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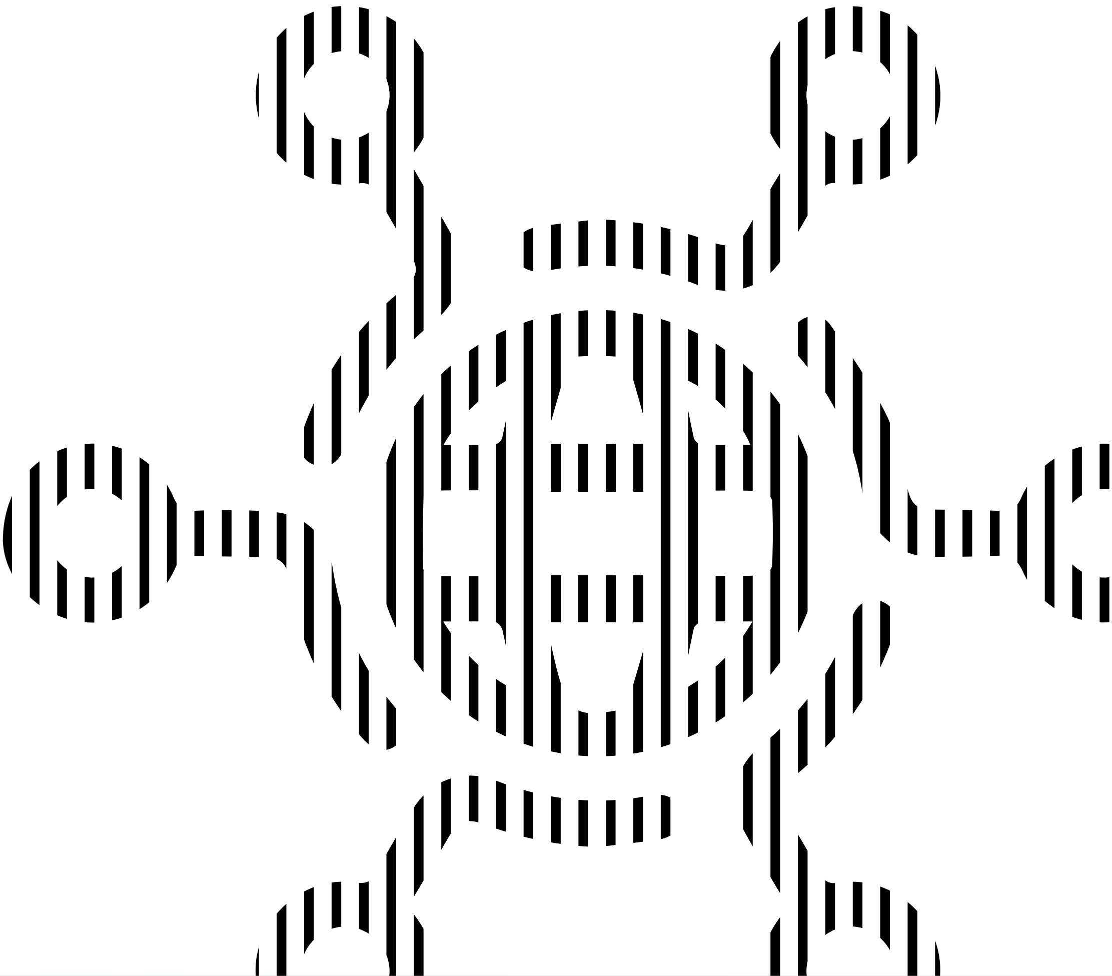

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OBSAH | CONTENT

VÝSKUMNÉ PRÁCE | *RESEARCH PAPERS*

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BRAND SEDUCTION AS A TOOL FOR BRAND'S SUCCESS: CONCEPTUALIZING THE TERM

This paper aims to present brand seduction as a crucial element for success in marketing nowadays. The author endeavors to define brand seduction to be usable in marketing research. The concept of seduction has been conceptualized based on this literature review by qualitative coding techniques. This coding process results in three identified dimensions of seduction (interaction, irrationality, and ireality). Afterward, this concept was empirically tested through qualitative research methods. The key stakeholders experiencing brand seduction were interviewed to verify the suitability of the theoretical concept. The results show the correspondence of the concept of brand seduction with the stakeholder´s experience.

1 Introduction

There are many examples of brands being very successful in capturing customers´ hearts and also those, seemingly no worse, who fail in markets. To distinguish the essential difference between them is probably essential knowledge in marketing management research. However, although terms like success, heart, or failure are understandable by common sense, it is not easy to grasp these words scientifically. Therefore, some methodology has to be established, and obviously, there is no singular perspective for such a task. This paper aims to develop one of the possible perspectives one can hold. The answer proposed in this paper can illuminate the roots of the astounding success of some brands. The main statement to be asserted here is that the ability to seduce by a brand is vital to succeeding in today´s markets.

The idea of seduction being the critical element of the marketing mix has been introduced previously. This thought was developed in various ways, including the perspectives only slightly related to marketing. However, although seduction in marketing was conceptualized in several ways, more is needed to apply this concept in marketing practice directly. Therefore the need to reconceptualize seduction was identified.

Some other marketing concepts might seem to cover Brand seduction . One of these concepts is brand love. Although Brand Love involves similar phenomena as seduction (e.g., interpersonal metaphors), those terms are not equivalent. Seduction, apart from „healthy" phenomena like bonding, trust, and affection, contains more controversial phenomenons like manipulation, using taboo, or creating illusions. On top of that, Brand Love is measured on the customer´s side, whereas brand seduction emerges more on the seducer´s (brand´s) side. Other related brand terms (Brand Loyalty, Brand Perception, Brand Sentiment, or Brand Touchpoints) are even more distant in meaning. On that account, it is not redundant to conceptualize brand seduction separately.

The primary insufficiency of existing concepts of brand seduction is that they are not used as a scientific term, or the definition needs to be narrower to capture all the relevant aspects of its deep meaning. The idea of a new concept of brand seduction in marketing is a term that covers its essential components (called dimensions in this paper) is measurable, and can be directly applied in marketing practice and theory. None of the existing concepts of seduction in marketing complies with these requirements.

Therefore, one of the goals of this work was to explore the means of understanding brand seduction and to capture the essence of seduction in marketing that pervades its existing definitions. For this purpose, relevant texts were compiled according to the further described criteria. The first step to conceptualizing brand seduction was exploring the broad context established by philosophical and sociological texts that addressed seduction in modern culture and society. These texts constitute the interpretational background for conceiving brand seduction because they establish the three possible ways to approach this term in marketing. Debord, Baudrillard, and Lipovetsky are among the most influential authors that can be named. Many other texts concerning brand seduction refer to these grounds works, and thus they extend the philosophically-sociological perspective.

A broader approach for conceptualizing brand seduction was chosen because of the insufficiency of the current definitions. Therefore brand seduction was approached through seduction in marketing in general. A systematic review was performed in the search for the definition of seduction in marketing. Firstly the relevant texts were identified by entering marketing seduction in Google Scholar (90 600 results). This tool allows sorting the results by relevance. The abstract review showed that only the first 45 pages (i.e., 450 results) contained texts with some description of seduction. These 450 results were sorted out based on the same criteria. Only slightly over 30 texts were identified with some description of seduction. Based on this description, these texts can be subsumed under one of the three previously mentioned perspectives.

2 Theoretical background

In order to understand the concept of brand seduction in marketing, some historical and societal changes must be reflected. In Debord´s words, during the 20th century, our society progressively transforms into a society of the spectacle (Debord 2021, p. 16). This metaphor mirrors the shift from reality to fantasy due to the boom of information technologies and digital media that enhance the advertising and entertainment industry (Gotham 2005, p. 228). Hand in hand with this expansion, the industry was massively automatized, enabling more goods to be consumed in developed countries. Therefore, it was necessary to stimulate the demand by creating false needs. As a result, advertising begins to persuade (or seduce) customers to believe their current state is insufficient and that certain commodities are needed to achieve happiness (Kaplan 2012, p. 461).

These thoughts were further developed by J. Baudrillard, who introduced seduction explicitly as a shaping principle of post-industrial society. Seduction and production are two competing powers representing masculine and feminine principles (Baudrillard 1990, p. 16). Production, a masculine power, is straightforward, rough, and establishes order. On the other hand, seduction destabilizes this order by creating illusions and playfully seizing symbols (Mortesten 2004, p. 1). In the society of the spectacle, this seductive power started to dominate advertising. Marketing incentives do not target customers´ reasoning, but it seduces them very much like seduction in human relationships – by flattering and encouraging one´s narcissism, mystery, and sexuality (Gane 2002, p. 60). Therefore, marketing seduction encourages people´s wishful thinking (people want to believe the particular product will make them young, beautiful, and healthy), even though it is only an illusion (Genosko 1994, p. 15).

Although seduction verges deception, Lipovetsky offered a different point of view on this phenomenon. According to his theory, the critical sociological change in the 20th century is enjoying the fruits of abundance by most people living in developed societies (Lipovetsky 2007, p. 13). Seduction means pampering, luxury, and the possibility to choose from the inexhaustible offer, so every customer´s need can be met. Therefore, in a seductive society, people can enjoy their life (Von Wachenfeldt 2018, p. 354) and can fulfil their needs without guilt. Furthermore, brands in a seductive society need to be emotionally compatible with the customers (Barroso 2019, p. 144), and the positive emotion connected to the brand becomes its main competitive advantage. In Lipovetsky´s view, seduction is thus not a negative phenomenon because the seductive strategies of the brand are beneficial for the customer.

There are three lines of thinking about brand seduction , based on the previous reflection: brand seduction in marketing can be understood as (i) a manipulation, (ii) a mean of satisfaction of needs, or (iii) a mean for establishing a relationship between a brand and a customer. The third way is derived from the previous two perspectives. The texts (mainly marketing academic articles) collected at the beginning of the literature review performed by the previously described method can be divided into these three categories. Each of them will be briefly characterized.

(i) The only goal of seductive marketing is to encourage customers´ consumption (Smith and Higgins 2000, p. 87). Contrary to Christian ethics, seductive marketing arouses the desire for pleasure and aims to break customers' inner resistance to spending and enjoying (Wilner and Ghassan 2017, p. 21). That can be achieved by substituting the social consensus that might be missing for some products. People, for example, want to eat healthy food, drink alcohol, or bet. However, they are ashamed of it, so they need the proper communication techniques to support their consumption decision (Deighton and Grayson 1995, p. 664). Other manipulation techniques are based on affecting of customer´s unconscious motivation. V. Packard and J. B. Key broadly characterized such techniques. According to these authors, advertisements are full of hidden motives, primarily sexual or violent (Key 1992, p 181), which are subconsciously perceived and affect customers´ behavior without their knowledge (Packard 1957, p. 35). Therefore, this negative interpretation of seduction in marketing emphasizes that customers are deceived and manipulated for the brand´s profit.

(ii) However, other voices say that people want to be affected by advertisements and actively seek new ways to consume freely and enjoy abundance (Kusina 2004, p. 87). People ever before endeavored to achieve superiority over others, and seductive marketing only satisfies this already existing need (Madany 2016, p. 2558). Brands serve as a status symbol (Newman 2001, p. 415), so they only replace items that played this socially inherent role in the past. This positive interpretation thus meets the negative one in the idea that seduction in marketing stimulates desire leading to irrational decisions (Belk, Ger, and Askegaard 2003, p. 333). However, it differs in one crucial aspect – customers actively seek this stimulation, so the market only answers this demand.

(iii) Some authors noted an analogy between establishing a relationship between two people and a brand with its customer. The different stages of this process were described by, e.g. Deighton and Grayson (1995, p. 669) and Alreck and Settle (1999, p. 141). By flattering, provocation, affection, emotions, and caring, the brand strengthens the bond with a customer (Barroso 2019, p. 148) to develop a relationship that can satisfy the customer's interpersonal needs. A lot can be derived from this view of seduction in marketing – González (2010b, p. 3) described how alternate approaches and distancing could stimulate the desire (for a product, brand itself, or lifestyle it associates). The seduction starts with the evoking need and ends with physical contact (González 2010a, p. 82). Understanding seduction through the relationship is a third possible way to conceive this phenomenon.

3 Methodology

The literature review leads to the further-described categorization, which maps and summarizes the discussion about brand seduction in marketing literature. Although important contact points of the relevant views can be found, only a few texts aimed to define brand seduction. Therefore, its precise meaning has to be reached analytically. Many of these texts do not focus on this theme directly, but the word seduction is used while discussing other topics. Even the texts that define brand seduction do not use a scientific method for conceptualizing this phenomenon. In order to reach a scientific definition of brand seduction usable within the empirical research in marketing, the following method has been used: In vital texts contributing to the discussion about brand seduction, keywords were identified. These words (or word phrases) are related to seduction in the following ways:

- quality of seduction (provocative, illusional, charming...)
- quality of a seducer (gentle, manipulative, conspirational...)
- a seductive technique (deception, mystery, taboo…)
- the effect of seduction on the seducee (affecting behavior, evoking emotions, stimulation of libido…)

The keywords were subsequently adjusted to infinitive and noun forms. This set of words allows using coding techniques for qualitative research, described in Saldana (2015). Coding can verbally capture a visual or linguistic phenomenon's essence, attributes, and key features. This process is more creative and intuitive than rigid and exact (Auerbach and Silverstein 2003, p. 24). It aims to interpret the term so that specific categories or codes are based mainly on considerations and arguments that justify their suitability in the research. For this research, the technique of categorization coding (i.e., sub-coding) was used, in which the identified codes are sorted into higher-level parent categories. The codes were usually not abstracted because they were directly used in the original text (in the case of foreign texts, they were translated into Czech).

Conceptualizing brand seduction aimed to bridge the difference between two opposing views on this concept – as a positive and a negative phenomenon. Because of this distinction, it was appropriate to classify the identified words, describing the different shades of seduction meaning, according to the same key – whether they were neutral words, words with a negative connotation, and words with a positive emotional color. The classification into these categories is, naturally, not entirely exact (for some words, it is questionable which category they best fall into), and it would be difficult to name the exact criterion based on which the words were evaluated in this way. However, the purpose of the classification was to identify the superordinate categories that connect the words so that a certain fluidity within the classification is not only permissible but often desirable, as the same word may have a completely different meaning in different contexts.

After sorting according to emotional connotation, the words within the categories were classified according to the essential feature. The identified categories (e.g., positive fantasies and negative illusions) often name a similar phenomenon but with a different emotional coloration, reflecting the considerable ambivalence of brand seduction. Thus, the evaluation coding method was used. By comparing the positive and negative aspects of the same phenomenon, it was possible to approximate its meaning by synthesizing the identified parent categories. The categories associating directly identified words (categories of the 1st degree) were classified into superordinate categories, creating second-degree categories of the 2nd degree. Within the three 2nd-degree categories, meanings of the categories of the 1st degree and the individual words falling into them were shaded. Therefore, the final definition (conception) of brand seduction is based on the highest level of generality (categories of 2nd degree) and considers the specific meanings assigned at lower levels of defining the term.

The analysis showed that although brand seduction is apprehended differently in various texts, these perspectives show three similar features (i-iii): Interaction between two subjects (a brand and a customer), creating a relationship (i). However, this relationship is not entirely anchored in reality (ii), as the ideas, fantasies, and illusions that the seducer creates for the seduced to influence his or her behavior and emotions (to seduce them) play an essential role. The third notion is the type of appeal the seducers use – they target not the seduced's mind (logical arguments or persuasion based on evidence) but their motivation and feelings (iii). These effects can be pleasant (stimulation of human libido, appeal to status) or unpleasant (arousing guilt or outrage). The definition is applicable

even for interpersonal seduction. However, at this point, the research aims to prove its validity in marketing, i.e., the interaction between the brand (seducer) and the customer (seduced).
The brand uses available means (advertisements, design stores, communication on social networks) to impress the customer and arouse an emotional response, strengthening his or her relationship with the brand. Building this relationship has multiple phases that can be identified, described, and found seminal to the brand's success. There are several ways to impress the customer – by using sexual or shocking themes, humor, flattery, appeal to his or her status or identity, and others. People are seduced by desirable ideas and associations evoked by appropriate words or stimulating senses. The imagery is often on the verge of delusion – the advertisements often show luxury destinations, high society, or supernatural features of products (e.g., providing a person with miraculous attraction or restoring youth). Thus, the seductive effect can be examined separately, and the presumed concept suggests that the framework of that process is an interaction that results in a relationship.
The theoretical conceptualization of brand seduction is thus a definition consisting of three dimensions (interaction, irrationality, and ireality), which join individual categories. These categories are divided into sub-categories according to their emotional connotation. Finally, individual keywords are classified into these sub-categories. Figure 1 represents the final concept and shows the dimension of brand seduction with the corresponding codes, divided into positive, negative and neutral.

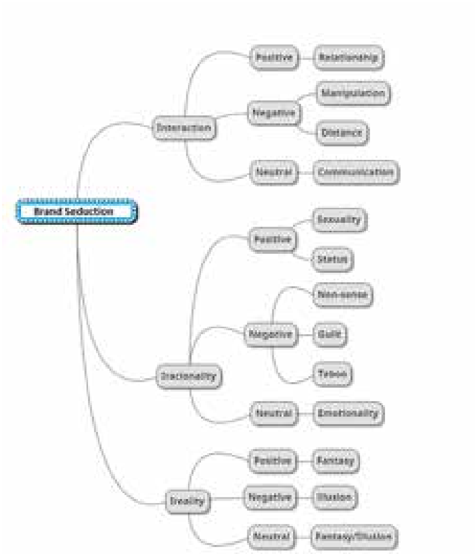

Figure 1: Graphic representation of the concept of seduction
Source: Author

The concept above has been subsequently empirically tested. This testing aimed to verify the concept or, in other words, to ascertain whether the concept matches the experience of key stakeholders. These stakeholders were chosen to represent three groups significantly affected by brand seduction. The first type of stakeholder is the customers. This group is a seduction target, and they can share their experience of being seduced by a brand. The second type is specialists, i. e. advertising workers, brand managers, and marketers. They are active users of seductive techniques, the second perspective necessary for verifying the concept.

Since advertising (or marketing communication in general) is the primary medium of brand seduction, the point of view of the advertising workers is valuable because using seductive techniques is practically their primary occupation. Brand managers and marketers also use seduction, but their perspective is broader than the perspective of the previous group. Their job is to manage the brand complexly, so they have to consider seduction on a more general level.
For verifying the concept, the method of the in-depth interview was chosen. For this purpose, the questionnaire was prepared with open questions. These interviews aimed to investigate the chosen stakeholders' experience and opinions about brand seduction. The questions were chosen to reflect the key elements of brand seduction. For example, the advertising workers were asked the following question: What is your brand like? How does it attract customers? These questions indirectly investigate whether the three main aspects of seduction (interaction, irrationality, and ireality) are present. According to the respondent's statement, the relevance of individual dimensions of brand seduction can be evaluated.
The interviews were transcribed, and obtained texts were evaluated similarly to the literature discussing seduction. The keywords were marked and coded. Final codes were classed into the defined categories, if possible. Some codes were left unclassified, and the new categories were to be identified.
The correspondence between the defined concept of seduction and the stakeholder´s experience with seduction was subsequently evaluated. The individual dimensions were valued on a scale from 0 points (no match) to 5 points (a perfect match).
Eight interviews have been executed. Three respondents represent customers, and five represent specialists (two advertising workers, one marketer, and two brand managers). The customers were asked online if they had a favorite brand. If yes, then whether they are willing to participate in this research. The specialists were asked through common acquaintances or by contacting the company. Interviews lasted approximately one hour (their transcription is over 100 pages long) and provided sufficient data to analyze. Since all the interviews confirm the applicability of the proposed concept of brand seduction, it is unlikely that potential new data will contradict the results. Therefore the theoretical saturation was reached.

4 Results
Results (Table 1) show that the three identified dimensions are somewhat relevant. The highest match was confirmed for irrationality (3.75/5 points), slightly less for ireality (3.5/5 points), and 3/5 points for interaction, which also signals the relevance of this dimension.

Type of respondent	Interaction	Irrationality	Ireality
Customer 1	4	4	4
Customer 2	3	3	2
Customer 3	2	4	4
Ad. worker 1	3	4	2
Ad. worker 2	3	2	3
Marketer	3	4	5
Brand manager 1	5	5	4
Brand manager 2	5	4	4
Average	3	3.75	3.5

Table 1: Relevance of identified dimensions of seduction
Source: Author

The unsorted codes analysis found a few new categories. The Table 2 shows the new categories for each respondent. The highest overlap was identified for aesthetics (5/8) and Social responsibility (4/8).

	Customer 1	Custo-mer 2	Custo-mer 3	Ad. wor-ker 1	Ad. wor-ker 2	Mar-keter	Brand man-ager 1	Brand man-ager 2	Num-ber
Stimulation of senses	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Aesthetics	X	X	-	X	X	-	X	-	5
Identity	X	-	-	-	X	-	-	-	2
Community	X	-	-	-	X	-	-	-	2
Simplification	X	-	-	-	X	-	-	-	2
Uniques	X	-	X	-	-	-	-	-	2
Experience	X	X	X	-	-	-	-	-	3
Sport	-	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Functionality	-	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Social responsibility	-	X	-	-	X	X	-	X	4
Popularity	-	-	X	-	-	-	-	-	1
Newness	-	-	X	-	-	X	-	X	3
Quality	-	-	X	-	-	-	-	-	1
Dynamics	-	-	-	X	-	-	-	-	1
Tradition	-	-	-	-	-	X	X	-	2
Partnership	-	-	-	-	-	X	X	X	3
Distinctiveness	-	-	-	-	-	-	X	X	2
Beneficiality	-	-	-	-	-	-	X	-	1
Competence	-	-	-	-	-	-	X	-	1

Table 2: New potential dimensions identified within the interviews
Source: Author

For aesthetics, there is an aesthetic aspect in all core dimensions of brand seduction. Beauty (or design, attractively) might be considered a presupposition of successful interaction. A customer prefers to interact with an attractive brand rather than an unattractive one. On top of that, the brand can interact with a customer passively, i. e. simply by being beautiful and being seen.

The importance of aesthetics also supports the relevance of the irrational dimension. By high valuation on beauty, the respondents confirm that customers are affected mainly by emotions, and their affection towards the brand does not rise from rational reasons.

The ireal aspect of brand seduction consists in creating fantasies and illusions. Since images primarily mediate these, the importance of aesthetics naturally emerges.

Aesthetics, thus, is a presupposition of a successful brand seduction. However, emphasizing esthetic quality in the Brand seduction definition cannot cover this. Firstly, aesthetic quality is a highly complex phenomenon. Not only beauty can seduce. There is also an aesthetics of ugliness (Rozenkranz 2015, p. 5).

Furthermore, aesthetics cannot be considered a dimension standing on the same level as the three identified dimensions. Although aesthetics can be significant, it is not essential for successfully establishing a bond with a customer. Therefore the results only highlight the importance of this category without questioning the original definition.

Social responsibility is also a broader term. There cannot be a general requirement for brand seduction to be socially responsible because only 50 % of respondents reported it as a significant feature of their experience of brand seduction. Some respondents consider some social or environmental sensitivity of the brand an important feature of today´s marketing. However, for other respondents, brand seduction is a strictly personal phenomenon. Since it might involve breaking the rules (like environmental un-friendliness or political in-correctness), social responsibility cannot be considered a universal dimension of brand seduction. However, the relative importance of this category points to the fact that seduction in the context of marketing can be something positive, and its meaning thus cannot be reduced to its controversial or demonic aspect.

The original concept of brand seduction was thus confirmed to match the experience of the key stakeholders.

5 Further research

The research described above is part of a dissertation project focusing on brand seduction in marketing. Besides conceptualizing this term and its empirical verification, brand seduction will be related to other marketing concepts. These other phases of the research will be briefly characterized.

The first phase of empirical testing evaluates the relationship between brand seduction and eye activity. When the eye-tracking method is used, the eye activity of respondents watching seductive visual features will be compared with their eye activity watching non-seductive features. The seductiveness of the features will be evaluated in the initial pre-test. This phase hypothesizes the following statement: The eye activity differs for seductive and non-seductive features by the size of heatmaps for individual areas of interest. Verifying this hypothesis would confirm brand seduction as a relevant factor for eye activity.

The second phase of the empirical testing is evaluating the relationship between brand seduction and brand recall. Brand recall represents one of the significant marketing concepts co-reflecting the success of a brand's marketing strategy. The effect of seduction on brand recall has yet to be scientifically investigated. Ten advertisements will be shown to respondents. The seductiveness of the advertisements will be evaluated in an initial pre-test. This phase hypothesizes the following statement: Brand recall is directly proportional to brand seduction. The established methodology for measuring brand recall (both aided and unaided) will be used, and the results will be compared with the identified seductiveness of the individual advertisements.

After verifying the theoretical concept of brand seduction and evaluating its connection to the marketing concepts mentioned above, the importance of brand seduction in marketing can be assessed. The verified concept of brand seduction can be a valuable contribution to marketing research and managerial practice. The concept can be related to other marketing concepts in further research and can be used to develop marketing strategies involving seductive techniques.

6 Conclusion

Brand seduction has been conceptualized based on the existing literature. This concept was subsequently empirically tested, and the results show that the concept matches the experience of the key stakeholders. In the following phases of the research, the concept of brand seduction will be empirically tested to assess the dependency between brand seduction and other marketing concepts. The testing will set an example for exploring the dependency between brand seduction and other marketing concepts.

Poznámky/Notes ——— Annex

Questionnaire respondent – a customer

1. Which brand is important in your life?
2. What do you like about this brand? How does it appeal to you?
3. What do you imagine when I say… (The brand's name)?

4. How would you describe your relationship with this brand? What would it be if this relationship were to be likened to an interpersonal relationship?
5. How did your relationship with this brand evolve? Do you remember when you first noticed the brand and when it became important to you?
6. What role do ideas and images play in your relationship with this brand?
7. Do you think your relationship with the brand is based on reason?

Questionnaire respondent – a marketing specialist and a brand manager
1. Why do you think some brands can catch the hearts of customers while other brands fail?
2. What should the brand be like to succeed in today's hypercompetitive environment?
3. What role do you think about the importance of relationships in today's marketing?
4. What is the brand you work for like? How does it attract customers?
5. What do you think about the concept of seduction in marketing? Do you think such a phenomenon could be used to answer the previous questions?
6. What do you understand by this term? What do you think the seduction techniques are? Is the brand you work for using some of them?
7. What do you think about the role of rationality and irrationality in advertising?
8. In this context, what do you think about the statement that the customer may prefer the image over reality?

Questionnaire respondent – an advertising specialist
1. Why do you think some brands can catch the hearts of customers while other brands fail?
2. What should the brand be like to succeed in today's hypercompetitive environment?
3. What role do you think about the importance of relationships in today's marketing?
4. What are the advertisements you created? How do they attract customers?
5. What do you think about the concept of seduction in marketing? Do you think such a phenomenon could be used to answer the previous questions?
6. What do you understand by this term? What do you think the seduction techniques are? Have these techniques been used in advertisements you created?
7. What do you think about the role of rationality and irrationality in advertising?
8. In this context, what do you think about the statement that the customer may prefer the image over reality?

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Kľúčové slová / *Key Words* ——— seduction, brand, marketing, advertisement, brand recall, *svádění, značka, marketing, reklama, brand recall*

JEL klasifikácia / *JEL Classification* ——— M31, M37

Résumé ——— **Brand seduction jako nástroj úspěchu značky: Konceptualizace pojmu**
Tento článek představuje brand seduction jako klíčový prvek pro úspěch v dnešním marketingu. Autor definoval brand seduction pro použití tohoto konceptu v empirickém výzkumu. Brand seduction byla definována na základě literární rešerše za pomocí kódovacích technik pro kvalitativní výzkum. Výsledkem procesu kódování byla identifikace tří dimenzí svádění (interakce, iracionalita a irealita). Následně byl koncept testován prostřednictvím kvalitativních výzkumných metod. Byly provedeny rozhovory klíčovými stakeholdery se zkušeností s fenoménem brand seduction za účelem posouzení adekvátnosti teoretického konceptu vzhledem k marketingové praxi. Výsledky prokázaly shodu navrženého konceptu sedukce se zkušeností klíčových stakeholderů.

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SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT: INSIGHTS FROM ACCOMMODATION FACILITIES IN BUKHARA ALONG THE SILK ROAD

In recent years, the tourism industry has encountered substantial challenges due to the pandemic, economic and political circumstances. Nevertheless, sustainable development frameworks can enhance the sector's resilience and generate social, economic, and environmental advantages for the destination's populace. Achieving this necessitates developing the destination under a coherent, content-rich brand, implementing precise marketing strategies, and promoting stakeholder collaboration. This research surveyed approximately 200 accommodation facilities in Bukhara, Uzbekistan, a prominent Central Asian tourism destination and a significant component of the Silk Road legacy. The study aimed to investigate their perceptions of the Silk Road brand, involvement in sustainable development initiatives, collaboration with the public sector, and the status of their service offerings. Based on the results, the paper concludes and offers specific recommendations.

1 Introduction

Relocation, temporary residence, cultural immersion, business or visiting friends and family are all aspects of a multi-dimensional industry known as tourism, which encompasses people traveling to places outside their usual environment. This industry integrates various elements such as accommodation, dining, sightseeing, transportation, and additional services. Collectively, these aspects are referred to as the tourism product, which shapes the overall travel experience. The tourism product's development, renewal, and transformation are influenced by numerous factors, including technological advancements, globalization, evolving consumer preferences, increasing demand, and competitive environments. In the following we will explain the impact of particular factors on the development of tourism.

Factors related to the economy. Tourism is now a key driver of economic growth in many nations, creating jobs, raising foreign exchange profits, and promoting regional development (UNWTO 2018). To increase tourism and increase revenue, governments and other stakeholders make investments in infrastructure development, destination marketing, and product diversity. The structure of taxes, tax exemptions (duty-free zones in means of transport: ships, airplanes), the setting of taxation of exports of goods and services, taxation of selected product categories (tobacco, alcohol, property) also have a significant impact on the development of tourism (Radulović, Sladić, Govedarica and Raičević 2023). Specific in the future may be, for example, rules of carbon taxation (Cao, Zhang and Zhang 2021).

Technological developments. Sector has grown significantly as a result of the quick development of technology. The manner that visitors research, plan, and book their travels has changed due to advancements in transportation and the growth of the internet and mobile technology, creating a more interconnected and cutthroat economy (Neuhofer et al. 2019).

Globalization. The increase in international travel is a result of the world being more connected through trade, investment, and cultural interaction (Gössling et al. 2009). People can now travel and experience foreign nations with greater ease thanks to the expansion of multinational enterprises, lowered travel costs, and liberalized visa regulations.

Consumer preferences are shifting, resulting in the expansion of niche tourism segments including eco-tourism, adventure tourism, heritage tourism and etc. Contemporary travelers prefer original, distinctive, and personalized experiences (Richards 2018). These specialized markets cater to the unique interests and driving forces of tourists.

Sustainability issues: There has been a shift in emphasis toward sustainable tourism practices because of rising environmental and sociocultural awareness. Buckley et al. (2019) emphasize the necessity to balance the economic, environmental, and sociocultural aspects of development for securing the tourism industry's long-term existence. In the process of maintaining this balance, the collaboration between stakeholders (government and non-government organizations (NGO), service providing companies, accommodation facilities, tourism operators and agencies, catering service providers, etc.) is deemed highly significant.

The research is focused on Historic Centre of Bukhara, which is considered one of the ancient Silk Road and Central Asia's tourism destinations. The study examined one of important stakeholder in tourism industry lodging facilities catering to visitors in the area. Throughout the research, their understanding of the social, economic, and environmental dimensions of sustainable tourism was explored, as well as their participation in tourism management processes and their roles in fostering the Silk Road heritage.

2 Literature review

The pursuit of economic, environmental, and social well-being for both the present and future generations is a shared objective of sustainable development and tourism, which explains their close relationship. The relationship between sustainable development and tourism is discussed in the article, along with examples of both industries' benefits from integration. *First off*, while protecting the environment and cultural heritage, sustainable tourism functions as an economic driver by creating job opportunities and promoting economic growth (UNEP and UNWTO 2005). Long-term success for destinations and communities is ensured by this equilibrium. *Second,* environmental protection is fundamental to sustainable tourism, which encourages resource management and lessens adverse environmental effects including pollution, deforestation, and habitat destruction (The International Ecotourism Society 2019). *Thirdly,* sustainable tourism is essential for maintaining regional customs and cultures. Cultural heritage is preserved for future generations by enticing visitors to partake in genuine experiences and support local providers (UNESCO 2022). *Fourth*, a crucial component of sustainable tourism is the mitigation of climate change. The tourism sector may drastically lower its carbon footprint by implementing sustainable practices, such as supporting eco-friendly transportation and the use of renewable energy sources. This will help the world's efforts to combat climate change (UNEP 2012). *Fifth*, as sustainable tourism places a strong emphasis on local involvement and cooperation, community empowerment is a fundamental component of the industry. This strategy promotes local communities' independence and more equitable distribution of the advantages of tourism (UNWTO 2023). *Sixth,* responsible wildlife tourism, the preservation of endangered species, and aid in the creation of protected areas are all ways that sustainable tourism helps to preserve biodiversity (CBD 2022). *Seventhly,* the foundation of sustainable tourism is education and awareness. By educating visitors on the value of protecting the environment and cultural heritage, responsible behavior is promoted, generating a greater appreciation of the places they travel to (GSTC 2022). *Eighthly,* waste management and reduction are essential components of sustainable tourism activities. Tourism activities have a reduced negative environmental impact when trash reduction, recycling, and efficient waste management are prioritized (The World Bank 2019). *Nineteenth,* a major advantage of sustainable tourism is that it helps local businesses. By enticing visitors to purchase local goods and services, it supports regional economies, raises living standards, and lowers poverty (UNWTO 2023). *Lastly tenth,* sustainable tourism balances the demands of the environment, local populations, and the tourism sector to guarantee the long-term survival of destinations. This equilibrium produces places that are more resilient, can respond to changes in the environment, and continue to be desirable for future generations (WTTC 2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant influence on the world's tourist sector, revealing its susceptibility to outside shocks and forcing a review of current procedures (Gössling et al. 2021). The crisis has brought home the importance of fostering sustainable tourism to ensure the sector's adaptability and long-term existence. The pandemic brought to light the significance of diversifying tourism offerings for increased resilience (Sigala 2020), boosting local economies by promoting local goods and services (UNWTO 2020), and putting a priority on the health and well-being of both visitors and host communities through ethical business conduct (Godovykh et al. 2020). The brief halt in international travel also highlighted the necessity for environmentally friendly tourism practices (Higgins-Desbiolles 2020). The pandemic has also led to a strengthening of infrastructure, especially soft infrastructure (software solutions, availability of e-services, crisis management processes) (Torabi, Rezvani and Hall 2023). This has also increased the quality and capacity of tourism services. In general, the pandemic has highlighted the critical position that sustainable tourism plays in resolving issues of economic, social, and environmental importance.

A form of tourism known as „sustainable tourism" tries to maximize positive contributions while minimizing negative effects on the environment, society, and economy (UNWTO 2023). It is essential for local economic development, cultural preservation, and environmental protection (Koens et al. 2018). Sustainable tourism development's defining traits include balancing economic, social, and environmental objectives; involving and collaborating with stakeholders; and long-term planning and flexibility (Melissen 2013). By following these guidelines, sustainable tourism may guarantee the long-term viability of travel locations, bringing advantages to both tourists and host communities while tackling urgent global issues.

Stakeholder participation is essential for the development of sustainable tourism because it promotes collaborative decision-making, ensures that different viewpoints and interests are considered during planning and management, and results in outcomes that are more successful and sustainable (Byrd et al. 2009). Involving local stakeholders encourages community support and helps to distribute rewards more fairly (Tosun 2006). Stakeholder involvement can also aid in identifying future conflicts, facilitate reaching agreements, and promote cooperation (Waligo et al. 2013). Along with increasing accountability and transparency, it promotes knowledge exchange, skill building, and innovation in sustainable tourism practices (Bramwell and Lane 2011). This is done by enabling the monitoring and evaluation of tourism initiatives to make sure they are in line with sustainability principles.

Residents and diverse communities, tourism companies, entrepreneurs, government and regulatory agencies, NGOs, travelers, academics, investors, media, and financial institutions are among the stakeholders in the development of sustainable tourism (Aas et al. 2005; Cohens et al. 2018). These groups play a principal role in conserving local culture, traditions, and environment by influencing policies and regulations, advancing sustainable practices, and influencing decision making processes. They are either directly or indirectly impacted by tourism activities or have the potential to do so (Waligo et al. 2013; Byrd et al. 2009). The role of stakeholders is evident, for example, in the case of elections: national or local, when their interests are addressed by political parties. Political parties can identify stakeholder interests, but the durability of common interests is limited by the electoral period (Olšavský 2014). Collaboration and communication amongst stakeholders are essential in the tourist sector if successful, equitable, and long-lasting outcomes are to be achieved (Bramwell and Lane 2011; Hall 2011).

One of Uzbekistan's most significant historical and cultural hubs, Bukhara, was added to the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1993. Bukhara, which has a history spanning more than 2000 years, was crucial to the spread of Islamic art, architecture, and culture throughout Central Asia. Bukhara's tourism growth has centered on maximizing the city's distinctive cultural heritage and historical attractions, which draw tourists from all over the world.

The government of Uzbekistan has been working to increase tourism and Bukhara has benefited greatly from these efforts. The government has made improvements to the transportation system, eliminated the need for visas for inhabitants of numerous countries, and made investments in the preservation and restoration of historical landmarks. A regional tourism development project called „Silk Road Destinations" has also helped to promote Bukhara as a significant stop on the historic Silk Road trading route.

It is critical to strike a balance between the conservation of the city's distinctive cultural heritage and the demands of the expanding tourism industry to maintain sustainable tourism development in Bukhara. To safeguard the city's historical and cultural treasures, this involves promoting ethical tourist activities, involving local populations, tourism providers and putting sustainable management practices into effect. In the region, there are currently 829 registered heritage sites, of which 139 are utilized for tourism purposes. It is crucial to develop tourism products based on sustainable heritage tourism approaches at these heritage sites. Consequently, this research aimed to investigate and analyze the activities of accommodation facilities, as one of the stakeholders, in promoting sustainable tourism in the Bukhara Silk Road heritage area.

3 Methodology

The article aimed to explore accommodation facilities operating in the Bukhara region regarding the Silk Road heritage, its condition, and projects related to the public sector and sustainable tourism. To this end, questionnaires were conducted at accommodation facilities in Bukhara, which comprise a majority compared to other providers. According to information provided by the Bukhara Tourism and Cultural Heritage department, the number of accommodation facilities in the first half of 2022 was 402. These numbers indicate high competition among accommodation facilities. Given a large number of hotels and conducting a questionnaire was deemed appropriate. Because, questionnaires save time and cost, standardize the questions asked of all participants, allow for the possibility of anonymous responses if desired by the respondents, ensure the reliability of the survey results, simplify the analysis, and prevent possible errors that might be made by the interviewer.

A sample size calculator was used to determine the appropriate sample size for the study. By figuring out the right sample size based on a confidence level and margin of error that have already been set, the calculator lets reduce the margin of error and make sure results are more accurate and reliable. This process adds to the reliability and applicability of research results, which are important for keeping high academic standards (Bryman 2016; Creswell 2014; Vilčeková 2010). In research, the sample size calculator is important to ensure the reliability of the work because it helps to obtain a sample that is representative of the target population. As a result, it was determined that obtaining questionnaires from at least 197 accommodation facilities would be appropriate for the study.

As indicated in sample size calculator questionnaires were collected from 198 accommodation facilities. The questionnaire was divided into five sections and included a different number of questions as follows: Introduction (11), Silk Road (4), Hospitality (4), Governance (5), and Sustainability (2). In the article, based on the topic, the sections on Silk Road, Hospitality, Governance, and Sustainability were analyzed, and the results were examined through descriptive analysis using Google Form analysis and the SPSS statistical software application.

4 Results obtained and analysis

4.1 Silk Road understanding

In relation to have a better understanding about the interest of the Silk Road among accommodation facilities four questions in form of five-point scale were stablished, as follows:
- Level of your understanding of Silk Road heritage.
- Importance of the Silk Road in the tourism development in Bukhara.
- Usage the Silk Road brand to attract tourists to the premises.
- Assessment of the conservation status of the Silk Road heritage resources.

According to the received responses (89) constituting 45% of the total, have a good or excellent understanding of the Silk Road heritage. The number of those with an average understanding is 83, proportion for 41.9%. Twenty-six respondents indicated a poor or very poor level of comprehension. As a result, less than 50% of the respondents possess a basic knowledge of the Silk Road heritage (Table 1). This, in turn, underscores the need to develop specific marketing programs aimed at enhancing promotion and awareness in the field. In this respect, it would be necessary to activate an internal marketing programme towards the target group of the local population. Local people must be the first convinced customers who will then be able to sell the offer of the local destination to tourists (Zhang, Chen, Wei and Dai 2022). Based on stakeholder theory, it will be necessary to identify the interests of local residents and increase their willingness to participate in tourism development.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Excellent	30	15.2	15.2
	Good	59	29.8	29.8
	Average	83	41.9	41.9
	Poor	16	8.1	8.1
	Very poor	10	5.1	5.1
	Total	198	100.0	100.0

Table 1: Understanding of the Silk Road heritage by respondents
Source: Authors

When respondents were asked about the importance of the Silk Road in the development of tourism in Bukhara, 81.9% (162) considered it as „very important" and „important." Thirty-two of them indicated that it was moderately important, while four people chose the options „slightly important" and „not important" (Table 2). Overall, the accommodation industry supports the development of tourism through the Silk Road.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Very important	91	46.0	46.0
	Important	71	35.9	35.9
	Moderately important	32	16.2	16.2
	Slightly important	2	1.0	1.0
	Not important	2	1.0	1.0
	Total	198	100.0	100.0

Table 2: Evaluation of the importance of the Silk Road in tourism by respondents
Source: Authors

The next question was aimed at exploring the possibility of attracting customers to accommodation facilities through the Silk Road brand. It was found that 62.1% of the facilities did not make use of the brand, while 37.9% indicated they did. The main reason for this was a lack of knowledge about how to utilize the brand effectively. Those who made use of the brand attempted to create a Silk Road atmosphere in the entrance of the hotel, on social media platforms, and in the interior and exterior design of the hotel. They showcased various Silk Road maps, caravans, and images of the ancient marketplaces where silk fabrics were sold by decorating the walls with these visuals.

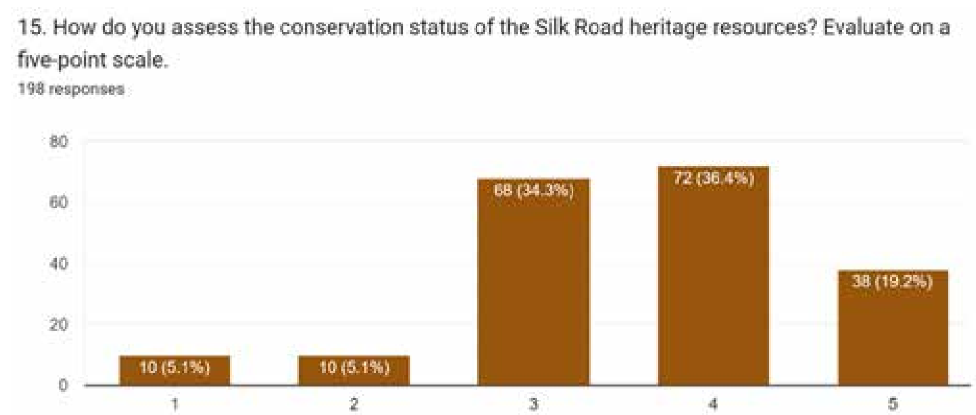

Figure 1: The respondents' assessment of the Silk Road resources' conservation status
Source: Authors

Last question was related to the respondent's assessment of the Silk Road resources' conservation status, respondents were invited to give their opinions. A total of 55.6% reported that the condition was good or excellent. However, 34.3% gave an average assessment, and 10.2% considered the condition to be poor or unsatisfactory. It can be observed that 44.5% gave average or lower ratings, indicating that this group supports conservation efforts and is not indifferent to the state of the Silk Road heritage (Figure 1).

4.2 Hospitality

The following section consisted of 4 questions which were:
- Years of experience in accommodation sector.
- The quality of personnel being trained for working in the sector.
- Services available at the accommodation facilities.
- What negative impacts of tourism are observed in the Bukhara region.

Based on the responses, 43% of managers (87) have among 1 and 3 years of experience, while the remaining 57% (111) have 4 years or more experience. Managers with 1-3 years of experience were primarily observed in newly opened accommodation facilities. In total, 38 (19.2%) respondents had 10 or more years of experience. Most of the managers participating in this questionnaire have significant experience, and their input is considered important for the development of tourism in the Historic Centre of Bukhara.

When asked about the quality of the personnel currently working in the field, they were rated an average of 3.56 out of 5 points. In general terms, the respondents highlighted some difficulties regarding personnel issues. This is mainly attributed to the seasonal nature of the industry, leading to a shortage of staff. Hotel managers emphasized that mitigating seasonality could potentially solve this issue.

Most accommodation facilities emphasized their ability to provide almost all range of services for tourists only limited depending on the type of facility, such as hotels, hostels, guesthouses, and hostels (Figure 2). It is important to highlight that 135 accommodation facilities have their own restaurants. However, it is important to clarify here that hotels in Historic Centre Bukhara's are medium-sized, with limited space. Moreover, two-floored high hotels are not permitted in the Historic Centre. As a result, those buildings have small restaurants that can typically accommodate up to 40 people. Regarding the answers, over 100 respondents indicated the range of services included the following services: room service, air conditioning/heating systems, mobile phone signal coverage, Wi-Fi, external tourism services booking, car parking, easy access toilets, waiting hall, transportation service for airport and train station and laundry (Figure 2). Only 35 of those hotels, additionally, have sport facilities, children's area, admission of pets, swimming pool, SPA, access ramps, and elevator services.

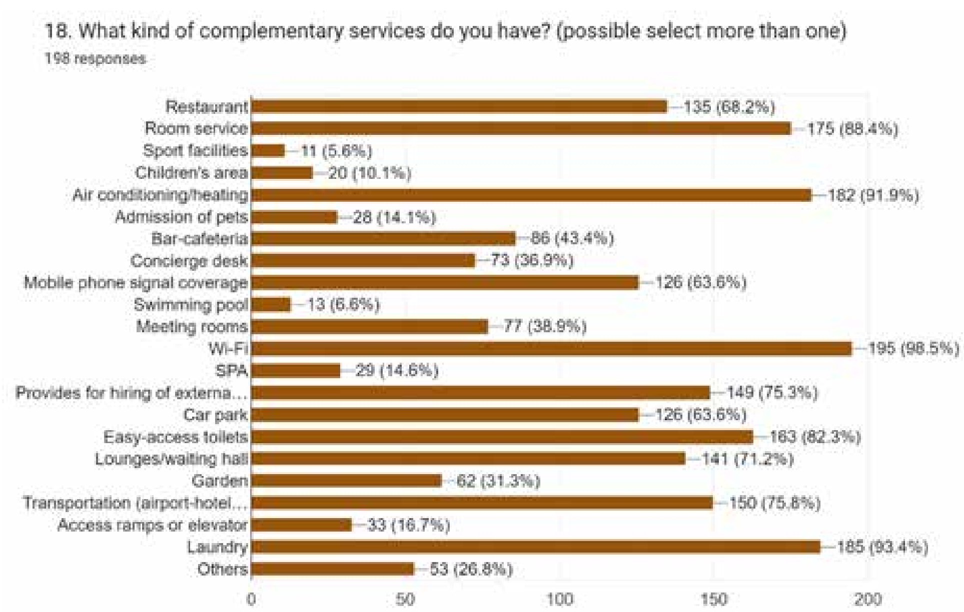

Figure 2: Services in accommodation facilities
Source: Authors

There is a lack of accessibility for individuals with limited mobility in hotels. Not to mentioned in the streets, public areas, and museums of Bukhara's Historic Centre. This issue has not been considered in many implemented projects or during the infrastructure development process. Newly opened hotels and those planned by foreign investors have addressed these concerns. However, accommodation facilities converting private homes into hotels, guesthouses, or hostels have faced challenges in implementing these features due to the associated costs. Nevertheless, from the tourists' perspective, it is considered appropriate to develop and review tourism infrastructure plans for everyone, as well as to enforce clear standards.

Following question asked about the consequences of the tourism industry considering environmental, sociocultural, economic, safety and security problems at Historic Centre of Bukhara

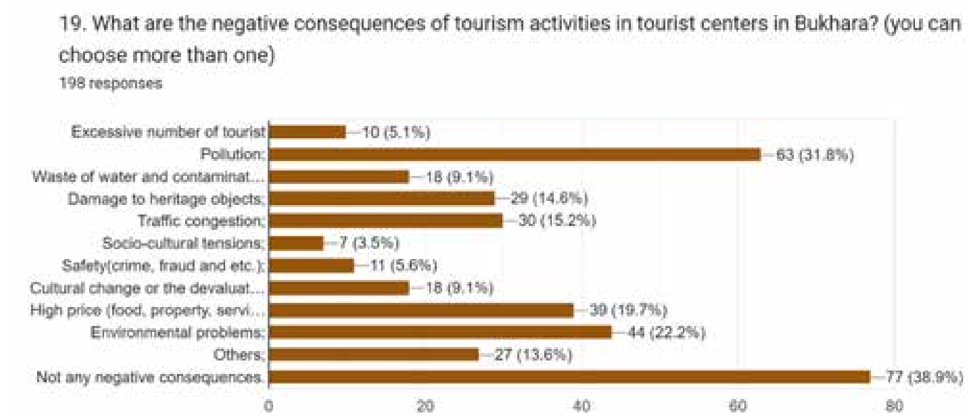

Figure 3: Indicators of negative consequences of tourism activities
Source: Authors

The main negative consequences identified (Figure 3) were pollution (31.8%), environmental problems (22.2%), high prices (19.7%), traffic congestion (15.2%), and damage to heritage objects (14.6%). These negative impacts can be observed in the historic city center and its surroundings. For example, the cultural heritage site of Shohrud channel has been providing water flow to the historic center until now. However, the disposal of plastic packages and rubbish in the canal has led to their accumulation. Additionally, poor waste management was identified in less-visited streets. Respondents also emphasized that the price increase of all goods and services during the tourist season is becoming a threat. To address the aforementioned negative impacts, it is considered appropriate to develop sustainable development programs as soon as possible. These programs can help mitigate the negative consequences and promote responsible tourism practices.

4.3 Public-private governance

Governance section aimed to explore the relationship between providers and the public sector. Given that, a collaborative approach between stakeholders and the public sector contributes to the long-term sustainability of tourism initiatives by fostering a sense of shared ownership and responsibility among stakeholders (Budeanu et al. 2016). The following questions were asked:

- Have you been involved in private-public discussions about tourism-related issues?
- In which issues have you participated in the discussions?
- Have you ever participated in developing a tourism development program for the Bukhara region?
- If so, in which program?
- Are you aware of the latest approved tourism development program for the Bukhara region?

A reduced number of the respondents, 170 (85.9%), indicated that they had not participated in discussions with local authorities regarding issues related to the hospitality industry. Only 28 (14.1%) had been involved in problem-solving dialogues, where suggestions were made on topics such as the improvement of payment installations like ATMs by banks, organization of professional skill development courses addressed to hotel staff, facilitation of credit acquisition from banks for initiating tourism businesses, enhancement of internet speed, simplification of guest registration procedures, increasing the number of tourists, and improvement of road infrastructure. Additionally, most respondents expressed that many of their proposals had not been considered yet.

In response to the question about participation in developing tourism programs in the Bukhara region, 168 respondents (84.8%) answered „no", while 30 respondents (15.2%) answered „yes", reporting their involvement in initiatives such as enhancing tourism areas, creating marketing programs, developing tourism during the COVID-19 pandemic, working on the „My Booking" project, and promoting gastronomic tourism. For the last question, 164 respondents (82.8%) indicated that they were not aware of the latest tourism development program in Bukhara, while 34 (17.2%) acknowledged being informed about it.

Overall, these numbers suggest a low level of interaction between the public sector and accommodation providers. This situation does not support the development of sustainable tourism programs and current interactions are based on collaboration with a small audience. To alleviate this situation, several recommendations have been proposed by researchers, such as establishing a multi-stakeholder platform (Bramwell and Sharman 1999), investing in infrastructure and services through public-private partnerships (PPPs) (Dredge and Jamal 2015), implementing bilateral capacity-building and training programs (Tosun, 2000), encouraging collaboration (incentives) through various methods (Gössling, Scott and Hall 2015), and organizing regular bilateral meetings and masterclasses (Reed 1997) to strengthen collaborative efforts. Based on the provided substantiated recommendations, it is reasonable to pursue these approaches to achieve the intended goals.

4.4 Sustainability

The last part was entitled „sustainability", and respondents were asked two questions, as follows:
- Significance of sustainable tourism relationship with economic, environmental, social and institutional issues.
- Privileges available for sustainable tourism projects in the accommodation industry.

Questions focuses on sustainable tourism development along the Silk Road. It is important to highlight the need to understand the private sector's perspectives and preferences regarding sustainable tourism elements. According to the results, 72 respondents (36.4%) considered it „very important" and 78 respondents (39.4%) „important", totaling 150 respondents who acknowledged sustainable tourism elements' importance. Meanwhile, 48 respondents (24.2%) chose a response indicating moderate importance and lower (Table 3).

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Very significant	72	36.4	36.4
	Significant	78	39.4	39.4
	Moderately significant	40	20.2	20.2
	Slightly significant	3	1.5	1.5
	Not significant	5	2.5	2.5
	Total	198	100.0	100.0

Table 3: Responses regarding the importance of sustainable tourism by respondents
Source: Authors

The next question aimed to investigate the awareness of respondents from accommodation facilities regarding incentives for supporting sustainable tourism projects. According to the results (Figure 4), 80 respondents (40.4%) emphasized that there were no incentives available, while 43 respondents (21.7%) indicated that they were unaware of any incentives. The remaining 75 respondents (37.8%) were given the option to select multiple answers, with the most common choices being tax and other financial incentives.

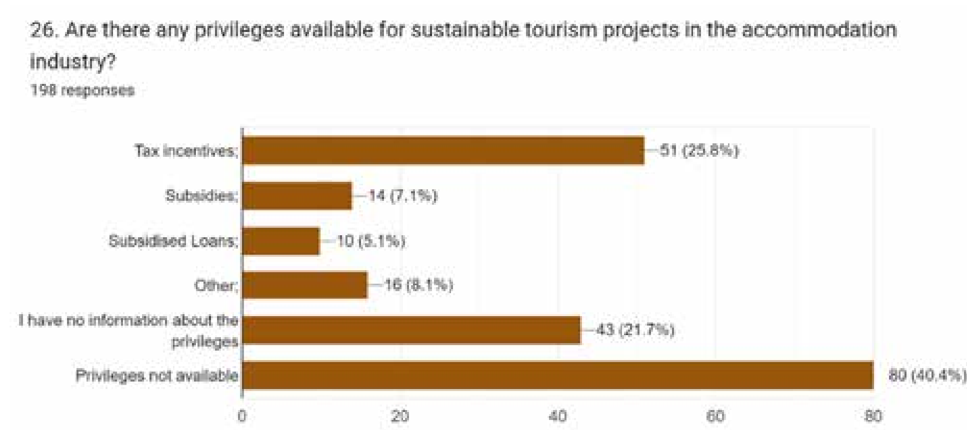

Figure 4: Awareness of incentives for sustainable tourism projects
Source: Authors

During the research, it was found that several tax incentives, subsidies, and credit privileges were provided by the government to expand the potential for tourism activities and develop the sector. Notably, the majority of these incentives were directed towards establishing and developing accommodation facilities. For example, government-issued resolutions PQ 104, PQ 4755, PQ 5232, PQ 5326, and PQ 4095 all indicate and support the allocated incentives (note [1]).

5 Conclusion and suggestions

In the study involving close to 200 accommodation facilities, the following conclusions and recommendations can be drawn for each thematic area.

The Silk Road emerges as an optimal marketing brand for luring a considerable number of tourists to Bukhara due to its encapsulation of diverse cultures, customs, historical facts, and narratives. Approximately 55% of accommodation facilities demonstrated a basic or lower level of knowledge regarding this brand. This finding underscores the need for specialized capacity-building programs aimed at educating providers about the Silk Road's significance, as over 80% of respondents deemed it crucial for the advancement of Bukhara's tourism industry. Enhanced knowledge would facilitate broader and more effective utilization of this brand, positioning the destination as a Silk Road tourism product.

The respondents assessed the conservation status of heritage sites to be either good or average. To ascertain sustainable development at these sites, it is advisable to examine the opinions and suggestions of all providers concerning them. Such responses indicate the providers' attentiveness to heritage and their readiness to collaborate in its preservation. Consequently, the formulation of specialized programs for heritage conservation in collaboration with providers appears appropriate.

A majority of accommodation facilities commenced operations in 2018 or later, experiencing challenging periods such as the pandemic. This scenario has engendered a sense of insecurity within the sector. Additionally, the issue of seasonality has given rise to problems like employee dissatisfaction. Taking these factors into account, it is advisable to implement and develop measures that ensure industry sustainability, enhance employee skills, and guarantee their performance.

The current state of service development is favorable. Most notably, hotel representatives exhibit high empathy towards the development of supplementary services and the fulfillment of tourists' desires. Nevertheless, it is deemed appropriate to devise comprehensive and accessible services and infrastructure in service delivery.

Mutual collaboration among all stakeholders represents a primary prerequisite for sustainability. It is evident that the structure of stakeholders in tourism is highly variable. This results in different and often conflicting interests. With the limited resources at the destination's disposal (financial, personnel, natural, etc.), it is important to realise that the only unifying element is cooperation in the field of sustainable tourism. Of course, the form of cooperation and the chosen strategy must be adapted to the circumstances and specifics of the destination. While this process is present within the Bukhara destination, it is only partially established in the case of accommodation facilities. Around 80% of respondents were unaware of the programs developed for destination enhancement and did not participate in these processes. Moreover, nearly 60% lacked comprehensive information regarding government-provided opportunities for sector development. This situation highlights the necessity of creating platforms that expand collaboration.

Poznámky/Notes ——— [1] National database of legislation of the Republic of Uzbekistan: www.lex.uz.

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Kľúčové slová / *Key Words* ——— silk road, sustainable tourism, stakeholders, public sector, accommodation facilities, *hodvábna cesta, udržateľný cestovný ruch, zainteresované subjekty, verejný sektor, ubytovacie zariadenia*

JEL klasifikácia / *JEL Classification* ——— M31

Résumé ——— Udržateľný rozvoj cestovného ruchu: Poznatky z ubytovacích zariadení v Buchare pozdĺž hodvábnej cesty
V posledných rokoch sa odvetvie cestovného ruchu stretlo so značnými problémami v dôsledku pandémie, hospodárskych a politických okolností. Napriek tomu môžu rámce udržateľného rozvoja zvýšiť odolnosť odvetvia a priniesť sociálne, hospodárske a environmentálne výhody pre obyvateľov destinácie. Dosiahnutie tohto cieľa si vyžaduje rozvoj destinácie pod koherentnou, obsahovo bohatou značkou, implementáciu presných marketingových stratégií a podporu spolupráce zainteresovaných strán. V tomto výskume sa skúmalo približne 200 ubytovacích zariadení v Buchare v Uzbekistane, významnej stredoázijskej destinácii cestovného ruchu a významnej súčasti dedičstva Hodvábnej cesty. Cieľom štúdie bolo zistiť ich vnímanie značky Hodvábna cesta, zapojenie do iniciatív udržateľného rozvoja, spoluprácu s verejným sektorom a stav ponuky služieb. Na základe výsledkov sa v závere článku uvádzajú konkrétne odporúčania.

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MARKETING STRATEGIES IN RESPONSE TO TOUGH TIMES – LESSONS FROM INDIA DURING A GLOBAL CRISIS

The purpose of the study is, in the first part, to identify and categorize the various guidelines recommended in the extant literature on adapting marketing strategies to handle the challenges posed by economic and other sustained environmental crises across markets. These strategies and initiatives have then been organized into themes. In the second part, the study aims to use these themes as a backdrop to examine the marketing strategies and innovations that marketers in India have used to cope with the disruptions caused by the Corona virus pandemic. The learnings from this research will be a distilled set of recommendations that organizations, especially those operating in emerging markets, could consider in the future in response to such challenging times.
This study contributes to the extant literature by highlighting the marketing strategies and tactics adopted by organizations during various recessionary times, particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic. It underscores the importance of marketing strategies in managing crises. It points to select innovative strategies that marketers can pursue to deal with the challenges posed by future economic downturns and support their survival. These strategies will help them protect their brand value and market positioning while maintaining their relationship with customers. Besides, since the study has adopted a broad perspective in analysing the strategies, these marketing tactics can be applied by a wide range of industries such as hospitality, tourism, fast-moving consumer durables, e-commerce, etc. The themes indicate that, by and large, the response of firms to the current pandemic is in line with the marketing strategies adopted during previous environmental disruptions, as substantiated by various examples.

1 Introduction

Economic downturns and recessions have always required firms and marketers to adapt to the realities of changes in consumer behaviour and new demand patterns. When faced with an uncertain future, consumers tend to reduce, defer or avoid purchases and become price-conscious and rational (Ang 2001; Ang, Leong and Kotler 2000; Pearce and Michael 2006). With changing consumer behaviour, businesses may find it a challenge to maintain their relationship with consumers (Waldron and Wetherbe 2020).
Downturns unevenly affect marketing plans, positioning, and brand value (Czech Marketplace 2008). Some firms cut down their market budgets though with adverse consequences (Alonso-Almeida and Bremser 2013). Firms respond by reducing overall expenditures and investments (Pearce and Michael 2006). Doing so may benefit them in the short run as they reap the benefits of promotions done before the crisis, but once these benefits get exhausted, it is posited that they are likely to suffer (Czech Marketplace 2008). This could result in lowered consumer perceptions about the brand and even fading of the brand from consumer memory (Czech Marketplace 2008). Meanwhile, the need to halt the introduction of new products may create a difficult situation for some companies (Aggarwal 2020). Amidst all this, some brands will likely attempt to differentiate themselves from their competitors (Aggarwal 2020). Firms that market a new product during these times may enjoy the benefits of being first compared to those that introduce products during recovery (Kashmiri and Mahajan 2014). It has been observed that the firms that continue their marketing communications during crises are able to enhance their earnings (Graham and Frankenberger 2011).
Besides resulting in the loss of millions of lives, the Covid-19 pandemic has adversely affected many industries and businesses worldwide, causing them to either temporarily slow down or exit from the market (Apedo-Amah et al. 2020). In addition to anxieties about the health of their families (Wang et al. 2020), consumers experienced concerns about the pandemic's possible further effect on the economy (Wright and Blackburn 2020). Among the countries severely affected by Corona virus globally, India has had the second highest number of infected cases and fatalities, following the USA as of July 23, 2021 (Statista 2022). The Consumer Confidence Index in India, as in many parts of the world, plummeted during 2020 reaching an all-time low in May 2021 and as of January 2023 is still to recover to pre-Covid levels (Reserve Bank of India 2023). „There was enduring impact on consumers' sentiments on their own financial conditions as well as the general economic situation – with the latter increasingly driven by the former" (Mishra, Roshin and Tushar 2022, p. 61). For millions of consumers in the country, employment and income were adversely impacted. Overall demand and discretionary expenditure on many categories of non-essential goods and services significantly decreased. The lockdowns caused a shift to online purchasing and required businesses to redesign their distribution. Considering the gravity of the prevailing crisis, many businesses recognized that some of the successful strategies of more prosperous times were not likely to work during the economic downturn and other environmental challenges.
Thus, marketers need to explore the impact of the recession on consumer behaviour (Ang, Leong and Kotler 2000) and modify their marketing approaches accordingly (Ding and Li 2021). An economic downturn or other changes in the macroenvironment require organizations to evaluate their strategies at all levels in the context of the changing trends. In the process of doing so, it would certainly help to also employ a rearview mirror to understand the adaptations to marketing strategy during a downturn that have worked in the past. These can serve as guidelines for handling marketing during an economic downturn that marketers across nations and cultures can draw from to help them steer their organizations through the turbulence.
The present study focusses on the marketing strategies adopted by businesses in a developing economy, that is, India, to cope with the challenges posed by the Corona Virus pandemic. Among the countries severely affected by Corona virus across the globe, India has the second highest number of infected cases and fatalities following the USA (Statista 2022). This was accompanied by a significant fall in consumer sentiment leading to losses for sectors such as retail, hospitality, tourism, and aviation (EY 2020). This severely affected the economy leading to decline in the gross domestic product by 7.3% in 2020 (Singh 2021).

2 Literature review

Crises impact the consumption behavior of consumers in manifold ways. The Asian crisis of 1997 caused consumers to be careful spenders who could survive with lesser possessions (Ang, Leong and Kotler 2000). They became buyers who purchased after careful consideration of others' opinions and evaluation of brands, shifted from luxuries to essentials, favored local and generic brands and long-lasting products providing „value for money", and were influenced by advertisements reinforcing functional benefits of products (Ang, Leong and Kotler 2000). During the economic crisis of 2008, Turkish consumers' confidence declined sharply and consequently, they cut down their spending and tended to purchase inexpensive product options (Kaytaz and Gul 2014). This coincides with the impact of the subprime crises (Quelch 2008). Consumers postpone buying durable items and instead search for inexpensive products (Ang, Leong and Kotler 2000). Their susceptibility towards price, deferred buying, and rational purchase decisions is driven by their stress about finances (Pearce and Michael 2006). During the Great Recession, customers restricted their shopping to cope with the future adverse effects of the downturn (Grossberg 2009). Turbulence caused by Corona virus has not only reduced consumers' shopping but has also made them more cautious about their well-being, which gets manifested in their purchases (Wang et al. 2020).

Some studies have investigated the marketing tactics adopted by firms to cope with the pandemic. Alshaketheep et al. (2020) posit that empathy, customized communications, and offerings promoted through digital marketing platforms impact consumer purchases. Favaro, Romberger and Meer (2009) suggest that firms should target customers who keep switching from one firm to another, attempt to meet the unidentified or unmet needs of the customers, focus on products purchased by customers, and reduce expenditures on products not valued by them. Quelch and Jocz (2009) posit that companies should simplify their product lines, make products cheaper through discounts, easy credit terms, etc., communicate empathetic messages to customers, and promote their brands on digital media and broadcast media. Firms can employ market research to understand consumers better, use family values in advertising while reducing ad expenditure, opt for direct marketing, and assist distributors through friendly credit terms and policies to motivate them (Quelch 2008). Firms should adopt a customer-focused approach, product innovations, and cost-reducing tactics and shift their activities online (Ding and Li 2021). Some firms also emphasized on strengthening their supply chains by making them adaptable (Huang and Jahromi 2021).

Ang (2001) posits that during a crisis period, firms look for new market segments, offer additional product benefits and discounts, make price modifications, and emphasize the functional benefits of products in their advertisements. Further, firms should eliminate weak product ranges while refraining from irrelevant product line extensions, quit weak markets, employ expert endorsements for promotions, introduce loyalty programs, offer premiums, and improve their distribution channels (Ang, Leong and Kotler 2000). Komissarova and Grein (2011) suggest that Russian firms eliminated products that are poor-performers and introduced unique ones and found promotion at the sales location and through the internet, more impactful. Some of these firms also adopted vertical and horizontal marketing systems to serve their buyers better (Komissarova and Grein 2011).

Chou and Chen (2004) posit that the value strategy favourably impacts the performance of the firm, and firms should roll out novel products and offer additional attributes in existing products. Grossberg (2009) states that marketers should provide value-based solutions and reassure customers through their communications. Nickell, Rollins and Hellman (2013) observe that companies that introduce new offerings and relax their credit terms perform better during a recession. Mann and Byun (2017) point to the strategies applied by retailers including adjustment of product lines, expansion of market and distribution channels, and performance of sustainable and philanthropic practices. According to Savelli (2011), firms can survive a crisis by prioritising their leading brands and simplifying their product mix.

Chan, Gao and McGinley (2021) state that the service standard strategies adopted by hotels during Corona virus involve the use of various online approaches to promotion and emphasize on targeting local markets instead of overseas ones. Rittichainuwat, Beck and Qu (2002) posit that value for money and special promotions were used to endorse tourist destinations. Chen (2000) observes the impact of the economic crisis on the behaviour of travellers and suggests that marketers can provide value-added packages and market their products through internet. Hoang, Truong and Nguyen (2021) posit that Viehost, a Vietnamese hotel, promoted itself to domestic travellers by providing them with promotional packages. Martin and Isozaki (2013) state that hotels bundle their services to improve customer affordability and resort to sales promotion and online advertising to thrive during testing times. Orchiston and Higham (2016) posit that the tourism sector chooses to promote its destinations online through social networking sites and websites in response to turbulence caused by disasters. Rogerson (2021) suggests that tourism organizations should roll out new and varied offerings as per the requirements of target buyers, make their products economical, and promote themselves on social networking sites to deal with the adversities led by Covid-19.

Van Heerde et al. (2013) suggest that firms need to cater to buyers' needs for low prices during a recession and promote these low prices to attract customers into their stores and increase their brand sales in these trying times. This coincides with the findings of Diallo and Kaswengi (2016). Whereas Rhodes and Stelter (2009) propose that firms should focus on products that buyers are ready to purchase without bargains, provide existing products at lower prices, opt for individual pricing of products, adopt inventive strategies such as subscription pricing, and refrain from bundling services. Contrary to this, Pearce and Michael (2006) posit that price cutting should be avoided and bundling and private labelling should be adopted. Calvo-Porral, Stanton, and Lévy-Mangin (2016) propose that food companies should strive to sell more quantities at reasonable prices to maintain profits and focus on the advertising of their products to survive during the economic crisis. Kashmiri and Mahajan (2014) observe that firms that were better performers during economic downturn kept their new product roll-out rates and advertising intensities high in the hard times. This coincides with the findings of Laitinen (2000) and Pearce and Michael (2006).

High marketing communications during recessionary times provide more value to the firm than other times (Graham and Frankenberger 2011). Alonso-Almeida and Bremser (2013) suggest that firms need to increase their marketing expenditures and provide additional value to customers to handle the crisis. Afthonidis and Tsiotras (2014) state that the launch of novel products and consideration of competitors' policies while deciding advertising expenditures can help firms perform better during economic disruption. Kaytaz and Gul (2014) illuminate the strategies adopted by firms in Turkey during the global crisis to increase consumers' consumption and indicate that consumers were driven by ads endorsed by reliable figures and sales promotion methods used by marketers such as discounts and extended sales periods. Le and Phi (2021) pin-point that sales promotion methods such as discounts, socially responsible activities such as donations, and take-away facilities are some of the strategies used by hotels during Covid-19. This strategy was also adopted by micro and small firms (Lado, Duque and Alvarez Bassi 2013). Companies should empathize with people through their communications, adapt their media to suit changing situations, link brands with their socially responsible deeds, and keep a tab on changing consumer behaviour to respond accordingly (Balis 2020). Also, firms launch new products to meet customers' changing requirements (Köksal and Özgül 2007). Kanter (2009) proposes that firms should interact with customers to show them their support, search for new green pastures to serve, continue following their values, and convey the same to assure customers. Feyaerts and Heyvaert (2021) observe that businesses interacted with their customers during the Covid-19 lead lockdown by incorporating solidarity, empathy, etc., in their messages. Lee, Chung and Taylor (2011) state that rational appeal is predominantly used by firms dealing in financial services during the economic crisis. Waldron and Wetherbe (2020) suggest that businesses should communicate their actions of supporting and assisting the stakeholders during the crisis, assure the customers that company will maintain its values, and inform them about their innovative ways of serving customer demands.

3 Methodology

To meet the objectives of the study, a two-pronged methodology was adopted. In the first part, a systematic search was undertaken in Web of Science and Scopus databases using two search queries (Table 1) formulated by combining keywords and Boolean operators to identify publications with the relevant keywords in their title, abstract, and keywords. This process is adopted from the procedure used in systematic reviews to improve the methodological accuracy of the research process (Tranfield, Denyer and Smart 2003).

Database	Search String	Field Search
Web of Science	Query 1: ((„Marketing Strategies") AND („crises" OR „recession" OR „disruption" OR „covid" OR „downturn")) Query 2: ((„Marketing") AND („crises" OR „recession" OR „disruption" OR „covid" OR „downturn"))	Title, Abstract, Keywords

Table 1: Applied search criteria
Source: Authors

Records in both the databases were restricted to document type articles in the English language in the categories Business, Management, and Hospitality, Leisure, Sports, and Tourism in the Web of Science database and in the categories Business, Management, and Accounting, Economics, Econometrics and Finance in the Scopus database. No timeline filter was adopted in either of the databases. Through this, 297 records from Web of Science and 1971 records from Scopus were obtained. From this number, duplicates and papers which on a scrutiny of their abstracts were found not to be within the scope of the present study were removed. This resulted in the retention of 48 full-text research papers from Web of Science and 62 full-text research papers from Scopus. These full-text papers were read in full to determine their eligibility and those which were beyond the focus of the study were excluded. Consequently, 21 research articles from Web of Science and 19 research articles from Scopus were included for final content analysis. In addition to these, five articles from Harvard Business Review, that were found to be highly relevant to the study, were also included. These 45 articles were subjected to a thorough examination and various marketing strategies identified in these studies were listed and subsequently organized into themes.

In the second part of the study, with the themes identified through the steps above as a backdrop, various adaptations and innovations in marketing strategy that firms in India have adopted during the Covid-19 fuelled health and economic crisis were identified through a content analysis of secondary sources. These themes were supported by the real time marketing innovations and adaptations actually implemented in India by firms to cope with the challenges posed by the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

4 Findings

A content analysis of the 45 relevant papers identified various marketing strategies that firms have either actually adopted or have been advised to adopt in the face of challenges posed by

a crisis in the external environment. These strategies have been categized in to 9 themes: adjusting product portfolios (Ang, Leong and Kotler 2000; Komissarova and Grein 2011; Wang et al. 2020), emphasizing functional benefits of products and services (Ang 2001; Brooksbank et al. 2015; Grossberg 2009), empathetic communication (Alshaketheep et al. 2020; Calvo-Porral et al. 2016; Quelch and Jocz 2009), use of digital marketing to reach customers (Balis 2020; Chan et al. 2021; Rogerson 2021), improved target market selection (Balis 2020; Favaro, Romberger and Meer 2009; Laitinen 2000), sales promotion measures to garner immediate sales (Hoang et al. 2021; Van Heerde et al. 2013), use of celebrity endorsements (Ang, Leong and Kotler 2000; Kaytaz and Gul 2014), innovations in distribution (Ding and Li 2021; Huang and Jahromi 2021), and adhering to the company values (Kanter 2009; Waldron and Wetherbe 2020). These themes have been discussed in the subsequent paragraphs of this section, along with examples of the initiatives undertaken by firms during the current pandemic and accompanying economic crisis.

4.1 Adjusting product portfolios

The extant literature indicates that modification of product portfolios as a response to environmental changes is a frequently recommended and adopted strategy. Many companies have developed new products or modified existing ones during the crisis to meet the changing demands of customers (Chou and Chen 2004). They can be eco-friendly or reasonably priced products introduced in the product portfolio (Mann and Byun 2017). Though firms may have been advised to continue focusing on their main brands (Pearce II and Michael 1997; Savelli 2011), it is also suggested that they need to simplify their existing product lines (Ang, Leong and Kotler 2000; Quelch and Jocz 2009).

Marketers should continue their efforts concerning the brands that make a significant contribution to the earnings of the company (Pearce II and Michael 1997; Savelli 2011). Aakash Digital platform, an initiative by Aakash Educational Services, personalized its products to meet the diverse demands of each customer group that it serves (Salesforce India 2020). Dabur introduced an immunity-strengthening tea known as Vedic Suraksha Tea and a new Dabur Chyawanprash, claiming that it will protect its consumers from Covid-19 (Pathak 2021).

During the recent pandemic, some firms shifted to medical supplies manufacturing (Ding and Li 2021). Chik, a brand of shampoo from CavinKare and Dabur, both FMCG brands, rolled out their respective hand sanitizers (Aggarwal 2020). Dairy brands such as Mother Dairy introduced turmeric milk (Tewari 2020). Dabur launched the „Immunity Booster Kit" containing a range of products, including Honey, Chyawanprash, Giloy Ghanvati, Honitus, and Giloy Churna, amongst others, to protect people against coronavirus (Tewari 2020).

4.2 Emphasize functional benefits

Advertisements promoting products using functional benefits are more persuasive for consumers during turbulent times (Ang, Leong and Kotler 2000) because consumers become more rational and conscious about their decisions (Ang 2001). They search for more information about brands and products before making purchases (Ang 2001). So, organizations can strive to offer valuable benefits to customers in exchange for their money during the recession, rather than merely changing prices (Brooksbank et al. 2015; Grossberg 2009; Ritichainuwat, Beck and Qu 2002).

Dabur emphasized the benefits of Chyawanprash, such as protection from the virus and boosting immunity through regular use, in its advertisement during Covid-19 (Pathak 2021). Hamdard Laboratories, a pharmaceutical company, in their campaign „StrongWithHamdard", reinforced and encouraged the use of Unani medicinal products to develop the body's resistance to fight coronavirus (Tewari 2020).

4.3 Adopt sales promotion methods

Loyalty programmes, discounts, personal sales, etc., are some of the sales promotion tactics applied by marketers during the recession (Ang, Leong and Kotler 2000; Kaytaz and Gul 2014; Martin and Isozaki 2013). Even some hotels have also adopted these methods by offering free room services (Martin and Isozaki 2013), „promotional packages" (Hoang, Truong and Nguyen 2021), etc. Among these tactics, discounts providing refunds to consumers at sales points are more favored by consumers (Quelch and Jocz 2009). These techniques develop an inclination among consumers towards products, thereby attracting them (Alshaketheep et al. 2020; Ang, Leong and Kotler 2000).

Teachers are being provided access to premium learning tools for free by Kahoot!, a platform that uses games to impart learning (Pinto 2020). Software providers such as Zoom, Microsoft, and Cisco Webex increased the length of free trials provided to companies across the world for a certain period to support them with work from home (Lingo 2021).

4.4 Use reassuring and comforting communication messages

Since consumers are going through trying times, there is a great need to comfort them by empathizing with them using emotional messages to develop a connection between the brand and consumers and build their trust in the brand instead of emphasizing commercial goals (Balis 2020; Czech Marketplace 2008; Quelch and Jocz 2009). Also, consumers will prefer such messages to distinguish themselves from others (Wen and Guo 2021). „Look for cozy hearth-and--home family scenes in advertising to replace images of extreme sports, adventure, and rugged individualism" (Quelch 2008, p. 1). But the focus of their communication must be on doing away with the fears of customers and cheering them up during these dark times (Grossberg 2009).

Aakash Digital, a learning platform, modified its marketing communications according to the requirements of every customer group while keeping it empathetic and meaningful (Salesforce India 2020). In its „home is full of possibilities" campaign, Ikea, a home furnishings' brand, reinforced upon various ways through which people can make most of their time at home (BrandWagon Online 2020). Many brands have shown flexibility by changing their marketing messages according to the changing situations (Balis 2020), which is expected to impact their profitability (Czech Marketplace 2008). Shoppers Stop, a department store, comforted customers to shop at its stores by informing them about the Covid-19 appropriate measures being followed at its outlets (Salesforce India 2020). It collaborated with various writers and fitness specialists to produce live-streamed events to cheer the consumers (Salesforce India 2020). In the „flatten the curve" campaign, Audi, a luxury automobile manufacturer, emphasized the need of practicing social distancing to deal with crises, by showing the distance of separation between the circles of its traditional logo (Loon 2020).

Brands resorted to nostalgia by reviving forgotten products, adverts, and ideas to connect with their consumers at a deeper level while solacing them in these times like Cadbury, a confectionary company, did by rolling out a renowned jingle „Kuch khaas hai" from bygone times to remind consumers of normal times and acknowledging them for maintaining their spirits during these times, while illustrating brand's consistent support for the masses (Young 2020).

4.5 Market targeting and selection strategy

Some firms have diversified their businesses to foray into new markets (Ang 2001; Mann and Byun 2017). They are targeting new customers or those who are less likely to be affected by the recession to reduce the harm caused by the economic downturn (Pearce and Michael 2006). This will help them reduce the loss of or due to their present customers (Kanter 2009; Pearce and Michael 2006). Firms need to quit those markets in which they are performing poorly and instead focus on boosting their position in the markets where they are good performers (Ang, Leong and Kotler 2000).

MakeMyTrip, an online travel agency, forayed into the food delivery segment (Singh 2020). ClubFactory, a dealer in fashion and beauty products and NoBroker, a real estate dealer, began providing grocery products (Singh 2020). Rapido, an online bike taxi aggregator, introduced „Rapido Local" to deliver medicines, etc., and „Rapido Store" to help online and physical businesses in delivering orders to customers (Roy and Arunachalam 2020).

4.6 Use digital marketing to connect with consumers

The Internet, social networking sites, etc., are increasingly being used by firms to promote their offerings (Komissarova and Grein 2011; Martin and Isozaki 2013; Orchiston and Higham 2016). „Livestream sales are one of the most popular approaches in mainland China" (Chan, Gao and McGinley 2021, p. 1680). This is because they are affordable and easily assessable for marketers (Quelch and Jocz, 2009). Many firms are investing in digital marketing as they find it a different way for promotions (Nickell, Rollins and Hellman 2013; Rogerson 2021). But while framing their strategies, they need to be careful of the information and messages they will disseminate (Thakur 2020).

Brands such as Dettol, Dabur, Godrej, etc., have used social media platforms to generate public awareness of this pandemic and its precautionary measures (Tewari and Tandon 2020). Parachute Advanced, a hair care brand, rolled out the „BondOveraChampi" campaign to encourage people to share their short videos related to hair oil massage, which will appear in their stories (Dcosta 2020).

4.7 Opt for advertisement endorsements by credible figures

Products endorsed by professionals and reliable figures in advertisements connect well with consumers, assure them, influence their buying decisions, and provide recognition to products (Ang, Leong and Kotler 2000). They beseech consumers to purchase the products (Kaytaz and Gul 2014). Due to these reasons, it is preferred by marketers even during a crisis.

Lifebuoy was endorsed by Kajol to encourage people to wash their hands properly using any soap through television and online ads (Verma 2020). Akshay Kumar endorsed the Dabur Chyawanprash immunity strengthening version (Pathak 2021). Pepsi featured Salman Khan to promote its product as „More Refreshing", while requesting people to adopt precautionary measures (afaqs! news bureau 2021).

4.8 Modify distribution channels to better access customers

Companies have added more distribution channels to reach customers and enhance their efficiency in distributing products during the recession (Köksal and Özgül 2007). During Great Recession, „retailers exploited existing resources by expanding online/offline channels" (Mann and Byun 2017, p. 28). Many businesses have improved their policies to provide favourable terms and conditions to distributors to prompt them to keep all their products (Quelch 2008). Some firms also collaborate with channel members to roll out new offerings (Mann and Byun 2017). Organizations can introduce new marketing channels to serve consumers affected by the crises (Wang et al. 2020).

Coca-Cola launched a digital B2C platform wherein consumers can order from local convenience stores to get groceries and beverages delivered to homes (The Coca-Cola Company 2020). Another example of omnichannel distribution preferred during this crisis is Tata Consumer Products which collaborated with Flipkart, an e-commerce company, to make its products available to consumers digitally (Shashidhar 2020). Some firms have tied up with e-commerce majors and developed their own platforms, such as Big Bazaar, which has also partnered with Amazon (Nagar 2020). On the other hand, others like Vadilal Ice cream, Hershey, etc., created separate online platforms where consumers can place orders for their products (Nagar 2020). Likewise, Uber partnered with Flipkart to help contain the spread of Covid-19 (Kumar 2020). Unilever home delivered its ice cream through Just Eat and Deliveroo (Tesseras 2021).

4.9 Adhere to the values of your company

Consumers should be ensured by marketers that they will continue providing them with the same „value proposition" even during disruptive times, without any compromise (Waldron and Wetherbe 2020). „Reminders about company values can reinforce solidarity and increase the confidence that customers have in the company" (Kanter 2009, p. 3). Besides, they need to be explained how the brand is still delivering them the same value despite the prevailing difficult times (Waldron and Wetherbe 2020).

Lifebuoy remained sticked to its purpose of protecting the lives of people by urging them to wash their hands using any soap, not just lifebuoy, besides creating awareness amongst them (Unilever Global Company 2020). Some firms resorted to new ways of serving their customers. Decathlon, a sporting goods retailer, launched a free application named 'Decathlon Coach', through which people can avail the services of virtual trainers from their homes (Loon 2020).

5 Conclusion

A content analysis of the extant literature identified a range of marketing strategies that firms have adopted or have been advised to adopt in the face of challenges posed by a crisis in the external environment. These strategies have been categorized into nine themes. These themes encompass strategies such as adjusting product portfolios, emphasizing functional benefits of products/services, empathetic communication, innovations in distribution, and the use of digital marketing to reach customers. Firms should view turbulent times as an opportunity to proactively understand and cater to evolving consumer choices. Not all firms will have the ability to adapt to challenging times. Brands are expected to sustain their impact without exploiting the recessionary conditions to make profits (Pinto 2020). Once these turbulent times get over and consumers resume their everyday lives, they will always be mindful of those brands that utilized these times to comfort and connect with them at a deeper level, rather than focusing on financial benefits (Aggarwal 2020). Addressing the changing needs of existing consumers will be of great significance as they are less likely to risk switching over to competitors during unpredictable times (Czech Marketplace 2008). The new buying patterns of consumers may persist even after the pandemic, thus, bringing a long-lasting transformation in consumers' purchase behaviour and lifestyle as well as in marketers' way of approaching them (Wright and Blackburn 2020). Businesses prioritizing consumers' changing needs and modifying their marketing approach will thrive during upheaval and beyond it (Quelch and Jocz 2009). Thus, firms need to consistently invest in marketing to increase their sales and efficiency. Firms can launch new products in the market (Chou and Chen 2004), make new customers (Kanter 2009), increase advertising and promotion (Graham and Frankenberger 2011), and provide valuable benefits at reasonable prices to help consumers weather the economic downturn.

This study contributes to the extant literature by synthesizing the learnings from past studies and highlighting the marketing strategies and tactics adopted by organizations during various recessionary times, particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic in an emerging economy. It points to a range of innovative strategies that marketers can explore to deal with the challenges posed by future economic downturns. Organizations have adopted different strategies and tactics to cope with the turbulence caused by recessionary times. It is necessary for firms to view these turbulent times as an opportunity to proactively understand and cater to the evolving consumer needs. It is important for marketers to explore the impact of the recession on consumer behaviour and modify their marketing approaches accordingly. Brands should strive to attract more customers and improve their efficiency and standing in the industry (Favaro, Romberger and Meer 2009).

Addressing the changing demands of existing customers and the needs of new customers will be of great significance as they are less likely to risk switching over to competitors during unpredictable times (Czech Marketplace 2008). Customers expect brands to be supportive towards them, but not in a way that takes advantage of the situation for the profit (Pinto 2020). Once these turbulent times get over and consumers resume their normal lives, they will always be mindful of those brands that utilized these times to comfort and connect with them on a deeper level rather than making money (Aggarwal 2020). The new buying patterns of consumers might persist even after the pandemic, thus, bringing a long-lasting transformation in consumers' purchase behavior and lifestyle as well as marketers' way of approaching them (Wright and Blackburn 2020). Therefore, the businesses that will prioritize consumers' changing needs and hence, modify their marketing approach will survive this upheaval and beyond it. Thus, firms need to invest in marketing to increase their sales and efficiency (Pearce and Michael 2006; Quelch 2008).

5.1 Limitations and future research directions

However, it needs to be acknowledged that this study is based on a limited number of research papers obtained through a systematic search of specific keywords in Scopus and Web of Science databases only. Future studies can consider gathering more documents, including books, conference papers, etc., using other relevant keywords in various databases, journals, and research platforms. Secondly, this research has conducted a content analysis of secondary data. Further studies can be based on the analysis of primary data collected from organizations regarding their experiences with strategies they adopted during recessionary times.

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JEL klasifikácia / *JEL Classification* ——— M31

Résumé ——— **Marketingové stratégie v ťažkých časoch – skúsenosti z Indie počas globálnej krízy**
Cieľom príspevku je v prvej časti identifikovať a kategorizovať rôzne usmernenia odporúčané v existujúcej literatúre o prispôsobovaní marketingových stratégií na zvládnutie výziev, ktoré predstavujú hospodárske a iné trvalé environmentálne krízy na trhoch. Tieto stratégie a iniciatívy boli následne usporiadané do tém. V druhej časti je cieľom štúdie využiť tieto témy ako pozadie na preskúmanie marketingových stratégií a inovácií, ktoré marketéri v Indii použili na zvládnutie porúch spôsobených pandémiou vírusu Corona. Poznatky z tohto výskumu budú predstavovať sumarizovaný súbor odporúčaní, ktoré by organizácie, najmä tie, ktoré pôsobia na rozvíjajúcich sa trhoch, mohli v budúcnosti zvážiť ako reakciu na takéto náročné obdobie.
Tento článok je príspevkom k existujúcej literatúre tým, že poukazuje na marketingové stratégie a taktiky prijaté organizáciami počas rôznych období recesie, najmä počas pandémie Covid-19. Zdôrazňuje význam marketingových stratégií pri zvládaní kríz. Poukazuje na vybrané inovatívne stratégie, ktoré môžu marketéri uplatniť, aby sa vyrovnali s výzvami, ktoré prináša budúci hospodársky pokles, a podporili svoje prežitie. Tieto stratégie im pomôžu ochrániť hodnotu ich značky a postavenie na trhu a zároveň zachovať vzťah so zákazníkmi. Okrem toho, keďže príspevok využíva pri analýze stratégií širokú perspektívu, tieto marketingové taktiky môže uplatniť široká škála priemyselných odvetví, ako je pohostinstvo, cestovný ruch, rýchloobrátkový tovar dlhodobej spotreby, elektronický obchod atď. Zistenia naznačujú, že vo všeobecnosti je reakcia firiem na súčasnú pandémiu v súlade s marketingovými stratégiami prijatými počas predchádzajúcich environmentálnych porúch, čo je doložené rôznymi príkladmi.

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THE ROLE OF MARKETING METRICS IN SOCIAL MEDIA: A COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSISS

In the digital era, social media has emerged as a powerful marketing tool, revolutionizing the way businesses interact with consumers. As social media platforms continue to evolve, it is crucial for marketers to effectively measure and analyze their efforts. This article explores the significance of marketing metrics in the realm of social media, highlighting the key metrics used to evaluate marketing campaigns and their impact on business success. Through an in-depth analysis of various marketing metrics, this article provides insights into optimizing social media strategies for enhanced customer engagement, brand awareness, and return on investment. The primary objective of this article is to delve into the significance of marketing metrics in the realm of social media. By examining various marketing metrics and their relevance in evaluating social media campaigns, this article aims to provide marketers with insights on how to optimize their strategies and achieve desired outcomes. The scope of this article encompasses a comprehensive analysis of key marketing metrics, including reach and impressions, engagement metrics, conversion metrics, customer satisfaction metrics, brand awareness metrics, and influence and authority metrics. This article is based on a thorough review of existing literature, industry reports, case studies, and expert opinions on marketing metrics in social media. Primary and secondary sources were consulted to gather information on the various metrics used in social media marketing and their impact on business success. The analysis and insights presented in this article are derived from a synthesis of the available knowledge and experiences shared by marketing professionals and researchers in the field of social media marketing. By exploring the importance of marketing metrics in the context of social media, this article aims to equip marketers with the necessary knowledge and tools to make data-driven decisions, optimize their social media strategies, and achieve meaningful results.

1 Introduction

Social media has revolutionized the way businesses interact with consumers, providing an unprecedented opportunity for marketers to connect with their target audience on a personal level. With the proliferation of social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, and YouTube, businesses have access to vast networks of potential customers, enabling them to expand their reach and build brand awareness like never before (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010). However, to harness the full potential of social media marketing, it is crucial for marketers to effectively measure and evaluate their efforts using relevant marketing metrics. The emergence and rapid growth of social media platforms have fundamentally transformed the marketing landscape. Social media platforms provide businesses with direct access to a large and diverse audience, allowing them to engage with customers in real-time and build brand loyalty (Mangold and Faulds 2009). Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn have become integral parts of people's daily lives, providing marketers with unparalleled opportunities to reach their target market.

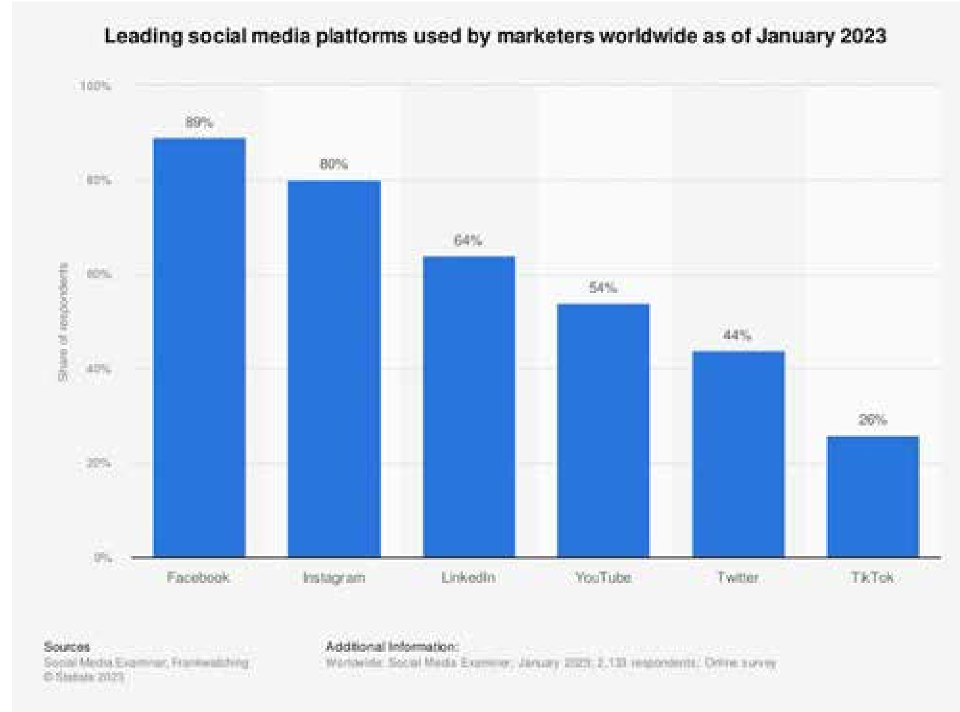

Figure 1: Worldwide, social media examiner (January 2023, 2.133 respondents, online survey)
Source: Frankwatching (2023)

Social media has shifted the power dynamic between brands and consumers. Traditional marketing methods were primarily one-way communication, but social media allows for interactive and two-way communication, enabling brands to engage directly with their customers, receive feedback, and build lasting relationships (Hennig-Thurau et al. 2010). Moreover, social media facilitates user-generated content, enabling customers to share their experiences, opinions, and recommendations, thus amplifying brand reach and influence. With the increasing emphasis on accountability and return on investment, marketers have realized the importance of measuring and analyzing the effectiveness of their social media marketing efforts. Metrics-driven marketing provides valuable insights into the performance of social media campaigns, helps marketers identify strengths and weaknesses, and enables data-driven decision-making (Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick 2019). By adopting a metrics-driven approach, marketers can optimize their strategies, allocate resources effectively, and maximize the impact of their social media marketing initiatives.

2 Key marketing metrics on social media

Reach and impressions metrics are essential in evaluating the extent of audience exposure to social media content. Reach refers to the total number of unique users who have viewed a particular post, while impressions represent the total number of times a post has been displayed, regardless of whether it was viewed by unique users or not (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010). These metrics provide insights into the potential size of the audience reached by a social media campaign and help gauge brand visibility.

Engagement metrics focus on the level of interaction and involvement that users have with social media content. Likes, shares, comments, and retweets are common engagement metrics that reflect user engagement and demonstrate the effectiveness of content in capturing attention and generating conversations (Hajli 2014). Additionally, click-through rates (CTRs) measure the proportion of users who click on a specific link or call-to-action within a post, providing insights into user interest and conversion potential.

Conversion metrics on social media evaluate the effectiveness of marketing efforts in driving desired actions by users. These metrics include click-through rates (CTRs) leading to website visits, sign-ups, downloads, purchases, and other measurable actions that indicate a user's progression through the marketing funnel (Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick 2019). Conversion metrics help assess the impact of social media marketing on lead generation, sales, and revenue generation.

Customer satisfaction metrics are crucial in evaluating the overall customer experience and the effectiveness of social media efforts in meeting customer needs. Net Promoter Score (NPS) is a commonly used customer satisfaction metric that measures customer loyalty and advocacy by gauging the likelihood of customers recommending a brand to others (Reichheld 2003). Social media monitoring tools and sentiment analysis techniques can also provide insights into customer sentiment and feedback, helping businesses identify areas for improvement and enhance customer satisfaction.

Brand awareness metrics assess the level of brand recognition and recall among social media users. Metrics such as social media mentions, share of voice, and hashtag performance help gauge the visibility and reach of a brand's messaging across social media platforms (Hajli 2014). By monitoring brand awareness metrics, marketers can understand the effectiveness of their social media campaigns in increasing brand visibility and generating conversations around the brand.

Influence and authority metrics focus on identifying key influencers and opinion leaders within a social media community and evaluating their impact on brand perception and consumer behavior. Follower counts, engagement rates, and social media Klout scores are examples of metrics used to assess the influence and authority of individuals or accounts on social media platforms (Gupta et al. 2020). Understanding these metrics helps marketers identify potential collaboration opportunities with influencers and leverage their influence to amplify brand messaging.

3 Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research design, specifically a literature review and analysis of existing academic sources. This approach allowed for a comprehensive understanding of marketing metrics on social media, drawing upon the insights and findings of previous studies. A thorough review of academic literature was conducted to identify relevant articles pertaining to marketing metrics on social media. Based on the findings of the literature review, a logical structure and framework for the article were developed. The framework included key points and sub-points to be discussed, ensuring a comprehensive coverage of marketing metrics on social media. By following this methodology, the article on marketing metrics on social media was developed, providing valuable insights and recommendations for marketers in effectively measuring and optimizing their social media strategies.

4 Results

To optimize social media strategies effectively, marketers must establish Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound (SMART) goals (Doran 1981).

SMART goals provide a clear direction for social media campaigns and enable marketers to align their efforts with overall business objectives. By defining specific metrics to track and improve, marketers can measure progress and success, ensuring that their social media efforts are contributing to organizational goals (Biemans et al. 2020).

Setting SMART goals in connection to marketing metrics on social media requires a structured and strategic approach to ensure clarity, focus, and measurable outcomes. Let's explore the components of SMART goals in the context of social media marketing metrics, supported by academic sources:

Specific (S): SMART goals should be specific and clearly defined, leaving no room for ambiguity. The goal should answer the questions of "what" is to be achieved and "why" it matters. According to Gondwe et al. (2018), specific goals in social media marketing might involve defining a clear objective, such as increasing brand awareness, driving website traffic, or boosting engagement rates on a particular platform.

Measurable (M): Measurable goals allow marketers to track progress and determine if the desired outcomes have been achieved. Quantifiable metrics provide a basis for evaluation and optimization. Chen et al. (2019) emphasizes the importance of defining specific metrics for each social media goal, such as the number of likes, shares, comments, click-through rates, or conversion rates. These measurable metrics enable marketers to assess the effectiveness of their strategies accurately.

Achievable (A): Goals should be realistic and achievable, considering the available resources, budget, and capabilities of the marketing team. As highlighted by Ebrahim et al. (2019), setting achievable goals on social media requires considering factors such as the size of the target audience, the level of competition, and the current state of the brand's social media presence.

Relevant (R): Relevance refers to ensuring that the set goals align with the overall marketing objectives and contribute to the organization's success.

Van Steenburgh et al. (2018) suggest that marketing metrics on social media should align with broader business objectives, such as increasing revenue, enhancing customer satisfaction, or launching a new product. The relevance of social media metrics lies in their ability to support and contribute to these larger goals.

Time-bound (T): Setting a specific timeframe for achieving the goals creates a sense of urgency and helps prioritize efforts. Kaplan and Haenlein (2019) emphasize the need to set time-bound goals in social media marketing to assess the effectiveness of campaigns and adapt strategies promptly. A fixed time frame also facilitates benchmarking and comparison with historical data. By adhering to the principles of SMART goal-setting in social media marketing, marketers can ensure a more focused, measurable, and impactful approach to their social media strategies. The academic sources cited above provide evidence-based support for the importance of SMART goals in the context of social media marketing metrics, helping marketers drive meaningful results and maximize their return on investment in the digital realm. By incorporating these SMART goal-setting principles, marketers can establish clear objectives and align their social media strategies with measurable outcomes. This approach enables effective monitoring and evaluation of marketing efforts on social media platforms.

Real-time monitoring of marketing metrics is crucial for optimizing social media strategies. It allows marketers to track the performance of their campaigns in real-time, identify trends, and make timely adjustments to improve results.

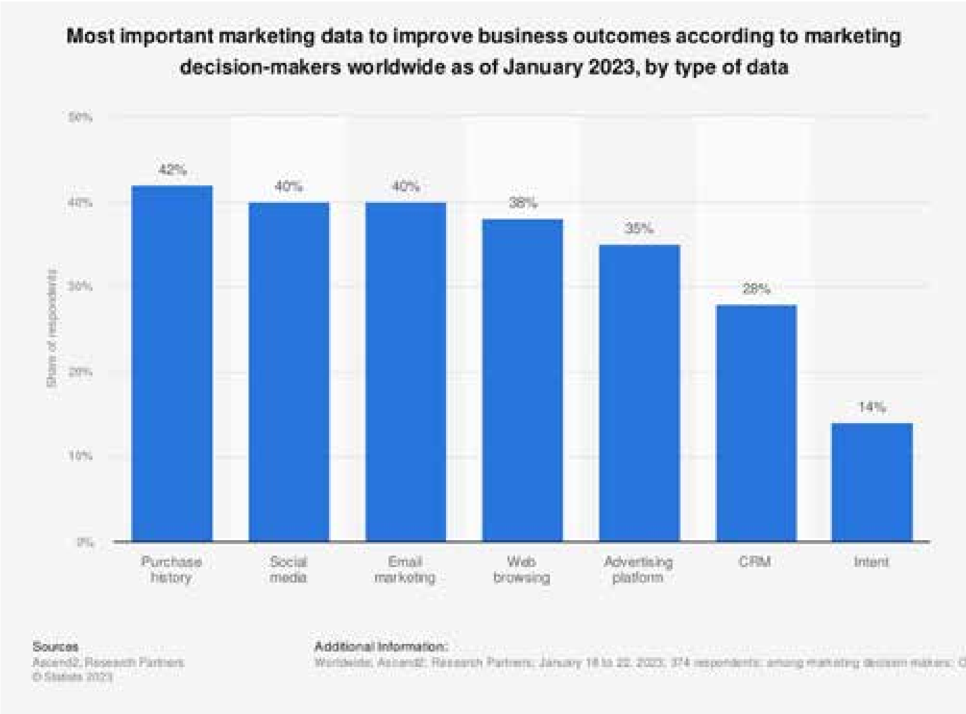

Figure 2: Worldwide, ascend2, research partners (2023 January 16-22, 374 respondents, among marketing decision-makers, online survey)
Source: Ascend2 (2023a)

By leveraging social media analytics tools and dashboards, marketers can gain insights into key metrics such as reach, engagement, conversion, and sentiment analysis on an ongoing basis (Chen et al. 2019). Real-time monitoring empowers marketers to respond quickly to emerging opportunities or challenges, ensuring that their social media efforts remain relevant and effective. Data-driven decision making is a cornerstone of optimizing social media strategies.

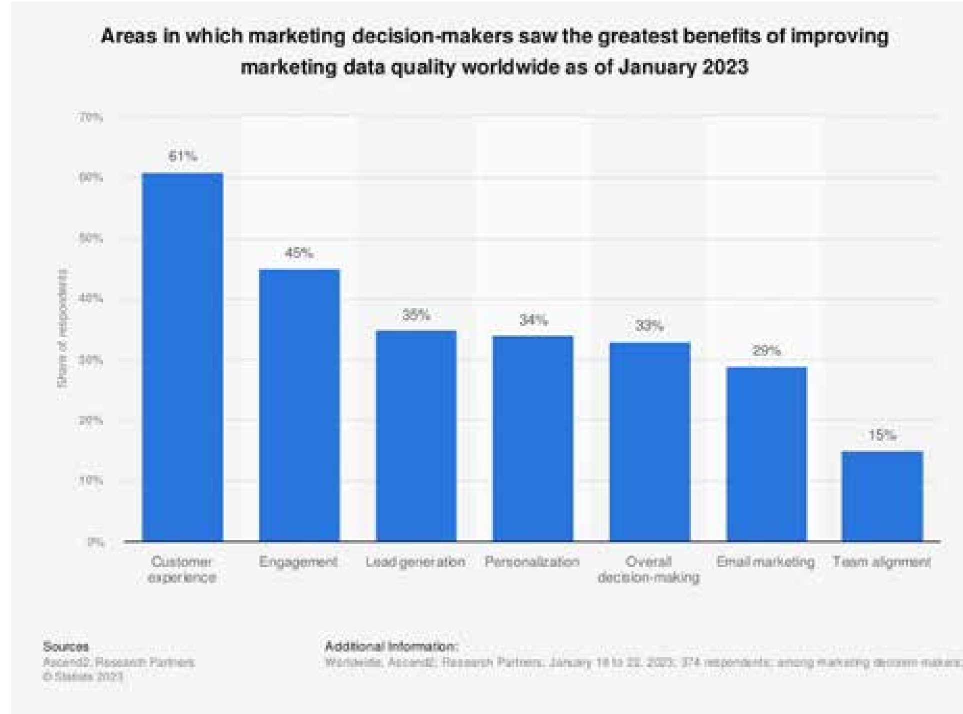

Figure 3: Worldwide, ascend2, research partners, (2023, January 16-22, 374 respondents, among marketing decision-makers, online survey)
Sources: Ascend2 (2023b)

Marketers need to collect and analyze data from various marketing metrics to derive meaningful insights and make informed decisions. By leveraging advanced analytics techniques, such as data mining, predictive modeling, and machine learning, marketers can uncover patterns, identify customer segments, and tailor their social media strategies accordingly (Gupta et al. 2016). Data-driven decision making helps marketers allocate resources effectively, personalize content, and optimize targeting strategies for enhanced engagement and conversion. Optimizing social media strategies requires a mindset of continuous improvement and experimentation. Marketers should embrace a test-and-learn approach, constantly experimenting with different content formats, messaging, targeting strategies, and channels (Phelps et al. 2014). By analyzing the results of these experiments and A/B testing, marketers can identify the most effective tactics and refine their strategies accordingly. Continuous improvement and experimentation ensure that social media strategies stay relevant in a dynamic digital landscape and drive ongoing performance improvements.

5 Challenges and limitations of marketing metrics on social media

One of the challenges in utilizing marketing metrics on social media is ensuring the accuracy and reliability of the data collected. Social media platforms provide a wealth of data, but discrepancies and inaccuracies may arise due to factors such as data sampling, data quality, and platform-specific measurement methodologies (Borges et al. 2020). Marketers need to be cautious in interpreting and relying on metrics without considering potential biases or limitations inherent in the data sources.

Attributing the impact of social media efforts to specific outcomes can be complex, especially in the context of multichannel marketing. Social media often functions as an influencing touchpoint rather than a direct conversion driver, making it challenging to accurately attribute conversions or sales solely to social media efforts (Verhoef et al. 2017). Marketers must employ sophisticated attribution models and tracking techniques to understand the contribution of social media in the overall customer journey and its impact on desired outcomes. The collection and analysis of customer data on social media raise privacy and ethical concerns. Marketers must navigate legal regulations and ensure compliance with data protection policies to safeguard customer privacy (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010). Additionally, ethical considerations arise when leveraging personal data for targeted marketing purposes. Marketers need to strike a balance between utilizing data-driven insights and respecting users' privacy and autonomy, ensuring transparent communication, and obtaining proper consent for data usage.

Social media platforms constantly update their algorithms and metrics, which can impact the accuracy and interpretation of marketing metrics. Changes in algorithms may lead to fluctuations in reach, engagement, and other metrics, making it necessary for marketers to stay updated and adapt their strategies accordingly (Mendes et al. 2019). Additionally, the introduction of new metrics or changes in metric definitions can introduce challenges in benchmarking and trend analysis, requiring marketers to continually reassess their measurement approaches. Integrating offline and online marketing metrics presents a challenge for marketers seeking a holistic view of their overall marketing performance. While social media metrics provide valuable insights into online interactions, connecting these metrics with offline actions, such as in-store purchases or phone inquiries, can be challenging (Rust et al. 2021). Marketers need to explore methods for data integration and establish linkages between online and offline metrics to gain a comprehensive understanding of the impact of social media on overall business performance.

Through this exploration of social media marketing metrics, several key findings have emerged. Firstly, setting SMART goals is essential for aligning social media strategies with overall business objectives. Monitoring metrics in real-time enables marketers to make timely adjustments and respond to emerging trends. Data-driven decision making empowers marketers to leverage insights and optimize targeting strategies. Continuous improvement and experimentation drive ongoing performance improvements. However, challenges exist in ensuring data accuracy, attributing social media impact, addressing privacy concerns, adapting to evolving algorithms, and integrating offline and online metrics. Understanding and effectively utilizing social media marketing metrics have significant implications for marketers. By analyzing reach, engagement, conversion, customer satisfaction, brand awareness, and influence metrics, marketers can gauge the effectiveness of their social media campaigns and make informed decisions. These metrics enable marketers to optimize their strategies, allocate resources effectively, and enhance customer experiences. Moreover, marketers can leverage metrics to identify key influencers, measure brand visibility, and track the impact of social media on overall business performance. It is critical for data-driven marketers to be effective at synthesising different types of information, as well as analysing data. Data on its own, as we learned, is simply descriptive. It can tell marketers the state of affairs. Effective data-driven marketers are those who can take that information on the sate of affairs and transform it into a plan for what needs to happen, based on that information (Inge 2022).

As social media continues to evolve, future directions in social media marketing metrics will focus on addressing the challenges and limitations mentioned earlier. This includes developing more accurate and reliable data collection methods, refining attribution models to measure the impact of social media in multichannel environments, ensuring ethical use of customer data, adapting to changing algorithms and metric definitions, and exploring methods to integrate offline and online

metrics seamlessly. Additionally, advancements in artificial intelligence and machine learning can enable more sophisticated analysis and prediction of social media metrics, allowing marketers to gain deeper insights and make proactive decisions. Furthermore, the future of social media marketing metrics will likely involve the integration of qualitative and quantitative data, such as sentiment analysis and natural language processing, to provide a comprehensive understanding of customer perceptions and sentiments. This integration will enable marketers to analyze the context behind metrics and gain deeper insights into customer behavior and preferences.

In summary, social media marketing metrics are invaluable tools for marketers to measure, evaluate, and optimize their social media strategies. By leveraging these metrics effectively, marketers can enhance engagement, drive conversions, build brand loyalty, and achieve their marketing objectives in the dynamic world of social media. Continuous improvement, adaptation to changing technologies and consumer behaviors, and the pursuit of ethical and privacy-conscious practices will be essential for marketers to stay at the forefront of social media marketing effectiveness.

6 Conclusion

In conclusion, marketing metrics on social media are essential tools for evaluating and optimizing social media strategies. This article has provided a comprehensive exploration of various marketing metrics used on social media platforms, including reach, engagement, conversion, customer satisfaction, brand awareness, and influence metrics. By effectively leveraging these metrics, marketers can gain valuable insights into the performance of their social media campaigns, make data-driven decisions, and enhance the overall effectiveness of their marketing efforts. The findings from this analysis highlight the significance of setting SMART goals, monitoring metrics in real-time, and utilizing data-driven insights to drive continuous improvement in social media marketing. It is evident that marketers who adopt a metrics-driven approach are better positioned to understand their audience, tailor their messaging, and optimize their campaigns to achieve desired outcomes. Furthermore, this article has shed light on the challenges and limitations associated with marketing metrics on social media. Issues such as data accuracy, attribution modeling, privacy concerns, evolving algorithms, and integrating offline and online metrics require careful consideration by marketers. Addressing these challenges will be crucial for maximizing the value and reliability of marketing metrics on social media. The implications for marketers are clear. By analyzing and interpreting the right metrics, marketers can identify areas of improvement, allocate resources effectively, and enhance customer experiences on social media platforms. Marketing metrics provide a window into consumer behavior, enabling marketers to optimize targeting strategies, measure the impact of their campaigns, and foster long-term relationships with their target audience. Looking ahead, future research in this area should focus on longitudinal studies to track the long-term impact of marketing metrics, cross-platform analysis to understand the effectiveness across various social media platforms, and the integration of offline and online metrics for a holistic evaluation of marketing efforts. Additionally, advancements in attribution models, ethical considerations, contextual analysis, and predictive analytics offer exciting avenues for further exploration and innovation.

In conclusion, marketing metrics on social media are indispensable tools for modern marketers. By continually refining measurement strategies, staying abreast of platform updates, and adapting to evolving consumer behaviors, marketers can harness the power of marketing metrics on social media to drive engagement, conversions, and overall business success in the dynamic and ever-evolving digital landscape. This comprehensive analysis of marketing metrics on social media aims to equip marketers with a deeper understanding of how to measure, analyze, and optimize their social media strategies. By leveraging the key metrics discussed in this article, marketers can gain valuable insights into their audience, refine their marketing tactics, and achieve greater success in the ever-evolving landscape of social media marketing.

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Kľúčové slová / *Key Words* ——— key metrics, SMART goals, social media, optimization of marketing strategies, *kľúčové metriky, SMART ciele, sociálne médiá, optimalizácia marketingových stratégií*

JEL klasifikácia / *JEL Classification* ——— M31

Résumé ——— **Úloha marketingových metrík v sociálnych médiách: komplexná analýza**
V digitálnej ére sa sociálne médiá ukázali ako mocný marketingový nástroj, ktorý spôsobil revolúciu v spôsobe, akým podniky interagujú so spotrebiteľmi. Keďže sa platformy sociálnych médií neustále vyvíjajú, je pre obchodníkov kľúčové, aby svoje úsilie efektívne merali a analyzovali. Tento článok skúma význam marketingových metrík v oblasti sociálnych médií, pričom zdôrazňuje kľúčové metriky používané na hodnotenie marketingových kampaní a ich vplyv na obchodný úspech. Prostredníctvom hĺbkovej analýzy rôznych marketingových metrík poskytuje tento článok prehľad o optimalizácii stratégií sociálnych médií pre lepšie zapojenie zákazníkov, povedomie o značke a návratnosť investícií. Primárnym cieľom tohto článku je ponoriť sa do významu marketingových metrík v oblasti sociálnych médií. Skúmaním rôznych marketingových metrík a ich relevantnosti pri vyhodnocovaní kampaní na sociálnych médiách sa tento článok snaží poskytnúť obchodníkom informácie o tom, ako optimalizovať svoje stratégie a dosiahnuť požadované výsledky. Rozsah tohto článku zahŕňa komplexnú analýzu kľúčových marketingových metrík vrátane dosahu a zobrazení, metrík zapojenia, metrík konverzií, metrík spokojnosti zákazníkov, metrík povedomia o značke a metrík vplyvu a autority. Tento článok je založený na dôkladnom prehľade existujúcej literatúry, priemyselných správ, prípadových štúdií a odborných názorov na marketingové metriky v sociálnych médiách. Primárne a sekundárne zdroje boli konzultované s cieľom získať informácie o rôznych metrikách používaných v marketingu sociálnych médií a ich vplyve na obchodný úspech. Analýza a postrehy uvedené v tomto článku sú odvodené zo syntézy dostupných poznatkov a skúseností zdieľaných marketingovými profesionálmi a výskumníkmi v oblasti marketingu sociálnych médií. Skúmaním dôležitosti marketingových metrík v kontexte sociálnych médií si tento článok kladie za cieľ vybaviť marketérov potrebnými znalosťami a nástrojmi, aby mohli robiť rozhodnutia založené na údajoch, optimalizovať svoje stratégie sociálnych médií a dosahovať zmysluplné výsledky.

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DEVELOPING MEANINGFUL SALES LEADS IN THE ONLINE ENVIRONMENT

A sales funnel looks at the consumer's buying journey from a corporate perspective. A sales funnel is based on the idea that a company needs to attract many interested individuals, before narrowing them down until sales happen with some. This cut off is inevitable, although effective funnels convert higher numbers of target audience into buyers.

Businesses continuously experiment with their funnel to make it more effective as not every cookie harvested in the online environment constitutes a valid sales proxy. Groupon (offering coupons to shoppers and travelers) relies a great lot on their referral program and user rewards. Interested clients are referred to Groupon by a friend. Friends get a bonus discount per referral.

Clear calls-to-action presented in the online environment, that encourage visitors to act (e.g. newsletter sign-ups, free downloads, or consultation requests), or development of dedicated landing pages for specific offers, campaigns or sub-segments (where a single call-to-action is strongly promoted) eliminate distractions and streamline visitor's attention and help the sales funnel succeed. Use persuasive copywriting and attractive visuals to encourage visitors to take the desired action. Sales promotion never hurts in making visitors act either. Incentives such free trials, premium delivery, discounts, exclusive content, access to webinars or events help capture the attention of potential leads and entice them to provide their contact information, which can be further use to establish a relationship.

For instance, Grammarly (an infamous grammar checker and writing improvement tool) spent reportedly over 100 million USD on digital advertising in 2022. Grammarly's frequently used platform is YouTube, where they mix ads and contextual targeting to improve brand awareness. Interested individuals may register and test Grammarly by following a clear call-to-action. Grammarly periodically offers free trials of premium features to move users from freemium plans. To access additional functionalities, clients need to enter their payment card details.

Partnering with industry influencers or complementary businesses is usually a way to expand the reach. Collaborate on content, co-host webinars, or offer joint promotions to tap into influencer's audience and generate qualified leads. However, make sure that influencer's values are aligned with yours and have a potential to create more rather than less trust and credibility. The 2019 influencer collaboration between the Instagram glamour star Jemma Lucy and Skinny Caffe weight-loss program was banned by the Advertising Standards Authority (UK's regulator of advertising), when it became public that Jemma was pregnant.

Building rapport and trust has been a tricky discipline in the online environment in any case. A lot of traffic is generated through automated bots and accounts are not genuine. A connection with a lead needs to be established by actively listening, asking relevant questions, and showing empathy. Follow-up emails, calls, or (virtual) meetings may provide a lead with additional information, address their questions and concerns, and result in a transaction later. For example, online florist Bloom & Wild offers multiple contact options: chat, Whatsapp, Facebook Messenger and a contact form, while publishing the average waiting time for live chat to provide customers with contextual information for their informed choice.

Once the lead has demonstrated strong interest and is ready to make a purchasing decision, guide them through the final steps of the sales process. Present your proposal, negotiate terms, and address any remaining concerns. Close the sale by obtaining a commitment or agreement from the lead. After closing the sale, follow up with the customer and provide additional customer services, when necessary, as opportunities for upselling, cross-selling, or referrals may arise. Retailers such as IKEA or Target show online their furniture staged in real-life settings, where the central product is complemented by other products from their range. Pinterest-alike inspiration boards are presented to offer a complete set of matching items.

Being online means becoming omnichannel-, content- and data-driven. Combining data from multiple sources – CRM and marketing automation software in particular – while matching the targeted customer profile to the information available about a lead. Naturally, only platforms, channels, and media where target audience is active, are to be utilized.

Long gone are days where marketing was primarily about creativity. Successful marketing communications evolves primarily around data analytics. Data needs to be tracked and analyzed continuously. Monitoring online traffic, conversion rates, email open rates, click-through rates, and other key metrics is a way forward.

Résumé ——— Jak sbírat a rozvíjet prvotní zákaznické kontakty v prodejním trychtýři v online prostředí?

Prodejní trychtýř je pohledem podniků na řízení zákaznického chování v nákupním rozhodovacím procesu. Množství prvotních kontaktů se v trychtýři zužuje na potenciální zákazníky, přičemž s některými z nich je na závěr řízeného procesu uzavřen transakční vztah. Prodejní taktiky jsou založeny převážně na schopnosti navázat angažovaný vztah s potenciálními zákazníky. V online prostředí platí dvojnásob, že schopnost přetavení prvotních kontaktů do prodejů odlišuje úspěšné od neúspěšných.

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SOUTĚŽ MARKETÉR ROKU 2022 MÁ SVÉHO VÍTĚZE

Soutěž Marketér roku vyhlašovaná Českou marketingovou společností má dlouholetou tradici. Česká marketingová společnost vyhlásila oficiální výsledky 18. ročníku soutěže Marketér roku 2022. V podvečer 18. května 2023 se v příjemném klasickém prostředí Divadelního sálu Klubu Lávka s historickým rámcem Karlova mostu a působivým výhledem na Hradčany odehrálo finále soutěže 18. ročníku Marketér roku 2022. Večerem provázel jako vždy skvělý moderátor Karel Voříšek a mladá plzeňská kapela Džangobells zpříjemnila večer všem zúčastněným. Pro vítěze byly připraveny sošky křišťálových delfínů z českého skla v čele s Velkým modrým delfínem v působivém designu z dílny uměleckého skláře Vladimíra Zubričana. Na oceněné i nominované čekaly kromě diplomů i mnohé věcné dary od sponzorů a partnerů soutěže. Kromě hlavních cen udělila porota i několik zvláštních ocenění za mimořádné aktivity a úspěšné inovativní marketingové projekty, stejně tak vybralo k ocenění svoje kandidáty i prezidium ČMS.

Velký modrý delfín – hlavní cena soutěže
Mgr. Ivana Janečková, předsedkyně představenstva, Duhovka Group, a. s.
za komplexní fundraisingovou kampaň v oblasti sociálního podnikání

Zlatý delfín
Ing. Lucie Němečková, marketing manager, PKF APOGEO Group
za nastavení marketingové strategie společnosti včetně re-brandingu a HR marketingu

Zelený delfín
Martin Dolský, MSc. ředitel marketingu, United Bakeries, a. s.
za komplexní re-design tradiční značky Odkolek včetně nového loga, komunikace, výrobků i kampaně

Růžový delfín
Ing. Eliška Soukupová, brand manager, Nestlé Česko, s. r. o.
za úspěšnou marketingovou kampaň na klasickou značku s výrazným navýšením prodejů a posílení pozice značky Kofila

Cena prezidia ČMS – Duhoví delfíni
Martin Koky, Skiareál Klínovec
za speciální komunikační projekt s využitím sociálních sítí s vhodnou tonalitou vůči cílové skupině

Lucie Mádlová, Ph.D., zakladatelka a výkonná ředitelka, Asociace společenské odpovědnosti
za environmentální marketingovou kampaň Nevolte vyhynutí

Lukáš Makowski, ředitel marketingu, M&M reality holding, a. s.
za realizaci konceptu televizních aukcí jakožto oborové inovace v kampani

Ing. Mgr. Irena Melounová, vedoucí obchodního oddělení stožárů, KOOPERATIVA, v. o. d.
za vytvoření marketingové strategie nové řady produktů

PaedDr. Petr Paksi, DBA, jednatel, obchodní ředitel, JAP FUTURE, s. r. o.
za kompletní marketingovou podporu nového produktu s využitím marketingového výzkumu

Mgr. Šuchrat Saidov, chief executive officer (CEO), Silon, s. r. o.
za komunikaci strategie udržitelnosti firmy a investic do ekologických opatření

Mladý delfín
Martin Apeltauer, obchodní a technický ředitel, Prague Car Festival
za realizaci významného projektu v oblasti výstavnictví s celoevropským přesahem

Marta Janoušková, head of brand & marketing, PINKO, a. s.
za úspěšné uvedení nového výrobku na trh

Kateřina Marešová, BA DevLab Smitio, s. r. o.
za projekt znalostního sdílení a propojování komunity

Mgr. Taťána Plecháčková, ředitelka nadace, Ing. Ludmila Bobková, projektová manažerka Nadace rozvoje občanské společnosti
za vytvoření úspěšného charitativního projektu Pomozte dětem s výraznou podporou médií

Pavel Sládek, vedoucí oddělení marketingu, Oborová zdravotní pojišťovna zaměstnanců bank, pojišťoven a stavebnictví
za výrazné posílení známosti značky prostřednictvím výrazné kampaně s využitím celebrit

Jan Vokurka, majitel a jednatel, Kitl, s. r. o.
za revitalizaci tradiční značky Vratislavická kyselka

Zvláštní cena za úspěšné zavedení nové kategorie předmíchaných nápojů
Ing. Tomáš Matuška, senior brand manager, Stock Plzeň – Božkov
za kvalitní komplexní strategii zavedení nové kategorie produktů s výrazným nárůstem prodeje

Zvláštní cena za vytvoření nového holografického reklamního nosiče
Ing. Dominik Peršl, CEO & business director, Jakub Hussar, creative director, Holomotion, s. r. o.
za inovativní využití holografie formou nového reklamního média

Zvláštní cena za inovativní využití reálných příběhů v kampani
Bc. Petr Princ, marketing manager, Klikpojisteni.cz, s. r. o.
za vhodné využití reálných příběhů v kampani Lůzr roku

Čestná uznání za úspěšnou nominaci
Ing. Dana Bičovská, trade marketing manager, STOCK Plzeň-Božkov, s. r. o.
za in-store koncept visibility komunikující různé spotřební příležitosti produktu

Ing. Karel Friml, MBA, Západočeská univerzita v Plzni
za nový systém oceňování výstupů kreativního průmyslu

Mgr. Radek Hrabě, předseda spolku, vedoucí projektu, Svátky hudby, z. s.
za efektivní komunikaci kulturního projektu

Mgr. Pavlína Merendová, projektový a PR manager Ostravské Vánoce, Černá louka, s. r. o.
za úspěšný projekt v oblasti event marketingu

Ing. Regina Netolická, MBA, marketingová ředitelka, Gorenje, s. r. o.
za úspěšnou komunikaci brandu

Andrea Pekerginová, majitelka, Luboš Hruška, marketingový ředitel, ONE-OFF-SYNERGY, s. r. o.
za vhodně zvolený komunikační koncept s využitím kvantitativního marketingového průzkumu

Mgr. Jan Štika, Outdoor concept, a. s.
za vytvoření nové vizuální identity značky Hannah

Letos byla už pojedenácté v rámci soutěže Marketér roku 2022 vyhlášena kategorie pro studenty vysokých škol – studentská cena Mladý delfín, tentokrát na téma Jak úspěšně komunikovat problematiku energetických úspor pro překonání krize. Porota pod vedením doc. Olgy Dolínkové ocenila projekty těchto studentů:

Vítěz soutěže
studentský tým z Vysoké školy ekonomické v Praze
David Duška, Vanesa Garová, Iveta Koubová

Další ocenění:

Cena za kretivitu projektu
studentský tým University Konštantína Filosofa v Nitre
Simona Nehézová, Monika Starke, Nicolett Gulka

Cena za kvalitu výchozí analýzy
studentský tým z Vysoké školy ekonomické v Praze
Anna Krupičková, Eliška Malá, Barbora Strnadová

Cena za realizovatelnost návrhu
studenský tým University Konštantína Filosofa v Nitre
Erika Kolárová, Rebeka Čepedyová, Simona Bochnovičová

držitelka Velkého modrého delfína Mgr. Ivana Janečková, předsedkyně představenstva, Duhovka Group, a. s. (uprostřed)
vlevo doc. PhDr. Jitka Vysekalová, Ph.D., čestná prezidentka ČMS
vpravo Ing. Tomáš David, prezident ČMS

AKADEMICKÁ A REKLAMNÁ OBEC SMÚTI – OPUSTIL NÁS NESTOR A LEGENDA ČESKOSLOVENSKEJ REKLAMY PAVEL HORŇÁK

7. júna 2023 nás navždy opustil vysokoškolský pedagóg, zakladateľ prvého samostatného vysokoškolského štúdia marketingovej komunikácie a reklamy v rámci Slovenskej a Českej republiky, dlhoročný vedúci Katedry marketingovej komunikácie na Filozofickej fakulte Univerzity Komenského v Bratislave, prof. PhDr. Pavel Horňák, CSc. (nar. 3. apríla 1953).
V rokoch 1968-1971 študoval na Strednej všeobecnovzdelávacej škole I. Horvátha v Bratislave, následne v rokoch 1971-1973 absolvoval nadstavbové štúdium kultúrno-výchovná práca pri Strednej knihovníckej škole v Bratislave. V roku 1978 ukončil vysokoškolské štúdium v odbore žurnalistika na Filozofickej fakulte Univerzity Komenského v Bratislave. V roku 1980 mu bol udelený titul PhDr. (doktor filozofie) v odbore československé dejiny so zameraním na novinárstvo na Filozofickej fakulte Univerzity Komenského v Bratislave. V roku 1989 získal titul CSc. (kandidát vied) v odbore sociológia na Filozofickej fakulte Univerzity Komenského v Bratislave. Titul doc. (docent) získal v roku 1996 v odbore žurnalistika na Filozofickej fakulte Univerzity Komenského v Bratislave a 25. januára 2010 ho prezident SR vymenoval za profesora v odbore masmediálne štúdiá, vďaka čomu sa stal vôbec prvým vysokoškolským profesorom marketingovej komunikácie na území Slovenskej a Českej republiky.
V rokoch 1978-1995 pracoval najskôr ako asistent, neskôr ako odborný asistent a potom ako docent na Katedre žurnalistiky Filozofickej fakulty Univerzity Komenského v Bratislave. Od roku 1990 bol vedúcim odboru propagácia v rámci Katedry žurnalistiky a v roku 1996 založil prvé samostatné vysokoškolské štúdium marketingovej komunikácie a reklamy v rámci Slovenskej a Českej republiky na Filozofickej fakulte Univerzity Komenského v Bratislave, kde pôsobil ako vedúci Katedry marketingovej komunikácie od jej založenia až do svojej smrti (spolu 27 rokov). Okrem Katedry marketingovej komunikácie (FiF UK v Bratislave) taktiež v rokoch 2003-2005 a neskôr od roku 2009 až do svojej smrti prednášal na Ústave marketingových komunikací, kde bol zároveň členom Vedeckej a umeleckej rady Fakulty multimediálních komunikací Univerzity Tomáše Bati ve Zlíně (ČR).
Bol zakladajúcim členom Moravskosliezskej spoločnosti pre propagáciu a PR v Brne (MOSPRA), kontaktným kancelárom pre SR v rámci Českej spoločnosti pre propagáciu a PR v Brne a prezidentom Slovenskej spoločnosti pre propagáciu v Bratislave (SOSPRA). Okrem toho patril k zakladajúcim členom Rady pre reklamu SR a Arbitrážnej komisie Rady pre reklamu SR. Stal sa autorom prvého kódexu reklamnej etiky v Československu a taktiež bol autorom prvého slovníka reklamných pojmov na Slovensku pod názvom Abeceda reklamy (vyd. v roku 1997). Okrem toho však bol aj autorom nespočetného množstva ďalších vedeckých štúdií, publikácií o reklame a marketingovej komunikácii doma i v zahraničí, ako napr. Teória propagácie; Reklama-propagácia-public relations v médiách; Reklama 2000; Etika reklamy; Reklama/teoreticko-historické aspekty reklamy a marketingovej komunikácie (1. a 2. deprac. a rozš. vyd.); Velký slovník marketingových komunikací (spoluautor); Kreativita v reklamě atď., ktorej problematikou sa zaoberal vyše štyridsať rokov. Bol členom odborných porôt na festivaloch kreativity i efektivity doma i v zahraničí, pravidelne sa zúčastňoval na medzinárodných konferenciách, reklamných fórach. Prezentoval sa aj tvorbou reklamných sloganov a beletristickou literatúrou (napr. Lexikón nadprirodzených bytostí, Od cigary k whisky, Rozprávky pre deti a pod.). Od počiatku vzniku bol odborným garantom projektu HERMES – Komunikátor roka, ktorý ako jediný hodnotí komunikáciu inštitúcií so zákazníkom na Slovensku, ale aj členom redakčných rád a vedeckých redakcií (napr. člen redakčnej rady medzinárodného časopisu Marketing Science & Inspirations, alebo člen vedeckej redakcie vydavateľstva VeRBuM – ČR). V roku 2022 získal pamätnú medailu k 100. výročiu vzniku Filozofickej fakulty Univerzity Komenského v Bratislave.

prof. PhDr. Pavel Horňák, CSc.
(3. 4. 1953, Bratislava – 7. 6. 2023, Bratislava)
Foto: osobný archív P. H.

Editor's note:
Professor Pavel Horňák was the founder of Marketing Science & Inspirations. Since 2006, from the first issue of the journal, he has been a member of the Editorial Board and has supported its development. Thank you Professor.

BERND HALLIER, THE DISTINGUISHED MARKETING AND BUSINESS PERSONALITY, HAS LEFT US

Professor Bernd Hallier was born in Hamburg. He studied economics at the University of Hamburg, where he received his MA and PhD. He subsequently completed internships in Turkey, Israel, South Africa and Japan. He started his professional career in October 1973 employed at Martin Brinkmann Cigarettes, responsible for distribution-analysis, since 1981 working as a sales manager. Since October 1984 is employed at the Institute of Self-Service (ISB), becoming its director in January 1985. Merging ISB with the Institute for Rationalization (RGH) created the Deutsches Handelsinstitut (German Retail Institute) in 1988, which became the EHI-Euro-Handelsinstitut in 1993, now EHI Retail Institute.

Professor Bernd Hallier was the Managing Director of the EHI Retail Institute, Chairman of the Advisory Board of EuroShop (world's largest capital goods show in the retail sector). Becoming partner of ShopDesignRussia in Moscow and a partner of CRC Shanghai in China, Member of the Board of AIDA Brussels, Member of the Astana Economic Scientists Club, Member of the Advisory Board of „Transparent Food", Chairman of the Board of the Orgainvent (the largest German labelling organisation in the beef sector), and Trustee of EHI Retail Institute at GLOBAL G.A.P.

In 2003, Moscow University appointed him an honorary professor. The University of Economics Prague recognized his achievements by awarding him the title of Doctor Honoris Causa in 2011. His main focus was on retail network management, initiating knowledge transfer, exchange of experience and further education with a focus on Eastern Europe and later on South East Asia.

Professor Bernd Hallier's collaboration with the scientific journal Marketing Science & Inspirations dates back to 2006. A few months after the founding of Marketing Inspirations (the predecessor of today's journal), Professor Hallier was interviewed by Associate Professor Marie Hesková. In 2011, he joined the editorial board of the journal and actively supported its development and published several articles. The last one was published in November 2022. Thank you, Professor.

Prof. Dr. Bernd Hallier
(28. 7. 1947 – 9. 6. 2023)
Photo: personal archive B. H.

FORET, MIROSLAV A TURNEROVÁ, LENKA, 2023. PRO KREATIVNÍ A UDRŽITELNÝ MARKETINGOVÝ MANAGEMENT

PRAHA: VYSOKÁ ŠKOLA KREATIVNÍ KOMUNIKACE. 102 S. ISBN 978-80-88431-10-7 (PRINT), ISBN 978-80-88431-11-4 (PDF).

Autoři – zkušení vysokoškolští pedagogové s množstvím publikovaných vědeckých statí, popularizačních článků a oborových zkušeností – se v předkládané publikaci nově pouštějí do objasňování problematiky marketingového managementu. Sluší se zvýraznit a doplnit slova „nově" a „aktuální problematiky". Nově, protože jednak do řešené problematiky vtahují vysoce aktuální kategorii udržitelnosti a udržitelného rozvoje a nově a účelně rovněž kategorii kreativity. Nepochybně to souvisí s posuny v oboru marketingového managementu, ale i s určením publikace: má sloužit jako aktuální vhled do dané problematiky zejména posluchačům Vysoké školy kreativní komunikace v Praze, ale nesporně rovněž ostatním zájemcům o oblast marketingu, jeho manažování, teorie kreativity, udržitelného rozvoje apod.
Celá práce je strukturována do deseti kapitol, jimž předchází úvod a závěr z pera „guru" československého marketingového myšlení Miroslava Foreta, který monografii chápe rovněž za „osobní bilanci pětapadesátileté známosti s marketingem". Nejde o tradiční převyprávění starších teorií pro chvíli „tady a teď", ale o promyšlenou práci, ve které se najdou i místa kritická, hodnotící bilance, přinášející pohledy na aktuální úskalí oboru, místa problematizující to, co se ještě před nedávnem zdálo nezpochybnitelné, stálé, trvalé. V této zdánlivé rozpornosti vidíme značnou hodnotu předkládané publikace: konečně sama teorie kreativity nutně pracuje s prvkem „nejistoty" – a kde jinde by měl být tento prvek všudypřítomný, nežli v učebním textu pro posluchače kreativně orientovaných oborů vysoké školy na kreativitu specializovanou.
Není pochyb, že marketing je nejtěsněji spjat s oblastí komunikace a komunikačních technologií: nová propojení se zákazníky (klienty), s organizacemi, s veřejností apod. Autoři tak upozorňují nejen na oblast marketingového mixu, zejména reklamy, s níž si běžný občan nejčastěji marketing propojuje, ale i na záležitosti, které zůstávají v hledí občana poněkud stranou – otázky likvidace odpadů, využívání ekologických obalovin, stanovení oboustranně akceptovatelné ceny apod. Posouvají tedy správně problematiku blíže k oblasti „sociální odpovědnosti podniku" a udržitelnému rozvoji.
V kapitolách „marketingové prostředí v udržitelném marketingovém managementu" a „kreativní marketingový management místa a lokální dopady" vhodně doplňují možnosti organizací odkrývat atraktivní příležitosti na trhu o vysvětlení četných analýz s příklady

(S–W analýza, O–T analýza, tradičnější SWOT analýza). Partie v knize je třeba ocenit zejména pro názornost, která se nutně bude hodit posluchačům, kteří se s problematikou teprve po prvních krůčcích seznamují (ať jde o místní rozvoj, cestovní ruch apod.).
Pokud stojí v počátku titulu slovo „pro“, hledají oba autoři publikace stejně tak všechna „proti“ v marketingovém managementu. Podle známé poučky, že každá reakce vyvolává protireakci, usilují oba autoři vidět, že i na dosaženém stupni marketingové vyspělosti existují jevy, které mohou překvapit (korekce živelné nadvýroby, hyperkonkurence, zelený marketing aj.). Upozorňují – nepochybně správně –, že je potřeba sledovat současnost a budoucí vývoj, ale nutné je rovněž se dívat zpět, do historie oboru, hledat tam metody a přístupy již využité a zapomenuté, ale schopné v dané situaci pomoci řešit naléhavé problémy klientů, organizací, trhů.
Vyjadřují se rovněž k otázkám informační společnosti, resp. marketingového managementu v éře informační společnosti. Poukazují tím znovu na kreativní udržitelný marketing a udržitelný rozvoj, férovou kreativní marketingovou komunikaci, stejně jako o „třech oříšcích pro pravý ořechový kvantitativní marketingový výzkum“.
Autoři sledují v textech problematiku zcela současnou a aktuální, drží prst na pomyslném tepu doby. Týká se to nejen virozy SARS-Cov-19 a proměny, kterou způsobila ve světě v jednotlivých vrstvách lidských životů a geopoliticky, ale poukazují i na problematiku války, světové bezpečnosti, nového zbrojení, kategorií obnažujících do naha otázku udržitelnosti, udržitelného rozvoje a zachování lidského rodu a všeho, co člověka obklopuje v jeho mikro- i makrokosmu.
Leží před námi kniha, která je vysoce aktuální probíranou problematikou, bude nesporně vhodným učebním textem, ale i zdrojem inspirace pro vědecké pracovníky v oboru i všechny, kteří se v dané oblasti pohybují a chtějí být „in“ a zamýšlet se zodpovědně a vážně nad proměnami, které probíhají v současném světě i v jednotlivých oborech, marketingový management nevyjímajíce.

DHAWAN, ERICA, 2023. DIGITÁLNÍ ŘEČ TELA. VYLEPŠETE SVOU KOMUNIKACI V ONLINE SVĚTĚ

BRNO: CPRESS. 287 S. ISBN 978-80-264-4687-3.

Autorkou tejto zaujímavej knihy je popredná svetová autorita v oblasti kolaboratívnej a vzťahovej inteligencie 21. storočia. Je americkou občiankou prvej generácie indického pôvodu z rodiny lekárov. Bola zaradená medzi 30 najlepších svetových profesionálov v oblasti manažmentu, prednáša po celom svete, je spisovateľkou, koučkou a rečníčkou v mnohých svetových spoločnostiach a fórach. Je to vzdelaná žena, má tituly z významných amerických univerzít: Harward, MIT Sloan a Wharton School. To je obdivuhodné!
Jej kniha pozostáva z úvodu, troch častí, záveru, prílohy a poznámok. Každá časť knihy obsahuje príslušné kapitoly. Celú knihu tvorí 10 kapitol. V úvode autorka objasňuje ako je v 21. storočí nevyhnutne potrebné vedieť efektívne komunikovať a riešiť problémy spojené s riadením globálnych, viacgeneračných, maticových a virtuálnych tímov pracovníkov. Pýta sa: *„Ako mám ľuďom rôzneho veku a pracovného štýlu, ktorí sa len zriedkakedy stretávajú osobne, pomôcť efektívne komunikovať?“* (s. 6). Problémy ľudí v komunikácii sú, podľa nej, spôsobené digitálnymi nástrojmi, ktoré nás síce v mnohom oslobodili, ale... *„Naša neschopnosť vysporiadať sa s vedľajšími účinkami našich žiarivých digitálnych nástrojov – e-mailov, textových správ, PowerPointu – meniacich komunikáciu vytvárala rozsiahle nedorozumenia a konflikty, ktoré sa následne prejavovali ako všeobecná úzkosť, strach, nedôvera a paranoja.“* (s. 6-7). Riešenie týchto komunikačných problémov vidí autorka v uplatnení a poznaní zručnosti, ktorú nazvala digitálna reč tela. Túto zručnosť, jej podstatu, možnosti a limity, veľmi podrobne preštudovala, analyzovala a snažila sa ju začleniť do manažérskej praxe lídrov mnohých podnikov a spoločností v rôznych odvetviach počas svojich vystúpení doma a vo svete.
Zle pochopená digitálna reč tela, alebo skôr neexistencia súboru všeobecne dohodnutých pravidiel, spôsobuje vo svete na pracoviskách, v komunitách, v rodinách veľké problémy. Ľudia o tom vedia, ale nijako nekonajú, hovoria si, veď predsa vieme čítať a písať. Ale ako to robiť v digitalizovanom svete, v ktorom už všetci dnes žijeme? *„Ako môžeme znovu nadviazať skutočnú dôveru a vzťahy, bez ohľadu na vzdialenosť? Tým, že vytvoríme základné pravidlá pre jasnú komunikáciu v modernom digitálnom svete.“* (s. 15).
Autorka v tejto knihe ponúka konkrétne stratégie ako rozlúštiť signály a náznaky toho, kto býva v komunikácii vypočutý, komu sa dostane uznanie, a čo bude v tomto meniacom sa svete vykonané. *„Mojim poslaním je pomôcť vám zblížiť sa s kýmkoľvek – intelektuálne, emocionálne, osobne i profesijne – a umožniť vám vyniknúť ako dôveryhodnému, priamemu lídrovi bez ohľadu na vzdialenosť.* (s. 16). O to ide autorke v tejto knihe.
Prvá časť knihy má názov Digitálne prvky štýlu. V jej 3 kapitolách autorka dôkladne a fundovane objasňuje podstatu tejto súčasnej medziľudskej komunikácie, ktorá sa prejavuje, ani nie tak hovorením, alebo konaním, ale skôr písaním. Ide viac menej o vizuálnu formu komunikácie.

„Zhruba 70 percent celkovej komunikácie medzi tímami sa dnes deje virtuálne. Každý deň odošleme približne 306 miliárd e-mailov a priemerný človek denne odošle 30 e-mailov a vybaví ich 96.“ (s. 21). Pritom až v 50-tich percentách e-mailov je zle interpretovaná „intonácia“ e–mailov. Dôvodom je strata neverbálnych fyzických signálov, obťažné vnímanie emócií v digitálnom priestore pracovísk. Prečo je to tak? Autorka v knihe zdôvodňuje: preto, že sme bezradní, pretože signály neverbálnej komunikácie sa väčšinou tvoria v komunikácii tvárou v tvár. Narušená je naša schopnosť pomáhať, zle sme načasovaní, nie sme povinní a nemusíme odpovedať hneď, obrazovky nám zmenili tradičnú reč tela, technológie umožňujú vytvárať masky. *„Digitálna reč tela ponúka systematický prístup k pochopeniu znakov digitálneho sveta rovnako, ako interpretujeme znaky fyzického sveta. Identifikuje a vysvetlí vyvíjajúce sa normy a signály digitálnej komunikácie v podnikoch a tým pomôže vytvoriť súbor spoločných očakávaní pre komunikáciu bez ohľadu na vzdialenosť.* (s. 26).

Autorka, na príkladoch, tak ako v každej kapitole celej knihy, prehľadne porovnáva rozdiely medzi tradičnou rečou tela a digitálnou rečou tela. Autorka píše, že ak chceme pochopiť túto novú komunikáciu, musíme pochopiť štyri zákony digitálnej reči tela. Sú to: viditeľné uznanie, starostlivá komunikácia, sebavedomá spolupráca a úplná dôvera. V tejto časti knihy predstavuje s prehľadom každý zákon, no kľúčovú, hlavnú pozornosť uvedeným zákonom venuje až v druhej časti knihy.

Prvým zákonom digitálnej reči tela je viditeľné uznanie. Vedie nevyhnutne k väčšiemu rešpektu a dôvere. *„Viditeľné uznanie spočíva v tom, že sme pozorní a vnímaví k druhým a zároveň im oznamujeme „rozumiem vám“ a „vážim si vás“ ... znamená, že sme vždy vnímaví k potrebám a časovým plánom druhých ľudí... znamená, že chápeme, že starostlivé a pozorné čítanie e-mailov v našej schránke je novým umením načúvať.“* (s. 29). Je to vlastne akt, prostredníctvom digitálnych kanálov, zaslania ekvivalentu úsmevu, alebo poďakovania.

Starostlivá komunikácia predstavuje druhý zákon digitálnej reči tela. Zahŕňa neustále úsilie o minimalizáciu rizika nedorozumení a nesprávnej interpretácie tým, že budeme svoje slová a svoju digitálnu reč tela vyjadrovať čo najjasnejšie. *„Starostlivá komunikácia znamená, že sa ľudia musia zhodnúť na tom, či je daný projekt nutný, alebo či je v súlade s podnikovými cieľmi.“* (s. 31). Ak tomu tak nie je, mrhá sa časom, stráca sa energia a nálada na pracovisku sa mení z nadšenia na skľúčenosť. Komunikácia medzi ľuďmi na pracovisku je potom nezrozumiteľná a nejasná.

„Tretí zákon, zákon sebavedomej spolupráce sa týka slobody vedome riskovať a zároveň dôverovať, že ostatní vaše rozhodnutia podporia.“ (s. 32). Znamená to tiež umožniť ľuďom reagovať s rozvahou a trpezlivosťou, namiesto aby ste na nich tlačili, aby v nepretržitej prevádzke reagovali na všetko okamžite. Sebavedomá spolupráca, podľa autorky *„... znižuje pravdepodobnosť, že sa súčasne ocitnete v pasci medzi prílišnou a nedostatočnou pozornosťou.“* (s. 33).

Štvrtý zákon digitálnej reči tela je zákon úplnej dôvery. Funguje až po zvládnutí prvých troch zákonov a prináša 360- stupňové nasadenie. Slovo „úplná“ je kľúčové v tomto kontexte. Prečo? Lebo keď máme úplnú dôveru, dostávame od ľudí maximum. *„Úplne dôverovať neznamená, že rozšírime bezpodmienečnú dôveru na všetkých, najmä na ľudí, s ktorými sme v minulosti mali negatívne skúsenosti, alebo nevyriešené vzťahy. Úplná dôvera sa naopak vzťahuje k pracovnému prostrediu, kde nikto nestráca čas riešením maličkostí, kde nejednoznačne formulovaná správa, alebo oneskorená odpoveď automaticky nevyvoláva strach, úzkosť, alebo neistotu a kde s dôverou predpokladáme, že všetci sú na našej strane. To je v dnešnej dobe celkom veľká požiadavka, ale úplná dôvera funguje.“* (s. 34). Aj tu autorka na konkrétnych príkladoch uvádza rozdiely medzi tradičnou a digitálnou rečou tela, čo je veľmi zrozumiteľné, transparentné a užitočné pre prax. Ďalšie kapitoly tejto časti pojednávajú o mocenských hrách a o úzkosti v digitálnej sfére, o nejednoznačnosti správ, o problémoch interpretácie v digitálnom svete, o stručnosti správ, o spomalených reakciách na správy, o mlčaní, o formálnosti a obradnosti v digitálnej reči tela, o tom, ako čítať medzi riadkami. „Dnes má stručný e-mail napísaný uhladeným písmom s bodkou na konci poslednej vety moc zastrašiť na vzdialenosť tisícov kilometrov. Nadšenie a pokyvovanie hlavou pri osobných schôdzkach sa dnes prejavuje výkričníkmi, emodži s rýchlymi odpoveďami.“ (s. 65). Autorka sa zaoberá tiež tým, ako sa reálna reč tela prenáša na obrazovke do slov, do interpunkcie, do načasovania a do voľby média, ako môžu byť slová zle interpretované a ako nad slovami získať kontrolu, než dáme povel „Odoslať!“.

V druhej časti knihy pod názvom Štyri zákony digitálnej reči tela autorka presvedčivo dokazuje ako môžu uvedené signály a prezentované témy ovplyvňovať pracovné tímy. *„Ako môžeme digitálnu reč tela využiť k prejaveniu uznania (viditeľné uznanie), k nájdeniu zhody (starostlivá komunikácia), k novému definovaniu tímovej práce v digitálnej ére (sebavedomá spolupráca) a nakoniec k spojeniu týchto troch pilierov dohromady, aby sme vytvorili tímy, vyznačujúce sa pocitom bezpečnosti (úplná dôvera).“* (s. 97). Rešpektovanie štyroch zákonov digitálnej reči tela.

Autorka v tejto druhej časti knihy na príkladoch z praxe podrobne rozoberá každý z uvedených zákonov s odporúčaniami ako optimalizovať priebeh a implementáciu digitálnej reči tela do podnikovej praxe.

Tretia časť knihy má názov Digitálna reč tela naprieč rozdielmi. Autorka sa v kapitolách detailne zaoberá ako možno posilniť angažovanosť, produktivitu a morálku svojho tímu, napriek odlišnostiam, ba práve vďaka pochopeniu digitálnych signálov reči tela. Píše nielen o poznatkoch z teórie skúmanej problematiky, ale aj z vlastnej životnej skúsenosti, keďže je sama Američankou indického pôvodu, ktorá sa narodila a vyrastala v Spojených štátoch a zažívala podobné situácie. Rozoberá ďalej otázky vplyvu pohlavia na digitálnu komunikáciu, skúma čo hovorí žena a čo hovorí muž, zamýšľa sa nad genderovými, predsudkami v kontexte digitálneho priestoru, porovnáva digitálnu reč tela muža a digitálnu reč tela ženy. Všetko cez optiku uvedených 4 zákonov digitálnej reči tela. Autorka poskytuje skutočne kvalifikované rady ako zlepšiť svoju digitálnu reč tela, svoju digitálnu komunikáciu v spoločnosti, berúc do úvahy generačné rozdiely ľudí a kultúru, v ktorej vyrastali a žili.

„Podstatou efektívnej digitálnej reči tela je prispôsobenie komunikácie, a to nielen tak, aby zodpovedala prirodzeným preferenciám jednej generácie oproti druhej, ale aby prispela ku splneniu danej úlohy.“ (s. 221).

V tejto tretej časti knihy autorka ponúkla súbor osvedčených postupov, ako môžu sociálne pohlavie, generácie a kultúrne zázemie ovplyvňovať vnímanie digitálnych signálov reči tela. Autorka v závere časti knihy vyzýva – nebáť sa diskutovať o odlišnostiach, pretože to umožňuje ľuďom viditeľne prejaviť uznanie. Vyzýva ďalej – byť vždy pripravený, čo znamená pripraviť si starostlivú komunikáciu, čo v konečnom zmysle vedie k sebavedomej spolupráci bez ohľadu na rozdiely. Odporúča na schôdzach zapojiť všetkých členov tímu do komunikácie a zabezpečiť pre nich rovnaké podmienky. *„Ak zavediete rovnaké podmienky a budete to presadzovať od samého začiatku, máte veľkú šancu, že vybudujete kultúru úplnej dôvery.“* (s. 245).

V závere knihy autorka sumarizuje, že väčšinu informácií komunikujeme virtuálne, ale nie je to iba doplnok tradičnej reči tela. *„Fyzická reč tela a digitálna reč tela sú neoddeliteľné. V skutočnosti digitálna reč tela pretvára fyzickú reč tela, verbálnu komunikáciu, a dokonca i spôsob nášho myslenia.“* (s. 247). Digitálne nástroje zmenili celú našu komunikáciu s ľuďmi, pomáhajú preklenúť problémy medzi introvertným a extrovertným štýlom komunikácie ľudí, digitálna reč tela znižuje trenie medzi ľuďmi, obmedzuje byrokraciu a vytvára univerzálny jazyk v 21. storočí. Toto všetko je, podľa autorky knihy „.... *dôležité pre dosiahnutie väčšej miery dôvery, prepojenia a autenticity, čo nám umožňuje lepšie komunikovať, budovať pevnejšie vzťahy a zmeniť spôsob, akým vedieme, milujeme, vytvárame vzťahy a žijeme.“* (s. 250). Múdre slová autorky je vhodné si pamätať.

Obsahom prílohy knihy je Sprievodca digitálnou rečou tela, kde autorka úplne detailne prezentuje kroky a postupy ako pracovať v tíme s digitálnou rečou tela, uvádza príklady a výklady využitia rôznych štýlov tejto komunikácie. Ponúka tímové cvičenia, týkajúce sa digitálnych štýlov aktívnym uplatňovaním preberaných štyri zákonitostí a kvíz pre vytvorenie prostredia úplnej dôvery na pracovisku. Oceňujem, tak ako vždy, deväť strán precízne uvedených poznámok ku každej časti kapitoly v každej časti knihy.
V tejto knihe je možné stretnúť sa s témami, ktoré ma profesijne vždy najviac zaujímali, ako sú verbálna a neverbálna komunikácia, hľadanie a budovanie dôvery medzi ľuďmi v komunikácii. Akosi organicky k nim pribudla téma digitálnej reči tela, keďže žijeme v digitálnej dobe, poznamenanej dlhodobou covidovou karanténou. Aj sama autorka napísala túto knihu počas nej. Je to v každom ohľade optimisticky napísaná kniha, no pre vyváženie netreba zabudnúť aj na negatívne stránky digitálnej doby a v nej uplatňovanej komunikácii.
Knihu jednoznačne odporúčam pre všetkých, ktorých zaujíma tradičná komunikácia, pre tých, ktorých zaujíma digitálny svet a jeho komunikácia a absolútne pre tých, ktorých pracovným prostredím je „home office“. Myslím si, že oni to najviac ocenia.

DICTIONARY OF USEFUL MARKETING TERMS

M

motivational | *motivačný* ——— In this case, I have found that neither descriptive nor motivational language would help much.
V tomto prípade som zistil, že ani popisný, ani motivačný jazyk by veľmi nepomohol.

motivationally | *motivačne* ——— I am in a great position financially, but motivationally I am in the same place.
Finančne som na tom výborne, no motivačne som na tom rovnako.

motivator | *motivátor* ——— It seems that negativity itself is a powerful motivator.
Zdá sa, že samotná negativita je silným motivátorom.

move | *pohyb, pohybovať sa, sťahovať sa* ——— The company is moving to Prague.
Firma sa sťahuje do Prahy.

moving | *pohnutý, dojímavý* ——— I found his speech really moving.
Myslím, že jeho reč bola naozaj dojímavá.

moving average | *kĺzavý priemer* ——— The data can be presented using a moving average.
Dáta môžu byť prezentované pomocou kĺzavého priemeru.

movingly | *pohnuto, dojímavo* ——— He spoke movingly about the need for town centers to set up more parks.
Dojímavo hovoril o potrebe, aby centrá miest zriaďovali viac parkov.

multi- | *predpona multi-, viac-, niekoľko-* ——— Their latest advertising campaign has a multi--million-dollar budget.
Ich najnovšia reklamná kampaň má niekoľkomiliónový rozpočet.

multichannel | *viackanálový, multikanálový* ——— Retailers plan to pursue multi-channel marketing.
Maloobchodníci plánujú realizovať viackanálový marketing.

multidimensional | *viacrozmerný, multidimenzionálny* ——— Intelligence is multidimensional, and, in marketing, great emphasis is placed on one of its forms and that is emotional intelligence.
Inteligencia je multidimenzionálna a v marketingu sa kladie veľký dôraz na jednu z jej foriem a tou je emocionálna inteligencia.

multidimensionality | *viac rozmernosť* ——— His latest book explores the multidimensionality of the concept of culture.
Jeho najnovšia kniha skúma viac rozmernosť pojmu kultúra.

multilateral | *multilaterálny* ——— The next round of multilateral negotiations will start next month.
Ďalšie kolo multilaterálnych rokovaní sa začne budúci mesiac.

multilateralism | *multilateralizmus* ——— The conclusion of this article stresses the importance of multilateralism.
Záver tohto článku zdôrazňuje dôležitosť multilateralizmu.

multilevel | *viacúrovňový* ——— The courses form part of a multilevel training model developed by the company.
Kurzy sú súčasťou viacúrovňového školiaceho modelu vyvinutého spoločnosťou.

multilevel marketing | *multi-level marketing, sieťový, viacúrovňový marketing* ——— The couple is involved with a multilevel marketing firm that sells beauty products.
Pár je zapojený do multilevel marketingu u firmy, ktorá predáva kozmetické výrobky.

multilingual | *viacjazyčný* ——— New members of the team are receiving English and Spanish language lessons so they can better understand their colleagues in the multilingual environment.
Noví členovia tímu absolvujú hodiny anglického a španielskeho jazyka, aby lepšie porozumeli svojim kolegom vo viacjazyčnom prostredí.

multilingually | *multilingválne, viacjazyčne* ——— Many government announcements are published multilingually.
Mnohé vládne vyhlásenia sú publikované viacjazyčne.

multimedia | *multimédiá, multimediálny* ——— Multimedia content now forms an integral part of mobile phone services.
Multimediálny obsah teraz tvorí neoddeliteľnú súčasť služieb mobilných telefónov.

multinational | *nadnárodná spoločnosť, nadnárodný* ——— Are multinationals now more powerful than governments?
Sú teraz nadnárodné spoločnosti mocnejšie ako vlády?

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