-de-mare-de-romani-recunosc-ca-n-au-citit-in-viata-lor-o-carte-2304683, (accesare martie 2024).

2. https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/influencer#google_vignette (accesat iunie 2024).

3. https://suttonhighnews.net/9018/school/why-dont-people-read-anymore/ (accesat mai 2024).

4. ***https://www.libertatea.ro/lifestyle/cum-a-aratat-piata-de-carte-in-2022-profit-mai-mic-ca-in-pandemie-dar-au-existat-si-doua-baloane-de-oxigen-4577292 (accesat martie 2024).

5. ***https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4789623/ (accesat iunie 2024).

Customers' Perception of Electronic Services in McDonald's Restaurants

Maria Magdalena Grigorof

Abstract: *The article focuses on users' perception of the change in customer service in the McDonald's restaurants, where human employees have been replaced by electronic displays for placing orders. 123 opinions have been collected in a McDonald's restaurant in Timișoara, Romania, and the findings point to a dominantly positive perception. The replacement of human employees by electronic services is a new and powerful trend in services worldwide, McDonald's being a forerunner in introducing and promoting innovative marketing solutions. However, some proposals have been formulated to improve the collection of customer perceptions of this means of service provision.*

Keywords: *electronic services, customer satisfaction, digital use, kiosk*

1. Introduction

The present article focuses on customers' perception of the use of electronic equipment in McDonald's restaurants. McDonald's Corporation, which is the largest fast-food restaurant chain in Romania, entered the Romanian market in 1995, when the first restaurant was opened on the ground floor of the Unirea Shopping Centre in the capital (Stan, 2014).

Currently, McDonald's is the largest fast-food restaurant chain in Romania. By 2018, the company had invested over 50 million dollars in the opening of Romanian units, with constant investments in technology and modernization (Chirita, 2018). Worldwide, McDonald's has a global turnover of around 20 billion dollars and a net profit margin of over 10% (McDonald's, 2023).

Fig. 1. McDonald's logo

The McDonald's marketing department focuses on 6 main directions (Rotundu et al., 2014):

- to provide a unique experience to each customer
- to build a close relationship with the customers to identify their preferences and expectations
- to engage in community involvement
- to promote the company's products and experience

- to increase sales and profitability
- to enhance QSC&V (quality, service, cleanliness and value)

Along these lines, McDonald's is a forerunner in trying out new forms of customer service. In an ever-changing world, digital technology is becoming a vital necessity to thrive in the 21st century. The era of digitisation has made technology present and indispensable in retail. The company's experience in "constant innovation in restaurants", by introducing tools to ease the interaction with customers or by bringing customers' favourite products to the comfort of their homes, through McDelivery, has proved extremely successful over time.

In recent years, a lot of technology has been implemented in restaurants. This paper presents customers' reactions to one of these novelties: electronic kiosks for placing orders (Restaurante, 2022).

2. Research methods

The survey on customer's satisfaction with placing orders at electronic kiosks was conducted in February 2024, on site at the McDonald's Circumvalațiunii restaurant in Timișoara, Romania, with the approval of the restaurant management and the help of the employees.

A questionnaire was used to interview random customers on the premises. A set of concise, relevant questions had been prepared beforehand in the interview protocol, to get the best results in optimal time. The customers were selected randomly for the interview and, after an effective introduction that generated interest, were asked whether they were willing to take part in the survey.

Their kindness and availability, the interest with which they responded and their sincerity were very much appreciated. There were 123 respondents, both men and women from the urban area, aged between 18 and 65+.

3. Results

"Experience of the Future" is a concept that has changed McDonald's restaurants around the world. It offers customers new options, both more comfortable and accessible; in short, a new and unique experience.

Customers can easily and safely order their favourite products at ordering kiosks, pay contactless or cash, opt for table service or personal pick-up at the counter. "Experience of the Future" has already been implemented in 41 restaurants across Romania, and McDonald's continues to invest in the remodelling and digitisation of the remaining restaurants. As a result, customers no longer have to wait in line, and can enjoy more quality time spent with friends or family. Also, Experience of the Future comes with a major benefit in the product serving process (Future, 2019).

Fig. 2. Kiosk Model

In addition, the big investments made by McDonald's have led to the implementation of table service in restaurants, which is also managed electronically, and which has been embraced both by employees and by customers, who can now sit comfortably at the table

waiting for their order instead of crowding in front of the counter (Kiosk, 2019).

What can kiosks do?

Interactive, digital signage kiosks provide a unique experience to customers, through easy access to information and applications, quality and fast services. Some customers said they enjoy the screens that have replaced the physical interaction with the employees.

Over the years, the kiosks have been used by customers as much as possible, due to their animated, intuitive and colourful light panels. The kiosk is a useful and practical device that highlights attractive offers and allows customising the menu. In addition to providing information, placing orders and scanning the barcode or the QR, payments can be made by card or cash at the cash register, based on the ticket with their order number. The kiosks aim to sell. However, restaurants can also use them to post various advertisements, thus promoting McDonald's products. Digitisation creates a unique, fast and quality customer experience, which makes customers return to the restaurant and which fosters a connection with the brand.

What cannot kiosks do?

Kiosks cannot replace employees, at least at this stage. Some customers believe that these kiosks can replace the employees, when, in fact, kiosks increase demand. Kiosks also allow more customers to order more food at the same time. It follows that restaurants like McDonald's need a lot more kitchen staff to prepare the food quickly and well, to fill the orders on time.

Also, the promotion of the product should be real; if the food does not taste good, no customer will be interested in attractive advertisements. Likewise, if the kiosks generate errors and do not allow mobile payment, customers will go elsewhere.

For McDonald's, "Experience of the future" is a major change in strategy. It facilitates order processing; all the products are prepared based on an order. Technology has improved the way in which customers are informed, the way in which they place orders and make payments. A few years ago, paying by card was not so popular. Today, most payments in McDonald's restaurants are made by card.

In restaurants where the full "Experience of the future" service is accessible, customers can order through the kiosks and pick up the order themselves when it is ready, within a reasonable time. The actual order completion time is shorter, because order preparation starts right after the customer has completed the order. Electronic kiosks will not replace cashiers completely in McDonald's restaurants, as there are still people who are not familiar with technology and prefer paying at the cash register, or who want to interact with the staff. Placing orders through digital kiosks is a new experience for those who are not familiar with the digital system implemented in some restaurants.

E-commerce process automation is one of the most significant changes McDonald's has seen in the last decade. The McDonald's e-commerce application provides a variety of interactive tools to customers, including an online restaurant locator that also provides details for each location. This allows customers to find restaurants quickly, especially in a new area, and to plan their events, such as meetings, based on the facilities available at each location. The app also allows customers to scan their loyalty card QR code to find information about the latest campaigns and favourite products, and to order food or various other products, such as T-shirts, caps, hoodies, pants, soccer balls and bags. Orders can be placed on the mobile phone on the restaurant premises, as well as from home, with subsequent pick-up from the restaurant. The QR code is a type of two-dimensional barcode (matrix code) that decodes the information quickly and allows customers to access product information.

Providing online services is a way to grow, keep track of customers and know their preferences. E-commerce helps McDonald's achieve

faster processes, synchronise and standardise their operations worldwide. Among other automation initiatives, McDonald's and MasterCard operate the OneSmart MasterCard PayPass transaction system. In some McDonald's restaurants, customers can tap their MasterCard on a PayPass reader to make a purchase or to pay by phone. This technology also enables quick, secure and efficient completion of small value purchases. Such initiatives help reduce costs and maximise revenue.

Fig. 1.3. Order Kiosk/ Order employee

4. Conclusions

Traditional ordering systems often lead to human error and service failure. For example, language barriers independent of the will of either party or the wrong wording of orders can result in long waiting times during peak hours.

Therefore, kiosks can provide a better alternative solution for customers, instead of waiting in long queues for direct service with the staff.

Kiosk interface have improved efficiency and have provided more time for menu selection, with detailed and clearer information when it comes to menu customization. By using the kiosks, customers get a sense of empowerment, because they have enough time to consider when choosing a menu. On the other hand, if customers had difficulty adopting the technology, their acceptance of the technology would be

slow. In the fast-food service industry, the relationship between user experience, perceived waiting time, waiting environment and customer satisfaction are key performance indicators (KPIs). McDonald's makes good use of all these indicators.

Premier Restaurants Romania is an example of success due to its longevity and development policy. The company blends the main features of fast-service restaurants (such as a wide range of products, dishes that can be eaten on the spot or takeaway dishes, 24/7 service, guaranteed hygiene and protection, friendly and available staff) with modern services, creating new expectations for the customers. They can order their favourite food very easily, customize their order using the kiosks, pay by phone, card or cash, at the cash register, and claim the offers from McDonald's mobile application, contactless.

The mobile application is one of the main development accelerators for the coming years. It currently has over 1.5 million users and constantly surprises customers with new offers to meet the growing demand for online orders. The McDonald's website allows customers to complete a customer satisfaction survey. At first glance, it seems like a facility accessible to any mobile phone owner; customers can answer the 10 survey questions at home, at the office or any other place. The survey can also be taken in the restaurant, at the recommendation of an employee, but the procedure takes time and is not so user friendly. A proposal for the future, based on my research, would be that McDonald's add an additional question to measure customer satisfaction. The question should come up once the customer has completed their order at the kiosk and should be a yes/no question or a smiley rating question. This proposal could be implemented immediately, with basic programming, and it would facilitate the swift collection of measurable data.

Webography:

1. Chirita, B. (2018, 01 04).
   https://chiritabogdan7.wordpress.com/2018/01/04/concurenta/.
   Available at: chiritabogdan7.wordpress.com:
   https://chiritabogdan7.wordpress.com/2018/01/04/concurenta/
2. Future, C. (2019, 04 30).
   https://corporate.mcdonalds.com/corpmcd/our-
   stories/article/future_restaurants.html. Available at: Creating the
   Restaurant Experience of the Future:
   https://corporate.mcdonalds.com/corpmcd/our-
   stories/article/future_restaurants.html
3. Kiosk, T. R.-S. (2019, 11 04).
   https://ergonomic.solutions/about/blog/the-rise-and-rise-of-self-
   service-kiosks. Available at: the-rise-and-rise-of-self-service-
   kiosks: https://ergonomic.solutions/about/blog/the-rise-and-rise-
   of-self-service-kiosks
4. Mc'Donald's, E. (2023, 01 05).
   https://ro.scribd.com/presentation/701377632/Evolutie-McDonald-
   s. Available at: Scrib.com:
   https://ro.scribd.com/presentation/701377632/Evolutie-McDonald-
   s
5. Restaurante, K.-u. p. (2022, 11 18).
   https://www.taptasty.com/ro/blog/kiosk-urile-pentru-restaurante/.
   Available at: Kiosk-urile pentru restaurante:
   https://www.taptasty.com/ro/blog/kiosk-urile-pentru-restaurante/
6. Rotundu, A., Săceanu, L., Săvulescu, M., Stănescu, R. (2014).
   https://ro.scribd.com/doc/219825347/Strategia-de-Marketing-La-
   MC-Donalds. Available at: Strategia-de-Marketing-La-MC-
   Donalds: https://ro.scribd.com/doc/219825347/Strategia-de-
   Marketing-La-MC-Donalds

7. Stan, Ş. (2014, 12 16). *Când a fost deschis și cum arăta primul restaurant McDonald's din România, care a atras peste 15.000 de clienți în numai câteva ore*. Available at: zf.ro: https://www.zf.ro/companii/cand-a-fost-deschis-si-cum-arata-primul-restaurant-mcdonald-s-din-romania-care-a-atras-peste-15-000-de-clienti-in-numai-cateva-ore-13723280.

The Role of Social Media in Promoting Timișoara 2023 - European Capital of Culture

Alexandra Irina Bacîtea

Abstract: *Social media has profoundly transformed event marketing and event experiences, becoming essential tools for communication and mobilisation. From promoting concerts and organising protests to planning parties, these platforms are crucial to the success of an event. Social media marketing, while seemingly spontaneous, requires careful planning and phasing of campaigns to ensure effectiveness. This study details the three phases of promoting events on social media and provides strategies for each step. Timișoara, designated European Capital of Culture in 2023, provides an excellent opportunity to examine the impact of social media on the promotion of major cultural events. In a world where information circulates rapidly, these platforms are crucial for disseminating cultural messages and engaging audiences. This paper examines the role of social media in promoting Timișoara 2023, highlighting how it amplifies cultural messages and encourages participation in events. Social networks, which include sites such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and apps such as TikTok and Instagram, are central to modern*

communication, allowing information to be shared globally and providing new ways for businesses and consumers to interact.

1. Introduction

Recent technological advances have rapidly transformed the world, with computing and media having a significant impact. However, social networks have had the greatest effect on accelerating change, altering the social structure and the way we communicate.

Social networks have introduced a new style of relating, especially among young people, through virtual communication without the need for physical presence. These platforms have become spaces for the free expression of opinions and feelings, strongly influencing the decisions and behaviours of others, turning some users into influencers.

In the context of cultural and urban development, major events such as Timișoara 2023 - European Capital of Culture, are crucial for the promotion of cultural identity. Timișoara used this opportunity to promote cultural diversity, inclusiveness, local development and European cultural interaction. The cultural programme attracted tourists, generated local consumption and promoted cultural activities, contributing to the economic and social development of the city.

The Spotlight Heritage by UPT project, in partnership with Timișoara 2023, highlighted the cultural and historical heritage of the city through various events and activities. This project strengthened the links between academia, the local community and the cultural sector, promoting the active participation of the inhabitants in the preservation and valorisation of cultural heritage. Timișoara has thus established itself as a cultural and historical centre of excellence in Europe, inspiring and educating current and future generations.

2. Research methods

To precisely determine the influence of social media on Timișoara 2023, a case study was conducted, analysing the social media platforms utilized and the major events featured. Additionally, the study examined the online promotional campaigns and assessed the impact of digital promotion in attracting participants.

Another research method was a questionnaire, created with Google forms. The questionnaire aimed to collect data on the use and effectiveness of social media in promoting Timișoara 2023 - European Capital of Culture. Timișoara residents as well as people from other cities or abroad, who were exposed to the promotion of events through social networks, could participate in this survey.

3. Results

Social networks are now indispensable for promoting cultural events and beyond in the digital era. In this context, Timișoara 2023 - European Capital of Culture - was a unique opportunity to analyse how these platforms can influence the success of such a large-scale event. In order to understand exactly the impact of social networks on the promotion of Timișoara, we conducted a detailed case study and applied a questionnaire, collecting relevant data on the use and effectiveness of these platforms.

The first step in this analysis was to carry out a case study, which involved a detailed examination of the social networks used and the major events presented online. We analysed promotional campaigns run on digital platforms and assessed their impact in attracting participants. We also created a questionnaire using Google Forms, aimed at both Timișoara residents and people from other cities or abroad who were exposed to the promotion of events through social networks.

The case study analysis revealed significant trends in the use of social media to promote Timișoara 2023. The most used platforms were Facebook and Instagram, due to their popularity and ability to reach a

wide and diverse audience. Twitter was used for quick updates and engagement with journalists and influencers, while YouTube was used to distribute quality video content, including interviews, promotional videos and live streams of events.

Major events, such as the opening and closing ceremonies, received the most intense promotion, generating significant interest and participation. Online promotion campaigns included the use of specific hashtags (#Timișoara2023, #EuropeanCapitalofCulture), which facilitated user tracking and engagement. Competitions and giveaways increased interaction and visibility of the events, and collaborations with local and international influencers brought in a considerable number of participants.

The impact of online promotion was evident, with heavily promoted events having 20-30% higher participation compared to less promoted events. This underlined the importance of well thought-out and executed social media campaigns for the success of cultural events.

The questionnaire included 15 questions aimed at determining the age of the respondents. Most respondents (54.1%) were aged between 20-25 years, indicating the subject's relevance to students and young professionals. Almost a quarter of the respondents were over 25 years old, providing different perspectives on the questionnaire's topic. Those aged between 18-20 years accounted for 17.6% of the respondents, while the smallest percentage (3.5%) was represented by teenagers under 18 years old.

Care este vârsta dvs.?

85 de răspunsuri

- ≤18
- 18-20
- 20-25
- +25

24,7%

54,1%

17,6%
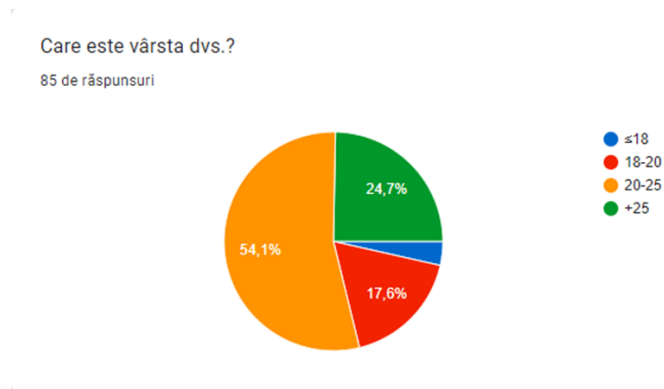
Fig. 1. Respondents' age

The survey asked respondents about their most frequently used social media platforms, revealing insights into their perceptions of platform effectiveness. Instagram emerged as the top choice, with 76.5% of respondents using it prominently for content distribution. TikTok followed closely at 63.5%, known for its appeal in sharing short, engaging videos. Facebook was a frequent choice for 55.3%, valued for personal connections and diverse interest groups. YouTube, selected by 36.5%, offers both educational and marketing opportunities through longer video content. LinkedIn (25.9%) and Twitter (5.9%) received lower percentages, likely due to LinkedIn's professional focus and Twitter's lower popularity in Romania. The survey's multiple-choice format provided a comprehensive view of social media usage preferences among respondents.

Care sunt rețelele de socializare pe care le utilizați cel mai frecvent?

85 de răspunsuri

Facebook — 47 (55,3 %)
Instagram — 65 (76,5 %)
Twitter — 5 (5,9 %)
Tiktok — 54 (63,5 %)
LinkedIn — 22 (25,9 %)
Youtube — 31 (36,5 %)
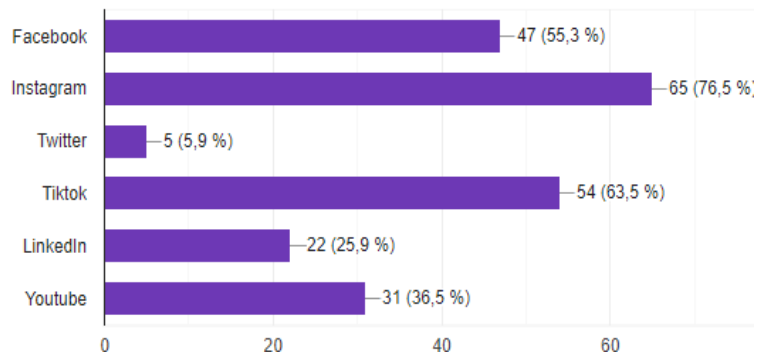
Fig. 2: Social media platforms used

People who answered affirmatively to the previous question were asked, "How did you hear about this event?". 94% of respondents selected "Social media". Social media once again demonstrate their importance in event promotion. 36.9% said they heard about it from friends or family. Although older individuals typically rely on traditional media like newspapers or television, our respondents also selected these options (14.3% press and 17.9% television). Another significant promotional channel for major events is radio. 17.9% of respondents stated they learnt about Timișoara 2023 from the radio.
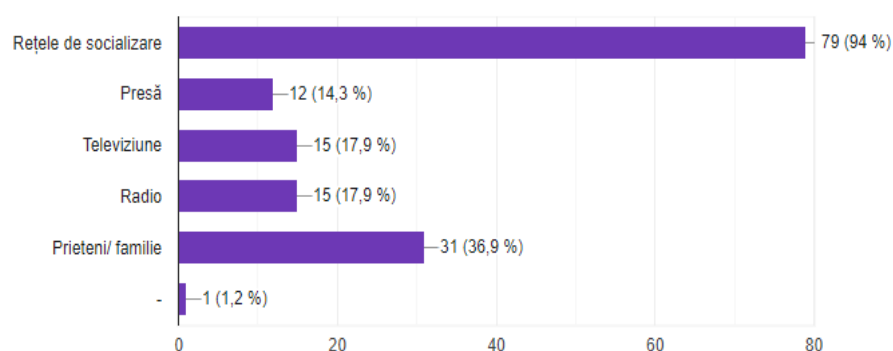
Fig. 3: Where did you hear about Timișoara 2023?

The promotion of Timișoara during its year as the European Capital of Culture focused on various initiatives aimed at highlighting the city as a cultural and tourist hub. We wanted to find out from respondents to what extent they believed social media contributed to the city's promotion. Accordingly, 76.5% stated that social media greatly contributed to the online promotion, making the city visible internationally. 18.8% of respondents considered the contribution level to be moderate, indicating significant but not maximum involvement in the evaluated activities. Responses such as "A little" or "Not at all" each gathered only 2.4% of the percentage. The low percentage suggests that the majority of participants perceived a certain level of impact or contribution.

În ce măsură considerați că rețelele de socializare au contribuit la promovarea Timișoarei 2023?

85 de răspunsuri

- Mult
- Moderat
- Puțin
- Deloc

18,8%

76,5%
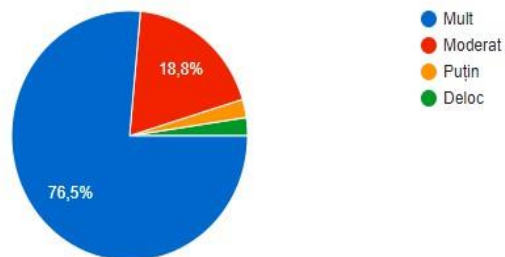
Fig. 4: The promotion of Timișoara in 2023

Respondents were asked how useful the information found on social media was. The question aimed to gauge the importance of the information found online for the respondents. As such, the response "Very useful" recorded the highest percentage, namely 74.7%, followed by 21.7% indicating "Moderately useful". The response with the lowest percentage was "Not useful at all", at 4.8%. In this question, participants could choose only one answer. What was observed, however, was that 2 out of the 85 participants refused to answer.

Dacă da, cât de utilă a fost informația găsită pe rețelele de socializare pentru a vă decide să participați? Copiază

83 de răspunsuri

Utilă	62 (74,7 %)
Moderat utilă	18 (21,7 %)
Deloc utilă	4 (4,8 %)
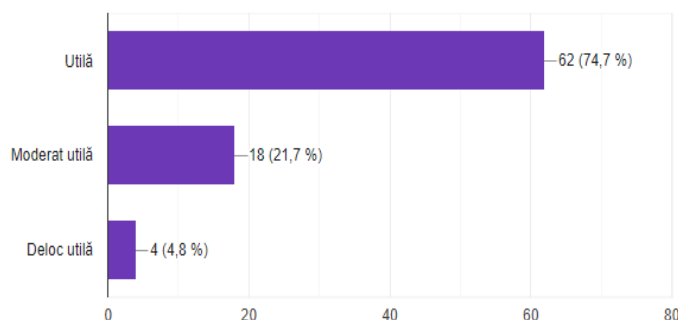
Fig. 5: The importance of information on social media

The study also aimed to observe the type of content users preferred regarding Timișoara 2023 on social media. To gain a more comprehensive understanding of these preferences, participants were allowed to select multiple response options.

Artistic photos and videos emerged as the clear favorites, chosen by 66.7% of respondents. This result underscores a strong user preference for creative visual content, which is valued for its capacity to convey emotions and engage viewers.

Live events broadcasted on various social networks were also quite popular, receiving a percentage of 45.2%. This suggests that people value real-time experiences and direct interaction. Live streams offer authenticity and spontaneity, making them attractive to a wide audience.

Articles and posts about culture, alongside contests and interactive activities, were each selected by 26.2% of respondents. Articles and cultural posts were essential for those seeking in-depth information about events in Timișoara. On the other hand, contests and interactive activities directly involved users, giving them the opportunity to actively engage in the online community.

Respondents' preferences reflect a diversity of interests. The results obtained from this question have provided us with a clear direction regarding the content needs that people prefer.

Ce tip de conținut legat de Timișoara 2023 v-a atras cel mai mult pe rețelele de socializare?

84 de răspunsuri
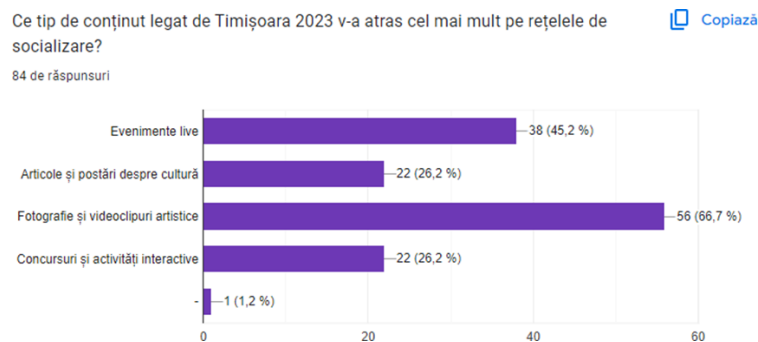
Fig. 6: The type of content promoted online

4. Conclusions

Social media has facilitated bi-directional interaction between organisers and the public, providing a space for continuous feedback and dialogue. By segmenting and targeting its messages, Timișoara 2023 successfully reached its appropriate target audience, thereby maximising the efficiency and effectiveness of its advertising campaigns.

Social networks provided a convenient and efficient platform for promoting cultural events during Timișoara 2023. Organisers successfully reached a large and diverse international audience using platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and others. Engaging posts, live videos, and well-planned activities contributed to increasing the event's visibility and attracting a large number of participants. Social networks enabled direct and continuous interaction with the audience. Users were actively encouraged to participate by commenting, sharing, and using the official hashtag. This interaction was crucial for creating dedicated online communities and promoting public participation in cultural events. Additionally, immediate feedback and audience reaction provided valuable insights for organisers to adjust and improve cultural programs.

By consistently producing captivating and original content, Timișoara also maintained interest and attractiveness throughout its journey towards achieving the status of European Capital of Culture.

Involvement of influencers and content creators amplified the impact of promotional campaigns. These collaborations extended the reach of cultural events to a wider and more diverse audience, benefiting from the credibility and popularity of these online personalities. Sponsored videos, story posts, and strategic partnerships proved effective tools for increasing presence and enhancing media coverage.

Continued exploitation and innovation in the digital space will allow Timișoara to maintain its leadership position in the European cultural landscape and continue to inspire and connect communities worldwide through art and culture.

In conclusion, social networks had a significant impact on promoting Timișoara as the European Capital of Culture 2023. These platforms played a crucial role in the success of cultural projects by increasing visibility, stimulating interaction, collaborating with influencers, documenting events, and adapting communication strategies. Social networks have proven to be an indispensable tool in promoting and managing large-scale cultural events, contributing to transforming Timișoara into an important cultural hub in Europe.

Bibliography:

1. Walter, E. (2014). *The Power of Visual Storytelling: How to Use Visuals, Videos, and Social Media to Market Your Brand*. McGraw-Hill Education.
2. Boyd, D. & Ellison, N. (2007). "Social Network Sites: Definition, History, and Scholarship." *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 13.1.
3. Kaplan, A. & Haenlein, M. (2010). "Users of the World, Unite! The Challenges and Opportunities of Social Media." *Business Horizons* 53.1.

Intention and Effect in Advertising. An Analysis of Rituals' Advertising Discourse

Alexandra Maria Gîtman

Abstract: *This article highlights the specific persuasion methods and tools used in Rituals' advertising approach (written and visual), adapted to the specificity of the Facebook communication channel. In addition, the article also illustrates the effects of advertising discourse on human behaviour. Therefore, the research aims to analyse Rituals' advertising discourse in social media. Based on this initiative, two essential aspects will be pursued, namely, the identification of techniques and ways of rendering the written message through the appropriate formulation and exposition of the concepts of selling and persuasion, on the one hand, and the analysis of the specific visual communication elements within the advertising approach, on the other hand. The qualitative analysis of the advertising discourse focuses on the coherence and cohesion between the message and the image (graphic representation), as displayed by the Rituals brand on social networks, particularly on the Facebook platform. At the same time, the brand's objectives and purpose of the advertising approach launched online*

will be defined, as well as discourse functionality and effectiveness. A questionnaire was used to conduct a quantitative analysis, in order to identify and analyse the effect produced by the advertising discourse on the target audience. The answers to the questionnaire point to the target audience's perception of the advertising discourse (whether this perception is in line with the brand's intention). Finally, a conclusion will be provided on the expected brand intention and the actual impact on the audience.

Keywords: *advertising communication, copywriting, visual communication, influence, persuasion*

1. Introduction

The main objective of this study is to identify the specific communication methods and techniques used in the (written and visual) advertising discourse of Rituals Cosmetics, and the effects of their social media advertising on the target audience. The motivation for conducting such research was based on the hypothesis that nowadays social media advertising has become a novel way to persuade. Moreover, persuasion tools are indispensable to sales-oriented communication.

At the same time, the research aimed to pinpoint Rituals' intention (the techniques and tools used in the development of the advertising discourse) and its impact on the target audience.

2. Research methods

The research methods used to illustrate the intention and effects of Rituals' advertising discourse were the qualitative analysis and the quantitative analysis.

Qualitative analysis: the evaluation of four Rituals Facebook posts from last year. The analysis grid comprised elements specific to advertising communication. The evaluation criteria were the following:

- *Textual level:*
  - marks of subjectivity;
  - marks of discursive approach;
  - attitudinal marks;
  - elements of orality;
  - symbols;
  - persuasion tools.

- *Visual level:*
  - shapes and lines;
  - colours, texture;
  - light;
  - contrast and specific composition;
  - symbols;
  - relationship between visual elements;
  - use of metaphors/symbols and visual language;
  - figurative meaning: representation of intrinsic elements.

Quantitative analysis: a questionnaire was designed as a way of interpreting and understanding the social media effects of the advertising approach undertaken by Rituals Cosmetics.

To collect relevant information, the questionnaire was administered to people aged between 18 and 50, interested in care, health, sustainability, aromatherapy, and luxury products. The following types of questions were used: open-ended, simple, helping, multiple-choice and closed-ended (to which an image was associated, depending on the specifics of each question). The questionnaire comprised 17 questions and allowed to determine whether the persuasion methods used in the advertising message were effective and impactful.

3. Results

The qualitative analysis of Rituals' advertising discourse was undertaken to get a broad and explicit view of the wording and intention of the sender with regard to the use of specific argumentation and persuasion techniques. This analysis resulted in the identification of some specific patterns of advertising settings, at a stylistic, linguistic, and visual level.

The analysis of the written message revealed both the contexts of the dissemination acts and the purpose (to implement in the perception of the receiver the values, product specifications and benefits of the products in relation to the competition). On the other hand, the message was shaped according to the weaknesses and needs of the target audience.

Rituals Cosmetics' advertising approach on Facebook is 100% focused on revealing and disseminating the brand's values and beliefs. The images associated with the message consistently capture the essence of the concept of existence, having the role of impacting the receiver and supporting the discourse. Furthermore, the visual representations reflect the company's identity and visual appearance.

The receiver is involved in most of the speeches analysed. The sender is often on equal terms with the receiver. However, various imperative statements (injunctions) shift the balance in favour of the sender, who becomes superior to the receiver (allowing the inoculation of a new behavioural pattern). The relationship between sender and receiver is shaped by identifying the needs and satisfying the desires of the receiver.

The marks of subjectivity are present (establishing the nature of the relationship between the two actors, providing dynamics and certifying the degree of involvement of the sender); the identified discursive devices are specific to argumentative and procedural/instructional texts. Moreover, the elements of orality, which support the persuasive approach and textual coherence, are present through pictograms or suspension points.

At the same time, the speaker calls upon the rhetoric of argument to build the message and configure a logical connection to disseminate complex meanings. Often, the use of the marks of subjectivity, such as flexibility in the use of verb tenses, appreciative language, and the position of the sender, was strong and involvement was evident. The register used was the injunctive one. At the same time, the message was cohesive, concise and clearly formulated, including elements of informal language.

The adaptability of the message was determined through the use of assertive communication, integrated in the reality and specificity of the audience. The tone of the message was adapted to match the values and assertions disseminated.

The AIDA model was used in most communication situations. The call to action gives the message rhythm, coherence and dynamism to the efforts in the area of influencing techniques. Furthermore, the various persuasion techniques used were the appeal to emotions, bandwagon, the appeal to humour, politeness, the appeal to the senses, exemplification of an alternative, exposition of guarantees, coherence and the sympathy technique. At the same time, it is noteworthy that figures of speech, symbols or peculiarities of sensory language convey a systematic identification of the receiver with the message and disseminate the company's participatory actions in the community.

In terms of visual communication, the presenter appeals to the use of iconic rhetoric, such as involving the observer in compositional dynamics and valances. The connotative dimension is mainly used to make the message polysemantic. One technique used was that of visual storytelling to introduce the receiver to new reality configurations, perception being shaped according to the receiver's needs and desires.

On the other hand, the speaker is persuaded by the compositional elements used, such as balance, rhythmicity, contrast and colours, and the symbolism associated with them. Figurative meaning was at the centre of this observation, as it marked new and broad connotations that aimed to persuade: involving the receiver in the visual universe,

composing frames of effect and sharing emotions from the spectrum of universality, the divine and the symbiosis between man and nature.

The quantitative analysis revealed that the target audience interested in the company's products consists of women aged 26-34, mostly students or women working in hospitality or commerce.

Therefore, although Rituals products are known for being luxury products, this seems not to be an impediment in the purchasing process. The analysis also revealed that the company's social media profile was followed frequently.

The images used in the advertising approach contain (and are consistent with) the visual identity elements and brand values. Similarly, the target audience considers that the images have a decisive influence on their perception and behaviour, as they faithfully reproduce the aesthetics and experience of the products.

The common feelings and experiences perceived by the respondents are in line with the brand values and discourse. Most of the respondents stated that love, romance, nature, luxury and respect for oneself and for the loved one were the values conveyed to them through the advertising content.

The images integrated into the measurement tool were carefully chosen to accurately anticipate relevant results. For example, the image depicting products in a lush and elegant setting under a warm light was interpreted positively, reinforcing trust in the brand. The respondents were equally impressed by the illustrated colours, floral arrangement and meticulously prepared setting.

Furthermore, the questionnaire findings show that the target audience believes that the advertising discourse is aimed at propagating Rituals' mission and values rather than the idea of making a profit. Conversely, it seems that both both message and text are important to the respondents and have the potential to change attitudes and behaviours.

Finally, when asked if they had any suggestions or recommendations to improve the written and visual message, the

respondents said no. Some of them mentioned that they were satisfied with the brand's products and enjoyed using them.

The impact of Rituals' advertising discourse is therefore positive. The company uses advertising discourse successfully, as a tool to interact with the target audience and to convey company values, thus strengthening its reputation and convincing the audience to use Rituals products.

Expert sources consulted

Both hardcopy and electronic sources have been consulted to conduct this study, and, in particular, to design the analysis grid used to investigate the advertising discourse. The sources consulted allowed me to identify theoretical aspects specific to advertising communication and to visual communication.

Suciu and Kilyeni (2015) address the composition and transmission of discourse, adapted to the communication situation. They set up a typology of texts and textuality standards that shape advertising discourse (Suciu & Kilyeni, 2015, pp. 28-65). Accordingly, argumentative texts use marks of subjectivity, logical connectors, evaluative vocabulary, cause-effect relationships and expression of opinions, relying on a logical sentence/conclusion system. They also stress the importance of register and varied argumentative approaches (Suciu & Kilyeni, 2015, pp. 35-36).

Instructional/procedural texts are characterized by impersonal injunctions and marks used in advertising to appeal to the receiver's reason and affect (Suciu & Kilyeni, 2015, pp. 37). Furthermore, the authors highlight orality and narrative strategies in advertising to create an eloquent reality in the wording and linguistic stylization of the message (Suciu & Kilyeni, 2015, pp. 54-60).

The structure of a persuasive text, according to Bly (2005), includes three essential elements: the title, the body of the text, and the call to action. The headline is crucial, as it is designed to attract attention, provide useful information and stimulate the reader's interest. There are

various headline formulas, such as direct, indirect, news or in the form of questions. The body of the text should follow copywriting models such as AIDA (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action), ACCA (Awareness, Comprehension, Conviction, Action) or the 'Four Ps' (portray, promise, prove, impel) to ensure effective delivery of the persuasive message. The call to action is the final component, being a firm invitation to the reader to take some action, with the aim of turning interest into actual commitment.

According to Abrighton (2010), there are twelve psychological techniques by which receivers are influenced in their purchase decision, namely: reactance, neglect of probabilities, bandwagon effect, illusion of control, storytelling, appeal to the senses, politeness, pleasure principle, social proof, coherence principle, authority principle and deficit principle. These techniques exploit various aspects of human behaviour and perception to stimulate buying.

Moriarty and Rohe (2005) explain that visual communication uses images and symbols to convey messages, influenced by the cultural context and audience specificity. It comprises elements of rhetoric and integration with text for coherence (Foss, 2005; Crețu, n.d.). In advertising, images depict, transform and comprise messages (Farcaș, 2022). Visual design principles, such as balance and contrast, and colour semiotics are key to emotional impact (Samara, 2007; Resnick, 2003). On social media, visual storytelling and audience interaction are crucial (Walter & Gioglio, 2014; Jewitt & Adami, 2016).

The electronic sources consulted consisted of Rituals' social media pages, namely LinkedIn and Facebook.

4. Conclusions

The analysis of Rituals' advertising discourse was conducted using two approaches: qualitative and quantitative. The persuasive techniques, figures of speech and symbols used highlight the coherence and effects of the advertising materials.

The AIDA model was predominant, and the visual message was evaluated based on criteria such as plastic meaning and figurative meaning, highlighting humans' connection with nature and promoting values such as balance and beauty. The questionnaire results point to the target audience's increased interest in and positive reception of the company's messages, which were found to be persuasive and in line with the company's identity and values.

In conclusion, Rituals' advertising discourse had a strong impact and succeeded in influencing attitudes and behaviours, eliciting a natural reception of the message.

Bibliography:

1. Adami, E., & Jewitt, C. (2016). "Social media and the visual". *Visual Communication*, 15(3), 263-270.
2. Abrighton, T. (2010). *Copywriting: Persuasive Writing Techniques for Advertising*. Random House.
3. Bly, R. W. (2005). *The Copywriter's Handbook: A Step-by-Step Guide to Writing Copy That Sells*. Holt Paperbacks.
4. Crețu, I.-N. (n.d.). "Retorica vizuală în tipologia textului publicitar". *Tipologia textului publicitar*. Available at https://www.scribd.com/doc/119613108/Art16-Retorica-Vizuala-in-Tipologia-Textului-Publicitar, accessed on 14.04.2024.
5. Moriarty, S., & Rohe, D. E. (2005). *Visual Communication: An Introduction to Graphic Design* (6th ed.). Pearson.

6. Resnick, E. (2003). *Graphic Design Basics*. Cengage Learning.
7. Samara, T. (2007). *Design Elements: A Graphic Style Manual*. Rockport Publishers.
8. Suciu, L. & Kilyeni, A. (2015). *Ghid de comunicare scrisă și orală*. Timișoara, Orizonturi Universitare; Cluj-Napoca, Casa cărții de știință.
9. Walter, E. & Gioglio, J. (2014). *The Power of Visual Storytelling: How to Use Visuals, Videos, and Social Media to Market Your Brand*. McGraw-Hill Education.

Webography:

1. Facebook, Rituals Cosmetics, available at: https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=824899306339575&set=pb.100064585398400.-2207520000&type=3&locale=ro_RO, accessed on 15.04.2024
2. Facebook, Rituals Cosmetics, available at: https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=820323206797185&set=pb.100064585398400.-2207520000&type=3&locale=ro_RO, accessed on 15.04.2024
3. Facebook, Rituals Cosmetics, available at: https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=793070492855790&set=pb.100064585398400.-2207520000&type=3&locale=ro_RO, accessed on 15.04.2024
4. Facebook, Rituals Cosmetics, available at: https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=775636447932528&set=pb.100064585398400.-2207520000&type=3&locale=ro_RO, accessed on 15.04.2024
5. Rituals Cosmetics. (n.d.). LinkedIn. Accessed on 20.04.2024. Available at: https://www.linkedin.com/company/rituals/about/.

Comparative Study of the Impact of the Visual Message Used in University Promotion

Cristina Lavinia Măciucă

Abstract: *In the competitive landscape of higher education, effective university promotion is essential for attracting and retaining students. This paper explores the importance of visual messages in university promotion, emphasising the role of photography and other visual media in shaping perceptions and influencing decisions. Visual messages, through photographs, videos, and graphics, provide a compelling and immediate way to communicate the university's culture, environment, and values. They engage prospective students emotionally, helping them envision themselves within the campus community. The study highlights how visual content can enhance marketing strategies, boost social media presence, and enrich promotional materials, ultimately creating a powerful narrative that sets the university apart. By analysing case studies and current practices, this paper demonstrates that well-crafted visual messages are vital for building a strong, attractive, and relatable university brand.*

Keywords: *visual message, higher education, university promotion*

1. Introduction

Photography plays a crucial role in university branding, helping to create an attractive and coherent visual identity. High-quality images can highlight campus, facilities, student life and academic events, attracting new students and sponsors. They also reinforce a sense of community and pride among students and alumni. Well-crafted photography can convey the values and culture of the university, helping to differentiate it in a competitive educational landscape. In addition, authentic and relevant images can increase engagement on social media platforms and other communication channels.

In today's social context, it is easy to say that online marketing has taken off and many businesses and companies have moved the majority of their campaigns to promote their services or goods online. How many times have you come across an advertisement that brings a product to your attention? Think of the latest smartphone you bought the sports team you follow, the clothing stores you frequent. Think about how these offers reached you. Everyone has promoted a product online that you like and that has persuaded you to buy, whether it is ads generated on the Google page or email promoting new products or unmissable offer.

Online marketing has cornered the retail market because it's handy, easy to access, without putting the shopper on the road or causing the inconvenience of standing in endless queues in shops.

Marketing is an essential part of selling a product or service. The use of photography is important, both for a large successful company and for local ones looking to make a name for themselves. A good photo can bring some gains that we could never have thought of, because with it, we can attract the attention of new buyers, highlight certain qualities of the product or service provided, thus we manage to convince the consumer that the product of our company should be bought. Photography plays an important role in advertising and marketing because it can succeed in convincing the consumer to use certain services

or to buy certain products. We live in an age where photography is the best way to sell a product or service.

For many of us, it is obvious that photography attracts attention much more easily than simple text. An impactful or interesting image can pique interest and make a marketing campaign stand out in the crowd of available information. Especially in this age of social media. Every social media application focuses on presenting a photo accompanied by a short text in order to attract consumers' attention more easily.

It is true that photos can convey emotions and also tell a story in a much more effective way than the text itself. The saying that a photo can describe a feeling more efficiently and better than a text is very true. They can create emotional bonds with the target audience and influence their behaviour in a much stronger way.

A study by John Medina, shows that people generally remember 10% of what they read once 72 hours have passed. But if the information is accompanied by a picture, people tend to remember 65% of the information within 3 days. So, it is proven that higher quality images help branding and marketing messages. Furthermore, it is clear that simple text will not have the same impact on the consumer, as they do not spend more than a few seconds on content that does not pique their interest.

Moreover, photos help build and strengthen brand identity. They can help us convey our values and brand promise in a visual and memorable way. So, posting photos that contain similar colours and patterns is necessary because shoppers will think of your brand. In marketing, this phenomenon is called brand association. In this way, we manage to build our brand identity.

Also, using good quality photos helps us to present our products or services in a way that is concrete and pleasing to the consumer's eye, giving potential customers a clearer understanding of what the brand offers. More, let's not forget that authentic and relevant photos can help build customer trust in the brand and what it stands for. They can

illustrate the quality of products or services. The more we use our authentic and distinctive photos, the more our products or services stand out to the buyer, so that the brand is able to differentiate itself from the competition and establish its own distinctive visual identity.

Last but not least, photos can boost audience interaction and engagement on social platforms and other online channels. An interesting image or one that is meant to elicit laughter from internet users can encourage sharing or engagement, thereby extending the reach of your marketing campaign.

One conclusion would be that photos often form the basis of successful campaigns. As mentioned earlier, people nowadays tend not to give so much time to things or information that are not useful to them. So, if in less than a few seconds, your brand's product or service fails to capture attention, you have hardly created an effective promotional campaign. In order to create a successful one, we need to use relevant, high-quality photos, which should also be accompanied by a short text that encompasses all the details and qualities of the product or service offered by the brand.

2. Results

The following pages demonstrate how photography can influence the decisions of prospective candidates when selecting their desired university. This study is based on information provided by the Politehnica University of Timisoara.

Politehnica University Timisoara (UPT) is a technical higher education institution in Timisoara, Romania, founded in 1920. In 2011, it was ranked in Romania's top category of advanced research and education universities, and in 2018 SCImago Institutions Rankings ranked it third out of 25 ranked universities in Romania. It consists of 10 faculties, most of which are technical.

Fig. 1 - Politehnica University website

The use of this photo is to promote the new registration session that will take place from 01.06. to 10.07.2024. The smoke behind the photo suggests that the future is uncertain, someone could even say mysterious. It is not easy to choose your future at 18, 19 years old. Many of us at these ages are fearful, but also hopeful. The two teenagers take us with the thought that we have to go ahead and dispel this mystery. The faces of the two, give the impression that the two are self-confident, even smug about what is to come. Also, the colour of the font (neon green), we can't say is used by chance. This colour suggests the idea of boldness. That we need to have an ounce of courage, to take risks in order to have a better future. Moreover, the message conveyed in turn underlines that we need to take our destiny into our own hands, for a better future.
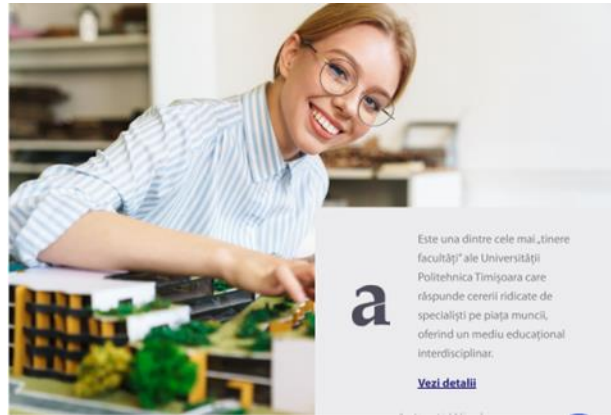
Fig. 2 - Faculty of Architecture - Politehnica University website

For the general presentation of the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism, the PR department has decided to use a photo quite suggestive for the faculty they represent. The story the photo tells is as follows: a young student, confident in her own abilities, creates a model of her next urban design project. Also, her posture and the way she is dressed indirectly suggest that the faculty needs capable, development-oriented, dreamy people, but at the same time basic, disciplined people who want to accumulate as much valuable information as possible in order to build a better future, both for the student and for society. Moreover, it is gratifying that they chose to use a girl to present this faculty. Thus, the idea is conveyed that we have long since overcome prejudices and that a woman can be a successful architectural engineer, that the boundaries and prejudices that a woman cannot become an outstanding engineer in the field of architecture have been shattered.

Fig. 3 - Politehnica University – Faculty of Computer Science

To showcase the educational packages provided by the Faculty of Computer Science, the photography used plays on the idea that a woman can become an excellent IT engineer, that not only men are good at programming, but also the female gender. Also at the heart of a successful career are years of practice and note-taking. We can say that the use of sticky notes in photography is no accident. Her smile suggests that choosing this career leads to a path of success and achievement, but it will not be without its obstacles. Moreover, the text used emphasises that the faculty's professors have the best and new knowledge, so that at the end of the degree program you become a successful programming engineer.
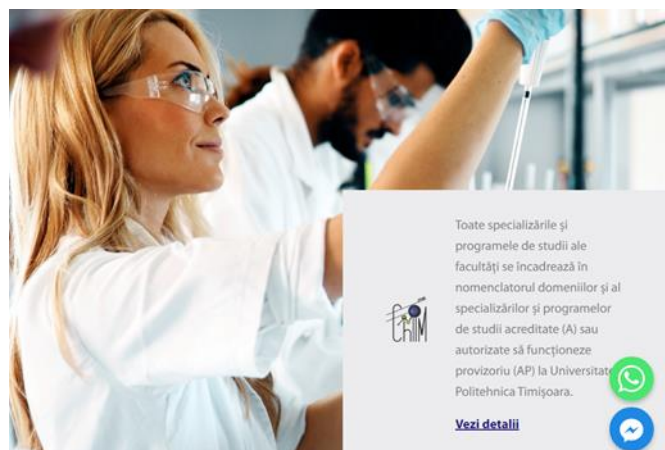
Fig. 4 – Politehnica University - Faculty of Chemical Engineering, Biotechnology and Environmental Protection

The Faculty of Chemical Engineering, Biotechnology and Environmental Protection uses a photograph for the overview, which suggests the importance of teamwork in becoming a successful chemist. The choice of the photo does not appear to be random. The image of a woman with blonde hair may be intended to challenge any stereotypes suggesting that women are less capable of understanding complex chemical concepts. Hair colour is not an indicator of intelligence, and the subject's smile emphasises her confidence in her abilities and knowledge.
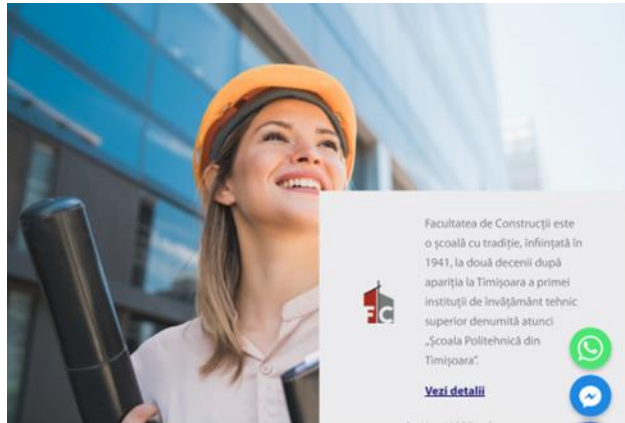
Fig. 5 – Politehnica University - Faculty of Civil Engineering

Like the other faculties that are part of the programs of the Politehnica University of Timisoara, the Faculty of Civil Engineering wants to get rid of the stereotypes imposed by the society of the past. The woman is capable of being an accomplished construction engineer. That thanks to the information made available through the educational packages available. Not only men, but also women are sure to become successful engineers, who can help us build a brighter and better future for mankind, they are the key to buildings, that they will help make buildings great and safe.
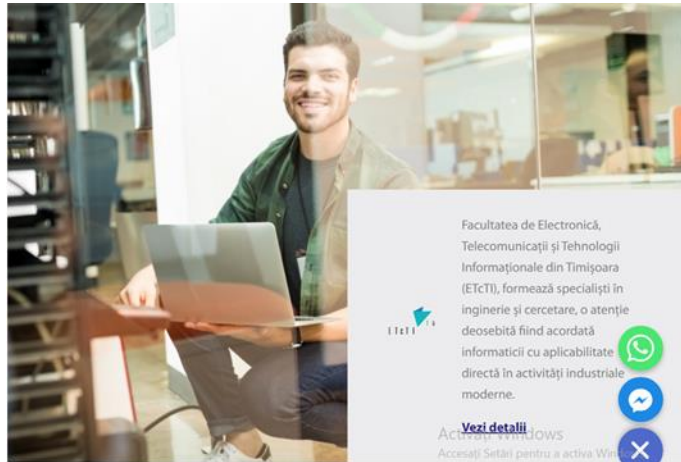
Fig. 6 – Politehnica University - Faculty of Electronics, Telecommunications and Informational Technologies

The photo used to promote the Faculty of Electronics, Telecommunications and Informational Technologies suggests that in the field of electronics and telecommunications, there is a need for people who are reliable, passionate about technology, we can say and curious to discover as much as possible in this field. We are also informed that most of the work is carried out in offices equipped with the necessary tools for the development of telecommunications and information technologies.
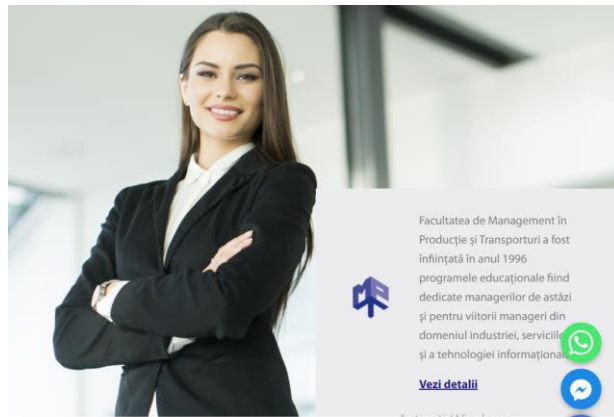
Fig. 7 – Politehnica University –
Faculty of Production and Transport Management

The Faculty of Production and Transport Management uses a photograph that appears somewhat general, not strongly indicating the specific faculty it is meant to represent. The image features a young woman who conveys self-confidence, punctuality (suggested by the visible watch), and professionalism, as she is dressed in office attire. This may imply that, with the knowledge gained during their studies, future candidates can succeed in the field of production and transport management. The woman's elegance could attract potential candidates to apply for the faculty's available majors. Although the faculty is relatively new, it is presented as a provider of highly skilled professionals to the labour market.
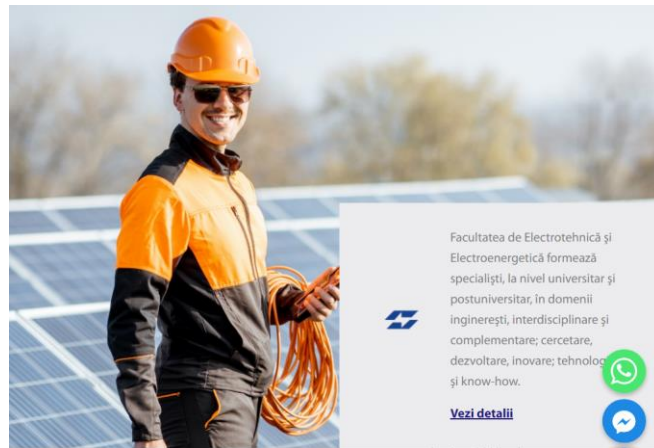
Fig. 8 – Politehnica University - Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Electrical Power Engineering

From the photo used by the Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Electrical Power Engineering we can tell that they are looking for determined, hard-working students who are excited to enter the field. The man in the picture suggests the idea that safety comes first when talking about the electrical engineering profession. The photovoltaic panels in the background also convey the idea of transformation, that we are living in a time when there is a lot of emphasis on reusable and natural energy sources, so that we stop producing disasters that are slowly but surely leading to the destruction of the planet. The text that supports the image guarantees that the faculty trains specialists in research, development and innovation.
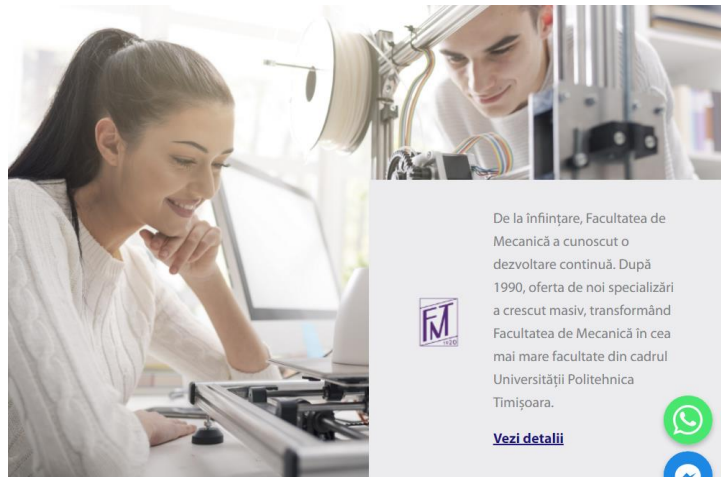
Fig. 9 – Politehnica University –
Faculty of Mechanical Engineering

The photograph used to present the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering suggests that mechanical engineering is no longer a field exclusive to men, highlighting that women are equally capable of understanding these concepts. The image conveys that passion for mechanics transcends gender. The way the two individuals engage with the instruments suggests dedication, passion, and a desire to master as much information as possible. Additionally, the photo implies that the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering is equipped with the necessary resources, and that the learning environment is supportive, with helpful colleagues.

Fig. 10 – Politehnica University –
Faculty of Communication Sciences

The Faculty of Communication Sciences uses a photograph that can be considered representative. The young lady in the image is dressed in office attire, suggesting a professional role that aligns with the field of communication. The photograph successfully conveys the image of a graduate from a communication sciences program, perhaps as a successful translator or interpreter attending a conference and interpreting speeches from foreign personalities.

However, there are aspects that could negatively impact the perception of the Politehnica University. Despite being a student of this university, there are elements that would cause hesitation if considering a different study program based solely on the information provided on the university's website.

One issue noted is that some of the photographs appear outdated. For instance, in Figure 11, the image depicts several students in a lecture or seminar, and it is clear that this is not a recent photo. The computer monitors in the image indicate that it was taken several years ago. This could be seen as a drawback for the faculty website, as it gives the impression of disinterest in keeping content up to date. It is important for websites to be regularly updated, both in terms of graphic content

and the information presented, to reflect current standards and attract prospective students.
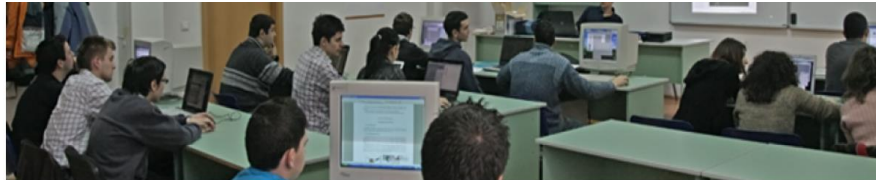
Fig. 11 – Politehnica University

Secondly, when viewing the site as a prospective visitor seeking information about the faculties, it becomes apparent that the photos used to represent the faculties do not feature images taken within the university. These images appear to be stock photos, sourced from platforms offering free or licensed images to avoid copyright issues. A more effective approach would have been to include photos featuring actual faculty students. This would help create a stronger sense of connection, making potential students feel as if they were already part of the university. Furthermore, real photos of students would communicate a greater commitment to the experience at the university, emphasising authenticity and engagement, which could better attract potential candidates.

Another issue with the images is the unfortunate placement of explanatory rectangles over the characters in the photos. This positioning often covers parts of their bodies or faces, detracting from the overall aesthetic and visual clarity. Proper pagination, graphic design, and the use of negative space are fundamental principles in design, and these basic mistakes suggest a lack of attention to detail. A more thoughtful layout would improve the professionalism and appeal of the website.

Lastly, the stock photos used lack a direct connection to the university. None of the images feature the actual buildings or campus of UPT, leading to a more generic message. These images could easily represent any institution in the Western world. Conducting photoshoots

on-site at the university's facilities would have added authenticity to the visual narrative, even if it required an additional investment.

In conclusion, photography plays a crucial role in university promotion, helping to create visually compelling content that highlights the strengths of the institution and fosters an emotional connection with prospective students. Photos of events, campus facilities, and student achievements provide an authentic glimpse into university life, helping prospective students envision themselves as part of the community. This visual storytelling is essential in a competitive educational landscape, where first impressions can significantly influence prospective students' decision-making.

Bibliography:

1. Baines P, Fill C. & Rosengren S. (2011). *Marketing.* Universitatea Oxford, New York.
2. Becker C. & Palmer S (2009*). Branding in Universities: Identity versus Image.* Universitatea de tehnologie Lulea.
3. Belostecinic I. (2019). *Brandingul în planificarea strategică de marketing,* Academia de studii economice din Moldova, Chișinău
4. Faye V. (2022). *6 reasons why your business should be using high-quality photography on social media,* accessed on 22.04.2024.
5. Ilieș, V. & Fărcaș, P. (2013). *Definirea principiilor de bază ale brandingului universitar în România.* Universitatea Babes-Bolyai și Alexandru Ioan Cuza.
6. Niaa, 2020. *The importance of photography in marketing,* accessed on 14.04.2024.
7. Plant, E. *The importance of clear and professional Branding in 2024,* 12 January 2024, accessed on 10.04.2024.

Analysis of the Innovative Factor in Branding

Laura Maria Sîrbu

Abstract: *To achieve success, brands must establish robust branding that conveys trust, stability, and loyalty through their products, services, and experiences. With ongoing advancements in technology and shifts in consumer preferences, it is essential for brands to continuously innovate in order to maintain relevance. Additionally, increasing competition within the industry intensifies the necessity for brands to distinguish themselves through the innovative products and services they offer. To stay authentic and pertinent to consumers, a brand must demonstrate its capability to respond swiftly to emerging trends and to evolve its branding strategy accordingly. By conducting a thorough analysis of consumer behaviours and preferences, brands can anticipate forthcoming market changes and adjust their strategies to ensure sustained success. From a scientific perspective, branding encompasses more than just a commercial activity; it represents a comprehensive practice grounded in consumer psychology, communication, and marketing.*

Keywords: *brand, branding, competition, consumers, innovation, preferences, trends*

1. Introduction

The concept of branding has evolved significantly over time, transforming from a mere name associated with a product or service into a narrative that resonates with consumers. The initial step in crafting this identity involves the creation of a logo, the selection of distinctive colours, and the development of a memorable tagline.

Branding and innovation are intrinsically linked concepts that reflect the ongoing changes within the business environment. In an era characterised by constant evolution, brands are compelled to pursue innovation to maintain relevance and distinguish themselves from competitors. Branding innovation encompasses multiple dimensions that contribute to a brand's success and evolution. This necessitates the generation of innovative ideas for the development of groundbreaking products that will capture consumer interest. Such innovations may include a modern and striking logo, packaging with unique details, a captivating advertising campaign, or even an authentic brand story.

In an increasingly competitive landscape, differentiation from competitors is not merely an option but has become essential. This involves the creation of offerings that enable a brand to stand out. The introduction of customised products, along with innovative services of superior quality, is fundamental. The success of this launch is closely linked to a brand's ability to swiftly adapt to market trends. The quicker the response, the greater the differentiation perceived by consumers.

While consumers often show a willingness to pay a premium for higher-quality products, it is advantageous for brands to maintain competitive and unique pricing strategies to distinguish themselves in the market. One approach could involve setting higher prices for premium products while offering lower, more accessible prices for standard items. Customers tend to value the agility of a brand in responding to trends and may feel more comfortable purchasing from a brand that consistently delivers positive experiences.

The effectiveness of innovation in branding can be assessed using key performance indicators (KPIs), which allow for a precise evaluation of the success of implemented innovations. Consequently, a brand can determine whether it has increased its recognition based on interactions across digital platforms and feedback collected from consumers through surveys and questionnaires.

Advanced storytelling in branding represents a strategic approach that transcends mere narratives, seeking to forge a profound connection between consumers and the brand through sophisticated strategies. A transparent presentation of the brand's story, including its challenges and setbacks, enhances consumer engagement.

Design plays a crucial role in influencing consumer purchasing decisions. Many brands tend to overload product packaging and advertising campaigns with excessive information, which is not necessarily an effective branding strategy. Research conducted by Mintel in France has shown that an abundance of details on packaging can diminish consumer trust in the product. In this context, minimalist design proves advantageous for brands, aiding in the creation of an identity that aligns with consumer ideals. By embracing minimalism, brands prioritise clarity, simplicity, and functionality. A minimalist brand identity typically features restrained colour palettes and straightforward logos devoid of superfluous elements. This approach enables brands to achieve greater recognition among consumers while also being valued for the straightforward principles they embody.

Looking ahead, it is anticipated that numerous innovations will emerge in branding, particularly in the realms of sustainability, product and service personalisation, e-commerce, and advanced technologies.

2. Research methods

To gain insight into how brands maintain relevance among consumers, a case study was conducted. This analysis focused on the most innovative strategies employed by brands to distinguish themselves

from competitors and enhance their positioning within consumer preferences.

Another research method utilised in this study was a survey created using the Google Forms platform. The survey questionnaire was designed on 25 May 2024 and remained open for responses for 48 hours, ultimately gathering 65 responses. The participants were residents of Romania, aged between 18 and 44 years. They were required to answer 27 questions, which included 2 independent variables, 20 closed questions, and 5 open-ended questions.

3. Results

The detailed analysis of brand innovation revealed that the success of certain brands can be attributed to their strategy of personalising products or services. A notable example is Nike's campaign, Nike By You, which allows consumers to customise their purchases based on their preferences regarding colours, materials, and designs.

Additionally, emotional messaging in advertising campaigns has proven effective for many brands. For instance, Procter & Gamble's Thank You Mom campaign highlights the significant role of mothers in children's lives, empowering them to achieve their goals. Similarly, the Like A Girl campaign by Always promotes values such as determination, intelligence, femininity, and girl power, resonating strongly with consumers.

The analysis also highlighted the ALS Association's campaign, which involved a challenge where participants poured buckets of ice over their heads to raise funds for individuals suffering from ALS. The number of videos created for this challenge directly influenced the amount donated, resulting in substantial engagement from the public. Furthermore, consumers exhibit a preference for brands that actively involve them in the innovation process for products and services. Apple exemplified this approach with its Shot On iPhone campaign, encouraging users to showcase their photography skills with their

iPhones, thereby fostering a community united by shared values and interests.

True consumer-valued innovations often revolve around the development of specific services. For instance, Spotify provides an interface that allows users to listen to their favourite music without interruption from advertisements, enabling the creation of personalised music libraries. Similarly, Airbnb facilitates tourists in sharing their experiences, aiding in decision-making regarding accommodation. The platform also allows locals to share their homes, enriching the cultural experience for visitors. Through its We Accept campaign, Airbnb communicated its stance against discrimination within its community, which was positively received by consumers.

Netflix has transformed the television landscape with its streaming innovation, offering users the flexibility to watch their favourite films and series at any time without the constraints of traditional scheduling. Another notable innovation appreciated by female consumers was Dyson's introduction of a hair dryer featuring a ventilation system that efficiently dries hair without causing damage.

The survey questionnaire provided insights into consumer perceptions of innovation in branding. When asked to define what innovation in branding means to them, the majority of respondents (52.3%) identified it as the launch of new products or services in the market. The second most popular response, selected by 43.1% of participants, was the consistent adaptation to consumer trends, while 24.6% cited the creation of impactful advertising campaigns. Additionally, 13 participants opted for two answers each, with the most frequent combinations being the correlation between constant adaptation to consumer trends and the creation of impactful advertising campaigns, as well as the launch of new products or services alongside impactful advertising campaigns. Responses varied across different age groups and genders, reflecting a diverse range of opinions rather than a specific demographic focus.
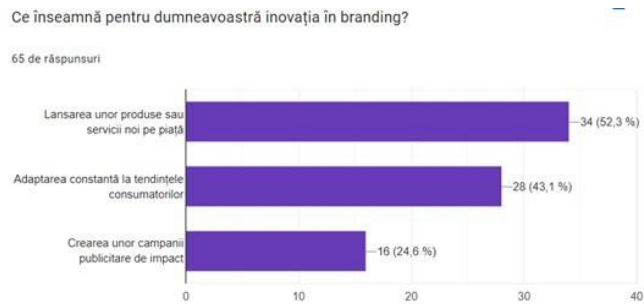
Fig. 1. Innovation in branding

When asked how innovation in branding contributes to a company's success, 64.6% of respondents indicated that it increases brand awareness. The other two options received equal support, each selected by 38.5% of participants, reflecting that innovation also improves customer loyalty and differentiates the brand from competitors. Responses to this question were varied, showing no significant differences in answers based on gender or age demographics.
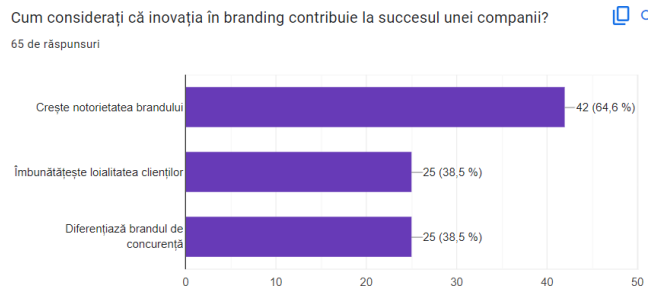
Fig. 2. How innovation contributes to the success of a brand

In response to the question regarding the main trends in innovation in branding, the option with the highest percentage, at 38.5%, was the use of emerging technologies, such as AI and AR. The other options, focusing on sustainability and social responsibility and personalising the customer experience, received equal support at 30.8%. This question was a closed one, allowing respondents to select only one

answer. Interestingly, a higher percentage of female respondents chose the use of emerging technology compared to their male counterparts. Additionally, both genders expressed concern for sustainability and demonstrated support for the idea of personalising products, indicating a shared interest in these trends. Age-wise, respondents did not clearly divide into distinct groups.
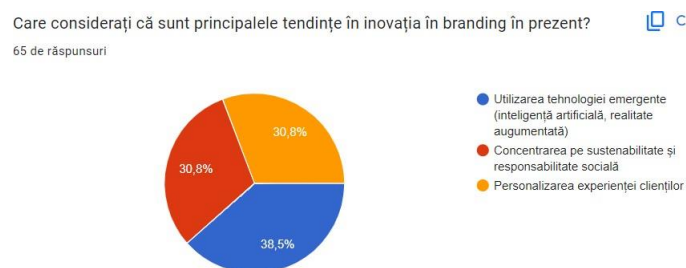
Fig. 3. The main trends in innovation

In question 8, respondents were asked which aspects most attract them to an innovative brand. Both the design and aesthetics of the products and services and the unique customer experience ranked highest, each receiving a percentage of 29.2%. Following closely, with a percentage of 27.7%, was the relevance and adaptability to customer needs and preferences. In last place, with 13.8%, was the use of advanced technology to enhance services. This question was a closed one, allowing only one response. The preference for advanced technology was predominantly selected by male respondents, with only two females choosing this option. Females showed a greater inclination towards design, unique experiences, and adaptability, while a small number of males indicated preferences for unique experiences and adaptability, with only four selecting design. Age-wise, it was noted that those who preferred the use of advanced technology to improve services were predominantly under 30 years old.

135

Fig. 4. The most appreciated aspects of an innovative brand

When asked about the relevance of Nike's product customisation campaign, Nike By You, 47.7% of respondents indicated that they found it very relevant, while 33.8% deemed it relevant, and 6.2% described it as somewhat relevant. The campaign was considered not very relevant by 3.1% of respondents, and 10.8% reported being unaware of it. Notably, no respondents selected the option for not relevant. This question was closed, allowing for only one choice. It is noteworthy that only one male respondent was unfamiliar with the campaign, whereas a greater number of females indicated they had not seen it. The responses categorised as very relevant and relevant came from both male and female respondents.
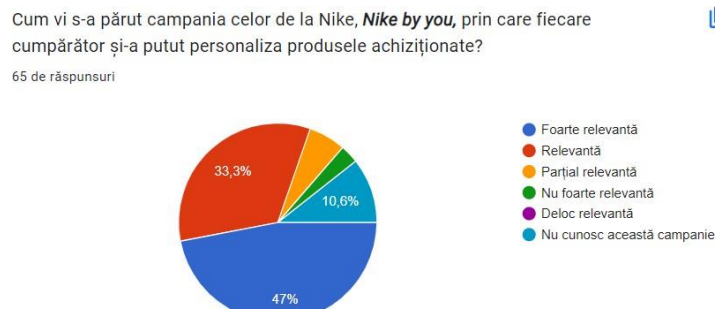
Fig. 5. Impression about the campaign *Nike by You*

When asked whether P&G's Thank You, Mom campaign had a positive impact on their perception of the brand, 33.8% of respondents selected the option "very much." The highest percentage, at 36.9%, indicated that they felt influenced to a certain extent, while 21.5% stated that they were not influenced at all. The remaining 9.2% chose the option "a little." This was a closed question allowing only one response. Contrary to expectations, there were male respondents who indicated they were influenced significantly or to a certain extent, while some female respondents chose the options "not at all" and "very little." From a generational perspective, no distinctions were observed among age groups.

Cei de la P&G au lansat acum câțiva ani, campania *Thank you Mom*, care celebrează rolul mamelor in viața sportivilor. V-a influențat aceasta campanie în mod pozitiv percepția față de acest brand?

65 de răspunsuri

- Foarte mult
- Într-o anumită măsură
- Puțin
- Deloc

9,1%
21,2%
36,4%
33,3%
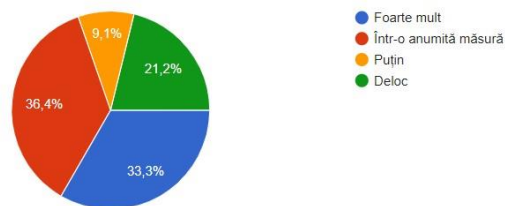
Fig. 6. The influence of the campaign *Thank you Mom*

In response to the open question regarding innovative aspects appreciated by respondents, females aged 19 to 24 highlighted the campaign's song, message, diversity, and effectiveness as notable innovations. Both male and female respondents recognised customisation and attention to detail as key factors. A 17-year-old male recalled the logo, while an 18-year-old boy remembered the advertisement. The negative pressure experienced by athletes, emphasised in Adidas' You Got campaign, was identified as an innovative aspect by a 26-year-old male respondent. Additionally, a

male participant suggested the eMAG Genius subscription as a notable innovation. A 20-year-old boy mentioned that Lays has innovated by investing money into the bags of chips. Interestingly, one female respondent pointed out the short biographies of athletes featured in advertisements as an innovative element.

Female respondents aged 22 to 28 considered several aspects innovative, including the stickers with Lala Band from Tempo biscuits, the video from Jacobs, the bracelets from Coca-Cola, the strawberries from Dr. Oetker, the 3D campaign from Sephora, the packaging in the colours of the Romanian flag from Rom, and initiatives aimed at helping the elderly through Dr. Max sales. A 23-year-old female also noted the use of augmented reality (AR) in the Pepsi Max Unbelievable Bus Shelter campaign as innovative. Furthermore, Maybelline's Sky High campaign was recognised for the idea of lashes attached to the subway alongside a mascara-like brush. Notably, both male and female respondents of various ages considered the involvement of public figures or characters as an innovative aspect of campaigns. Female participants recalled names such as the shepherd Ghiță from the Vodafone commercial, Antonia from Avon, Alexia Eram from Storia, the girl from Oreo, the character Dino from Danonino, the blue piglet from Antrefrig, and the cow from Milka. Among male respondents aged 18 to 35, personalities such as Daniela Crudu from Elfbet and Felix Baumgartner from Red Bull were highlighted, alongside characters like the bear from Carpathi beer, Santa Claus from Coca-Cola, and the train featured in the same campaign. This indicates the formation of two distinct camps: one group that views stars and characters as innovative elements in advertising campaigns, and another that focuses on innovative details.

When asked for suggestions on improving advertising campaigns, 21 respondents of various genders and ages opted not to answer. An additional seven participants stated that they had no suggestions to offer. The majority of responses centred on themes such as sustainability, creativity, authenticity, trends, honesty, consumer needs, relevance, and posts on Instagram and TikTok. Some respondents also suggested the

involvement of public figures in promoting products or services. These insights were provided by both male and female respondents aged 18 to 44, who were required to present their own suggestions in response to the direct question.

4. Conclusions

In discussing the relevance and success of a brand in the free market, innovation and community involvement emerge as two essential components. Brands must continuously adopt innovative marketing strategies to remain current within the marketplace. In an industry characterised by constant evolution, the ability to adapt to rapid changes and to monitor feedback effectively are critical for achieving a positive impact and ensuring branding success. The synergy between branding innovation and genuine community involvement facilitates the establishment of a strong reputation, thereby supporting brand advancement.

Research on innovative branding encompasses a broad array of topics, offering detailed insights into the potential evolution of branding strategies. The influence of digitisation is a fundamental area of focus, examining how technology affects interactions between audiences and brands. These processes are directed towards fostering authentic and enduring relationships between brands and consumers.

Innovation in branding can be evaluated using relevant key performance indicators (KPIs) that assess the effectiveness of strategies. This enables a brand to maintain its position in the market for an extended period within a competitive and ever-changing landscape. Furthermore, innovation is reshaping consumer preferences and establishing new standards for adaptability to emerging trends.

When considering risks, it is imperative for a brand to acknowledge the potential challenges that may arise during the implementation of innovations and branding strategies. To manage these risks effectively, thorough analysis of the market and target audience behaviour is essential. This includes testing products and

services prior to launch, encouraging consumer involvement in the innovation process, monitoring competitive dynamics, and conducting rigorous financial planning to mitigate the likelihood of failure.

Bibliography:

1. Aaker, J. (1997). "Dimensions of Brand Personality". *Journal of Marketing Research*.
2. Aaker, D. A. *Brand Relevance, 2011, Making Competitors Irrelevant* San Francisco*:* John Wiley& Sons.
3. Khamitov, M., Wang, X., Thomson M. (2019). *How Well Do Consumer-Brand Relationships Drive Customer Brand Loyalty? Generalizations from a Meta-Analysis of Brand Relationship Elasticities*.
4. Sachetti, P., Zuppinger, T. (2018). *New Technologies and Branding*.

Webography:

1. Brand storytelling, https://www.acquia.com/blog/brand-storytelling. Accesat la data de 10.05.2024.
2. Branding inovator și design de logo, https://b1studio.ro/branding-inovator-si-design-de-logo/. Accesat la data de 10.05.2024.
3. Branding și strategie de brand, file:///C:/Users/HP/Downloads/Suport%20de%20curs
4. %20(1).pdf. Accesat la data de 10.05.2024.
5. Branding și strategie de brand, https://ro.scribd.com/document/658623204/Carte- Branding-Si-Strategie-de-Brand-2022-3. Accesat la data de 10.05.2024.

Shaping Economic Growth: The Role of Government Communication and the Media

Denisa Uscatu

Abstract: *In the contemporary landscape of economic development, the interplay between government communication and the media emerges as a pivotal factor in shaping economic growth. This research explores how strategic dissemination of information by government entities, coupled with media coverage, influences public perception, investor confidence, and policy effectiveness. Moreover, insights from this research contribute to a deeper understanding of the evolving landscape of public communication strategies and their implications for governance and public policy.*

Keywords: *government communication, media influence, economic growth, strategic communication, economic development*

1. Introduction

Communication serves as a fundamental driver of economic progress and transformation within nations. This article investigates the way in

which communication influences economic development, with a specific focus on the unique contexts of developing countries.

Moldova, Honduras, and Bangladesh are examined as case studies to illustrate how communication strategies and infrastructures shape their economic landscapes and address pertinent developmental challenges. Developing countries often face barriers such as limited access to technology, linguistic diversity, and infrastructural limitations. These challenges can hinder effective communication about economic development initiatives. By undertaking a comprehensive analysis, this study aims to explain how communication contributes to overcoming barriers to development.

The choice of investigating the role of communication in economic development within developing countries stems from the author's profound curiosity about the transformative power of effective communication in socio-economic settings. This topic addresses an urgent critical issue in today's global landscape. These underdeveloped countries face significant challenges in attracting foreign investment and support for their economic development initiatives. Moreover, the decision to study this issue also stems from the acknowledgement of the significant disparities in communication effectiveness among underdeveloped countries. Moldova, Honduras, and Bangladesh are compelling case studies where communication gaps hinder these countries' ability to harness external support effectively.

The main purpose of this paper is to investigate and analyse how communication can be used effectively to stimulate economic development in developing countries. Effective communication, both within and across nations, is a critical component of socio-economic progress. In the context of developing countries, where economic growth often faces numerous obstacles, strategic communication can play a pivotal role in overcoming these challenges.

2. Research methods

The paper explores two key issues: government communication and the role of the media in disseminating government messages to attract funding. Government communication encompasses the strategies and methods employed by public institutions to convey information, policies, and decisions to the public and stakeholders.

As stated by Sanders & Canel (2013: 3), "[g]overnment communication involves considerable complexity in terms of goals, needs, audiences, definition and resources as compared to the corporate sector".

Effective communication by governments is crucial for maintaining transparency, fostering public trust, and ensuring the smooth functioning of democratic processes. Government communication can be defined as the set of practices and techniques employed by government entities to disseminate information to citizens. These practices encompass a wide array of communication methods, including public speeches, press conferences, and press releases, as well as the use of digital platforms such as government websites and social media (Beciu, 2002).

Effective government communication ensures that citizens are well-informed about policies, decisions, and services, which in turn enhances public trust and facilitates the smooth functioning of governmental processes. Key government communication strategies include transparency and clarity, ensuring that policies and decisions are communicated clearly and comprehensively to demystify governmental processes. Furthermore, consistency and coherence are essential to maintain a unified narrative across departments, avoiding confusion and building trust. Finally, accessibility and inclusivity ensure that information reaches all segments of the population through multiple languages, formats and channels (Beciu, 2002).

Effective government communication is one of the key factors in attracting foreign investment, especially in developing countries. Communication can influence investor perceptions, promoting an

attractive and secure business environment. When governments communicate transparently and effectively, they provide potential investors with the information they need to make informed decisions, thereby fostering confidence and trust.

In the realm of political communication, the media serves an essential function as the main channel for the public dissemination and visibility of political information (Beciu, 2002).

The media plays a crucial role in disseminating information and shaping public perception. The media, encompassing traditional outlets like newspapers and television, as well as digital platforms such as social media and online news, is the main tool for the dissemination of information. Effective communication through the media can attract funding by raising awareness, building credibility, and engaging potential investors.

In underdeveloped countries, the role of the media becomes even more significant as it serves as a bridge between these nations and potential donors, investors, and international aid organizations. By effectively disseminating information and raising awareness about the challenges faced by underdeveloped countries, the media can attract much-needed funding and support to foster development and improve living conditions.

Based on these considerations, the research method used in this paper is *grid analysis*. This methodological approach was chosen to facilitate a comprehensive and coherent examination of the communication strategies used within the economic settings specific to the three countries mentioned earlier.

The grid analysis framework allows for a systematic and detailed examination of different forms of communication, facilitating the identification of patterns and particularities in the way governments convey their messages to the public and the international community. By applying this method, my objective was to provide a clear and coherent perspective on the communication strategies used in the economic context of the three nations.

Four main forms of communication have been identified: *press articles*, *governmental press releases*, *interviews*, and *reports*. An analysis grid was used to gather information on these forms of communication, with a focus on the following criteria: content of the article, message dissemination channel, campaigns, key points of the message, mode of expression (direct or indirect speech), and style.

3. Results

To achieve the objectives, *grid analysis* was used to examine press articles, governmental press releases, interviews, and reports. The analysis has led to the following findings.

In Moldova, governmental communication strategies aimed at stimulating economic development encompass various approaches. The analysis of articles, press releases, interviews, and reports shows that development programs place significant emphasis on transparent communication and community participation. The examination of the articles in Honduras highlights communication strategies that focus on promoting the country's image and educating the local population. However, the findings also point to significant shortcomings, such as political instability and corruption, which have compromised communication effectiveness and have created a negative perception among investors and the international community. In Bangladesh, the analysis of the articles reveals that the government uses communication as a strategic instrument for economic development.

Furthermore, it is noteworthy that all the three countries under study lack references to communication campaigns. This absence can be attributed to several factors, including the media's tendency to overlook these campaigns. Another possible reason is that these campaigns are not visible or impactful enough to attract the necessary attention from foreign investors.

4. Conclusions

This paper has highlighted the critical role of communication in driving economic development in developing countries such as Moldova, Honduras, and Bangladesh. Effective communication strategies, both from governments and through the media, are essential for overcoming barriers to development, such as limited technology access, linguistic diversity, and infrastructure challenges.

Effective communication, both by governments and through the media, is crucial to overcoming barriers to economic development in developing countries. Transparency, clarity, and consistency in government communication enhance public trust and investor confidence. Meanwhile, the media serves as a vital tool for raising awareness and attracting international support. Addressing challenges like political instability and corruption is essential to improve communication effectiveness and create a positive perception that attracts the necessary investments for sustainable development.

In essence, the research has highlighted the role of communication as a catalyst for economic transformation in developing nations, advocating for improved strategies to leverage communication effectively for inclusive growth and development.

Bibliography:

1. Beciu, C. (2002). *Comunicare politică*. București: Comunicare.ro
2. Buludov, I. (2016). "Comunicarea guvernamentală din Republica Moldova pe new media". In: *Analele Ştiinţifice ale Universităţii de Stat din Moldova: Ştiinţe socioumanistice*. Chişinău, Republica Moldova: Centrul Editorial-Poligrafic al USM, Vol.2, SSU, pp. 65-69.
3. Invest in Moldova. (n.d). *Prezentare Economică*. Available at https://www.invest.gov.md/ro/economic-overview/. Last accessed 06.04.2024.
4. Popa, D. (2002). *Mass-media, astăzi*. Iaşi: Institutul European.

5. Sanders, K., Canel, M.J. (ed.) (2013). *Government Communication*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Events for Children Within Timișoara 2023 - European Capital of Culture: Online Visibility

Ionica Vălimăreanu

Abstract: *In contemporary society, advertising plays a significant role, with advertisements appearing almost everywhere—on the internet, television, and even in the most unexpected corners of urban spaces. The advancement of technology has broadened the concept of advertising, removing geographical constraints. Additionally, the World Wide Web has made it easier and more cost-effective to promote services, products, or events compared to traditional advertising methods. The shift from traditional to digital advertising has resulted in substantial changes to previously established practices in promotion. The online environment enables advertisers to convey their messages to the audience rapidly, and audience reactions can be measured with relative ease. When discussing advertising, whether organic or paid, one refers to the use of text, music, images, and special effects aimed at informing or persuading consumers. These elements can be combined by producers to create the desired effect for the target audience. Organic marketing seeks to enhance brand awareness and foster*

long-term relationships with the target audience through the sharing of valuable content. This approach is less intrusive and continues to engage audiences even after the advertising budget has been depleted. In contrast, paid online advertising allows entities to swiftly reach their target audience through a funded advertising campaign. Unlike organic content, which primarily focuses on building brand awareness, paid online advertising is typically employed to drive conversions in the subsequent stages of the marketing funnel.

1. Introduction

This research focuses on strategies for promoting events online as part of the "Power Station+ | Creative Schools" project. This initiative is aimed at associations seeking to organise events for children, teenagers, and teachers as an alternative to traditional education methods.

The events are scheduled to take place in Timișoara throughout 2024, funded by non-repayable grants, with the goal of bringing art and culture closer to younger generations.

The study provides valuable insights into the advertising strategies employed, highlighting those that yielded the most significant results as well as those that proved less effective.

One limitation of the analysis is the absence of a comprehensive overview of all online conversions and the conversion rate, which could have been assessed using an automated calculation tool.

The primary motivation for selecting this topic stems from a personal interest in the field of advertising and the efficient methods available for online promotion. The aim of the analysis is to identify both the similarities and differences in the strategies used by various associations responsible for organising the events in their efforts to promote these initiatives online.

2. Research methods

The research method employed is qualitative, centred on a comparative study of four categories of events organised by different associations. These events were scheduled to take place in Timișoara from January to May 2024.

The aim of this paper is to analyse key components of advertising discourse, including graphic materials, language elements, and context, as well as to identify similarities and differences in the online promotion methods chosen by each organisation. Particular focus is given to understanding the chosen advertising strategies and their impact on the audience.

This paper is of scientific importance as it seeks to objectively address the research question: "If online advertising methods and graphic materials vary according to event category, does this also alter their impact on the target audience?" Based on the findings of the comparative study, one can identify the most effective online advertising strategies and gain insights into constructing a compelling advertising discourse, optimising both language and graphic elements.

3. Results

Similarities
Platforms used in the online promotion of the events

The platforms selected for online promotion by the event-organising organisations indicate that 84.3% opted for Meta. Only a few instances involved additional promotion on Instagram or other platforms, such as YouTube.

Power Station+ | Creative Schools - used platfroms for online promotion
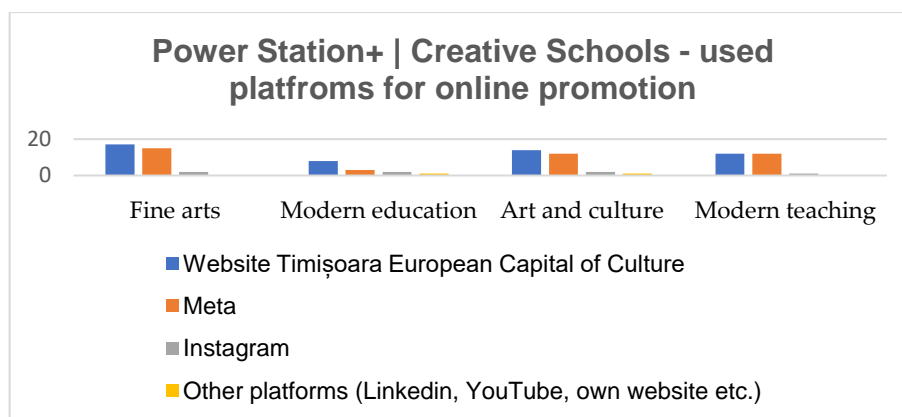
Fig. 1 - Platfroms used for online promotion
Power Station+ | Creative Schools

Graphic Materials

For the graphic materials created specifically to promote the events online, across all four analysed categories, highly saturated colours (such as red, orange, and blue) are used to capture the target audience's attention, along with primary and complementary colours for easy visual recognition. Another consistent feature observed in the design of these materials is visual balance: over 80% of the items analysed exhibit visual balance, taking into account contrast, hierarchy, and white space. Representative elements are often arranged symmetrically or strategically placed according to the rule of thirds.

Visual unity across all events, despite being organised by different entities, is achieved through the use of the Timișoara 2023 and Ministry of Culture logos.

Fig. 2 - Unity offered by the use of logos
(https://www.facebook.com/ArterapieAtelier,
https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100076026184982)
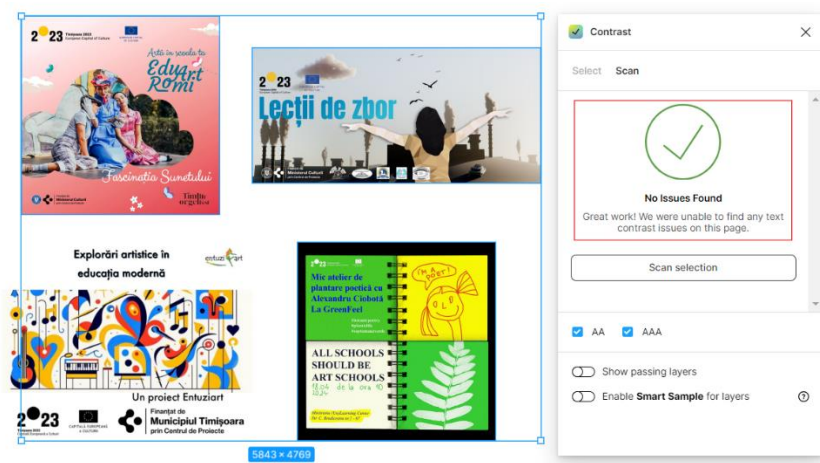
Fig. 3 - Contrast check for some representative graphic materials -
Power Station+ | Creative Schools

Discourse Analysis

At the discursive level, the comparison reveals several similarities:

Paralanguage: In all graphic materials, characters—whether real or animated—convey a world of joy, where the realm of knowledge is open to activities such as painting, dancing, virtual reality, and filmmaking, illustrated through expressive facial expressions and body language.

Language and Tone: The sense of well-being depicted by the characters is reinforced linguistically with positively connoted words in the accompanying text. This characteristic is consistent across all four categories. Examples include phrases like "opportunity to inspire," "wonderful journey" (in "Fine Arts"), "power of change in education," "harmoniously blending literature" (in "Modern Education"), "magical space," and "flavours of tea" (in "Modern Teaching").

Discursive Function: Interestingly, informative structures dominate, contrary to expectations.

Additionally, two main objectives emerge in the advertising discourse: conveying as much information as possible about the events, leading to largely informative texts, and incorporating both informative and persuasive elements.

Impact on the target audience

From an objective perspective, if only the number of reactions from the target audience is taken into account, the analysis emphasises that the immediately visible impact in the online environment is low for all the four categories.

Differences
Graphic materials

While the use of the Timișoara 2023 and Ministry of Culture logos provides some visual unity to the graphic materials, their placement, shape, size, and language vary depending on the organisation responsible for their creation. In other words, there is no established

best-practice guide for a consistent visual identity across all events under the "Power Station+ | Creative Schools" initiative.

Another factor that disrupts identity cohesion is the inconsistency in graphic material sizing. Although 83% of the event promotion occurs online, the materials produced lack standardised dimensions. Observed sizes include 870 x 1600, 960 x 540, 1448 x 2048, and 2048 x 1152, indicating the absence of a unified guideline for format.

Fig. 4 - Existence of different sizes for Meta posts
(https://www.facebook.com/ArterapieAtelier)

Discourse Analysis

As noted, all posts contain varying degrees of informative content. Notably, some organisations favour a predominantly persuasive approach, using emoticons, friendly and accessible language, and specific advertising elements like calls to action. These posts are often complemented by illustrations to enhance appeal.

From an advertising strategy perspective, resource allocation varies widely. While some organisations invest heavily by posting

frequently on Meta, others limit their promotion to a single post, or, in some cases, have no online presence at all.

Impact on the Target Audience

The effectiveness of posts in reaching the target audience depends on factors such as resource investment, posting frequency, quality of graphic materials, style of promotional language, and the organisation's social media following. The comparative analysis shows that events promoted over multiple editions and with frequent posts achieved significantly higher visibility online. Conversely, events associated with newly established Meta pages, limited followers, or infrequent online activity received the fewest responses from the target audience.

4. Conclusions

The primary aim of this analysis was to objectively address the research question: "If online advertising methods and graphic materials differ according to the event category, does this variation impact the target audience?"

The criteria for the comparative analysis included: the platforms selected for promotion, the design and features of graphic materials, promotional strategies, and the resulting impact on the target audience.

Overall, the analysis indicates that, in most cases, online promotion was present, though with limited resources, which correlated with minimal immediate audience response. A significant factor contributing to this outcome was the relatively small follower base of many of the organising associations on their primary platform, Meta. This limited reach likely hindered effective promotion among the intended audience. After reviewing the activity on the official pages, it appears that some organisations only became active following their receipt of grants, which explains the relatively low community engagement.

Bibliography:

1. Arntson, A. E. (2007). *Graphic Design Basics*. USA: Thomson Wadsworth.
2. Bloor, M. B. (2007). *The Practice of Critical Discourse Analysis: An Introduction*. UK: Routledge.
3. Coman, C. (2004). *Relatiile Publice Si Mass-media*. Romania: Polirom.
4. Cook, G. (1992). *The Discourse of Advertising*. London & New York: Routledge.
5. Fairclough, N. (2004). *Analysing Discourse*. London: Routledge.
6. William F. Arens, M. F. (2011). *Contemporary Advertising and Integrated Marketing Communications*. 13th ed. United States of America: McGrow-Hill Irwin.
7. William Lidwell, K. H. (2003). "Universal Principles of Design". In K. H. William Lidwell, *Universal Principles of Design* (p. 168). Massachusetts: Rockport Publishers.

Webography:

1. "A deep dive into Meta campaign objectives and best practices for Facebook Ads", https://www.adspaceagency.com/article/meta-campaign-objectives-and-best-practices-for-facebook-ads/#:~:text=How%20do%20I%20choose%20the,or%20achieve%20other%20specific%20outcomes, accessed on 31.05.2024.
2. Baluch, A., "Social Media Marketing In 2024: The Ultimate Guide", https://www.forbes.com/advisor/business/social-media-marketing/, accessed on 06.05.2024.
3. Barnhart, B., 2010, "12 Facebook ad examples you wish you made". https://sproutsocial.com/insights/facebook-ad-examples/ , accessed on 31.05.2-24.

4. "Experimentul Liceul Non-formal", 2024, https://timisoara2023.eu/ro/proiecte/experimentul-liceul-non-formal/, accessed on 08.05.2024.

5. Goldstein, K., 2023, "What is a logo and why is it important for your brand", de pe www.wix.com: https://www.wix.com/blog/what-is-a-logo, accessed on 01.05.2024.

6. Martin, G., "A picture is worth a thousand words", www.phrases.org.uk: https://www.phrases.org.uk/meanings/a-picture-is-worth-a-thousand-words.html, accessed on 1.06.2024.

7. https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/how-use-negative-space-graphic-design-ameer-muavia/ , accessed on 31.05.2024.

8. Pahwa, A., 2024, "What Is Publicity? – Characteristics, Types, & Examples", https://www.feedough.com/what-is-publicity-characteristics-types-examples/, accessed on 31.05.2024.

9. Powderly, H., 2024, "Digital marketing and advertising industry overview", https://www.emarketer.com/insights/digital-advertising-market-trends-predictions/, accessed on 31.06.2024.

10. România pozitivă, 2023, "Cultura vine mai aproape de școli, prin programul de finanțare Power Station+ | Școli creative" , https://www.romaniapozitiva.ro/administratie/timisoara-programul-de-finantare-power-station-scoli-creative-2-000-000-de-lei-pentru-a-integra-arta-in-scoli-si-de-a-adapta-spatiul-scolar-pentru-a-stimula-creativitatea/#prettyPhoto, accessed on 05.04.2023.

11. Stewart, A., 2024, "A Comprehensive Guide to Typography in Graphic Design", https://www.teamtown.co/: https://www.teamtown.co/blog/what-is-typography-in-graphic-design, accessed on 01.06.2024.

12. Strizver, I., "Typographic Hierarchy",
    https://www.myfonts.com/pages/fontscom-learning-fyti-
    typographic-tips-typographic-hierarchy, accessed on 11.06.202.
13. „Symmetry in graphic design: tips, examples, concepts", 2021,
    https://designbro.com/blog/inspiration/symmetry-graphic-
    design-tips-examples-concepts, accessed on 11.04.2024.

Promoting Anti-EU Attitudes in the Romanian Digital Space

Ovidiu Darius Voița

Abstract: *In Romania, the accession to the European Union was received with great enthusiasm, because it was seen as a good opportunity for the development and modernization of the country. Most Romanians supported and still support EU membership, and appreciate the EU's democratic values, economic benefits and freedom of movement. However, there is also a certain reluctance to certain measures coming from Brussels. Anti-EU attitudes are fuelled by a variety of factors, including consecutive economic crises, social crises, the Covid-19 crisis, concerns about national sovereignty and identity, and the perception of certain European policies as ineffective or unfair. Online platforms play a crucial role in shaping these perceptions, due to the simple and fast way in which information flows, the way it is presented and interpreted by the public, and the real feedback followers can provide. In this digital environment, almost anyone can become a content creator, whether amateur or professional, and that is why misinformation and fake news are quite common. This paper aims to identify the main digital channels through which anti-EU attitudes are promoted in Romania, analyse the content and strategies used in online anti-EU campaigns, describe the*

profile of those who promote such messages and propose recommendations to reduce the promotion of anti-EU attitudes online and in general.

Keywords: *anti-EU content, EU, Romania, George Simion, social-media, posts*

1. Introduction

The public perception of the European Union varies considerably, both among the member states and within the population of each country, being influenced by economic and political factors, the media and certain personal experiences. In general, EU citizens share common EU values such as peace, stability and freedom of movement, but there are also certain concerns related to national sovereignty, European bureaucracy and the impact of population migration from Asia and Africa. Also, the successive economic crises, the pandemic crisis (Covid-19), the social crisis (immigration), followed by the geopolitical instability caused by the war in Ukraine, have provided the most favourable grounds for the development of anti-European trends. As a result, several nationalist parties have emerged across Europe, promoting populist, sovereignist and Eurosceptic narratives.

In Romania, this perception of an outside influence (from Brussels) on domestic politics, as well as concerns about the loss of national identity to a certain extent, have led to the rise of increasingly more anti-EU trends. As a result, parties with a conservative, anti-globalization and therefore anti-EU profile have been founded, such as the Alliance for the Union of Romanians (AUR) and S.O.S. Romania. Some of the main reasons for the decrease in enthusiasm among Romanians regarding the European Union are: the inefficient management of the economic crises by the ruling parties, the increasingly acute lack of qualified labour due to the social crisis, the high number of Romanians working abroad, the influx of migrants who have invaded the labour market, and the instability on the border with Ukraine, due to the war. All these reasons have provided fertile ground for the promotion of populist and anti-European messages.

Over the past decade, social media has become a ubiquitous component of the media landscape, radically transforming the way information is conceived, shared and consumed, as well as the way opinions are formed and expressed. This transformation has laid the foundation for a new communication paradigm, where social media plays a central role in shaping public discourse as well as individual and collective opinions. Social networks are certainly one of the main means of information and of shaping public opinion in the digital age. As they facilitate the very rapid dissemination of information and opinions, these online platforms have a major impact on how events, ideas and public figures are perceived.

"If, in the last century, the worldwide spread of opinion polls gave a voice to the silent crowd, nowadays the "new media" (online platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, etc.) have exponentially amplified this voice. Unfortunately, the new media, by "filtering" information, can influence our opinions, attitudes and behaviour, without us realizing that a force is being exerted on us; more directly, they can manipulate us by controlling perception" (Chelcea, 2019).

Official data show that the population of Romania is 19.7 million in 2024, 54.8% of which live in urban areas, and respectively, 45.2% in rural areas. According to an analysis by DataReportal, there were 18.06 million internet users in our country in January 2024 (Redacția, 2024). This analysis also points to a percentage of 91.6% in terms of internet access. Of the 18.06 million users, 13.3 million are social media users (January 2024), which means 67.4% of the total population. However, it should be emphasised that these social media users may not be unique users. It is known that one can create countless accounts on social media, not only on different platforms, but also on the same platform. According to DataReportal, Facebook ranks first when it comes to preferred social media platforms in Romania (31.7%), followed by WhatsApp (24.7%), and Tik Tok (13.9%) (Redacția, 2024).

2. Research methods

A content analysis was performed to investigate anti-EU narratives on social media in Romania. More precisely, the content analysis was conducted between November 1, 2023 and April 30, 2024, and focused on George Simion's Facebook posts.

George Simion is the leader of the AUR party (Alliance for the Union of Romanians), and also a member of the Romanian Parliament (a deputy) from the same party. Prior to his career in politics, he was an active football supporter, being the co-founder of ultras groups such as "Honor et Patria" and "Uniți sub Tricolor" ("United under the Romanian Flag"). George Simion is also connected to the "Unionist Platform Action 2012" coalition, which campaigns for the unification of Romania and the Republic of Moldova. During the Covid-19 pandemic, George Simion stood out for promoting content against vaccination, against the vaccination certificate, against government restrictions, etc. Also, he has often stood out in the Romanian Parliament for his violent, anti-EU, anti-Western, sovereignist and populist language.

Fig. 1. George Simion (Facebook)

The analysis grid focused on the following aspects:
➢ Concrete elements:
  • thematic content;
  • type of argumentation;
  • reactions (likes, shares, comments, etc.);

➢ Abstract elements:
  • amount of information (frequency of anti-EU content);
  • quality of information relative to the sender (the sender's positive or negative actions in society, as perceived by the receivers);

➢ Metacommunication:
  • social channel
  • sender's attitude
    • sender's presence on other communication channels than their own
  • sender's preference for a certain means of communication

3. Results

Table 1- Anti-EU posts on George Simion's Facebook page

Month	Number of posts	Most impactful post	Number of likes	Number of comments	Number of shares
November	2 posts	Video (live) "Who is lying to you, AUR or Ciolacu?	27 K	20,1 K	10 K
December	6 posts	"Nein Schengen" Live from Charleroi airport	18 K	9385	2,3 K
January	5 posts	The bilateral security treaty signed by	13 K	2770	5,8 K

		Romania and Ukraine in Davos			
February	2 posts	"For our children, we have a duty not to kneel down either to the Empire in the East or to the new Soviet Union in Brussels." Excerpt from George Simion's speech at the presentation of AUR candidates in Timișoara	5,9 K	1303	2,1 K
March	9 posts	George Simion live on Facebook from the protest organised by AUR against Ursula von der Leyen and against the Romanian leaders, described as "slaves to the EU"	33 K	11354	11 K
April	2 posts	"We say NO to migrants in Romania, to LGBT education in schools, and to other topics imposed at European level"	6,3 K	1258	2,1 K

Findings:

- ➢ Concrete elements:
- • thematic content: political, social and economic content
- • type of argumentation

164

- the most common type of argumentation is persuasion, with the sender relying on pathos in his messages, in an attempt to stir emotion in the receiver;

- pathemisation is also used as a discursive argumentation strategy;

- appeals to logos are also present, including both inductive and deductive reasoning;

- the use of signature speech elements, by applying the slogan-definition as an argument (along with the words: Romanians, for Romania, for the country, for Romanians, etc.);

- reactions: likes, shares and comments

-the posts received many likes and shares, as well as many mostly positive comments (supportive, congratulatory);

➢ Abstract elements:
- amount of information (frequency of anti-EU content)

- the communication flow was high; there was an average of 3-4 anti-EU posts per month;

- quality of information relative to the sender (the sender's positive or negative actions in society, as perceived by the receivers)

- through his actions in recent years (both positive and negative actions), George Simion has managed to consolidate his and AUR party's image and position in the Romanian political landscape;

➢ Metacommunication:
- social channel (Facebook platform)
- sender's attitude

- the attitude of the sender (George Simion) is positive when he refers to his country (Romania), to the Romanian citizens and traditions, to everything related to ancestral values, with the aim of building a strong connection with the receivers (e.g. his followers, his fans, the party), and of attracting as much political capital as possible (votes, new members, new sympathisers)

- the attitude of the sender (George Simion) is negative (e.g. violent, accusatory, discriminatory language) when he refers to both Romanian and foreign political opponents, to opponents in the mass media, to the measures he considers against the country and the Romanian people. This negative attitude also attracts political capital and notoriety

• sender's presence on other communication channels than their own

- George Simion is a highly publicised public figure, he participates in many radio and TV shows, as well as in the digital space, in online shows and podcasts, on platforms such as Facebook, Tik-Tok and Twitter

• sender's preference for a certain means of communication

- social media lives are George Simion's favourite means of communication

4. Conclusions

In conclusion, George Simion, the leader of the AUR party (Alliance for the Union of Romanians), is a very skilled politician, who, in recent years, has grown a lot in the polls, has accumulated a lot of political capital, both for himself and for his party, and is, at the moment, the engine of the party. The niche audience that he has managed to attract is built on former PRM (the Greater Romania Party) sympathizers, who are very receptive to the nationalist, populist, sovereignist and, of course, anti-globalisation, anti-Western and anti-EU rhetoric.

George Simion's strategy is to convey his opinions on as many media channels as possible, being very active online, on digital platforms such as blogs, social networks (Facebook, Tik Tok, LinkedIn, Twitter, etc.), mobile applications and podcasts. George Simion is a highly publicized figure, in general; he also appears in the mainstream media, on TV, on the radio and in newspapers, and hence, his supporters are of all ages and from all backgrounds.

This anti-EU, anti-Western, anti-globalisation rhetoric of his is highly appreciated by the receivers. George Simion identifies with the

receivers; he tells them he is just as dissatisfied as they are, and that he is fighting for the good of the Romanian people, and for the good the country in general, not only with the EU leaders, but also with the political leaders in our country, who are portrayed as vassals to those in Brussels. "Persuasion is more likely to succeed if you can establish some ideological similarities between yourself and the audience" (Newsom, D&Carrell, B, 2004).

According to the experts, opinions are temporary and unstable, but over time some of them may become attitudes, which are more stable, and then they become beliefs, which are the hardest to change. Indeed, this is a complex process that takes time and depends on several factors. The same is true about these anti-EU messages constantly promoted on all media channels, especially in the digital space. For some receivers, they turn from simple opinions into attitudes and then, into beliefs even. As explained by Newsom and Carrel (2004), "[w]hen we accumulate information and experiences, we form opinions. Some of these opinions tend to cluster, being particularly significant for a particular attitude. Then clusters of attitudes tend to cluster together, supporting a particular belief."

On the other hand, it is true that the European Union has also made a series of communication mistakes, in the sense that the information in the EU's promotion campaigns is generally rather rational; they rely a lot on "logos". Hence, for some of the recipients of EU messages, the final impression is that some measures are only being imposed on us from Brussels, and we are forced to adopt them, without anyone taking our opinion, rights and traditions into account. Such gaps in communication from the EU are immediately exploited by the promoters of anti-EU, anti-Western and anti-globalisation attitudes.

Today, the information about the European Union coming from the EU is no longer so visible to Romanians. An equally big fault lies with our governors, who, like their counterparts in Brussels, have remained rather practical in communication, and hence, the generations after

Romania's accession have no longer been as well informed about the EU values, about the benefits of being an EU citizen, etc.

In my opinion, due to such a defective communication strategy, both from Brussels and from Bucharest, all kinds of fake information (fake news), disinformation and conspiracy theories have emerged in the digital space, which have all had a negative impact on Romanians' perception of the European Union.

Following the conclusions presented above, a series of proposals can be made, which, in my opinion, can be seen as viable solutions to significantly improve the image and the perception of the European Union among Romanians. Implementing a new communication strategy could lead to combating Euroscepticism and reducing anti-EU attitudes, in general:

> more effective communication strategies are needed at EU level, which should include an appeal to emotion (pathos) among EU citizens, besides the appeal to reason (logos). This way, the EU leaders together with the MEPs and the rest of the apparatus in Brussels would be perceived as more humane, closer to the citizens, not just as officials who do not understand them and who do not identify with the community;

> these new communication strategies should be in line not only with the European values, but also with the values specific to each nation. Because we are all European citizens, we do have and support a set of common values; however, national values should also be considered;

> there is a need for a more effective EU promotion strategy at national level, which should be carried out jointly by Brussels and Bucharest, and which should take into account, as previously stated, both common European values and Romanian national values. Such a strategy could counter the anti-globalization rhetoric focused on the loss of national identity;

> at national level, more specific communication is needed about what it means to love one's country, traditions and ancestral

customs, or to be a patriot. There is nothing wrong with that and it has nothing to do with hatred of other nations, with discrimination of any kind, or with the common values we share at a European level - they should not be in contradiction;

➢ there is also a need for a greater awareness of the fake-news phenomenon and everything it encompasses. This can be achieved by presenting more accurate information about the EU in the mass media, and by imposing sanctions on the guilty, which the EU and some member countries have already started to;

➢ this information on the European Union should also be circulated in education institutions, so that the young generations learn about the values of the EU and thus, be proud to be both Romanian and European citizens.

Bibliography:

1. Chelcea, S. (2019, 09 11). *România socială*. Preluat de pe romaniasocială.ro: https://www.romaniasociala.ro/influenteaza-participarea-in-retelele-de-socializare-orientarea-opiniei-publice-spre-dreapta/

2. Redacția. (2024, 03 24). *Analiză DataReportal/ România digitală în 2024*. Preluat de pe economedia.ro: https://economedia.ro/analiza-datareportal-romania-digitala-in-2024-peste-18-milioane-de-romani-sunt-conectati-la-internet-iar-peste-13-milioane-sunt-in-social-media.html

3. Newsom, D. & Carrell, B. (2004). *Redactarea materialelor de relații publice*. București: Polirom.

4. Simion George-Facebook.

Artificial Intelligence as a PR Tool: A Case Study

Adela Celine Voicu-Dungan

Abstract: *The paper aims to analyse how artificial intelligence (AI) is transforming the field of public relations (PR), focusing on innovations, challenges, and the perspectives of industry specialists. The purpose of this paper is to understand the changes in the field by closely examining the accuracy of AI in PR activities and the limits that technology has yet to surpass. Artificial intelligence is designed to provide new ways of approaching public relations and handling public relations activities, helping to accomplish tasks more easily and quickly. However, mastering the use of AI requires additional competences for PR specialists, if they intend to remain relevant on the labour market.*

Keywords: *artificial intelligence, public relations, digital media, innovation, content generation*

1. Introduction

The primary objective of this paper is to draw attention to the significant changes AI brings to the PR industry, highlighting the main elements and features of AI tools designed to improve PR activities. This paper is

based on the hypothesis that AI has the potential to transform PR by automating routine tasks, enhancing data analysis, and generating creative content. AI is recognised for its ability to mimic human capacities such as reasoning, learning, planning, and creativity, being a pillar for the digital evolution of society. Its importance is acknowledged at the European Union level and worldwide. AI is already omnipresent in daily routines, from internet browsing and online shopping to virtual assistants, automatic translations, text, and image generation, and even for enhancing the efficiency of public services.

2. Research methods

The research methodology involves a content analysis of online forums discussing AI in public relations, experiments with AI-generated text and images (using tools such as ChatGPT and DALL-E), and a comparison of AI performance across languages to assess its applicability in PR. A questionnaire will also be analysed to determine how accurately individuals can distinguish between AI-generated and human-written content.

This study explores the applicability of artificial intelligence within the PR industry, focusing on its impact on the field and specific applications like automating repetitive tasks and generating content to enhance communication strategies. A case study examines the views of PR and communication specialists on the integration of AI into their daily tasks.

An experiment was conducted to test AI's capability to generate text and images for PR campaigns, comparing its effectiveness for various PR tasks in English and Romanian. Additionally, a questionnaire assesses the public's ability to differentiate between AI and human-created texts, providing insights into user perception and highlighting the practical advantages and limitations of AI in public relations.

3. Results

The analysis of international forums on the topic of AI in PR, shows that artificial intelligence is widely used, mainly for drafting text, main ideas, outlining, brainstorming, summarising content. Among the main tools using AI is ChatGPT, one of the most popular and well-known tools. And while AI is proving to be very useful according to comments from PR specialists, human creativity, note taking and editing are essential. Ethical considerations and data privacy are very important issues. Forum users perceive artificial intelligence as a complement to human skills, not a replacement.

The Romanian articles in discussing the topic of AI in PR, highlight the fact that artificial intelligence is revolutionizing public relations, automating repetitive tasks and improving the personalization of communication. It is stated that human expertise remains crucial for complex strategies and interpersonal relationships. Nevertheless, to make the most out of these technologies, it is mandatory to retrain PR specialists, thus help them keep up with changes. All these articles can be found in the references section of this work.

ChatGPT is used for text generation and DALL-E is used for image generation. These are two types of artificial intelligence developed by OpenAI. ChatGPT is a natural language model used for text generation and coherent conversations, while DALL-E is an image generation model capable of creating images based on textual descriptions. The use of artificial intelligence for text and image creation in public relations helps PR specialists with advanced tools, providing support in communication, making it more effective. AI can quickly generate different texts such as press releases, blog articles, social media posts or other types of content. This ability of AI to quickly produce consistent and tailored content for each communication channel allows PR specialists to focus on more complex communication strategies and customer relationship management.

Fig. 1. (Source: ChatGPT generated image EN
– Tree planting campaign)

Fig. 2. (Source: ChatGPT generated image RO
– Tree planting campaign)

This experiment shows that ChatGPT and DALL-E are useful for content generation, both as a source of inspiration for the creation of PR-specific texts and for the creation of images for campaigns promoting various activities of a company.

Following the comparison conducted for the study, we find that the differences between the texts generated in the two languages are rather due to the differences in expression in the two cultures, which shows that ChatGPT adapts to the used language, which in my opinion suggests that this tool can also be used in Romanian to generate with a high degree of accuracy the information generated. It is not necessarily obligatory to generate a text in English and then translate it into Romanian.

After examining the images, it can be concluded that there are no significant differences in generating images in English vs. Romanian,

because in both languages we can obtain images relevant for social media and PR activity with a given theme. However, in English the text generated on images has fewer typos than the Romanian text. At the same time, the spelling accuracy in either language is random.

The questionnaire results on human identification of whether a text is AI- generated or not, (see the texts below), indicate that there are difficulties in correctly identifying AI-generated texts from human-written texts, especially for texts that are short and concise. Participants' justifications reflect common perceptions related to formal language and the use of emojis as clues for identifying AI-generated texts. However, emotional and personal tone can sometimes be misleading, even if the text is AI-generated, when people perceive it as human.

4. Conclusions

Artificial intelligence is becoming increasingly important in public relations, offering numerous advantages such as streamlining and automating tasks. Studies by the Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) indicate that while AI can handle repetitive tasks and generate content tailored to specific audiences, it cannot replace human creativity and expertise. (CIPR, 2018, "Humans still needed. An analysis of skills and tools in public relations).

Despite its efficiency, AI raises ethical and privacy concerns that require strict regulations. Current AI tools like ChatGPT and DALL-E face challenges in generating text on images in both Romanian and English, limiting their full applicability in PR. Future research should focus on continuous education, strategic planning, and developing ethical guidelines to integrate AI responsibly into PR. Additionally, testing multiple AI tools across various languages and conducting interviews with industry experts could provide more insights into AI's performance and its impact on the industry. As technology advances, companies must adapt their communication and PR strategies.

Bibliography:

1. CIPR. (2023). *Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools and the Impact on Public Relations (PR) Practice*. Chartered Institute of Public Relations.

2. CIPR. (2020). *Ethics Guide to Artificial Intelligence in PR.* Chartered Institute of Public Relations.

3. CIPR. (2020). *The Effects of AI on the Professions. A Literature Repository*. Chartered Institute of Public Relations.

4. CIPR. (2019). *Skills Guide: An Introduction to AI in PR.* Chartered Institute of Public Relations.

5. EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT. (2023). *AI Threats & Opportunities*. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/topics/en/article/20200918STO874 04/artificial- intelligence-threats-and-opportunities. accessed on 22 April 2024.

6. EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT. (2023). *What is AI and how it is used*. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/topics/en/article/20200827STO858 04/what-is- artificial-intelligence-and-how-is-it-used accessed on 22 April 2024.

7. EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT. (2022). *The Future of AI.* https://www.europarl.europa.eu/topics/en/article/20220422STO277 05/the-future- of-ai-the-parliament-s-roadmap-for-the-eu, accessed on 27 April 2024.

8. IPRA. (2023). *AI's implications for PR. It's time to step up.* https://www.ipra.org/news/itle/itl-510-ais-implications-for-pr-its-time-to-step-up/, accessed on 30 April 2024.

9. IPRA, CIPR. (2018). *Humans Still Needed. An Analysis of Skills and Tools in Public Relations.*

https://newsroom.cipr.co.uk/humans-still-needed---research-project-reveals-impact-of-artificial-intelligence-on-public-relations/ accessed on April 2024

10. LinkedIn, Safety Approach. (2024). *Planting activity*. https://www.linkedin.com/posts/safety-approach_environment-sustainable-planting-activity-7129152560363413505-pHN-/, accessed on 35 April 2024

11. Parlamentul European. (2021). *Ce este inteligența artificială ci cum este utilizată?* https://www.europarl.europa.eu/topics/ro/article/20200827STO858 04/ce-este- inteligenta-artificiala-si-cum-este-utilizata.

12. Rotar, D. (2007). *Inteligență artificială. Note de curs. Caiet de seminar. Îndrumător de laborator.* Bacău: Editura Alma Mater.

The Role of Telecommunication Technologies in Communication

Andreea Elena Anescu

Abstract: *As I grew up, I could see technology "growing up" as well. By "growing up" I mean evolving. I could see my own family going from no phone in the house and using the only landline phone around, owned by a neighbour, or going a few kilometers away to use a "card phone", i.e. a public coin- and phonecard-operated payphone, to having mobile phones with "buttons" and then computers, and now, to having touchscreen phones, always connected to the Internet, being able to transfer money any minute, day or night, to videocall me, or to read the news. However, with the unlimited access to information and apps for different purposes also comes danger. Unfortunately, my family's data has somehow been leaked, probably due to online shopping, and consequently, we receive phishing messages quite often. Luckily, we have been reading about them and so far, we have never been victims of such cyberattacks. The aim of this research paper is to describe the evolution of telecommunication technologies in communication.*

1. Introduction

Today's well-known concept of "access to information" had a long way to go until it ended up the way we know it nowadays. Before, people could read the news only from the newspaper. It was delivered once a day, and they could only read about the events that had happened the previous days and maybe some forecasts. It was impossible to learn about the live events that were happening. Some time ago, the only way to communicate with people was through letters, fax, and then, landline phones.

Television, the way we know it today, was developed through a series of innovations in the US and the UK between 1920 and 1930. Today, we benefit from slim screens, a lot of colours and high-definition resolution. Letters have become text messages, and there is no longer need to wait until meeting someone - we can now videocall! Communication, with everything it includes, has gone a long way to become the way we know it today.

2. Evolution of communication

The origins of human communication are based on spoken language, which enables people to convey information, emotions and develop social relationships. Oral stories and traditions play a vital role in the transmission of knowledge and culture from generation to generation.

The appearance of writing around 3200 BC revolutionised communication. The earliest forms of writing, such as cuneiform and hieroglyphs, allowed information to be recorded and transmitted over greater distances and across generations. The Phoenician alphabet, and later, the Greek alphabet, simplified writing and expanded access to knowledge.

179

The development of writing materials, such as papyrus in ancient Egypt and parchment in ancient Greece and Rome, facilitated the creation and dissemination of written documents, allowing for better preservation of information.

Johannes Gutenberg's invention of the printing press in the 15th century was a major leap in communication. Printing enabled the mass production of books and other written materials, democratized access to education and information, and spurred the Renaissance and Reformation.

In the 19th century, the invention of the telegraph and the telephone revolutionised long-distance communication. The telegraph enabled the rapid transmission of messages via the Morse code, while the telephone facilitated direct voice communication, shortening distances and improving response times.

In the 20th century, radio and television brought information and entertainment directly into our homes. Radio enabled large-scale broadcasting of news and programs, and television added a visual dimension and became a major source of information and entertainment.

The advent of computers and the Internet in the second half of the 20th century ushered in a new communication era. The Internet has changed the way we get information, communicate and collaborate, enabling instant exchange of global data.

With the advent of messaging apps, written communication has become much simpler, faster and more efficient in conveying personal and professional messages. And hence, communication started to evolve more and more quickly.

And hence, communication started to evolve more and more quickly. Communication has undergone a significant transformation in the last twenty years, thanks to the emergence of social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn. These platforms have revolutionized the way we connect with others, enabling instant interactions and the creation of online communities. They have become

indispensable tools for cultivating personal connections, facilitating business growth, and spreading valuable information.

The introduction of smartphones merged multiple communication functions into one portable device. They have transformed communication through constant accessibility and through applications that facilitate interaction and information.

Today, artificial intelligence and virtual assistants such as Siri and Alexa are improving the communication experience even more, by providing personalized assistance and automating daily tasks.

The evolution of communication has been characterized by continuous innovation, with each stage bringing significant improvements to the way people transmit and receive information. From oral communication to advanced digital technologies, progress has been constant and has had a profound impact on society.

Today, we have various communication channels, such as face-to-face channels, which include interviews, public statements, courses and speeches; written channels, which include newspapers, posters, letters, books and press releases; and last but not least, technological channels, which include television, radio, computers and telephones.

To maximise communication impact, the channel should be chosen carefully. To this end, several aspects should first be considered, such as the target audience, the information being conveyed or the prior knowledge that the receivers may or may not have related to the topic.

3. Evolution of telecommunication technologies

Communication has undergone a significant transformation in the last twenty years, thanks to the emergence of social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn. These platforms have revolutionized the way we connect with others, enabling instant interactions and the creation of online communities. They have become indispensable tools for cultivating personal connections, facilitating business growth, and spreading valuable information.

The introduction of smartphones merged multiple communication functions into one portable device. They have transformed communication through constant accessibility and through applications that facilitate interaction and information.

Today, artificial intelligence and virtual assistants such as Siri and Alexa are improving the communication experience even more, by providing personalised assistance and automating daily tasks.

The evolution of communication has been characterised by continuous innovation, with each stage bringing significant improvements to the way people transmit and receive information. From oral communication to advanced digital technologies, progress has been constant and has had a profound impact on society.

Today, we have various communication channels, such as face-to-face channels, which include interviews, public statements, courses and speeches; written channels, which include newspapers, posters, letters, books and press releases; and last but not least, technological channels, which include television, radio, computers and telephones.

To maximise communication impact, the channel should be chosen carefully. To this end, several aspects should first be considered, such as the target audience, the information being conveyed or the prior knowledge that the receivers may or may not have related to the topic.

Mobile communication refers to the technologies and services that facilitate the transmission of voice, data and multimedia between mobile devices, such as mobile phones, cellular networks or various telecommunications standards that make possible the mobility of users and access to the Internet from anywhere. Mobile communication is not only limited to smartphones, but also includes other portable devices such as tablets or laptops.

Mobile communication began in the 1940s, with the appearance of the first mobile radio networks, used by emergency services or the armed forces. Given that it was the first time the world came into contact with mobile networks, it should be mentioned that they were limited to a small coverage area, and radio frequencies were used for voice

transmission. With the advent of the first generation of mobile communications (1G), only 40 years later, analog technology was used, and voice calls were also facilitated. However, the first mobile communications technologies limited the capacity and quality of calls.

In the 1990s, the second generation (2G) brought the switch to digital technology, offering better sound quality and introducing text messaging (SMS) services. 2G marked the beginning of the modern era of mobile communications, allowing not only voice calls but also simple data transmission. In the early 2000s, the third generation (3G) enabled higher data speed and mobile Internet access, paving the way for complex mobile applications and multimedia.

The fourth generation (4G), launched around 2010, revolutionized mobile communications by offering data speed up to 100 times faster than 3G, enabling high-quality video streaming and online gaming. Today, the fifth generation (5G) promises even higher data speed, ultra-low latency and the ability to connect large numbers of devices simultaneously, transforming the Internet of Things (IoT) and other advanced applications.

4. Conclusions

In conclusion, human communication has evolved dramatically from its origins in spoken language to the advanced digital technologies of today. Initially, oral stories and traditions were crucial for passing down knowledge and culture. The advent of writing around 3200 BC marked a revolutionary shift, allowing information to be recorded and transmitted over distances and across generations. Innovations such as the Phoenician and Greek alphabets, papyrus, parchment, and Gutenberg's printing press further democratized access to information and spurred societal advancements.

The 19th century saw the telegraph and telephone revolutionise long-distance communication, while the 20th century introduced radio and television, bringing information and entertainment into homes. The rise of computers and the Internet in the late 20th century ushered in a

new era of instant global data exchange. Social networks and smartphones have further transformed communication, making it more accessible and efficient.

Today, artificial intelligence and virtual assistants enhance the communication experience by providing personalized assistance and automating tasks. The evolution of communication channels (face-to-face, written, and technological) mirrors continuous innovation, each stage significantly improving how people transmit and receive information. To maximise communication impact, it is essential to carefully choose the appropriate channel, considering the target audience, the information being conveyed, and the receivers' prior knowledge.

In light of the present research, it can be argued that it is not easy to consider other perspectives and manage a difficult situation, but surely empathic communication can be very helpful in a work team. The findings only apply to the HR department at FORVIA HELLA Timișoara. There are, however, some general guidelines. The Empathic communication guide provides the following seven tips: Put yourself in the other person's position, Be honest, Listen actively, Be understanding, Investigate, Be supportive, and Make compromises.

The results confirm some of the theories, such as claiming that nonviolent communication is an intelligent strategy in the internal communication of an HR department. Empathy completely changes the work environment and increases communication quality. Moreover, it may even improve efficiency and facilitate authentic connections within a professional group. It is also interesting that empathic communication is an ingenious way to solve difficult situations or conflicts among group members. As a negotiation strategy, the art of collaboration dominates in this context, because emphasis is placed more on relationships than on interest. Of course, creativity and out-of-the-box thinking can only bring advantages to the group. Channeling energy towards the creative resolution of any difficult situation is indisputable evidence that

nonviolent communication can be used as a smart negotiation strategy, in both personal and professional life.

Bibliography:

1. Anescu, A. *Utilizarea tehnologiilor de comunicații în comunicare, Dissertation paper*, June 2024, pp. 8-9.
2. *** https://ro.pinterest.com/pin/145170787981203774/ (last accessed June 2024).
3. *** https://ro.pinterest.com/pin/111323422032489189/ (last accessed June 2024).
4. *** ChatGPT https://chatgpt.com/ (last accessed June 2024).

A Comparative Analysis of Online Web Development Tutorials

Laura Borșoș

Abstract: *This paper investigates the usefulness of online HTML and CSS tutorials, with a focus on four platforms: Coursera, Udemy, Khan Academy, and Codecademy. Each tutorial is assessed in terms of format, available exercises, usability, and final outcomes. Based on a comparative analysis, each criterion is rated on a 1 to 5 scale, where 1 means low satisfaction and 5 means high satisfaction. According to the findings, Khan Academy and Udemy provide the most extensive exercises in well-structured, beginner-friendly lectures. The comprehensive learning strategy offered by Codecademy is constrained by its demo format and subscription model. Although Coursera provides in-depth theoretical material, it is less user-friendly for novices. The study highlights the necessity of more multi-participant studies in the future, to eliminate subjectivity issues and to assess the long-term retention of acquired skills.*

Keywords: *Online tutorials, web development, E-learning platforms, learning accessibility*

1. Introduction

This research involved a comparative analysis of four online tutorials designed to teach web development using HTML and CSS. The tutorials, available on Coursera, Udemy, Khan Academy, and Codecademy, were evaluated based on their structure, the quality and variety of exercises provided, accessibility, and overall effectiveness in teaching fundamental web development skills.

By systematically assessing these criteria and assigning ratings on a 1 to 5 scale, the study aimed to identify the strengths and weaknesses of each platform, offer insights into their suitability for beginners, and suggest potential areas for improvement in online web development education.

2. Research methods

Comparative analysis was the main research method used to assess four different online tutorials that teach HTML and CSS web development. The tutorials are provided by four well-known educational platforms: Coursera, Udemy, Khan Academy, and Codecademy. The main goal was to systematically compare these tutorials in terms of efficiency, based on a number of factors, such as the way in which they are structured, the kind and quality of the exercises they provide, how easily accessible they are, and the overall outcomes students are expected to achieve.

The first step was to carefully examine the content and structure of each tutorial. This required assessing the comprehensiveness of the content, the logical progression of topics, and instruction clarity. The range and difficulty of the activities provided were then used to evaluate each tutorial, as these hands-on tasks are essential to bolster the theory. Accessibility was another major priority; special attention was paid to the platform's usability, the availability of interactive help, and the financial consequences for students. To guarantee full comprehension, the tutorials were assessed both individually and in relation to their

suitability for novices in web development. The goal of the research was to provide an unbiased analysis of the tutorials' overall performance, by assigning a 1 to 5 score to each criterion.

This method made it possible to analyse the advantages and disadvantages of each tutorial in detail, which allowed me to determine whether the tutorial was appropriate for inexperienced web developers. The conclusions of the research provide insightful information about how online learning platforms operate, and point to areas that might use some improvement, such as adding more interactive components and enhancing learner assistance. The comparative approach used in the study also emphasizes the importance of context when assessing educational materials, as the effectiveness of a tutorial can vary depending on learners' specific learning preferences and previous knowledge.

3. Results

The assessment of the four online tutorials on web development with HTML and CSS from Coursera, Udemy, Khan Academy, and Codecademy focused on a number of important factors, including the overall structure of the tutorials, the range and diversity of the exercises provided, the cost and use of the tutorials, and their overall effectiveness in transferring the desired information. This diverse approach made it possible to fully comprehend the advantages and shortcomings of each platform.

The findings reveal notable differences in the structure of the tutorials on each platform. In particular, Udemy and Khan Academy stand out for their user-friendly and well-structured platforms, which makes them perfect for novices. These platforms have managed to improve the learning process considerably, by providing distinct menus, divided classes, and projected completion times.

An important additional consideration in the assessment was the quality and diversity of the activities. Again, Khan Academy and Udemy rank first, thanks to the richness of their thoughtfully designed

tests and practical activities that supplement the course material. As for Codecademy, it combines practical applications with theoretical knowledge, offering instantaneous feedback that helps reinforce learning. On the other hand, Coursera falls far behind in this area, as it relies more on external resources and theoretical textbooks than on hands-on learning activities. Therefore, users who are used to applying concepts in real-time may find their learning process hampered by this lack of practical experience.

Accessibility, in terms of both costs and usage, was another important criterion. Khan Academy seems to be the leader in the field, as it is completely free to use and has an intuitive interface that facilitates browsing and going back to previous sections. Udemy also provides free access to a significant number of tutorials, but it requires the creation of an account. Both free and paid content is available on Codecademy; however, some tutorials can only be accessed in demo mode, unless users have premium membership. Coursera provides the fewest free tutorials, which usually require a subscription for full access. Despite this financial barrier, its thoughtfully designed menu nevertheless facilitates learning.

The final tutorial learning outcomes allowed for an overall assessment of each platform in terms of effectiveness. Due to their well-organized, clear methods and numerous practical examples, both Khan Academy and Udemy succeeded in delivering on their promises to teach the basics of HTML and CSS. Despite providing valuable knowledge, Coursera is not as appropriate for complete beginners as it is for those who want to use their previous knowledge and skills to build an online portfolio. Codecademy seems promising at first, but its demo restrictions do not allow users to watch the entire tutorial without a subscription.

The table below shows users' satisfaction with each platform on a 1 to 5 rating scale, where 1 means "very satisfied" and 5 means "not satisfied at all." Each rating criterion is provided individually for each platform, as follows: the structure of the tutorial, the activities provided

in the tutorial, the accessibility of the tutorial, and the final learning outcome. The information is essentially the same, but the categories that were previously evaluated from "very satisfied" to "not satisfied at all" have now been converted into 1 to 5 ratings. This method makes it easier to compare the four platforms under analysis (Coursera, Udemy, Khan Academy, and Codecademy) and provides a clear, unbiased assessment of each tutorial in terms of effectiveness.

Final score				
	Coursera	Khan Academy	Udemy	Codecademy
Tutorial structure	3	2	1	4
Exercises	4	1	3	2
Tutorial accessibility	3	1	2	4
Final outcome	3	1	1	4

The findings reveal there is variation in the ability of each tutorial to teach HTML and CSS. Thanks to their well-organised methodology and numerous hands-on activities, Khan Academy and Udemy successfully delivered on their promises to provide basic knowledge. Despite providing excellent content, Coursera is less appropriate for novices, as it places more emphasis on using pre-existing skills than on learning new ones from scratch. Even though Codecademy showed

initial potential, it restricts access to the full learning experience without a subscription. These findings highlight the importance of choosing a platform that should fit learners' requirements, financial constraints, and current proficiency level, so as to achieve optimal learning outcomes.

4. Conclusions

It can be concluded that each of the four analysed educational platforms (Coursera, Udemy, Khan Academy, and Codecademy) reveals unique advantages and disadvantages. Both Khan Academy and Udemy do an excellent job providing accessible, well-organized tutorials with in-depth activities that are particularly helpful for beginners. Codecademy provides an integrated learning approach by combining theory with real-world tasks. However, learning progress may be hampered by the platform's demo structure and limited access without membership. Coursera's complicated structure and scarcity of free resources makes it less suitable for absolute beginners, even if it does provide in-depth theoretical information and practical applications.

The present research could be expanded to include more people with different backgrounds, in order to reduce subjectivity biases. In addition, to fully understand the educational effectiveness of these platforms, more research should be conducted to assess knowledge and skill retention over time. This all-encompassing method would guarantee a more thorough assessment of online tutorials, assisting instructors and students in choosing the best resources for web development education.

Bibliography:

1. Clark, R. C. & Mayer, R. (2016). *E-Learning and the Science of Instruction: Proven Guidelines for Consumers and Designers of Multimedia Learning*. John Wiley & Sons.
2. Guragain, N. (2016). *E-Learning Benefits and Applications*. Metropolia Ammattikorkeakoulu. http://www.theseus.fi/handle/10024/105103.
3. Jazayeri, M. (2007). *Some Trends in Web Application Development*. Accessed April 8, 2024. https://ieeexplore.ieee.org/abstract/document/4221621/authors#authors.
4. *10 Best Online Learning Platforms in 2024*. (2024). Accessed May 28, 2024. https://sites.google.com/site/videoblocksreview/online-learning-platforms.
5. *The Evolution of Distance Learning*. (2019). Tulane School of Professional Advancement. January 17, 2019. https://sopa.tulane.edu/blog/evolution-distance-learning.

The Use of Artificial Intelligence in Graphic Design

Maria Galdea

Abstract: *This paper investigates the transformative potential of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in graphic design. By leveraging advanced computational techniques, AI tools promise to revolutionise traditional workflows, boosting creativity, efficiency, and personalisation. The research focuses on a practical application of AI in the development of a comprehensive graphic identity for an American-themed restaurant located in Timișoara, Romania, highlighting the advantages and challenges of using artificial intelligence. Key methods include a comprehensive literature review, a survey targeting the Romanian graphic designers' community, and applied research to identify current trends and specific needs in AI tools. The findings reveal significant insights into the impact of AI on design workflows, offering valuable contributions to both the scientific community and industry practices.*

Keywords: *artificial intelligence, graphic design, generative AI, restaurant branding, visual identity, AI-powered design*

1. Introduction

Artificial intelligence (AI) enables machines to emulate human intelligence through machine learning. Picture machines that can learn from data, recognise patterns, and adapt their behaviour – that's the essence of AI. This technology equips computers to perform tasks that have traditionally required human intelligence, such as understanding language, recognising objects, and making complex decisions. For example, self-driving cars utilise AI for these tasks: they analyse vast amounts of data to identify patterns and adjust their behaviour based on experience, continually improving over time (Gallardo-Rodriguez and Jimenez Rodriguez, 2023).

Graphic design forms the foundation of visual communication. It encompasses a wide array of creative pursuits that employ images, fonts, colours, and shapes to convey messages, evoke emotions, and engage audiences across various platforms. It involves the art of strategic arrangement, where these elements come together to create impactful visual compositions that resonate with viewers. Graphic design influences how we interpret and interact with the world around us, from printed materials to digital environments (Jia et al., 2023).

The intersection of AI and graphic design involves utilising machine learning to create and enhance graphics. AI tools fall into two main categories: generative design tools and AI-assisted design tools. Generative tools, such as DALL-E 2 and Midjourney, can swiftly generate images based on user input, although they raise ethical concerns due to the potential use of unlicensed art in their training data. In contrast, AI-assisted tools streamline the design process by suggesting colour schemes, translating drawings into code, and generating initial graphic package concepts. These tools eliminate many time-consuming tasks, allowing designers to focus on more strategic and creative work (Fatima, 2023).

2. Research methods

The primary objective of this paper is to investigate the perceptions and perspectives of professional designers concerning the use of artificial intelligence in graphic design. This study will explore the current limitations, future implications, requirements, and concerns related to the integration of artificial intelligence into the graphic design process.

The following research questions will be addressed in this paper:

Q1: What is the status of artificial intelligence in graphic design, and what future needs exist?

Q2: In what ways can artificial intelligence enhance the process of creating a graphic package for an American restaurant in Timișoara?

To address research question Q1, an analysis of scientific papers relevant to the chosen field was conducted. Based on this analysis, a survey was developed and distributed to the graphic designer community in Romania.

Data collection methods
Search field:

AI in graphic design, Designing with AI, AI collaboration in Graphic Design, Integration of AI technologies in Graphic Design
Publication date: 2018 – 2024
Databases: Google Scholar

Selection Procedure
For this specific methodological approach, only scientific papers and books were selected, excluding reviews and PowerPoint presentations. The titles, keywords, and abstracts of the papers were recorded. A preliminary screening of the articles was conducted using the inclusion and exclusion criteria outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Papers/books relevant to the field of graphic design. Papers/books that include introductions of graphic design tools that use AI. Conference papers/books and journals. Papers/books including keywords for AI-assisted graphic design.	Papers that develop the topic of artificial intelligence in a context other than graphic design. Irrelevant papers and with no keywords specific to AI in graphic design.

Identification

The initial search for relevant academic literature began on Google Scholar, where a comprehensive set of keywords was examined across the first five pages of results. This search identified 210 potential research papers. Zotero was employed as a research assistant to facilitate the collection and organisation of the papers. Following a review of the titles, keywords, and abstracts, 43 papers were retained. A brief skim of the materials was conducted, during which inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied. This process resulted in 24 selected works. These 24 scientific papers were thoroughly examined and utilised to address the research questions, as well as to contribute to the introduction of the dissertation.

To validate and verify research question Q2, two graphic packages were created that utilise artificial intelligence tools for the generation of design elements, either partially or fully. Based on the accumulated experience, a set of best practices has been proposed.

3. Results

The existing literature demonstrates a growing interest in the potential of AI to enhance design processes. After analysing 20 scientific papers and 2 books, the tools mentioned that are based on artificial intelligence were extracted.

This summarised the AI tools utilised for creating design elements, as well as those employed for developing design products (Dehman, 2023; Fatima, 2023; Felzmann et al., 2020; Gallardo-Rodriguez and Jimenez Rodriguez, 2023; Guo et al., 2021; Hughes et al., 2021; Jia et al., 2023; Li, 2021; Liu et al., 2021, 2023; Mustafa, 2023; Ndukwe, 2022; Osipov and Ulimova, 2013; Patil, 2023; Rezk, 2023; Rezwana and Maher, 2023; Rospigliosi, 2023; Seeber et al., 2020; University of Sydney, Australia and Meron, 2022; Verganti et al., 2020; Wernersson et al., 2023; Zheng et al., 2019).
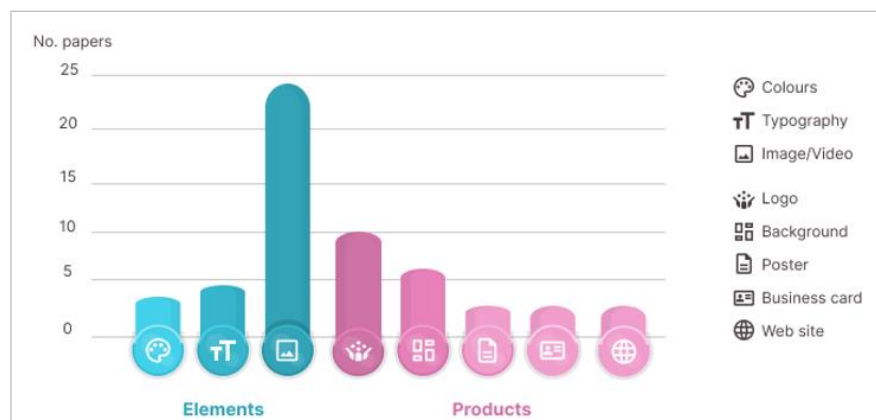

Fig. 1. Number of scientific papers referencing
a specific category of AI tools used in graphic design

It is noted that the most numerous AI tools used for creating design elements are those dedicated to images, illustrations, or videos. In terms

of AI tools employed in the development of design products, the most frequently mentioned are those for generating logos (Liu et al., 2021).

To understand the graphic design community's perspective on AI, a survey was conducted. Although the participant pool was not extensive, it included design professionals, providing a valuable snapshot of their experiences and opinions.

The survey began its inquiry into artificial intelligence with the fourth question, asking respondents to identify any AI tools they use within their design workflow. Notably, 19% of participants indicated that they do not currently utilise AI tools. The remaining 81% of responses highlighted a diverse range of technologies adopted, with some commonalities emerging.

Software from the Adobe suite, including features such as Firefly, Generative Fill, Photoshop AI, and Illustrator AI, received 16 mentions. Text generation tools were also widely used, with ChatGPT receiving 20 mentions compared to just 4 for its Google counterpart, Gemini.

In the realm of generative AI capable of transforming text prompts into images, illustrations, or videos, the Midjourney app secured 16 mentions, significantly outpacing DALL-E, which garnered only 5 mentions. Other tools in this category include NightCafe Creator, Canva, Ideogram, WarpFusion, Visions of Chaos, GettyAI, Freepik AI, and Gencraft.

Question five examined how designers utilise AI tools. The majority (66.7%) reported using them for digital image creation, followed by colour palette generation (23.8%). Interestingly, none of the respondents indicated using AI tools for business card design.

The analysis revealed a consensus: while AI is still in its early stages within graphic design, its potential is undeniable. The most frequently cited benefit is the significant reduction in design time, allowing designers to focus more on the creative aspects of their work. Additionally, AI is perceived as a valuable brainstorming partner, providing a wealth of options when inspiration is lacking.

However, concerns were also raised. Common themes included a lack of accuracy in certain areas, such as illegible fonts, nonsensical wording, and anatomical inconsistencies. Participants also highlighted the need for clear instructions to guide the AI, noting that this can be time-consuming, as AI does not immediately grasp a designer's intent.

Graphics package implemented with the help of artificial intelligence

Nestled in the heart of Timișoara, Sandy's Diner encapsulates the classic American diner experience of the 1960s. This chapter explores the diner's current visual identity and proposes a new direction through two graphic package options: one that is entirely AI-generated and another that utilises various AI tools for a semi-automated approach.

This case study demonstrates the potential of AI in streamlining design workflows, allowing designers to focus on more strategic creative decisions. However, it also underscores the importance of ethical considerations and the ongoing need to refine and maintain AI design tools.

Sandy's Diner's current logo effectively captures its retro vibe. The depiction of a 1960s-style waitress, complete with bright red hair, a white bandana, and a striped shirt, embodies the diner's welcoming and lively spirit. This detailed logo evokes nostalgia and invites customers to enjoy a classic culinary experience. However, its intricate design can present challenges when integrating it into smaller graphic materials.

The proposed new logo for Sandy's Diner offers a sleek and modern interpretation of the brand identity. It features the restaurant's name in a classic black serif font, enhanced by a distinctive element: the letter "e" in the word "diner" is replaced by a burger icon, reinforcing the diner theme of the establishment.

Fig. 2. Comparison between the old and the new logo

Fig. 3. Comparison between the existing colour palette
and the proposed colour palette

Sandy's Diner's current colour scheme features a three-colour palette that instantly evokes the nostalgia of 1960s American diner culture. The proposed new four-colour palette, while retaining the familiar red, introduces a modern, sophisticated vibe with a bold twist, creating a look that is noticeably different yet refined.

The existing visual identity leans heavily on food photography, featuring images of fries, burgers, coffee, and desserts to showcase the diner's offerings and give customers a clear sense of the menu. In contrast, the new visual identity adopts a clean, minimalist aesthetic, conveying a sense of contemporary sophistication.

Colourful posters and cluttered menus are a thing of the past. To ensure customer expectations align with the actual dining experience, the client opted to exclude specific food photography from the new visual identity. This eliminates the potential for misrepresentation that could arise from digital depictions of dishes.

Fig. 4. Comparison between existing illustrations
and proposed illustrations

To uphold the brand's personality, a selection of representative images was incorporated. However, to ensure visual consistency, dishes were carefully chosen for their generic appearance, regardless of the chef. This approach maintains alignment with the overall clean and minimalist aesthetic while still authentically representing Sandy's Diner's culinary offerings.

Graphics Pack 1: All-in-One
In the search for a free, AI-powered tool capable of generating a brand identity based on an existing logo, few options were found. Most required additional payment or did not allow for logo integration. Eventually, uBrand (https://ubrand.com/) stood out as a promising platform, offering a free AI-driven design experiment for generating a complete graphics package.

uBrand impressed by creating logo variations suitable for different backgrounds (light and dark) and even generating alternative versions of the logo symbol itself.
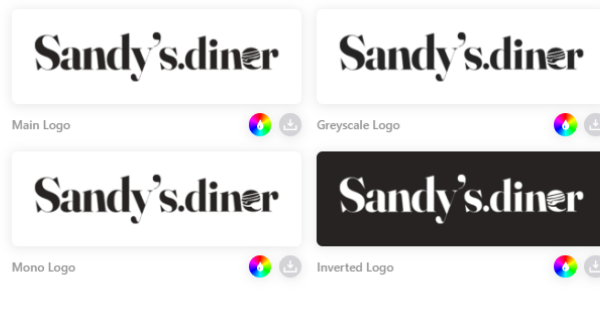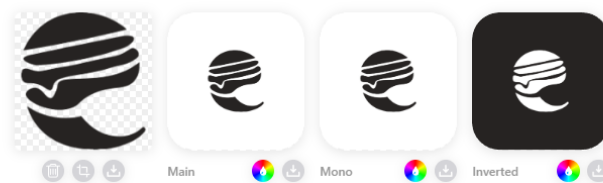
Fig. 5. Logo variations

While the AI performed well in generating logo variations, it required manual input for selecting the colour palette and typography. Similarly, defining the brand's tone of voice, values, and mission was not automated by the AI; these elements needed to be provided for the tool to develop brand positioning.

With Sandy's Diner's brand identity defined, the platform's graphic product options were explored. These allowed for customisation with a chosen style using two colours (primary and background) and a geometric theme.
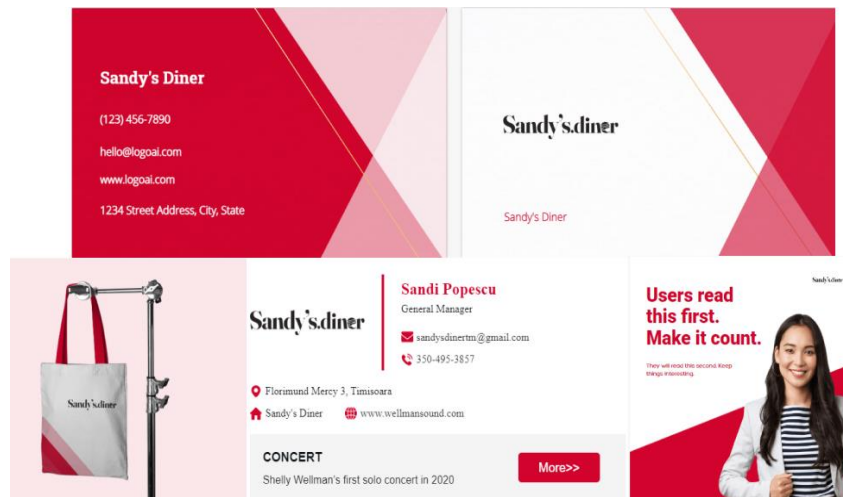
Fig. 6. Graphic products generated by uBrand

Unfortunately, uBrand's social media post generator, which operates based on the selected style, did not align with the brand's visual identity. This misalignment likely stems from the platform's lack of industry-specific considerations when selecting templates, resulting in generic posts that weren't suitable for a restaurant's social media needs.

While uBrand demonstrates strength in generating graphic packages, a notable limitation is the need for a PRO subscription to edit or download the created materials, restricting access for those with budget constraints.

After discussions with the client, it became clear that the AI-generated graphic package did not fully capture the restaurant's atmosphere. To achieve the desired outcome, it was necessary to manually refine the graphic elements, using AI as an initial foundation for further creative development.

Graphics Pack 2: Step-by-Step
To develop the graphic package, the process began with constructing a mood board using Gemini, rather than ChatGPT despite its higher survey mentions, to explore Gemini's capabilities and limitations. Gemini provided recommendations for hand-drawn illustrations,

colour palettes, text styles, and inspirational images. Additional research was conducted on similar projects through Behance (https://www.behance.net/) and Dribbble (https://dribbble.com/).

With visually compelling projects identified, a mood board was assembled in Figma (https://www.figma.com/) to capture the intended visual identity for Sandy's Diner. Following discussions with the client, elements from four restaurant projects were selected to inspire the final design.
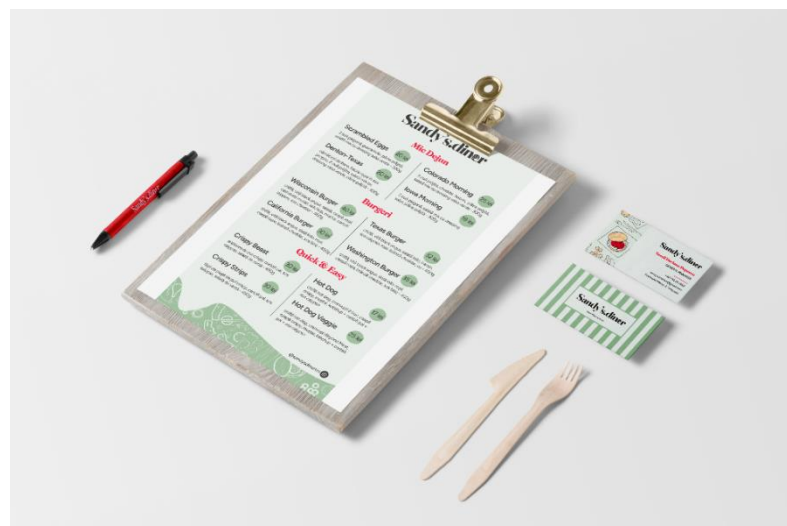
Fig. 7. Business cards and menu

Following client discussions and mood board creation, the process of generating graphic elements began with the business card. Despite the prevalence of digital interactions, business cards remain a valuable, tangible brand touchpoint. Two double-sided versions were created, simple yet impactful, featuring the logo, contact information, and address.

The client's existing slogan, *"Your place is here!"*, served as inspiration for creating context-specific adaptations. For instance, on packaging and paper liners, the slogan became *"Your food is here!"*,

emphasising the diner's culinary focus. This playful style extends to the paper cups, available in red and olive green, featuring a simple design with the logo and the adapted slogan *"Your drink is here!"*.

Fig. 8. Packaging

To expand the brand identity, two recycled cotton tote bags were designed to align with the established visual identity and colour scheme. One tote features the original slogan, *"Your place is here!"*, while the other playfully adapts it to *"Your bag is here!"* for an inviting touch. Both totes are accented with red or olive-green handles, reflecting Sandy's Diner's primary colours.

Fig. 9. Tote bags

Showcasing Sandy's Diner spirit, a unisex t-shirt design was created for both employees and brand enthusiasts. The design is clean and classic, with the logo prominently displayed on the front right side. The charm of the design lies in the playful reinterpretation of the slogan, cleverly integrated with the brand's signature fine line. This element, a key feature of the new visual identity, elegantly connects each word of the slogan, adding a touch of whimsy and reinforcing brand recognition.

Fig. 10. T-shirt

Following client discussions, a comprehensive set of graphic products was created to embody Sandy's Diner's new visual identity. The design features clean lines, a minimalist approach, and a carefully chosen colour scheme that evoke a modern and sophisticated feel, aimed at attracting a broader clientele.

The client was thrilled with the outcome, expressing gratitude for choosing Sandy's Diner as the project focus. They shared that being immersed in the restaurant's old identity on a daily basis had limited their vision. This project opened their eyes to new possibilities for Sandy's and its potential to truly flourish.

Recommendations related to AI tools in the design process

Sandy's Diner's new visual identity, characterised by clean lines and fine-line illustrations, presents exciting opportunities for AI design tools. However, AI should be seen as an enhancer rather than a replacement for human designers. When integrated strategically, AI streamlines workflows, sparks creative exploration, and ensures brand consistency, but human involvement is indispensable. AI aids the design process by providing creative prompts and maintaining consistency, but impactful design ultimately requires human vision. The most successful projects harness the strengths of both AI and human creativity.

While AI tools like uBrand can serve as a starting point, a human-centred design approach remains crucial to developing a truly impactful and strategic brand identity that distinguishes Sandy's Diner from the competition.

4. Conclusions

This study has found that designers recognise and embrace AI tools for their efficiency benefits, particularly appreciating AI's ability to spark creativity and automate repetitive tasks.

However, concerns about uniformity and the potential loss of creative control were also highlighted. The survey emphasises that while AI is a valuable tool, a human-centred approach is essential, maintaining

a balance between technology and human input. Designers expressed a need for more intuitive, customisable AI tools that seamlessly integrate into their workflows and adapt to their preferences.

This research contributes meaningfully in two key areas. Firstly, it enriches the scientific field by providing valuable insights into graphic designers' perceptions and needs concerning AI.

On a personal level, this study presented an invaluable opportunity to delve into an innovative field and actively contribute to its growth. Analysing designer experiences offered a deeper understanding of AI integration within creative processes.

Overall, the paper highlights AI's potential to transform graphic design while underlining the importance of human creativity.

Bibliography:

1. Dehman, H. (2023). *Graphic design, Already Intelligent? Current possibilities of generative AI applications in graphic design*.
2. Fatima, I. (2023). *Designing with AI : A User Study to Explore the Future Role of AI as a Collaborative Tool in Graphics Design*.
3. Felzmann, H., Fosch-Villaronga, E., Lutz, C., Tamò-Larrieux, A. (2020). "Towards Transparency by Design for Artificial Intelligence". *Sci Eng Ethics* 26, 3333–3361. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11948-020-00276-4
4. Gallardo-Rodriguez, S., Jimenez Rodriguez, L.A. (2023). "Artificial Intelligence And Graphic Design Creating The Classroom Of The Future". *LA INTELIGENCIA ARTIFICIAL Y EL DISEÑO GRÁFICO CREANDO EL AULA DEL FUTURO*. https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.16197.63201
5. Guo, S., Jin, Z., Sun, F., Li, J., Li, Z., Shi, Y., Cao, N. (2021). "Vinci: An Intelligent Graphic Design System for Generating Advertising Posters", in: *Proceedings of the 2021 CHI Conference on Human Factors*

in Computing Systems. Presented at the CHI '21: CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems, ACM, Yokohama Japan, pp. 1–17. https://doi.org/10.1145/3411764.3445117

6. Hughes, R.T., Zhu, L., Bednarz, T. (2021). "Generative Adversarial Networks–Enabled Human–Artificial Intelligence Collaborative Applications for Creative and Design Industries: A Systematic Review of Current Approaches and Trends". *Frontiers in Artificial Intelligence* 4.

7. Jia, P., Li, C., Liu, Z., Shen, Y., Chen, X., Yuan, Y., Zheng, Y., Chen, D., Li, J., Xie, X., Zhang, S., Guo, B. (2023). *COLE: A Hierarchical Generation Framework for Graphic Design.* https://doi.org/10.48550/arXiv.2311.16974

8. Li, S. (2021). "Exploration on the application of artificial intelligence elements in Graphic Design", in: *2021 2nd International Conference on Intelligent Design (ICID). Presented at the 2021 2nd International Conference on Intelligent Design (ICID),* pp. 143–146. https://doi.org/10.1109/ICID54526.2021.00036

9. Liu, C., Ren, Z., Liu, S. (2021). "Using Design and Graphic Design with Color Research in AI Visual Media to Convey". *Journal of Sensors 2021,* e8153783. https://doi.org/10.1155/2021/8153783

10. Liu, V., Vermeulen, J., Fitzmaurice, G., Matejka, J. (2023). *3DALL-E: Integrating Text-to-Image AI in 3D Design Workflows.* https://doi.org/10.48550/arXiv.2210.11603

11. Meron, Y. (2022). "Graphic design and artificial intelligence: Interdisciplinary challenges for designers in the search for research collaboration". *Presented at the DRS2022: Bilbao.* https://doi.org/10.21606/drs.2022.157

12. Mustafa, B. (2023). "The Impact of Artificial Intelligence on the Graphic Design Industry". *resmilitaris* 13, 243–255.

13. Ndukwe, K. (2022). *Are Adobe's software tools positioned to lead a wave of design democratisation?*

14. Osipov, S.S., Ulimova, N.V. (2013). "Advantages and Disadvantages of AI". *Science and World* 100.

15. Patil, A.A. (2023). *Artificial Intelligence in Graphic Design - ProQuest*.

16. Rezk, S.M.M. (2023). "The Role of Artificial Intelligence in Graphic Design". *Journal of Art, Design and Music* 2. https://doi.org/10.55554/2785-9649.1005

17. Rezwana, J., Maher, M.L. (2023). "Designing Creative AI Partners with COFI: A Framework for Modeling Interaction in Human-AI Co-Creative Systems". *ACM Trans. Comput.-Hum. Interact.* 30, 67:1-67:28. https://doi.org/10.1145/3519026

18. Rospigliosi, P. (2023). "Artificial intelligence in teaching and learning: what questions should we ask of ChatGPT?" *Interactive Learning Environments* 31, 1–3. https://doi.org/10.1080/10494820.2023.2180191

19. Seeber, I., Bittner, E., Briggs, R.O., de Vreede, T., de Vreede, G.-J., Elkins, A., Maier, R., Merz, A.B., Oeste-Reiß, S., Randrup, N., Schwabe, G., Söllner, M. (2020). "Machines as teammates: A research agenda on AI in team collaboration". *Information & Management* 57, 103174. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.im.2019.103174

20. Verganti, R., Vendraminelli, L., Iansiti, M. (2020). "Innovation and Design in the Age of Artificial Intelligence". *Journal of Product Innovation Management* 37, 212–227. https://doi.org/10.1111/jpim.12523

21. Wernersson, J., Persson, R., Lindh, M. (2023). *Exploring the Potential Impact of AI on the Role of Graphic Content Creators: Benefits, Challenges, and Collaborative Opportunities*.

22. Zheng, X., Qiao, X., Cao, Y., Lau, R.W.H. (2019). "Content-aware generative modeling of graphic design layouts". *ACM Trans. Graph.* 38, 133:1-133:15. https://doi.org/10.1145/3306346.3322971.

A Comparative Analysis of Models in Communication Systems and the Modelling of Communication Techniques

Mihaela Nicoleta Ianuș

Abstract: *The effectiveness of communication in the digital age relies heavily on the underlying structures of communication systems. This study provides a comparative analysis of the models used in communication systems and the modelling of communication techniques, with a focus on the OSI and TCP/IP models. As fundamental frameworks, the OSI model's seven-layer structure and the TCP/IP model's four-layer architecture provide distinct methodologies for managing data transmission in networks.*

Keywords: *communication systems, network protocols, communication, data transmission, layered architecture, network security*

1. Introduction

In today's interconnected world, communication systems form the backbone of our digital infrastructure, facilitating the exchange of information across global networks.

The effectiveness and reliability of these systems are largely determined by the underlying models and techniques used to organize and manage data transmission. Two prominent frameworks, the OSI (Open Systems Interconnection) model and the TCP/IP (Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol) model, serve as pillars in the field of computer networking, each providing distinct approaches to structuring communication protocols.

This paper embarks on a comparative study of these models within communication systems, aiming to examine their respective architectures, functionalities, and implications for network performance. Key aspects such as data encapsulation, error detection, flow control, and security mechanisms will be examined to reveal how each model addresses these aspects.

Furthermore, the research explores the modelling of communication techniques within these frameworks, investigating how protocols are structured and implemented to optimize data transfer effectiveness and reliability. The study will analyse the adaptability and scalability of each model in meeting the evolving demands of modern communication networks while considering their strengths and limitations in various practical applications.

By comprehensively examining the OSI and TCP/IP models, this paper seeks to bring valuable insights into the foundational principles of communication systems. Ultimately, it aims to inform network architects, engineers, and researchers on best practices for designing, implementing, and maintaining robust communication infrastructures capable of supporting the complexities of today's digital landscape.

2. Research methods

The study employed a comparative research design to analyse the models used in communication systems, focusing on the OSI and TCP/IP models. The research explored the structural differences, functionalities, and practical implications of each model in contemporary network environments. A qualitative approach was adopted to delve into the complexities of these frameworks and their applications.

Primary data was gathered through a comprehensive literature review from academic journals, books, and reliable online sources. This provided foundational knowledge and a theoretical framework for understanding the OSI and TCP/IP models. Secondary data included case studies, white papers, and technical documents from the industry to illustrate real-world implementations and challenges.

A comparative analysis was conducted to highlight similarities and differences in their approach to data encapsulation, error handling, security mechanisms, and scalability.

3. Results

The comparative analysis of the OSI and TCP/IP models revealed distinct structural differences in how each model organizes communication protocols.

The OSI model, with its seven-layer architecture, provides a granular approach to data transmission, allowing for clear delineation of responsibilities across layers from physical transmission to application-level functions. In contrast, the TCP/IP model, comprising four layers, simplifies network management with a more streamlined approach, focusing on practicality and interoperability.

In contemporary network environments, both models demonstrate practical implications based on their respective designs. The OSI model's modular architecture facilitates easier troubleshooting and scalability, making it suitable for educational and developmental purposes. Conversely, the TCP/IP model's efficiency in handling large-scale

networks, such as the internet, underscores its practicality and adaptability in real-world implementations.

The comparative analysis has highlighted key functional areas where the OSI and TCP/IP models differ:

✓ Data Encapsulation: the OSI model ensures strict data encapsulation at each layer, whereas the TCP/IP model integrates functions across layers for streamlined communication.

✓ Error Handling: the OSI model employs detailed error detection and correction mechanisms per layer, while the TCP/IP model relies on higher-level protocols for error management.

✓ Security Mechanisms: the OSI model includes security measures at specific layers, while the TCP/IP model often implements security through additional protocols and applications.

✓ Scalability: the OSI model provides structured scalability with clear layer responsibilities, whereas the TCP/IP model excels at scaling for global networks with its simplified architecture.

The analysis has highlighted significant findings concerning the OSI and TCP/IP models in communication systems. These insights contribute to a deeper understanding of each model's structural nuances, functional capabilities, and practical implications for network design and management. Furthermore, leveraging the strengths of each model can enhance network effectiveness and resilience, supporting the continuous evolution of communication technologies and infrastructures globally.

4. Conclusions

The comparative analysis of the OSI and TCP/IP models in communication systems reveals critical insights into their structural frameworks, functional capabilities, and practical implications for contemporary network environments. This research aimed to explore and analyse how these models organize and manage data transmission, emphasising their roles in shaping network architectures and supporting global connectivity.

Furthermore, leveraging the strengths of each model can optimize network performance and resilience, ensuring networks are well-equipped to meet evolving communication challenges in an increasingly digital world.

In conclusion, the OSI and TCP/IP models remain reference frameworks in communication systems, each offering unique strengths and applications. By understanding their structural nuances and functional capabilities, network architects and engineers can design resilient and efficient communication infrastructures to meet the demands of an increasingly interconnected world.

Bibliography:

1. Comer, D. E. (2006). *Internetworking with TCP/IP: Principles, protocols, and architecture (5th ed.)*, Pearson Education.
2. Ionescu, A. (2015). *Tehnici moderne de comunicații de date*, Editura Universității din București.
3. Popescu, I. (2018). *Comunicarea în rețele de calculatoare: Principii și protocoale*, Editura Politehnica Press.
4. Smith, J. (2024). *Comparative study of model levels in communication systems and modeling of communication techniques (Unpublished doctoral dissertation).* University of Communication Studies.
5. Stallings, W. (2013). *Data and computer communications* (10th ed.), Pearson Education.

The UX/UI Process in Designing a Language Learning Platform

Romina Roxana Kolarovszki-Ion

Abstract: *Mobile apps are almost impossible to avoid in daily life as they impact almost all aspects of it. Regarding MALL (Mobile Applications for Language Learning), the market is oversaturated, making it difficult to choose the right app that will cater to one's needs. This article is based on the author's master's thesis with the same name, and it aims to address the UI/UX perspective in prototyping a platform for mobile language learning. The research has opened two research questions. To answer to these topics, a questionnaire has been created and analysed. Along with a short study of the competitive market, these will set the foundation for the design of a German learning mobile app. In this "conclusion" of the research, the reader will be able to identify all the problems that have come up in the process and see all the steps for correction that have been taken, to come up with an app that is both user-friendly and effective in the learning process.*

Keywords: *mobile app, UI/UX, user interface, user experience, app design, language learning app*

1. Introduction

Sight has always been the most important sense of man. From cave paintings to antique jewellery to odd advertisements, humankind has always leant towards visuals.

Even in the digital world, the same idea is dominant. Brianna Flavin offers a short and accurate definition of this field: "In simple terms, graphic designers create visual elements for communicating certain messages. These visual structures can be as simple as a logo or as complicated as the layout of a website (Flavin, 2023).

As for the branches of graphic design, these can be found in all fields that contain visual elements. Examples of such branches are logo, editorial, web, visual identity (brand design), advertisement, animation design and of course, the most relevant for this thesis, mobile app design (Flavin, 2023). For online platforms, the most important types are UX and UI design.

UI refers to the interface created for different devices (e.g., mobile phone, computer, tablet, smart watch etc.). The interface consists of a software that translates the information given by the system of operation, to "maximise the user experience" (Nurpalah et. al, 2021). As the name suggests, user experience refers to the user's interaction with the application, website or any other software (Nurpalah et. al, 2021).

Nurpalah et. al. (2021) emphasises the importance of following specific steps in the UX/UI process.. Firstly, the designer will study the market and analyse the user type that the platform should target. The competition analysis can offer a broader understanding of the goal for the app to be created. Following this step, a wireframe of the flux, i.e. the exact process the user must go through in that particular system, should be mapped out.

Only after this prototype is finished can the UI/UX expert focus on design, mainly on a more detailed image of what should be the finished product. As a last step, all results will be presented, from beginning to end, so that the app can move on to being implemented by a

programmer. Overall, the timeline looks like it can be seen in figure 1.1 (Nurpalah et. al, 2021):
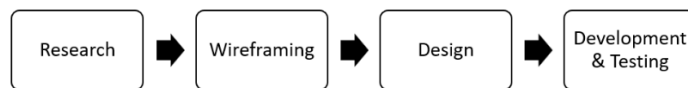

Fig. 1. UI/UX Design Process

Thomas and Devi (2021) describe the cycle of developing apps for mobile phones. They have identified seven key steps regarding this process. As a first step, the exact role of the app should be established. Basics, like target group, competition analysis, scope, added benefit and even the technology needed should be discussed and agreed upon. Only after that crucial first step can the expert move on to design and creating the prototype.

The UI part refers to how the users will interact with it. In this wireframing stage, there are three important parts. Information design means the logical structuring of information, so that the user can browse intuitively. It is all about creating the links between pages and the operations that appear on the screen. Finally, the interface design includes the designing of different buttons that will maximise the usability (Thomas & Devi, 2021).

2. Research methods

In order to properly understand the theoretical aspects and to get a grasp on how everything works in the addressed field, I followed some steps of collecting information. Following this, two questions for research have been used.

To collect data, a search was conducted on Google Scholar using the following keywords: "UX/UI design process," "UX/UI mobile apps," "mobile learning apps," and "language / German learning apps." Results were restricted to the years 2019-2023, and further filtered based

on relevance and language (English and German). Only scientific articles were selected, excluding books, reviews, or PowerPoint presentations. Additional filtering focused on article titles, keywords, and abstracts. Short analyses were conducted to identify articles relevant to the UX/UI process for mobile apps, particularly those presented at conferences or published in journals, that included keywords related to UX/UI processes, study cases, or relevant research. Articles from teachers' perspectives were also considered. After filtering, ten relevant results remained for this thesis.

Following a thorough review of these articles, two research questions were formulated:

Question 1: What is the current status of learning a new language through mobile technology among Romanian users?

Question 2: How are the stages of UX/UI highlighted in creating an app for learning German?

To address the first question, a questionnaire was developed for Romanians who are currently or have previously used mobile apps to learn a foreign language. The form included nine progressively specific questions and was created using Google Forms. It was distributed via social media (Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp), resulting in responses from 125 participants.

For the second question, a series of steps were followed. First, a competitor analysis was conducted. This provided insights used to wireframe the app's structure and partial information architecture. Finally, the app pages were designed, and a prototype was created.

Questionnaire

The nine questions were the following:

- Have you ever learned or are you currently learning a foreign language?
- Through which methods have you learnt or are you currently learning a foreign language?

- Which mobile app for language learning have you used or are you currently using?
- Do you agree that learning a language through a mobile app can fully replace a face-to-face course with a teacher?
- In which of the following aspects has a mobile app for language learning helped you?
- How much time were / are you willing to allocate towards learning a language using a mobile app?
- Would you recommend learning a foreign language using a mobile app?
- On a scale from one to five, how easy has it been / is it to use the language learning app?
- How do you prefer the pages of a language learning app to be, regarding the design?

This form managed to showcase the users' preferences regarding design, but content on a mobile app for language learning as well. Through this method potential weak points and the importance of utility were identified. Other results from this questionnaire showed the difficulty in acquiring grammatical knowledge, even though this is a problem that surpasses the digital field and has been around since people have first started to learn foreign languages. Still, it is important to the respondents and need to be considered. The answers to the last question were divided between the wish for a very colourful app, others wanted pastel colours and a third main group chose minimalism and lack of colours. Taken everything into account, what an app needs is balance more than anything.

3. Results

Graphic interface for language learning
Competitive Market Analysis

For a better understanding when it comes to market and competitors four German learning apps (exclusive or not to German as the only subject) were chosen. All selected apps have at least one million downloads on Google Play and a rating over 4,0. A particularly important criterium in the selection process was the different approaches towards the learning process. Thus, different principles of graphic design can be observed. The analysed apps are: DW Learn German, Learn German – 5,000 Phrases, Memrise and Drops. For each app I also found a study case, to have another's perspective as well.

The first app belongs to the famous news channel Deutsche Welle and their notoriety was considered enough, knowing that the app will be downloaded by many. Even if apparent simple in design, as well as easy to follow, the user interface contains quite a few interruptions in the user's flow, as well as elements that do not necessarily have a purpose. The user experience constantly comes to a halt by needing to scroll or by lack of vital information on the same page. On some pages, the hamburger menu even appears twice. The only characteristic that "saves" the app is the learning material, as it results from Sulistyorini and Pratomo's analysis *The Utilization of the Deutsche Welle Learning Application in Teaching German Vocabulary* (Sulistyorini and Pratomo, 2022). Even so, sometimes the logic in browsing through the levels appears to be missing and the user is not encouraged in any way to continue using this app.

Learn German-5,000 Phrases is a really interesting platform, regarding the structural aspects of the design. It appears a bit chaotic to the eye regarding the user experience and interface. Even more than in the first app, the user needs to allocate time for understanding how everything works. A positive aspect in this case is the presence of a live

tutorial when first using the app, but a one-time tutorial is not enough to memorise all the weird elements and how they work.

A platform for learning more languages, not only German, Memrise stands out through the use of AI in the learning process. Not only that, but the design of the user interface positively stands out as well. The humoristic and slightly playful character of this app manages to really engage the user. The natural flow is not interrupted by unnecessary things and any unclarities are swiftly explained. Its functionality is backed up by a simple, yet beautiful design.

Drops is an app belonging to Kahoot!, the globally used platform for online quizzes. Its app for language learning is incredibly attractive to a younger audience, due to the colour palette, which is in strong and contrasting colours, like purple, bright orange and teal. From a UX/UI perspective, there is room for improvement, as some things can lead to confusion. Also, even if fun and colourful, exactly this choice of design can quickly lead to tiredness of the eyes, which not something a user wants.

Visual design and prototype

The first step involved creating a wireframe, a critical initial stage to identify potential issues and facilitate feedback from both the client and prospective users. This step, which should not be skipped, allows for the "personal exploration" of ideas, serves as a tool for "communicating abstract concepts," and acts as a "mechanism for evaluating initial feedback" (Cuello and Vittone, 2023).

After developing a wireframe for the desired app based on the guidelines outlined earlier, the process moved to the design and prototyping phase. Prototypes serve as representations for internal or user testing, helping to identify usability issues (Cuello and Vittone, 2023). The design and prototype were created using the online platform Figma, which included the following screens: splash screen, landing page, login page, homepage, calendar page, feed page, profile page, and an exercise page with a pop-up window.

One of the primary considerations was the respondents' preference for ease of use. A key issue identified in previous analyses was the complexity of navigating to the homepage. To streamline this process, as shown in Figure 2, the design allows users to move from the landing page to the login (with an expedited option via Facebook) and then directly to the homepage.

In terms of design elements, simplicity and relevance were prioritized. The logo incorporates the colors of the German flag, with yellow as the dominant color for its cheerful association. The font of the logo and iconography feature a handwritten style, as illustrated in Figure 2, which displays the initial screens.
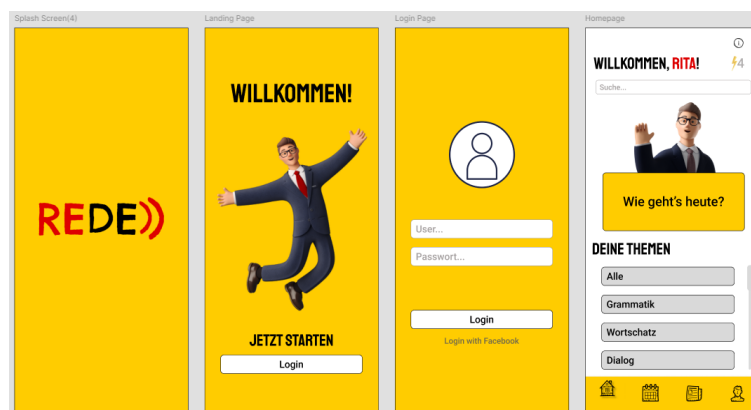

Fig. 2. Splash screen, landing page, login page and homepage

The concept of immersion was a particularly important one to creating this app, as it should help the user in accumulating knowledge and in setting his mind to only think in German when learning. It is not recommended to constantly translate between two languages when trying to acquire new linguistic information.

This is why the entire app is in German, with the possibility-only if necessary, to click the information icon and see a translation of the page. The choice of vocabulary is one that should be logic and understood, even with no or little knowledge. This is also because the structure is according to Beaird's principle of „intuitive browsing" of the

app (Beaird, 2007). It is clear to see that the text is easily understandable and the flow of browsing is obvious, so that the user does not have to stop and analyse the app and what to press next. This is clearly shown in figure 3. Either through suggestive icons, simple choice of words, logic layout of the information or even process bars, it is simple to understand the app.
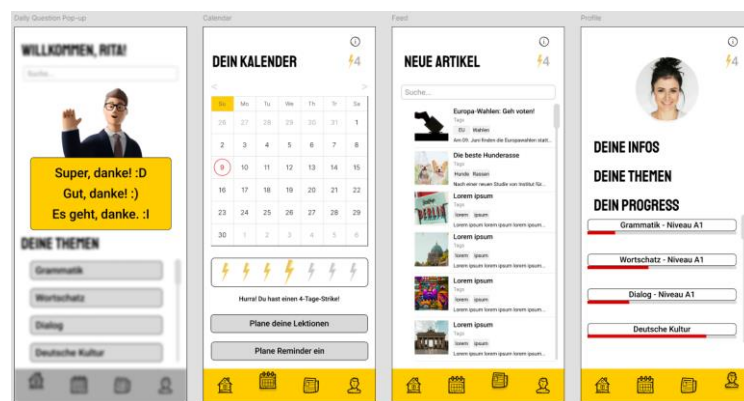
Fig. 3. Pop-up window, calendar page, feed page
and profile page

The application should motivate and thus contain a gamification aspect. This has been done through the weekly streaks of using the app. The user received a lightning bolt for each consecutive day exercising. Once he has gathered seven lightning bolts, a fun fact about Germany or the German vocabulary is unlocked. This contributes to raising interest toward the German culture as well, as it is part of the immersion concept and it is the best way to learn a language. Other choices of content also support this concept, such as the feed page with articles (based on user's level) in German and having learning categories dedicated to culture as well.

Fig. 4. Learning categories, exercise page and pop-up window
for checking exercise response

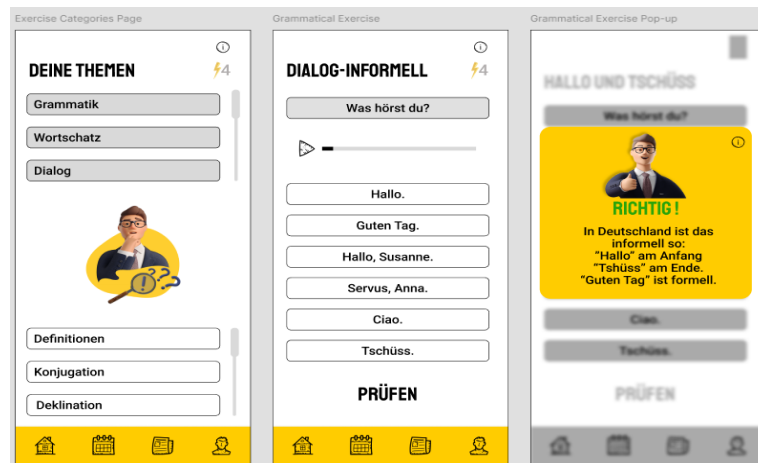In figure 4, it can be seen that the exercise layout is very similar to most apps. It is extremely hard to come up with a new perspective regarding such layouts, and would not necessarily be useful, as could be seen with Drops. What makes the exercise layout for Rede special, is the separate categories of learning with solely theoretical information that can be read only if chosen to. Furthermore, when checking the answer to an exercise, the pop-up window will always contain little theoretical information. Through this method, it can be ensured that the correct answer was not just a coincidence, and that the whole concept and rules are fully understood.

4. Conclusions

This paper aimed to identify the strengths and weaknesses of mobile language learning apps through market research and a questionnaire targeting users who have either previously used or are currently using such apps for language learning.

This research informed the design of an app prototype, developed according to the steps outlined earlier. The app reflects user preferences and includes some unique contributions.

One central concept, often overlooked in language learning, is the idea of full immersion in the subject. A significant percentage of respondents reported challenges with learning grammar through apps, which guided my efforts to address this issue. Drawing on three grammar principles from Zeyer et al. (2015) — "simple explanations, grammar in context, and grammar learning through personal discovery" — I developed a process allowing users to learn grammar, potentially without consciously realizing it. From both a UI/UX and didactic perspective, this platform aims to create an optimal learning environment and foster positive learning outcomes.

Bibliography:

1. Beaird, J. (2007). *The Principles of Beautiful Web Design*, ISBN-13: 978-0975841969, https://www.sitepoint.com/principles-beautiful-web-design/, visited on 25.04.2024.
2. Cuello, J., Vittone, J. (2013). *Designing Mobile Apps, first edition, version 1.1.* pp. 68-73, ISBN 1494969602, 9781494969608.
3. Flavin, B. (2024). *What Is Graphic Design? A Beginner's Guide to This Creative Career* (web page), for Rasmussen University, https://www.rasmussen.edu/degrees/design/blog/what-is-graphic-design/, visited on 23.05.2024.
4. Nurpalah, A, Pasha, M S, Rhamdhan, D D, Maulana, H., Rafdhi, A.A. (2021). "Effect of UI/UX Designer on Front End". *International Journal of Research and Applied Technology* (INJURATECH).
5. Sulistyorini, E., Widodo, P. (2022). "The Utilization of the Deutsche Welle Learning Application in Teaching German Vocabulary". I*nternational Journal of Linguistics, Literature and*

Translation, vol. 5, first edition, 2022, DOI 10.32996/ijllt.2022.5.1.15, ISSN 2617-0299, pp 113-115.

6. Thomas C., Devi, J. (2021). "A Study and Overview of the Mobile App Development Industry". *International Journal of Applied Engineering and Management Letters* (IJAEML), vol. 5, first edition, 2021, ISSN 2581-7000, pp 120-122.

7. Zeyer, T., Bernhardt, L., Ivanovska, I. (2015). *Hinter den Kulissen der Interaktiven Animierten Grammatik: Didaktische Konzeption und Entwicklung einer App zum Grammatiklernen* (Behind the curtains of interactive animated grammar: didactical design and development of an application for grammar learning), for http://gfl-journal.de/ , second edition, ISSN 1470 – 9570, pp. 72-73.

The Impact of 3D Technology on Communication

Teodora Pocol

Abstract: *The present article focuses on the impact of 3D technology on the evolution of communication. Communication is a process which has been going on since the genesis of humankind and which will not only continue indefinitely, but will also be in constant development, depending on the factors that influence the development of the communication situation. Technology, on the other hand, came much later. It can be argued that it has only evolved significantly in the last decade to encompass the emergence and development of the many technologies and devices that we currently find in the homes of most of us.*

Keywords: *telecommunications, 3D technology, communication, holography*

1. Introduction

This paper is primarily addressed to students of the Faculty of Communication Sciences and of the Faculty of Electronics, Telecommunications and Information Technologies. It contains theoretical aspects from both communication sciences and telecommunications. My intention was to create a basic guide for

students in both fields, who want to innovate in one field using knowledge from the other field.

Students at the Faculty of Communication Sciences can use the basic information in the field of telecommunications to better understand how communication is currently carried out and how it is affected by the evolution of technology, and to be able to forecast the evolution of communication.

Students at the Faculty of Electronics, Telecommunications and Information Technologies will find the information in this paper useful for the development of future communication devices and technologies; a good understanding of the development of the communication situation will facilitate the development of new communication technologies.

At the same time, yet to a lesser extent, this paper could also serve students of the Faculty of Education Sciences or those of the Department for Teacher Training. These fields have relatively many meeting points with the field of communication. That is why this study also sometimes includes information from the field of education, as well as proposals to improve the communication situation in a pedagogical context.

2. Results

Communication theory

Technology has developed in the last decade at an extraordinary speed, which could only attract a development of the fields closely related to it, communication and public relations being amongst them. Letters have turned into phone calls, overseas visits have become video conferences, hours of waiting at the counter have turned into bots that we can access through our phones or on digital platforms.

Until recently, the development of communication as a result of the development of technology came as a side effect, not an intentional one. The purpose of this paper is to create a bridge between communication

sciences and technological sciences, which would facilitate the simultaneous and systematic development of the two fields.
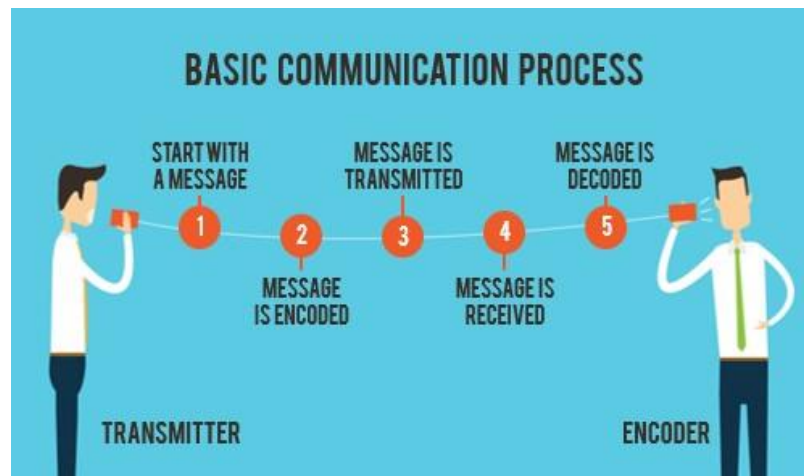

Fig. 1. The basic communication process

Communication is the transfer and counter-transfer of information, based on the transmission, reception and understanding of information. As Rus (2002) also states, a sender, one or more receivers, a transfer and a message medium are needed to carry out the communication process. Communication is a complex concept and can be classified according to various criteria.

Depending on the number of participants, it can be interpersonal or intrapersonal. Interpersonal communication involves two or more entities, is influenced by various factors, and produces several effects among participants. Intrapersonal communication is communication with oneself and contributes to one's inner balance and self-development.

In terms of the environment in which it takes place, Rus (2015-2016) enumerates political or electoral communication, corporate communication, public communication, educational communication, etc. For example, political or electoral communication involves information for electoral purposes, while public communication

involves information by state institutions, such as the mayor's office, ministries, autonomous regions, etc. Educational communication involves information for educational purposes and takes place in both formal educational institutions, such as schools, high schools, universities, and non-formal education institutions.

The distinction between verbal and non-verbal communication is, however, the most relevant to the subject of this paper. Verbal communication includes all communication situations in which the transmitted message is carried out through the spoken or written word. Some examples of verbal communication are: dialogue, monologue, letters, instant messaging, articles in newspapers, magazines, publications, etc. Non-verbal communication, also called analogical communication, is achieved through various social indicators, such as: facial expression, body language, tone of voice, eye contact, posture, gestures, physical appearance, gaze, kinesthetics, touch, etc.

According to the theory developed by Albert Mehrabian following a case study conducted at the University of California in Los Angeles (1967), face-to-face communication is effective due to the three "V" elements – verbal, vocal, visual. The verbal element comprises the words, the content of the message; the vocal element means the tonality of the voice, the intonation; the visual element includes body language, physical appearance, gestures. Surprisingly, the ratio of these elements in terms of importance is not balanced at all: 7% for the verbal element, 38% for the vocal element, and 55% for the visual element. Therefore, it is extremely important that the visual element should supports the message one wants to convey, so that the message is processed correctly by the receiver.

Inconsistency between two or more elements of communication will lead to uncertainty or lack of confidence on the part of the receiver. Of course, this inconsistency in communication can be used intentionally - for example, when one wants to convey a passive-aggressive message. This passive-aggressiveness is caused by the inconsistency between the verbal component and the vocal or visual

component. It is important to be aware of the communication elements and their importance, precisely so as not to accidentally cause communication situations that may turn out to be unfavourable.

When it comes to the digital space, the theories related to non-verbal communication are not only valid, but also carry more weight. From pragmatics and advertising to media design, the focus in these fields is very much on the visual component: the colours, shapes and images used are chosen carefully because they weigh much more than the verbal component.

People tend to think that, in the digital space, non-verbal communication has less impact than in face-to-face communication, because social cues such as body language, facial expressions, tonality, intonation are not (always) present. However, the digital space has some specific characteristics, which are considered non-verbal social indices. Features such as social media reactions, GIFs, emoticons and other paralinguistic elements are a form of non-verbal communication characteristic of the digital space. For example, if one cannot hear someone else's tone in the digital space, they can identify other elements that reflect the tone of voice: Caps Lock is often used when people want to convey a message which, in face-to-face communication, would be uttered in a raised voice.

Even if, for instance, we do not see one's appearance in a social media post, this does not mean that the non-verbal elements on which we can form a first impression are absent. In the digital space, we would use the person's spelling or the wording of the message to form an image of them. Also, the soundtrack, the colours, the symbols, the images used along with the transmitted message are elements that influence our perception and experience. These elements are found in all categories of media products: social media posts, documentaries, news, TV shows, series, movies, etc. Often, news stories have a dramatic soundtrack to heighten the effect they have on viewers.

Moreover, the colour used (an element related to non-verbal communication) has a great impact on the processing of the transmitted

message. For example, shades of green are ideal for nutrition companies, fruit and vegetable distributors or vegan food producers, as green suggests health, freshness, nature and harmony. Shades of red are perfect to inspire determination, power, action, passion, energy, but also love or anger - hence the expression "to see red". Shades of pink are almost always present in the branding of women's products, as pink - a muted shade of red - inspires elegance, gentleness, femininity and grace.

Fig. 2. Colour meanings

According to Olesen, these colours not only inspire certain feelings, but also have the power to influence our mood and judgement. For example, a certain colour can spoil our mood if we associate it with an unfortunate event or happen to be overexposed to that colour; or conversely, we may be more likely to find a certain person more attractive if they wear a colour that suits them or that we like. Olesen states that, if we become aware of the meaning of colours and the associations that the human brain makes, we can significantly improve the control we have over the reactions and the accuracy of the message conveyed.

Colours are also used by experts from various fields, such as business or law, to turn the communication situation and its outcome to their advantage. An excellent case in point would be a common practice in the field of law, where clients are advised by lawyers to wear white clothing and to look as neat, flawless and clean as possible, so as to inspire innocence and purity. This practice has been well known for over 30 years, as explained by Heiman in an LA Times article (1993).

Telecommunications theory

The evolution of technology has always been accompanied by the evolution of human relations, and hence, of communication as well. Considering the technological progress made over the past 30 years, we will continue to witness a significant change in the way people communicate. If previous generations had to resort to letters or to go to the post office for a phone call, today's generations can do everything almost instantly: they can send text messages, call anyone, anywhere, make video calls, etc. If, 30 years ago, a communication situation unfolded over the course of a few days, now it unfolds instantly, regardless of the distance between the participants.

Verbal communication in the digital world has currently reached its peak. As a result, the focus should shift to the development of non-verbal communication methods in the coming years. As already emphasised, nowadays the focus is on the visual component of both communication and technology. In terms of communication, 55% of the transmitted message is assimilated visually. A similar observation can be made about technology, by looking at the bandwidth for audio transmission, on the one hand, and that for video transmission, on the other: audio transmission in calls uses somewhere around 100 Kbps, while a video call takes somewhere between 500 Kbps and 1.5 Mbps, usually for lower video quality. Therefore, the bandwidth in audio/video transmission points to the impact it has on the assimilation of the message. Regardless of the transmission medium, the audio

component will always have the least bandwidth, while the visual one will take up most space.

3D technology is relatively limited at the moment, especially for the general public. However, it will continue to develop, and with this development will come new devices and new ways of using it. Although 3D technology is currently mostly used for entertainment, there are many other areas that will revolutionize communication and education once they become more developed and accessible. For example, some circuses have abandoned animal exploitation and opted for hologram shows to help reduce animal cruelty.

Such technologies are also used in museums to enhance visitor experience and stimulate the senses. Another area where such technology is used is virtual reality therapy. Phobias such as fear of heights, fear of public speaking, fear of animals can be combated by virtual reality therapy. Patients are brought face to face with their fears in a controlled environment so that they can overcome them, and this is only possible with technology that has evolved enough to simulate reality in a credible way. The table below provides the three main device categories that use 3D technology and a short comparative analysis:

Table 1. Device categories

3D television (without glasses)	3D television (with glasses)	VR/AR headset
• works on the principle of autostereoscopy; • stereoscopy is achieved by rapidly alternating two images from slightly different angles; the alternation of the two images is fast enough to be perceived by the brain, but not perceptible to the viewers; • does not require additional accessories.	• works on the principle of stereoscopy; • stereoscopy is performed by viewing two superimposed images, one red and the other blue or green, with the help of glasses with lenses of different colours, so that each eye sees a different image, these being superimposed and perceived in relief at the level the brain.	• works on the principle of stereoscopy; • stereoscopy is performed as follows: in front of each eye, there are two small screens as lenses; on each individual screen, an image taken or generated from different angles is broadcast, so that, at the level of the brain, it is perceived three-dimensionally.

Unfortunately, at the present time, 3D technology is neither financially nor affordably accessible. Ideally, many institutions and businesses would use the available technology to combat various issues such as animal cruelty, waste of resources, pollution, etc. But unfortunately, the costs are currently too high for widespread adoption. Education is another area where 3D technology adoption and mass implementation would be beneficial.

The adoption of such technology in education would significantly improve the field. Not only would it facilitate learning in fields such as anatomy, physics, biology, architecture and mechanics, but it would also accommodate students with educational needs different from the majority. In his book *Multiple Intelligences – New Horizons* (2006), the American psychologist Howard Gardner developed the theory of

multiple intelligences. He describes in detail eight types of intelligence, namely: visual-spatial, musical, kinaesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalistic, verbal-linguistic, and logical-mathematical. Gardner found that the students responded differently to stimuli; although the students were exposed to the same stimuli, different hemispheres of the brain were activated in each student, depending on the category of stimuli applied (visual, auditory, tactile, etc.).

Gardner (2006, 21-22) explains that students will respond differently to stimuli, depending on their brain structure: "Linguistic intelligence also passes our language tests. For example, a specific area of the brain, called Broca's Area, is responsible for making grammatical sentences. A person with this affected area may understand words and sentences well, but will have trouble putting words together in anything other than the simplest sentences. At the same time, other thought processes may not be affected at all."

Currently, the pedagogical structure of formal education is mainly based on the verbal-linguistic and logical-mathematical learning style. In some places, the other learning styles are also used, but in much smaller proportions - even too small, for students who have a different main learning style than the one used predominantly. This structure is best reflected in the Romanian theoretical high schools, which are organised into two main tracks: the humanities track (the verbal-linguistic learning style) and the exact sciences track (the logical-mathematical learning style). Indeed, there are also vocational, technical and technological tracks, but in a much smaller proportion and, unfortunately, with much more limited opportunities.

However, there are creative and affordable options that can be implemented in the meantime, just like my craftwork shown below, which was inspired by online sources (https://www.youtube.com/shorts/pdDIW3g0Ubs): with just four clear plastic trapezoids and some hot glue, I built a pyramid frustum that projects a hologram-like image, if placed over a tablet screen.
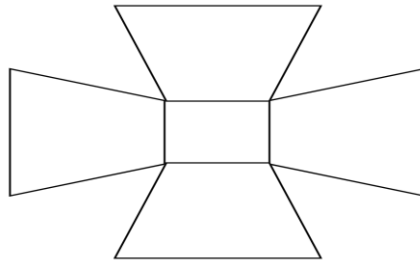
Fig. 3. Cutout sketch for the pyramid frustum

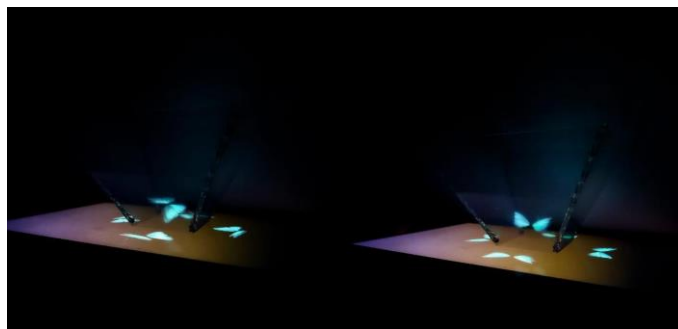Fig. 4. Built prototype of the pyramid frustum

Fig. 5. Prototype demonstration

To create a solid, transparent material, two blank A4 sheets were laminated. From these, four identical trapezoids were measured and cut to construct a pyramid frustum. A hot glue gun was used to join the edges, forming the frustum structure. The dimensions can be adjusted according to the device used to project the hologram, with a larger size chosen in this instance to accommodate projection from a tablet or laptop.

The next step involved selecting a video formatted for hologram projection. Such videos can be sourced online or custom-made, though creating one requires additional digital skills. Research on "hologram video" on YouTube revealed that the video should have a transparent background and be arranged in an X shape, with four frames.

To complete the setup, the device must be placed horizontally on a flat surface, making phones, tablets, or laptops with 360° foldable screens particularly suitable. The pyramid frustum is then placed at the center of the screen, allowing the holographic image to project within it.

3. Conclusions

The main purpose of this article was to create a bridge between communication sciences and telecommunications to better understand the way in which the evolution of technology influences the changes that occur in other fields, such as communication.

As already detailed earlier in the paper, human communication has been strongly impacted by the evolution of technology and by the accessibility of multiple technologies. This influence has been more or less conscious and intentional, but I believe that collaboration between experts in the two fields, so as to steer this evolution in the right direction, cannot be anything but favourable for both specialists and the general public.

I believe it is crucial to merge technology and communication. The progress up to this date is incredible, but the potential to improve communication and revolutionize it is massive. Implementing more

technology into everyday communication could facilitate the assimilation of the message and improve the communication situation.

Bibliography:

1. Gardner, H. (2006). *Inteligențe multiple – noi orizonturi*. București: Editura Sigma.
2. Mehrabian, A. (1967). "Inference of Attitudes From Nonverbal Communication in Two Channels". *Journal of Consulting Psychology*, 31(3).
3. Rus, F. C. (2002). *Introducere în știința comunicării și a relațiilor publice*. Iași: Editura Institutul European.

The Role of Content Design in Web Pages

Paula Nicoleta Staicu

Abstract: *Content design is the process of creating and organising content on web pages so that it is accessible, attractive and easy to use for visitors. It combines aspects of visual design with communication strategies and search engine optimisation (SEO) principles.*

Keywords: *content, content design, structure, SEO, website*

1. Introduction

The chapter on content design in web pages provides an overview of the development and usage of the web, along with a detailed exploration of the importance of design. It addresses key concepts such as content structure and organisation to engage users, as well as essential aspects for content creators to consider when crafting compelling digital experiences.

This section investigates the role of content design in the digital sphere, analysing its impact on user interaction and the importance of a well-designed user experience. It aims to highlight how effective content design can enhance user engagement with a webpage, offering practical recommendations for optimising content design to improve user experience and website performance. By exploring current trends and practices, this chapter contributes to a deeper understanding of content design principles in today's digital environment.

2. Results

Developing a Web Guide

This part of the analysis is grounded in theoretical insights and reviews of existing web guides. To create a tailored web guide for the Politehnica University of Timisoara, extensive research was conducted on web writing standards, including language guidelines and content writing rules.

Foundational documents for this guide include *Content Design* by Sarah R., 2017; the second edition co-authored by Sarah R. & Rachel E., published by the European Union Publications Office in 2024; the *Interinstitutional Guide to Clear Writing* from Europa EU (1997); and the *Technical Report on Accessibility and Use of Internet Resources* by the Authority for the Digitisation of Romania (2023). After analysing these sources, the guide for the Politehnica University was structured into several key sections:

- General aspects
- Basic principles: Clarity, Conciseness, Relevance
- Tone & Style
- Structure & SEO Optimisation
- Recommendations

The General section, based on research findings, should cover topics such as how content is viewed, the role it plays, and the expectations and needs of users. This section is titled General Aspects as

it provides introductory information and general guidance for writing appropriate content on a website. The material in this section is drawn from both the reviewed guides and theories presented by Sarah Richard in her books *Content Design* and *Content Design* (2nd edition), along with insights from Mike A. and Carrie H. in *Designing Connected Content* (2018). This information highlights the preferences and perspectives that content creators should adopt to develop well-suited text, encompassing general considerations about web page content, from wording to structure and presentation.

The Basic Principles section is similarly formulated, organised into three subdivisions: Clarity, Conciseness, and Relevance. These principles are consistently recommended across the reviewed guides and bibliographic sources for creating engaging, coherent, and essential content. Key points from each source have been synthesised to build this section, drawing on the same references as mentioned above.

Within the Clarity subdivision, recommendations from these sources are provided to help creators develop content that is accessible and clear for users. The Conciseness subdivision details the crucial elements of creating content that is both engaging and easy to navigate, as is common in web content across websites. The Relevance subdivision similarly presents the essential elements from the sources, emphasising content that aligns with users' needs.

The Tone and Style section is largely based on Newcastle University's guidelines, along with Sarah Richard's recommendations in both editions of *Content Design*, which discuss the tone a brand should adopt and the style it should maintain. Key recommendations are included on how a brand's tone can influence the connection with its audience, as well as the role that writing style plays in users' perception of content quality.

The Structure and SEO Optimisation section is grounded in all the referenced sources, as these elements influence content quality and user engagement. This section covers the placement of content on the page, the purpose it serves, and how it should be structured to capture and

retain users' attention. Well-organised content must follow the outlined steps to ensure it is both easily navigable and comprehensible for users. A content creator must consider the users' perspective, needs, and expectations to produce effective content.

Finally, the Recommendations section summarises the key points addressed, emphasising the aspects discussed throughout while also offering some additional tips relevant to writing web content.

3. Conclusions

The theoretical analysis indicates that the most crucial elements for content creators to consider are clarity, conciseness, structure, organisation, and language. To achieve the desired outcome, creators must account for users' needs and expectations. The theory underscores content's role on a web page as being informative, useful, and engaging.

The purpose of these analyses has been to highlight content's significance and to outline the concepts that make it effective. For content to be relevant, its structure should incorporate elements that enable users to quickly locate desired information. Therefore, content should be well-organised, consist of brief paragraphs, and feature a simple, concise, and clear format.

Research results further indicate that relevant web content structured around these principles aids in swift information access. Through the theory and applied research methods, the findings demonstrate that content design on web pages is closely related to information organisation, intuitive navigation, effective writing strategies, and adapting to the needs and preferences of the target audience.

Bibliography:

1. Aaker, D.A. (1996). *Building Strong Brands.* Free Press.
2. Atherton, M., & Hane, C. (2017). *Designing Connected Content: Plan and Model Digital Products for Today and Tomorrow.* New Riders.
3. Beaird, J. (2007). *The Principles of Beautiful Web Design.*
4. Fogg, B.J. (2003). *Persuasive Technology: Using Computers to change what we think and do.*
5. Halvorson, K., & Rach, M. (2012). *Content Strategy for the Web. New Riders.*
6. Jennifer, G. & Gradiva, C. (2011). *Search Engine Optimization (SEO): An Hour a Day.* John Wiley & Sons.
7. Kissane, E. (2011). *The Elements of Content Strategy. A Book Apart.*
8. Norman, D. (2013). *The Design of Everyday Things.* Basic Books.
9. Redish, J. G. (2012). *Letting Go of the Words: Writing Web Content that Works.*
10. Richards, S. (2017). *Content Design.* Content Design London.
11. Wachter-Boettcher, S. (2012). *Content Everywhere: Strategy and Structure for Future-Ready Content.* Rosenfeld Media.

Augmented Reality Experiences in Graphic Design

Claudia Monica Trăistaru

Abstract: *This paper explores the integration of Augmented Reality (AR) in the field of graphic design, highlighting its diverse applications and transformative potential. By blending digital overlays with physical environments, AR offers novel avenues for enhancing user experiences and storytelling in graphic design. The research focuses on the practical application of AR in developing a mobile user interface for e-commerce in the real estate sector and creating an interactive poster with AR effects within the same domain. Through a mix of literature review, hands-on experimentation, and user feedback, the efficacy and challenges of integrating AR into graphic design are discovered. The insights gained not only contribute to advancing the understanding of AR's role in graphic design, but also provide practical guidance for designers seeking to leverage this innovative technology.*

Keywords: *augmented reality, graphic design, UX design, UI design, mobile user interface, print design, usability evaluation*

1. Introduction

In the last decades, technological progress has fundamentally redefined the way people interact with the world around them, communicate ideas

and information. One of the most exciting developments in this regard is the emergence of new realities such as virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR) and mixed reality (MR). Augmented reality involves superimposing virtual elements onto the real world, which allows users to see both the real world and computer-generated objects simultaneously using mobile devices (i.e., smartphones, tablets, and smartwatches), head-mounted displays (HMDs), computers or even projectors (Oun et al., 2024).

Graphic design takes ideas, concepts, text and images and presents them in a visually engaging form through print, electronic or other media. It imposes an order and structure to the content to facilitate and ease the communication process, while optimising the likelihood that the message will be received and understood by the target audience. A designer achieves this goal through the conscious manipulation of elements (Ambrose & Harris, 2009).

As technology continues to evolve at an unprecedented pace, the fields of graphic design and augmented reality (AR) begin to intersect in fascinating ways. Augmented Reality is transforming the landscape of graphic design, allowing designers to break free from the constraints imposed by traditional two-dimensional environments and empowering them to create immersive, interactive, and captivating experiences. From enhancing product visualisation to revolutionising print media and brand engagement, AR opens a new realm of creative possibilities (Singh, 2023).

2. Research methods

The primary aim of this study is to thoroughly investigate effective strategies and best practices for integrating augmented reality experiences into the field of graphic design. This investigation is grounded in a comprehensive literature review and insights from graphic design communities.

In this paper, the following research questions will be answered:

Q1: What are the main application areas of augmented reality?

Q2: What are the best practices for integrating augmented reality experiences in graphic design?

To address research question Q1, an analysis was conducted on scientific papers relevant to the chosen field, following the steps outlined in the subsections: Data Collection Methods, Selection Procedure, and Identification.

Data collection methods

The following data collection method was selected:

Search terms: "Augmented Reality in Graphic Design," "Augmented Reality Mobile Application," and "Create a realistic AR environment with Figma."

Publication date: 2018 – 2024

Database: Google Scholar

Selection Procedure

For this particular method, only scientific papers and books were selected, while reviews and PowerPoint presentations were excluded. Titles, keywords, and abstracts of the papers were examined, and a preliminary screening of the articles was conducted using the inclusion and exclusion criteria outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Conference papers/books and journals	Irrelevant papers and with no keywords specific to graphic design in association with augmented reality
Papers/books including keywords for graphic design in association with augmented reality	
	Papers lacking examples of graphic products that could incorporate augmented reality experiences
Papers/books including screenshots of applications using augmented reality in different domains	

Identification

The search for relevant scientific papers began on Google Scholar, utilizing a range of keywords and examining results across the first eight pages. This initial search yielded 240 potential research papers. Zotero was employed as a research assistant to collect, organize, and remove duplicates, resulting in 162 papers for further consideration.

After reviewing titles, keywords, and abstracts, and applying inclusion and exclusion criteria, a final set of 21 papers remained (Ahmadi Dehrashid, 2021); (Ambrose & Harris, 2009); (Amin et al., 2022); (Arena et al., 2022); (Criollo-C et al., 2021); (Dargan et al., 2023); (Deng & Wu, 2020); (Divya Udayan et al., 2020) ; (Kollárová, 2021); (Koumpouros, 2024); (Margaritopoulos & Georgiadou, 2019); (McNally & Koviland, 2024); (Mohamed Gamee Kamel El-Saidy & Mohamed Abolnaga, 2021); (Oun et al., 2024); (Parras-Burgos et al., 2020); (Pochtoviuk et al., 2020); (Saragih & Suyoto, 2020); (Tan et al., 2022); (Vert et al., 2021); (Vorobchuk & Pashkevych, 2023); (Weking et al., 2020)

These 21 papers were carefully examined to address the Q1 research question and, additionally, to complete the introduction part of the dissertation paper.

To address research question Q2, examples of best practices recommended within the graphic design community were analyzed. Using Figma, Vectary, Adobe Express, and Artivive, the following graphic products were created: a mobile user interface for e-commerce in the real estate sector and an interactive poster featuring AR effects within the same domain. Based on the experience gained, a set of best practices was proposed.

Augmented Reality Application Areas

The examination of the 21 academic papers underscores the application of augmented reality across various domains primarily via mobile apps, and to a lesser degree, via web apps. This technology is employed in sectors including education, hospitality, tourism, gaming, medicine, and retail, thereby yielding considerable advantages within each respective sector.
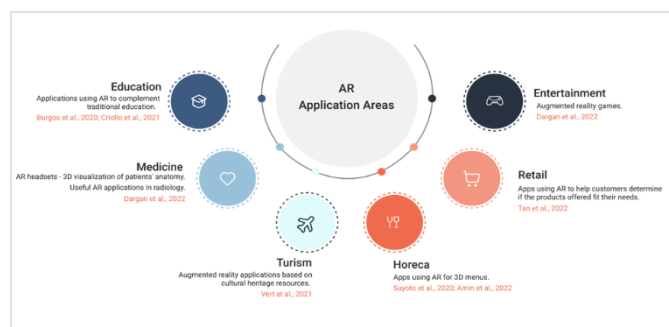

Fig. 1. AR Application Areas

The augmented reality applications described in the reviewed articles employ various types of AR technology. Marker-based AR, using QR codes, is predominant, followed by Markerless AR, which

scans the environment without a trigger image, and Location-based AR, leveraging GPS to deliver location-specific information.

Additionally, the developers have prioritised optimising augmented reality applications for Android devices, while ensuring strong support for iOS users. This strategic approach reflects a deep understanding of market dynamics and user preferences, ensuring broad accessibility and functionality of cutting-edge AR technology across diverse platforms. This inclusive strategy allows users, regardless of their choice of operating system, to enjoy and leverage the remarkable potential of augmented reality in innovative and immersive ways.

Furthermore, popular software tools like Adobe Aero, Blender, Figma, Unity 3D, Vectary, and Vuforia are consistently utilised for developing augmented reality applications. This underscores the widespread adoption and effectiveness of these platforms among AR developers, valued for their robust functionality and resource capabilities.

These insights highlight augmented reality's significant advantages and its increasing integration into daily life, driven by collaborative efforts and standardised approaches in application development and implementation.

3. Results

Integration of AR into graphic design

The integration of AR experiences into graphic design introduces new possibilities for engaging and innovative visual interactions, fundamentally transforming the way users perceive and interact with digital content.

Best practices within the graphic design community

Numerous graphic designers propose and showcase innovative methods for integrating augmented reality experiences into graphic design. These demonstrations provide concrete examples of best

practices, highlighting the exciting potential of this technology in modern visual communication.

Table 2: Examples proposed by graphic designers

Domain	Graphic designer	Graphic product	AR Experience	Link
Tourism	Adrián Řezníček, Stanislav Bagin, Lukas Stranak	Mobile UI	Points a traveller's route through the airport to check-in, security, gates, restaurants and to the taxi or bus stop.	https://www.beha nce.net/gallery/73 623109/Improveda irportexperience-through-AR
Tourism	Pixel Ravi Nickelfox Design	Mobile UI	Guides a traveller's direction to cafés, restaurants, shops or supermarkets.	https://www.yout ube.com/shorts/fx zMB--MV0o
E-commerce	Nagaredesign studio	Mobile UI	Allows the user to visualise coffee expressors or furniture objects in the real environment.	https://creativema rket.com/nagared esignstudio/10302 875-Augmented-Reality-Metaverse-App
E-commerce	Kostya Stepanov	Mobile UI	Allows the user to try on a pair of sneakers and check every detail by rotating the chosen 3D shoe model.	https://uxplanet.or g/2023mobile-ui-trends-2a44873102d
Multiple domains	Artivive	Printing material	Allows viewers to see posters come to life.	https://www.yout ube.com/watch?v =8Uta3XOd4Ps
Multiple domains	abdz.do	Printing material	Facilitates understanding of design principles in a fun and engaging way by scanning posters.	https://abduzeedo .com/node/87156

Upon reviewing the examples proposed within the graphic design community, it becomes evident that designers can animate static images, crafting compelling and interactive user experiences. Mobile UI design stands out as the predominant medium for integrating AR experiences, while the adoption of print AR experiences remains limited.

Mobile User Interface

Following the analysis of examples within the graphic design community, focus shifted to developing a mobile graphical user interface (GUI) for real estate e-commerce, enhanced with augmented reality (AR) elements.

This initiative is designed to enhance the furniture shopping experience provided by a fictional brand, with an emphasis on accessibility, convenience, and an aesthetically pleasing interface. The incorporation of AR technology enables users to preview furniture items within their own spaces prior to making a purchase, thereby increasing brand engagement and influencing purchasing decisions.

The GUI design and prototyping were executed using Figma, while the integration of AR technology was facilitated through Vectary.

The process began with an exploration of domain-specific inspiration within the graphic design community. A detailed visual sketch was then created to align with the intended information display and navigation structure of the mobile UI. Next, a visual guide was developed to define the logo, font, colors, and iconography to be used. Finally, the mobile pages were designed in Figma.

Using the Vectary platform, a 3D chair model downloaded from CGTrader (https://www.cgtrader.com) was imported. The chair's appearance was enhanced by selecting colors, materials for the upholstery and legs, and adding effects. To enable augmented reality features, a premium account was activated, and the link was copied for further use.

The following step required integrating the 3D element as a 2D image within the Figma prototype, necessitating the installation of the Vectary 3D plugin. After accessing the plugin and inserting the previously copied URL from Vectary, an attempt was made to embed the 3D element into the Figma prototype. However, despite extended processing time, the 3D element could not be integrated, as the "Processing" message persisted.

Upon investigating this issue in the Figma Community, the Vectary 3D Plugin comments section, and Vectary's Discord channel, it became clear that this bug affects all users attempting to insert custom 3D products. Vectary's developers have acknowledged the problem and are actively working on a fix, although the timeline for resolution remains uncertain.

Given these limitations, an alternative approach was taken to simulate the integration of augmented reality (AR) technology in the mobile GUI designed with Figma. This simulation involved using a background image of a living room, with the furniture object positioned within this setting. Users could interact with the 3D object by resizing it and selecting colors that best complemented their existing decor, aiming to closely replicate an authentic AR experience.
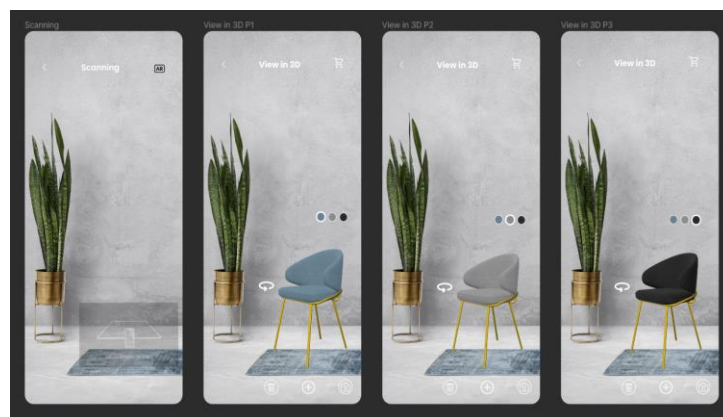

Fig. 2. AR Simulation

To evaluate the augmented reality functionality of the 3D model, a workaround was implemented by linking an interaction to the "View in 3D" button. This directed users to an intermediate screen in Vectary displaying an AR indicator.
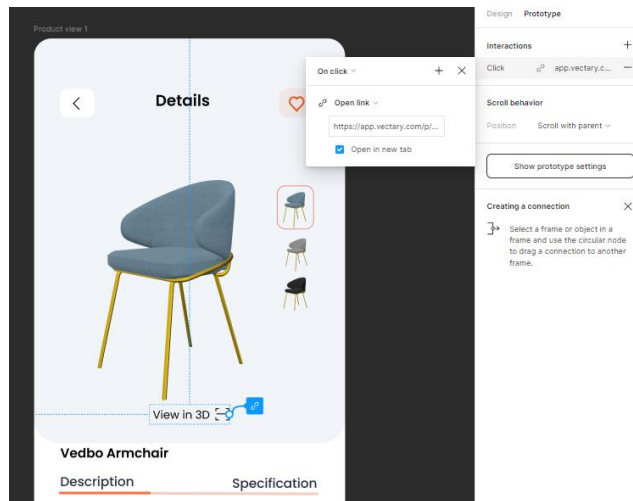
Fig. 3. "View in 3D" button interaction

Accessing the AR indicator allowed users to place the furniture object within their home environment.
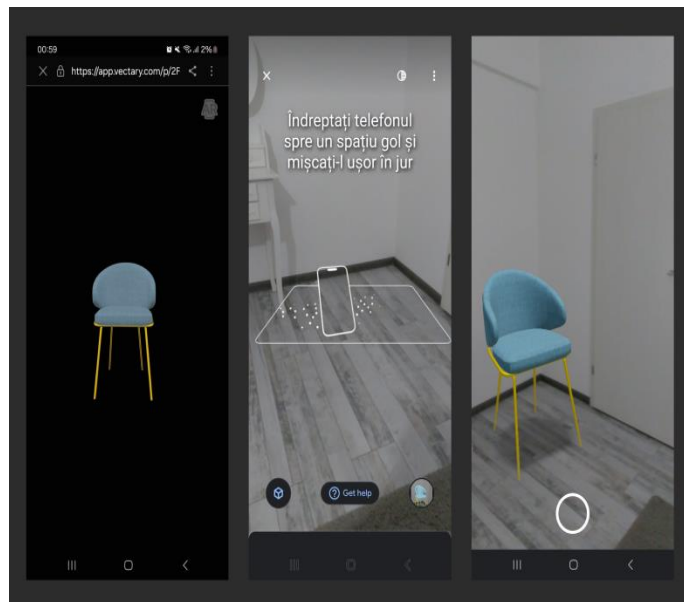

Fig. 4. Space scanning and chair placement in personal home

Despite the constraints of the Vectary 3D Plugin, leveraging an augmented reality (AR) workaround enabled successful placement and visualization of the 3D element in real space. Furthermore, simulating AR integration within the Figma-created mobile GUI closely approximated the authentic AR experience. Both the practical AR implementation and the simulated approach underscored the advantages augmented reality brings to the retail sector.

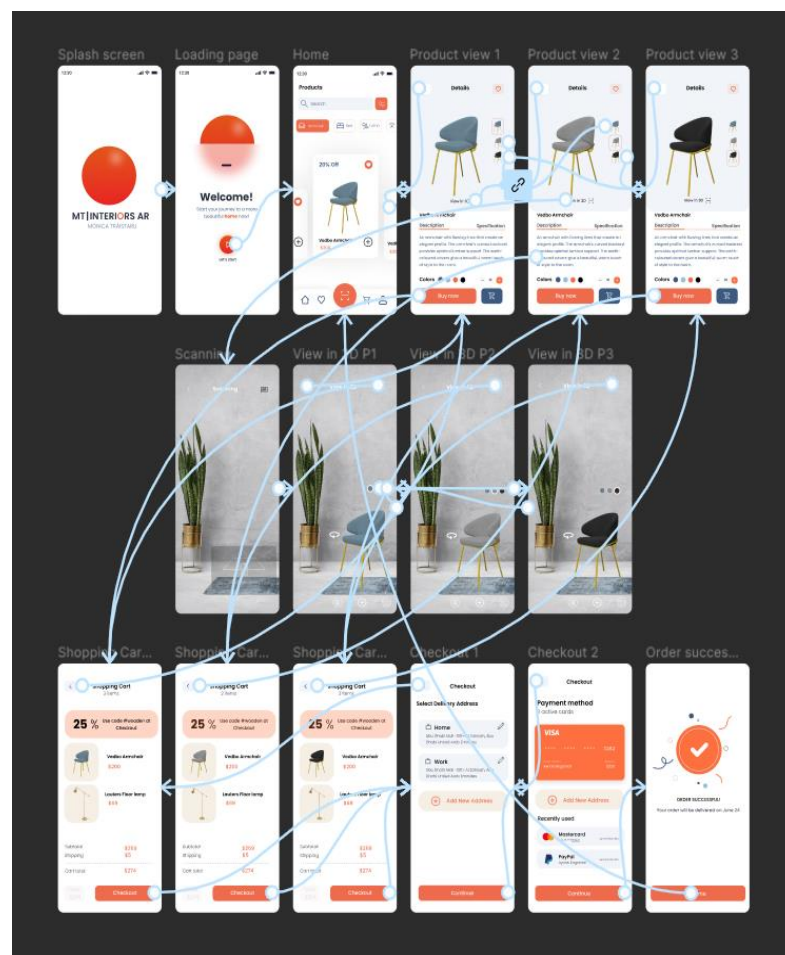The final prototype is illustrated in Figure 5:

Fig. 5. Final prototype

Poster

Motivated by a passion for interior design and the exploration of augmented reality integration within the graphic design community, an augmented reality-enhanced poster was created, targeting interior design enthusiasts and individuals involved in home design. This poster presents five tips for transforming a home into a welcoming space.

The creation of the AR poster involved three primary steps. First, the poster was designed and downloaded using Figma. Second, a short video was produced to showcase the augmented reality features of the poster. Utilizing Adobe Express, an animated poster template from Adobe Stock was selected and customised, incorporating media content and enhancing it with text, design elements, and animations to add dynamism to the presentation. Finally, a thorough review of the material was conducted, with necessary adjustments made to ensure quality.
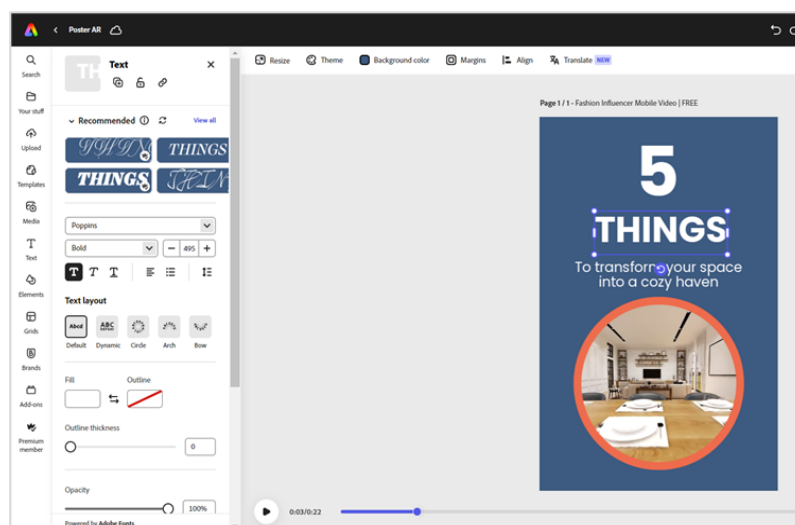

Fig. 6. Adobe Express video

To complete the creation of the augmented reality-enhanced poster, the Artivive platform was used. Within the Bridge by Artivive interface, the image poster from Figma was uploaded on the left side, and the video from Adobe Express was placed on the right. After

selecting the preferred display method for the video, the project was saved using the "Save" button. Within moments, the project appeared on the Bridge home page, from which it was downloaded using the "Download Artwork" option.

Fig. 7. Download AR poster from Artivive

To view the augmented reality-enhanced poster, the Artivive app was installed from the Google Play Store, which is also available on the Apple App Store. Upon opening the app and pointing the phone's camera at the poster, the app activated the AR features, overlaying a video that presented five tips for transforming a home into a cozy space.

In summary, integrating AR technology into print design enhances interactivity and immersion, converting static viewing into dynamic interaction. While the implementation process demands technical expertise and several crucial steps, the outcomes can profoundly enhance user engagement and experience.

Testing

The testing sessions were conducted in person within a group study room, comprising five participants (three females and two males) aged between 23 to 35 years. All participants were smartphone users and possessed a basic comprehension of augmented reality technology; however, none had previous experience with augmented reality applications.

The AR-based graphical user interface testing sessions lasted 55 minutes each, structured as follows: a 15-minute introduction and pre-questionnaire, 25 minutes for task execution, and a concluding 15-minute post-questionnaire.

Overall, the participants expressed positive feedback on the interface design and navigation ease. They particularly liked the initial animation and the cohesive use of colours, fonts, and icons. However, challenges were noted in accurately positioning the mobile phone camera for scanning and in returning to the "Product View 1" page, after placing the furniture object in the real environment. Thus, addressing these interaction issues is crucial for enhancing user experience in future iterations.

The following day, a focus group was conducted with five participants to examine the integration of augmented reality technology in poster design. This qualitative approach was selected to gather insights and opinions on the topic. The session lasted approximately 45 minutes, including 5 minutes for participants to share their initial impressions of the AR poster and 40 minutes dedicated to group discussion.

Based on the focus group findings, augmented reality shows potential for future poster design, despite its current limited adoption. A key barrier identified was reluctance among viewers to install third-party apps to access AR content. To address this, future research could focus on developing web-based AR technologies that enable posters to be viewed directly through a web browser, eliminating the need for apps downloads. This approach would involve optimising AR performance

and ensuring compatibility across different devices and platforms, aiming for a seamless and accessible user experience.

4. Conclusions

This paper effectively addressed the two research directions, offering pertinent insights into the primary applications of augmented reality and optimal methodologies for integrating AR experiences into graphic design field.

The present research outlines the fundamentals of emerging VR, AR, and MR technologies, explores various branches of graphic design, and examines the synergy between AR and graphic design. Two research questions were proposed to guide the study. The research was based on a review of scholarly articles sourced from Google Scholar, selected according to the identification methods and inclusion/exclusion criteria detailed in Table 1.

A systematic literature review was conducted to explore various applications of augmented reality, alongside an analysis of best practices within the graphic design community. This study facilitated the creation of the following graphic products using Figma, Vectary, Adobe Express, and Artivive software: a mobile graphic interface for e-commerce in the real estate sector featuring AR elements, and an interactive AR-enhanced poster for the same domain.

Throughout the process of developing this paper, responses to the research questions outlined in the introduction were obtained:

Q1: What are the main application areas of augmented reality?
Augmented reality technology is particularly applied in sectors such as education, hospitality, tourism, gaming, medicine, and retail, offering substantial benefits across each of these fields.

Q2: What are the best practices for integrating augmented reality experiences in graphic design?

From the two practical experiences, best practice examples and recommendations for designers were derived.

To formulate guidelines for designing mobile GUIs with AR elements, it is essential to first identify the necessary application features. These features will be depicted in a visual sketch to provide an overview of the app pages. A moodboard will then be created to refine ideas and develop a visual guide. Following the guide's specifications—such as colours, fonts, icons, and illustrations—and the visual sketch, the individual page design is crafted. Augmented reality technology will be integrated by attending tutorials or courses and using 3D elements created with programs like Adobe Aero, Blender, Unity 3D, Vectary, and Vuforia. Finally, the application prototype will be designed using tools such as Figma.

The prototype will undergo testing using methods including observations, focus groups, and A/B testing. Analysis of the results will lead to conclusions on necessary improvements for the application, guiding subsequent iterations of the UX/UI design process as needed.

On the other hand, creating posters enhanced with augmented reality elements demands specific skills and considerations. These include comprehending the poster's context and purpose, selecting suitable platforms like Figma, Adobe Express, and Artivive for creation, choosing the right trigger element and content, and testing and optimising the design for performance, usability, and accessibility.

The designer must identify the poster's target audience and its intended use, select the appropriate digital content format (2D, 3D, animation, or video), and ensure the augmentation performs effectively across various lighting and environmental conditions. The design must prioritise usability and clarity, aligning closely with the audience's needs and preferences.

Future research could focus on developing web-based AR technologies that enable posters to be viewed directly through a web browser, eliminating the need for apps downloads. This approach would involve optimising AR performance and ensuring compatibility

across different devices and platforms, aiming for a seamless and accessible user experience.

Drafting this paper has provided the opportunity to apply the knowledge gained from various subjects within the selected Master's program, while also acquiring new skills. This experience has facilitated a deeper exploration of relevant concepts and theories within the field of study.

Bibliography:

1. Ahmadi Dehrashid, K. A. (2021). *The place of poster in the digital era* [Master of Fine Arts, Iowa State University]. https://doi.org/10.31274/etd-20210609-1
2. Ambrose, G., & Harris, P. (2009). *The fundamentals of graphic design*. AVA Publishing, ISBN-13: 978-2940373826
3. Amin, S. N., Shivakumara, P., Jun, T. X., Chong, K. Y., Zan, D. L. L., & Rahavendra, R. (2022). "An Augmented Reality-Based Approach for Designing Interactive Food Menu of Restaurant Using Android". *Artificial Intelligence and Applications*, 1(1), 26–34. https://doi.org/10.47852/bonviewAIA2202354
4. Arena, F., Collotta, M., Pau, G., & Termine, F. (2022). "An Overview of Augmented Reality". *Computers*, 11(2), 28. https://doi.org/10.3390/computers11020028
5. Criollo-C, S., Abad-Vásquez, D., Martic-Nieto, M., Velásquez-G, F. A., Pérez-Medina, J.-L., & Luján-Mora, S. (2021). "Towards a New Learning Experience through a Mobile Application with Augmented Reality in Engineering Education". *Applied Sciences*, 11(11), 4921. https://doi.org/10.3390/app11114921
6. Dargan, S., Bansal, S., Kumar, M., Mittal, A., & Kumar, K. (2023). "Augmented Reality: A Comprehensive Review". *Archives of*

Computational Methods in Engineering, 30(2), 1057–1080. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11831-022-09831-7

7. Deng, W., & Wu, Y. (n.d.). *Application Research of AR (Augmented Reality) Technology in Creative Interaction of Poster Design.* 515, DOI: 10.2991/assehr.k.210106.131

8. Divya Udayan, J., Kataria, G., Yadav, R., & Kothari, S. (2020). "Augmented Reality in Brand Building and Marketing – Valves Industry". *2020 International Conference on Emerging Trends in Information Technology and Engineering* (Ic-ETITE), 1–6. https://doi.org/10.1109/ic-ETITE47903.2020.425

9. Kollárová, Z. (2021). *Augmented Reality Gallery of the Studio of Graphic Design and Multimedia*, https://is.muni.cz/th/dug93/zkollarova_bachelor_s_thesis_agd m_ar_gallery.pdf

10. Koumpouros, Y. (2024). "Revealing the true potential and prospects of augmented reality in education". *Smart Learning Environments*, 11(1), 2. https://doi.org/10.1186/s40561-023-00288-0

11. Margaritopoulos, M., & Georgiadou, E. (2019). *The application of augmented reality in print media*, ISSN 2414-6250 (Online), ISSN 2223-8905 (Print)

12. McNally, K. F., & Koviland, H. (2024). "A Web-Based Augmented Reality System". *ICST Transactions on Scalable Information Systems*. https://doi.org/10.4108/eetsis.5481

13. Mohamed Gamee Kamel El-Saidy, Y., & Mohamed Abolnaga, H. (2021). "The effective of augmented reality in the interactive print design". *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies in Art and Technology*, 4(2), 102–130. https://doi.org/10.21608/ijmsat.2021.226261

14. Oun, A., Hagerdorn, N., Scheideger, C., & Cheng, X. (2024). "Mobile Devices or Head-Mounted Displays: A Comparative

Review and Analysis of Augmented Reality in Healthcare". *IEEE Access*, 12, 21825–21839.
https://doi.org/10.1109/ACCESS.2024.3361833

15. Parras-Burgos, D., Fernández-Pacheco, D. G., Polhmann Barbosa, T., Soler-Méndez, M., & Molina-Martínez, J. M. (2020). "An Augmented Reality Tool for Teaching Application in the Agronomy Domain". *Applied Sciences*, 10(10), 3632. https://doi.org/10.3390/app10103632

16. Pochtoviuk, S. I., Vakaliuk, T. A., & Pikilnyak, A. V. (n.d.). *Possibilities of application of augmented reality in different branches of education*, DOI: 10.31812/educdim.v54i2.3867

17. Saragih, R. E. & Suyoto. (2020). "Development of Interactive Mobile Application with Augmented Reality for Tourism Sites in Batam". *2020 Fourth World Conference on Smart Trends in Systems, Security and Sustainability* (WorldS4), 512–517. https://doi.org/10.1109/WorldS450073.2020.9210300

18. Tan, Y.-C., Chandukala, S. R., & Reddy, S. K. (2022). "Augmented Reality in Retail and Its Impact on Sales". *Journal of Marketing*, 86(1), 48–66.
https://doi.org/10.1177/0022242921995449

19. Vert, S., Andone, D., Ternauciuc, A., Mihaescu, V., Rotaru, O., Mocofan, M., Orhei, C., & Vasiu, R. (2021). "User Evaluation of a Multi-Platform Digital Storytelling Concept for Cultural Heritage". *Mathematics*, 9(21), 2678.
https://doi.org/10.3390/math9212678

20. Vorobchuk, M., & Pashkevych, K. (2023). "Digital Code as an Object Graphic Design for Dissemination and Promotion of Brand". *Art History & Criticism*, 19(1), 130–142. https://doi.org/10.2478/mik-2023-0010

21. Weking, A. N., Suyoto, S., & Santoso, A. J. (2020). "A Development of Augmented Reality Mobile Application to

Promote the Traditional Indonesian Food". *International Journal of Interactive Mobile Technologies (iJIM)*, 14(09), 248. https://doi.org/10.3991/ijim.v14i09.11179.