

Online marketing for women. An analysis of online purchasing behavior of young women in Romania

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Abstract. *Many researchers (Barletta, Peters, Qualman) consider women the most important global consumers because women usually take the purchasing decisions, if we are talking about commodities, household purchases, clothes, cosmetics, books or goods or services that are not necessary associated to women, such as small consumer electronics, computers, etc. In a society which has gone digital, we observe that women use social networks differently than men. For example, women usually use Pinterest, while men mostly use Google Plus. According to various studies, women interact more with brands in social media and use more often the mobile phones to access social networks, compared to men. Those findings are important for marketers when they target women in their online brand campaigns. The present paper researches online purchasing behavior of women in Romania, using both quantitative and qualitative research, to determine key groups of online young women by analyzing their behavior on social media and some other aspects like: what do they want from brands in social media, why and how they buy online.*

Keywords: *social media; Facebook; digital users; digital divas; digital cultures.*

Introduction

Society as a whole and the relationships between individuals have been strongly influenced in the past decades by changes that occurred at the level of different factors: economical, technological and socio-cultural. Globalization as a process and, mainly, the constant innovation in technology constitute the basis for the change of societies and individuals. The present society is a digital one, networked, directly influenced by

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the new technologies, by the ascension of mobile Internet and electronic commerce, as well as the appearance of digital cultures.

In the specialized literature (Qualman, 2009; Castells, 2009; Creeber, 2011), a globally connected society is discussed, defined by a series of elements that act simultaneously: the online information volume doubles roughly every 11 hours (Dumitrescu, 2013, p. 29); social media becomes the most popular activity on the internet, as well a majority individuals aspire to be a part of (Qualman, 2009, p. 1).; through social media the global society becomes a network society in which the users develop a cultural world different from the classical interaction space and is modeled after their own values and interests (Castells, 2009, p.120); the development of *the internet of all objects*; the ascension of m-commerce and mobile applications.

Social networks, especially Facebook, are spaces in which several factors act simultaneously (the users' friends, commercial brands, news channels, the pages dedicated to certain activities or hobbies, the public figures which wish to establish a personal brand for themselves, etc.) competing for the time allotted by users to the online environment. This means that brands must use personalized and original strategies to attract attention and differentiate.

The online environment lately revealed an aspect that brands and marketers ignored or started to harness only of late: women are the ones that make the most acquisitions and the most valuable ones from a financial point of view (element that was observed for online purchases and online purchase behavior). Physical markets begin to orient themselves toward this valuable segment and in the online environment companies intensify their strategies.

Literature review

From web 1.0 to social media and user generated content

Web 1.0, considered by Berthon et al. (2012, p. 261) as a "technological tsunami" that allowed consumers to interact with the companies, has

rapidly become a space in which the latter disseminated commercial and entertainment-oriented content. Although the internet appeared for a time as an environment in which companies held firm control, web 2.0 and the new wave of technologies have again modified the frame of reference, and social media has rapidly become the most popular online activity and has reconfigured local and international marketing models, communication paradigms and commercial activities. Currently we don't only discuss physical markets, but e-commerce and m-commerce as well. And social media was, in our opinion, the dynamo of this accelerate changes.

But, before discussing social media we must define the concepts of “web 2.0” and “new media”. What sets them apart from web 1.0 is the fact that users are now able to generate and reutilize content. A few examples are: Facebook, YouTube, Wikipedia, Flickr or the blogs (Creeber, 2011, p. 3). Web 1.0 meant a series of concepts such as mp3, Britannica Online and personal sites and web 2.0 – Google Ad Sense, blogs, cost-per-click, search engine optimization etc.

Beyond all this, fundamental changes occurred regarding communication standard. Even since 1996, in the specialized literature some authors (Hoffman & Novak, 1996, p. 4) debated the birth of a new communication pattern directly influenced by the online environment evolution. As such it was the transition to the “*many-to-many*” communication model. Consumers interact with the environment and among themselves; companies disseminate content and respond to the environment; consumers can also generate commercial content. This communication model is currently much more visible by way of social media and contributes to the forming of digital cultures (Creeber, 2011, p. 3).

Erik Qualman (2009) talks in *Socialnomics. How social media transforms the way we live and do business*, about the fact that today, news and information find us. We are talking about the fact that social media has become the most popular activity on the Internet and that individuals wish to obtain and access information fast and with ease. The environment that social networks build is, in fact, a manifestation of *space* and space is, together with *time*, what determines human experiences and social relationships, according to Manuel Castells (2009). Blanchard (2011) considers that

the reason for which social media has known this kind of spread among individuals is because it helps them inter-connect in a manner that has value for them in regard to their social and personal experiences.

We are talking today about a “networked society” in which “individuals do not retreat in the isolation of virtual realities, but on the contrary, they expand their social relationships and selectively use the richness of available communication networks, thus building their own cultural world in terms of preferences and projects and modifying this newly built world according to their own interests and values” (Castells, 2009, p. 120).

During a research focused on social media users, Williams (2013) has identified a series of elements that constitute the purpose for which individuals use social media. Amongst these we recollect: social interaction, entertainment, relaxation, expressing opinion, disseminating and finding information.

One must take into account the fact that social media users have gained a sort of multi-functionality and a distributive attention when it comes to messages. As such, a user can read a press article, discuss with a friend on Facebook and read the messages of a brand, all at the same time (Papachirissi, 2010).

However, social media, especially Facebook and Instagram, has become what Qualman (2009, p. 43) called the competition between users on the subject “who does the most interesting things”. The photographs that the users upload on Facebook are part of this competition, are taken with the precise purpose of being uploaded online and represent a manifestation of one’s self, giving information about the user’s activities, status and preferences etc. (Qualman, 2009, p. 119). The image itself is associated by Marshall to an expression of narcissism (2006, p. 639, in Creeber and Martin, 2011, p. 120). Moreover, according to Marshall, Creeber and Martin (2011), mobile internet has contributed even more to the development of social networks and the dissemination of content such as photographs and real time sharing of opinion.

The users' profiles reconfigure the image of self by "remembering, transforming and adjusting the information" and the images of self in the virtual world are simultaneously constructs of the spirit and the result of the negotiation process with the electronic application (Georges, 2010, p. 69; Vătămănescu, 2012, p. 91). The users' profiles are a control instrument in social media by making use of the ability to set visibility of content policies and the messages that other users post on their friends' profiles augment or decrease the degree of visibility (Papacharissi, 2010).

As for the interaction with the brands, TechInfografics (2013) has realized toward the end of the year 2013 a division of social media users in regard to their attitude toward brands. Amongst the typologies identified: the silent fans, the occasional fans, unsatisfied consumers, loyal fans. One of the categories, the unsatisfied fans, highlights the importance of image management in social media, because research shows that internet users expect to receive an answer from brands within one hour from the moment they sent a direct or indirect message concerning the company. The silent fans, instead, the category of users that follows the content of brands because they like the variety of posts on their pages, but don't make their opinion public.

However, we believe that these categories of users or fans represent up to a certain point latent audiences that will manifest when brand messages or the quality of products or services will influence them to have positive or negative reactions. This means that brands need to select more carefully the type of messages that they distribute or associate with.

Social media and the reconfiguration of digital environment

The development of mobile devices and "*the Internet of all objects*" were influenced not only by technological innovation, but also by the extent that social media and mobile internet have experienced in recent years. Today, mobile devices (smart phones, tablets, etc.) are those that not only facilitate communication and social interaction, but also real-time access to information from almost any place on Earth. The digital society of today, thanks to "*the Internet of all objects*", is expected to reach the paradox that by 2020 the number of devices that are connected to the Internet will be larger than the number of people in the world (Dumitrescu, 2013, p. 27).

Contemporary society is heavily influenced by mobile internet and apps on smart phones (Martin, 2011). With these devices individuals check from trivial information such as weather, up to professional or business information such as stock prices or transactions, apply for jobs, make online purchases, pay bills online, answer emails, connect to social networks, etc.

Qualman (2014) conducted a series of statistics about social media on users and their purchase behavior. Thus, more individuals own a mobile phone than a toothbrush, 20% of the searched terms each day on the Internet were not previously searched, 53% of Twitter users recommend products in their posts, 93% of purchasing decisions are influenced by social media while only 14% are influenced by advertising, 90% of consumers have greater confidence in the recommendations received from their Internet surfer friends for the products they intend to acquire. At the beginning of 2014 statistics indicated that there are more Facebook profiles created every minute compared to the number of births, daily in America more adults use YouTube channel with a higher frequency as compared to using cable television, every second 2 new users sign up on LinkedIn and 80% of companies use Facebook as a recruitment environment.

In terms of purchasing behavior, a global study (Stadd, 2014) shows that Facebook (21%) and Pinterest (25%) are the most used social networks for acquisitions, while Twitter has the most influence when discussing product recommendations. Most users utilize Twitter (19%) for complaints about brands, while YouTube channel is least used for such cases (9%). The same study shows that YouTube (61%) is the most used online environment by users when they want to learn about products, the second being Pinterest (56%) and Facebook.

Consumer and purchasing behavior

When talking about marketing addressed to women, one should keep in mind that we are talking about women as the most important consumers of brands. If in the past we referred to women as a market segment or niche based on companies' profiles, today we talk about a market in the true sense.

Theorists who have written about marketing addressed to women draw attention to the fact that today women are “the most important global consumers” (Barletta, 2007, p. 21), and companies need to reinvent themselves by a “total repositioning of the methods of recruitment, sources of employment, reward systems, promotion, organizational structure, business processes, estimates, overall strategy, vision and leadership” (Peters, 2010, p. 469).

Underhill (2000, p. 116) shows the behavior of women when shopping as follows: if they do not feel comfortable with their purchase, they will not stop looking until they find the desired product or service and, in addition, women will not purchase products requiring a minimum of effort in terms of information on the characteristics.

Regarding social media, women access social networks differently. For example, Google Plus, Instagram, YouTube and Twitter are the social networks with the youngest female users, while on Pinterest typically the users consist mostly of mothers and housewives. The female users of Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter have the highest incomes (WeberShandwick, 2013).

In America, social networks (except for LinkedIn social network) have more women users than men. Also, more women interact with brands in social media than men and use more frequently their mobile phones to access social networks (Clifford, 2014).

A study by the Women’s Marketing Inc. and SheSpeakes (2014) shows that women are more inclined to purchase products and services from the brands they interact with in social media, and their presence on social networks has as main argument the desire to form lasting bonds.

A survey conducted by the Pew Research Center and Burst Media (2014) shows that gender differences are found beyond the personal and professional relationships in the way we perceive information, and entertainment idea is reflected in consumer behavior online. The study shows that 38% of women use the mobile phone for online games, a

rate that exceeds by 10% the number of men who use the phone for the same purpose (2014). The research reinforces the findings of other studies showing that women ignore online paid advertising and tend to be more willing to interact with brands, as compared to men.

At the same time, women choose to interact with brands in social media to conclude transactions (71% as compared to only 17% for men users) and only 39% of female users scan QR codes, compared to 56% men (2014). Finance Online (2014) shows that women prefer visual sites, with photos and videos. This explains the success that Pinterest has among its users.

A survey conducted by Business Insider (Adler, 2014) indicate that 60% of time spent on social networks is from mobile and tablet devices, which shows that, in fact, women consume more time online than men following the latest news from social media using mobile technologies. The same Business Insider research shows that the most used social networks through mobile phones and tablets are Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and SnapChat (Adler, 2014).

Ernst & Young (2014) conducted a research on consumer behavior of women and men online consumers in America, and the results of the study indicate that the favorite sites of both categories are Amazon, Barnes and Noble and CDNow. Regarding the categories of products purchased, first three places in the ranking are occupied by books, computers and CDs. Women buy more toys, baby products and care products, as compared to men.

Ogilvy and Microsoft Agencies (2013) conducted a study on the online behavior of women and created a typology of them. The most interesting one is called Digital Divas. Users falling into this category stated that mobile phones brought them closer to brands, 1 in 5 users in this category has more than 900 connections online, and they shop online at least once a day.

The findings show that Digital Divas not only have Facebook or Twitter accounts, on which they are active and do not prefer online games, they

are constantly connected to brands and want their brands in the online environment to provide them as many valuable experiences as possible. They are rather interested in purchasing online than social networks themselves. They use social networks to find the most interesting information, to make recommendations, for information on the products and services offered by brands online.

For the market in Romania, studies show that 83% of Romanian women daily access Facebook social network, and 45% say they would like to buy from Facebook (Dobre, 2013). A survey conducted by Research and Consultancy Exact Digital Barometer in 2013 shows that 45% of Romanian women use mobile phones to surf the Internet, compared with 2011, and that the number of LinkedIn Romanian female users increased by 10%. In addition, 40% of Romanian women aged between 15 and 49 years use weekly other social networks and 48% of them use the Internet to search for videos or movies (Crăciunescu, 2013). Regarding e-commerce in Romania, women make most purchases. Among the most acquired products are cosmetics. Also, 57% of online services that Romanian women use fall into bank -financial category.

Reiterating Peters' idea from *The Innovation Circle* that brands need to constantly reinvent themselves, and to gain a piece from the market that women represent, one needs to properly understand their lifestyle, needs, purchase behavior and consumption patterns. We consider that brands that will pay attention to the construction of personalized messages for women will be able to succeed in attracting attention and have loyal consumers. Studies indicate the fact that women are more inclined to remain loyal to brands with whom they reach relationships based on sensory elements.

But in the online, consumer behavior of women depends not only on age or social status, but depends on the communities to which they belong, the circle of friends online, lifestyle and social media projected image. Some consumers are leaders of opinion for the other Internet users, and as for the others, they constitute a latent public that only seeks information and follows the activity of the former.

The question is, however, what are the main profiles of online consumers, with what their preferences differ when it comes to classic brands and brands online, and especially what motivates them to make purchases, recommendations or criticisms addressed to brands in social media.

Methodology

To determine the characteristics of Romanian female users of social networks we have conducted a research that employs both quantitative methods (applied research survey on 211 respondents aged between 19 and 48 years) and qualitative methods (three focus groups applied on 24 participants aged between 19 and 22 years).

The purpose of research is to determine the main characteristics of Romanian users of social networks. We constructed the questionnaire and interview grid used for the focus groups by considering three main dimensions: social media users' behavior, self-reporting and virtual friends on social networks, attitudes towards brands in social media.

The general objectives of quantitative research are: to determine the specific characteristics of female Romanian social media users, online behavior and determining online purchase patterns, reporting at brands in the online and offline environment, self-reporting and friends on social networks, factors influencing the purchase of products and services.

The general objectives of qualitative research are: revealing perceptions about brands online, the determination of self-perception in social media, determine the perception of virtual friends, user profiling for Romanian female social media user aged between 19 and 22 years.

The main research questions are:

- What are the main characteristics of Romanian female users of social networks?
- What are the target users' perceptions of social media on brands and their promotional activities on social networks?

- What are the most used social networks by our target users and which activities are undertaken by them in social media?

Discussions – the results of quantitative research

Behaviors in social media, self-reporting and virtual friends reporting

The questionnaire quantitative research was administered online on 211 female respondents aged between 19 and 48 years. Concerning the amount of time spent on social networks we differentiate two main user categories: 35% that allocate between 3 and 5 hours daily surfing said networks, and 26% that spend more than 5 on social media. At the opposite pole there are the users that spend less than 1 hour on social media (6%). Generally, our respondents have between 2 and 3 social media accounts (100% have a Facebook account, while 51% have a Google+ Account, 30% - a Twitter account, 32% - an Instagram account, and 29% - a Pinterest account). We consider that the high presence on Google+ is owed to the Gmail accounts that automatically generate the Google+ accounts. The results of the questionnaire are in accordance with the Romanian Copywriter statistics (2013) for the Romanian market, statistics that already indicated that the most popular social networks among Romanian people are Facebook and Twitter.

Regarding the number of friends on Facebook, 31% of the respondents have between 300 and 500 contacts, 24% have between 100 and 300, 19% have over 900 contacts and only 1% have under 100 contacts.

The electronic device most used for accessing social networks accounts by our respondents is the desktop computer (57%), while the mobile phone and tablet reach only 39% and 9%, respectively. The mobile phone is the device most used to connect to social networks by the respondents that spend on average between 3 and 5 hours online each day. An aspect of note is that respondents aged below 23 years mostly utilize the computer and not the mobile phone. However we need to mention that these results generated by the administration of the questionnaire on our 211 respondents don't fall into the global tendencies that emphasize the fact that women tend to use more the mobile phone to access their social network accounts.

For the reasons why our subjects utilize Facebook we mention: 45% responded that they mostly use Facebook to chat with friends; 42% of Romanian women who answered the questionnaire said they use Facebook heavily to find updated information about the program at college or at work; 19% of Romanian women who answered the questionnaire said that they use the social network to a minimum extent to read the press, while only 10% said they use Facebook heavily to read the press; 57% of people surveyed said that they use very little the social network for the gaming applications.

The criteria that are important when respondents befriends someone on Facebook, we noticed the following: for 36% of them matters a lot how interesting the posted content by someone is, while for 12% this matters to a reduced extent; for 29% it matters if the post contains interesting photos; to 76% is very important if they are also friends in real life; for 37% matters a lot if the person is a friend of their friends, while only for 7% this matters very little; for 33% matters very little whether the potential friend is a public figure, while for 5% is very important; for 34% doesn't matter if they know the person in real life.

Regarding self-reporting and friends-reporting in the virtual world, we have noticed some issues in the quantitative research: 11% of subjects strongly considered that they distribute more interesting content than their friends; 15% of respondents agree with the statement: "*when posting on Facebook, I censor my opinions more than in real life*", while 6% strongly agree with the statement above.

Reporting to brands, the interaction with companies and online acquisition behavior

Companies in social media act in the same space and time with users and their virtual friends answering a dual challenge: to generate content more interesting than their direct competitors and generate messages more attractive than online consumers' friends. Given that they characterized both personal and friends' activity on Facebook, respondents were asked to express why they choose to be friends with brands on Facebook social network. In general, participants said they give likes to brands' pages with which they have interacted also in the offline environment, from which

they use to consume products or services, or brands that are notoriously high.

To the question: *To what extent you use Facebook to interact with brands? (likes, shares, comments)*, 27% of respondents estimated that they utilize the social network to a small extent, and only 7% access it to a very high extent to interact with brands. 38% of the women that were questioned declared that they use Facebook to a minimum extent to recommend brands, while only 2% declared that they recommend brands on Facebook.

It should be noted that 35% of respondents largely agree with the statement: *There is no major difference between brand products and ordinary ones, instead I pay the brand*, and 12% agree to a large extent. Only 9% agreed to a small extent with the statement above. These results come as a practical background to the specialized literature which introduced the idea of “consumers do not believe that there is a major difference between products” (Klein, 2006, p. 39), and differentiation comes from the emotional connection that brands succeed in creating.

30% of respondents agree with the statement: *I usually buy from leading brands because their products/services are of a higher quality*, and 5% strongly agree with this statement. Only 11% agree to a lower extent to this. 28% of respondents agree with the statement: *I often buy from discounts/sales, no matter the brand*, 9% strongly agree, and only 10% agree to a small extent. This shows that there is no high degree of loyalty toward brands, if the differentiator is given by discounts. 8% strongly agree with the statement: *I buy from the brands with the lowest price, because I don't want to pay advertising costs*, 16% agree with the statement, and 25% agree to a small extent.

The results of the questionnaire revealed that 46% of respondents agree to a small extent with the statement: *I used to do often recommendations about products / services on Facebook*, and 6% largely agree. Regarding denouncing the negative experiences they had with brands, 56% of respondents have stated that they use less the social network in this regard, and 25% seldom. 28% of women who answered the questionnaire said they used Facebook to learn about new products and services, while just 5% say they

use the social network heavily on this. 31% of people who answered the questionnaire said they largely agree with the following statement: *Brands censor messages that do not express positive opinions about products / services*, and 7% said they agreed with the statement in very small measure.

For online purchases, 36% of respondents said they purchase online every two - three months, and 28% once a year. While only 10% make purchases online at least once a month. An interesting aspect is that about 26% do not shop online at all, and the highest percentage is found among girls under 23 years. Regarding respondents who make online purchases we noticed that the main categories of products purchased are: clothes and shoes (26%), books (18%), electrical equipment (17%), care products and cosmetics (9%). Other product and service named are: jewelry, handmade articles, tickets to theater, film and opera, etc. Regarding sites that they buy from: 66% of respondents said they use to purchase online from sites in Romania, while only 9% buy from sites abroad. Regarding the allegation: *Online purchases are unsafe*, 43% of respondents don't have a clear opinion whether online purchases are safe or unsafe. However, 8% of women who responded largely agree with the statement, while 24% agree to a small extent.

Results of the qualitative research

Given the results of quantitative research, in the three focus groups we rather paid attention to characteristics and perceptions in relation to the Facebook social network than competing products, given the fact that it is the most notorious in Romania and the most used equally by women and by companies.

The discussion started at a general level, the participants being asked to divulge what social networks they have accounts on and what the motivation behind the creation of these accounts was. During all three focus groups the most mentioned social network was Facebook. Other social networks that were cited: Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube, and Pinterest. Only one respondent specified Google+, but she directly associated it with the automatic generation via the Gmail account.

Regarding their motivation for opening these social network accounts, the most cited argument related to Facebook and was peer pressure (be it the school group or the friend circle). This sustains the theory from specialized literature that social networks constitute a majority that most individuals wish to be a part of (Qualman, 2009).

We noticed the fact that respondents aged 19-22 consider Facebook as a channel through which they communicate with friends and faculty colleagues rather than an information source or a way to interact with the brands. Also, one can notice that even though they have multiple accounts on different social networks, they are seldom or not at all used.

Regarding the criteria on which respondents said they befriend new people on Facebook three in particular stood out: to be friends in real life, have friends in common, the person in question to have interesting pictures. These arguments confirm the results of quantitative research which indicated the same motivations. Some interesting aspects would be that: respondents do not believe that people have many virtual friends are popular, they appreciate their friends' activity on Facebook as either boring or irritating through the large number of posts such as check-ins or photos.

Further, Facebook being the most mentioned social network, participants in the focus-groups were asked to imagine that Facebook is a live person and should enter the room where the interview took place. In this context, they had to perform a characterization of the social network. Responses were of the most varied and creative, but have distinguished some common elements that were repeated. Among them we mention that Facebook is seen, through the young women's eyes, as corresponding to a *woman* and has features such as: active, sociable, popular, independent and optimistic. Other features mentioned by respondents were: "*It would be multilaterally developed; it would be trendy and have double, triple personality, or even multiple personality; actual, in phase with the news and a large circle of different friends* ", " *time consumer* ", " *a bookworm* ".

Regarding the reference to brands, the focus group participants said they choose sites to be friends with on Facebook from amongst the ones they know or from which they usually buy from. However, an interesting

aspect is that the respondents admitted that they deleted from the list of considerations specific brands because they provide information about products that they could not afford for financial or health-related reasons, and were, as a result, creating a sense of frustration.

Next, respondents were asked to indicate which they consider to be the most active brands on Facebook. The listed brands were those that produce cosmetics and care products, jewelry, clothing, food and news channels. Among the frequently mentioned brands were: KFC, H&M, Promenade Mall, telecom brands Vodafone and Orange. The Romanian traditional brands mentioned are: Rom chocolate and Napolact. Regarding interaction with brands via likes, share of links or comments, most respondents said they do not usually comment on posts because they do not believe that their opinions are valued by brands and they also believe that brands sort public messages received from consumers so that they could project a positive image.

Another interesting aspect of the results in both studies is that the respondents don't have the inclination to be loyal to brands, but buy according to the mood or discounts and promotions. These issues do not fall into the mainstream global thinking in the literature showing that women tend to be more loyal to brands they interact with and use to make recommendations of products and services both online and offline.

Final discussions. Romanian female social media user profile

Following the questionnaire on 211 respondents and therefore the achievement of the three focus groups we came to a series of common characteristics that generally apply to Romanian female social media users, mainly for those aged between 19 and 22 years since this age group constituted the base of our qualitative research, giving detailed answers.

We built the user profile considering three dimensions: social media behavior, self-reporting and to virtual friends in social media, attitudes towards brands in social media.

For the “social media behavior” factor we considered the number of social media accounts that respondents own, the average number of friends on Facebook, time spent online, online purchases.

In regard to self-reporting and reporting to virtual friends, we considered their perception on the activities conducted by them and their friends in social media, their perception on the new social media tendencies (selfies, for example), the degree of online exposure, and in regard to attitude toward brands we considered the interaction with brands via likes, shares, comments, the criteria that determines their appreciation of a brand (to “like” something of Facebook) and the way they perceive the promotion activity of brands through social media.

Thus, in our view, we can distinguish between two main categories of users. For social media behavior, the first category consists of the users that: average 300-500 friends on Facebook; have more than 2 accounts active on social networks (usually, Facebook and Instagram / LinkedIn), but also a number of accounts on other networks that were created out of curiosity, but do not use them (e.g. Pinterest, Google+ or Twitter); spend on average three hours online daily; generally, the main activity on Facebook consists of conversations with close friends; don't make purchases online at all or very seldom; rarely post on Facebook and created the account as a result of peer pressure; mainly use their Facebook account to track activity of other rather than post themselves; don't publicly expose through posts about their personal life; prefer the classic environment interaction.

The second category consists of users that: average 700-900 friends on Facebook; have accounts on most social networks and constantly generate content on at least three of them (usually, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter / Pinterest); spend five hours online; generate content about personal life and exhibit it publicly; want to show their virtual friends what they do through pictures or virtual check-ins; make purchases online often; usually are trendsetters for their virtual friends; are always up to date with new information about applications, gadgets, brands, clothing, etc.

Regarding self-reporting and to virtual friends, users of the first category consider friends in the online environment annoying, think about

themselves that are not popular and produce content that does not bother others. They are rather introverted people online, they express by distributing messages and pictures that show professional messages that do not exhibit their personal life; consider selfies, check-ins and the large number of virtual friends that their friends have on Facebook as an expression of frustration and need for attention.

Users of the second category generate a lot of content on social networks because they feel that it best expresses them, they need to provide information about places they've visited and people they interacted with. They expose their personal lives, use to generate a large number of pictures (usually selfies) and check-ins, see the social network as a personal diary that they share with the virtual community.

Regarding interaction with brands on social networks there are a number of similarities between the two categories identified. Among them: the weak interaction through comments, perceptions that brands will only promote their products and services, perceptions related to the fact that paid ads on social networks are annoying and invading the private space by substituting content generated by friends. However, users of the second category are more open to make recommendations on brands in the online environment, to publicly express their grievances in relation to brands on social networks.

These typologies are strictly generated by the results of our research and are not official types of Romanian social media users. The research has a number of limitations related to the number of respondents and the age segment of the participants in focus groups.

Of course, users of social media in Romania can be fitted into global typologies as the one by Ogilvy and Microsoft, that present the Digital Divas type (very connected to the online environment, in line with trends, easy-going in their interaction with brands and eager to expose themselves, passionate online purchasers). This typology is most often represented in Romania by female bloggers who work in fields related to fashion, beauty, feminine lifestyle or culinary, as well as public figures. They generally

have a number of friends that exceeds 1,000 and are active on most social networks (especially on Facebook, Pinterest, Instagram and Twitter).

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