Chapter 8
Gender Differences in Advertising Engagement Using the Case of Facebooks Ads

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, social media have transformed the worldwide web into a participatory community where both users and companies co-create, share, and modify content. The importance and the attention that social media has gained is widely studied among the scientific community as their growth seems unstoppable. The rise of online advertising has made companies design new marketing plans to adapt both their strategic and tactic operations to meet multichannel customers' needs. Since social media marketing is a core part of any firms' marketing strategy, companies and organizations are starting to use Facebook Ads as a marketing tool. In spite of the extensive statistics the software provides, little research is done on the effectiveness of social marketing campaigns according to gender. Therefore, the purpose of the chapter is to analyze several Facebook campaigns in the education sector to discover which gender group reacts best to advertising.

INTRODUCTION

In the last decades, the use of 2.0 technologies has dramatically changed the landscape of a globalized world. Social networks have reached a predominant role within the communication channels as users can get instant access to updated information. Social network profiles grow every second. According to Social Media Today (2015), nearly half of the global population (3,175 billion people) is an active Internet user. Social media have become increasingly fashionable with 2,206 billion active users, 87.2% out of which using mobile platforms. This means 12 new active mobile social users join these platforms every second, meaning one million per day! Therefore, billions of users and companies, with multiple social accounts, are constantly connected.

Regarding the social network concept, the literature provides a variety of definitions of this notion. According to Boy and Ellison (2007), virtual social networks or social network sites are a service based on a web platform that allows people to create their one public or semi-public profile within a limited system. It also allows the possibility of creating contact lists and visualizing the lists of other friends. Other authors also state that social network allows an information sharing and relationship generation by means of interaction with members with common interests (Bigné *et al.*, 2010; based on Preece, 2000; Wiertz & De Ruyter, 2007).

From a set of different social network categories, this study focuses on the horizontal network (ON-TSI, 2011), where the use is not restricted to a group of users with a particular interest (gastronomy, cooking or travelling social networks, for example). Users join horizontal social networks, Facebook in this case, with communication or entertainment purposes.

The web now is a participatory community where not only users, but also companies can co-create, share and modify content. According to Porter Novelli (2012), Spain is the third worldwide country in terms of active users (77%) and 83% of Spaniards are willing to follow a brand on a social network, which is the highest rate in Europe. Consequently, companies and brands invest on social networks to promote their products and to improve customer engagement (Camarero & Cabezudo, 2014). Thus, these platforms emerge as important marketing and communication tools to influence customers. By analyzing users' comments on social networks, firms can discover their tastes, wishes and needs. Therefore, firms can better understand users' behaviors and they can assess satisfaction levels within the purchase process (Kozinets, 2002). By knowing customers better, companies can design specific advertising campaigns addressing the needs of the digital users. These commercial tools provide time and cost savings (Malhotra and Peterson, 2001) and they have a strong personalization power in terms of promotions for individual consumers (Ailawadi *et al.*, 2009; Kannan & Kopalle, 2001)

Social media marketing is a core part of any firms' marketing strategy. With global, connected customers, companies are aware of the need of generating leads that increase purchase intentions by means of social media. Online customer loyalty is hard to get, so marketers are implementing multichannel marketing strategies to generate advertising impacts on any means available. Although traditional media (TV, radio, press) remains important, digital ad spending will reach 30% of total advertising expenditures in 2016 (eMarketer, 2013). Therefore, academics and practitioners need to know how to target customers effectively.

Although Facebook ads platform is a powerful and widely used marketing tool, there is little research about the effectiveness of social marketing campaigns depending on gender. Thus, the purpose of this study is to determine if there are significant differences on Facebook ads' performance according to gender. The article describes the most important metrics regarding social media advertising and, by means of different case studies, it assesses which gender group has greater engagement and performance.

BACKGROUND

Not only do men and women communicate differently, but they think, feel, perceive, react, respond, love, need, and appreciate differently (Gray, 2009, p5).

The last several decades have brought many changes, including but not exclusively the technological ones. The role of women in society has evolved internationally. Around 70% of all working-age women

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