

# THE USE OF SOCIAL NETWORKS IN MARKETING TO TARGET PEOPLE BETWEEN 18 AND 29 YEARS OLD

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## **AUTHOR'S DECLARATION**

I, MANON GASSIES, declare that I am the sole author of this dissertation, that during this period of registered study I have not been registered for any other academic award or qualification, nor has any of the material been submitted wholly or partly for any other award. I have personally carried out all the work of which this a record. The programme of study of which this a part has been delivered by Dublin Business School.

Signed:

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## **ABSTRACT**

The researcher explains the use of social networks in Marketing to target people in ages between 18 and 29. Indeed, throughout this project, the author attempts to analyse the main reasons why it is worth for companies to use social networks if they want to target people between 18 and 29 years old. As a result, an investigation is driven in the secondary data (ideas from books, articles and websites) for a better understanding of what social networks are and to be aware of the psychological aspect and main motivations of young adults.

Furthermore, the whole question of this paper is to determine why it is positive for firms to use social networks when they want to target people in ages between 18 and 29. The researcher tries to answer to this question through three objectives which are: to analyse why and how people between 18 and 29 years old use social networks and to evaluate how companies use Facebook to target young adults.

The researcher collected primary data through a descriptive design, and the form of data collection method which used was a questionnaire. The author found that people in ages between 18 and 29 tend to spend a lot of their free time on social networks and sometimes like to pay attention to advertisements and brands.

Finally, the conclusions founded are that social networks are becoming part of people between 18 and 29 years' life-style, principally for social motivations. Moreover, they tend to like giving their opinion about products. As a consequence, if a company wants to target people in ages between 18 and 29, they would have to be present on social networks.

# **CHAPTER 1:**

## **Introduction**

## **1. Introduction and purpose of the study**

In this study, the researcher has decided to analyse the use of social networks by companies marketing to target people between 18 and 29 years old.

Zeng et. Al (2009) summarised Hart's (2007) article by saying that '*the rapid growth of online social networking communities has caught the attention of advertisers that hope to find new ways to harness these communities for their advertising purposes*'.

From now on, Internet and particularly social networks are key areas to be present in for companies, especially if they want to target people in ages between 18 and 29. That is what the researcher will try to prove through this research.

❖ Why the researcher has chosen this topic?

After searching for a topic which is related to the work area in which the researcher would like to work in, Marketing, she thought about the potential of e-marketing for next years, and particularly the future of Marketing within social networks. As young people are the target the most sought for by companies, she would like to focus on this target. Moreover, the researcher feels concerned by the use of social media by companies on the internet because she is a personal user of social networks and has already worked for a company in that sector.

## **2. Research question, hypothesis and objectives**

### **2.1. Research questions**

*Question 1:*

Why the use of social networks is increasingly used by companies?

*Question 2:*

Why companies use social networks to target people in ages between 18 and 29?

### **2.2. Research hypothesis**

The hypothesis is an qualified guess to give an answer at the research question.

The hypothesis that emerges from these research questions is that as of today, it is positive for companies to use social networks if they want to target people between 18 and 29 years old.

### 2.3. Research objectives

#### *Objective 1:*

To analyse how people in ages between 18 and 29 use social networks.

#### *Objective 2:*

To determine why people between 18 and 29 years old use social networks.

#### *Objective 3:*

To evaluate how companies use Facebook to target people in ages between 18 and 29.

The researcher has used these two objectives in order to confirm or invalidate the hypothesis.

### 3. Research methodology

The purpose of this part is to explain how the researcher has collected her primary research. The author had to choose among three different categories (descriptive, exploratory and causal) and several forms of data collection. All her choices have been explained and justified.

### 4. Organisation of the research

- Chapter 2 is the literature review and is devoted to explain the characteristics of social networks but also investigate the target that represents people in ages between 18 and 29. Then, the example of Facebook will be taken to determine why it is a path to success for a company.

- Chapter 3 provides the methodology that the author has used for her primary data collection. She has justified in this chapter her own choice for a type of data collection method.
- Chapter 4 presents the findings related to the three objectives of the study. They allow a comparison between the findings of primary research and those of secondary research.
- Finally, in chapter 5, the researcher gives a conclusion of the study with her own recommendations.

## **5. Conclusion**

In this part, first of all, the author has given an overview of her dissertation and an explanation justifying her choice for this topic. Then, the research question, the research hypothesis and the three objectives have been clearly defined.

The content of the following chapters have been explained in this chapter. They will give a response to the hypothesis through the objectives set by the researcher.

# **Chapter 2:**

# **Literature Review**

The purpose of this literature review is to give an understanding of social networks as a tool to target people in ages between 18 and 29. This chapter will go through many different steps offering an overview of social networks (definition and characteristics) and investigating on people in ages between 18 and 29 psychological aspect and motivations. Furthermore, the example of Facebook will be taken to determine why it is a path to success for a company.

## 1. **Social networks**

### 1.1. Definition of social networks

The term 'social network' first appeared in 1954 by Barnes. And a clear definition of what a social network is, can be the one from Palmer (2009, p.164): *'applications allowing users to build personal web sites accessible to other users for exchange of personal content and communication'*. In fact, social networks are the heart of virtual communication between people because each person speak to each other, give their opinion about products or services, inform themselves, and there are many other forms of applications available with social networks.

Boyd and Ellison (2007) however give a more detailed definition: they define social network sites *'as web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system'*. They also add that each individual has a personal profile that all people on your list of friends can see.

Nevertheless, the privacy of the users and the various services available on the website (instant messaging technology, access via mobile phone, applications...) depends on the social network being used.

### 1.2. Characteristics of social networks

A better understanding of what the main characteristics of social networks are will allow to a better understanding why people in ages between 18 and 29 like to be part of them. And those factors should be considered when researching on why companies use social networks to target youth.

When writers want to define more precisely what a social network is, the main features are:

- Thanks to Internet (particularly through mobile phones), social networks are becoming one of *'the most popular forms of digital communication in the US and Europe'* (Bradshaw, 2010).
- Every member of a social network has a profile page and each one is unique including age, interests, location... (Boyd and Ellison, 2007).
- The privacy of the profile depends on 2 factors: the social network on which the individual is and what he wants to share with other people (Boyd and Ellison, 2007).
- Members have relationships on the social network, and depending on which one, they can be called "friends", "contacts" or "fans" (Boyd and Ellison, 2007).
- Members of social networks can leave "comments" on their relationships' profile (Boyd and Ellison, 2007).
- The online advertising budget is low.
- A lot of brands like Coca-Cola or Mc Donald's are present on the social networks, but there are also some charities, and fashion or luxury goods which are part of the most popular pages (Bradshaw, 2010).

### 1.3. Main social networks

To better get a better understanding on why a company will choose a social network more than another one, an explication of the main characteristics of the most used

social networks is useful for the current subject. Burrus (2010) gives good definitions of those:

- Through **Facebook**, an individual can connect, interact and share with people in his/her life. The person can add friends, send messages, share photos or videos, speak with instant messaging, send notifications about himself/herself, update his/her profile, see his/her friends' profile. Users can 'like' one of their friends comment, video or photo.
- **Twitter** allows exchanging quick messages that cannot have more than 140 characters per message. The sender can choose to deliver the messages just to his/her friends or co-workers. The new updates can be received via Twitter or other social networks like Facebook.
- **YouTube** is a video sharing website where everyone can watch videos, but if someone wants to upload and share video clips, he/she needs to be a registered user. YouTube provide a high quantity of different videos including musical clips, movie clips, personal videos, product demonstrations and commercials. Users can vote for videos with thumbs up or thumbs down.

Moreover, According to a recent report by the Pew Internet & American Life Project (Lenhart *et al.* 2010), more than 70% of online users between 18 and 29 years old use SNSs, with Facebook (73%) being the most popular social networking website, followed by MySpace (48%) and LinkedIn (14%).

## **2. Consumers in ages between 18 and 29, an attractive target with social networks**

### **2.1. Psychological aspect of consumers between 18 and 29 years old**

To better target and understand people between 18 and 29 years old, marketers need to better be aware of the psyche of those young consumers, which is the subject here. And Hongjun (2010) allows an understanding of this psyche. According to him (p. 240), a small group called "social media addicts" exists, *'who find it necessary to constantly check their social media updates and update their own statuses to reflect*

*the current state of affairs in their real life as well as their current state of mind'*. And for him, the characteristics of that group will allow a better understanding of socially connected consumers in ages between 18 and 29. The following explanation will pursue the Hongjun (2010) reasoning.

First, these consumers between 18 and 29 years old have a list of close and distant contacts on social networks and they are able to share information with them when they want to.

Second, they can update new information whenever they want. This information can be videos, news and interests.

Third, for Hongjun it is the most important part and (p.240), *'can be attributed to their belief that here is an opportunity for me to express myself and create a desired impression of how I would like to be viewed by people in my social network'*.

Therefore, when a marketer looks at all these points, he can know that he has to create a good and positive image of the company on social media. This image has to be funny, interesting, and friendly for people between 18 and 29 years old targeted. It has to be part of their culture, their life style.

Another point of view could be done by Cook and Buckley (2008), who highlight the importance of social networks on young adults' lives by explaining the Mark Earls' (2003) work. This last one thinks that individuals are a part of a group and notes what he calls the 'Latin School of Marketing', which emphasises the consuming individual as a member of a tribe. In fact, people can be member of several tribes and play a different role within each. But there is no control on those tribes, so tribe members can join or leave at any time. And this work highlights the fact that marketers have to be innovative and present on social networks in order for the company to keep their members.

## 2.2. Motivations of consumers in ages between 18 and 29

Understanding the consumers between 18 and 29 years old motivations is an essential point for marketers if they want to do business with them.

The following figure represents the Maslow's pyramid and will allow setting up people in ages between 18 and 29's motivations:

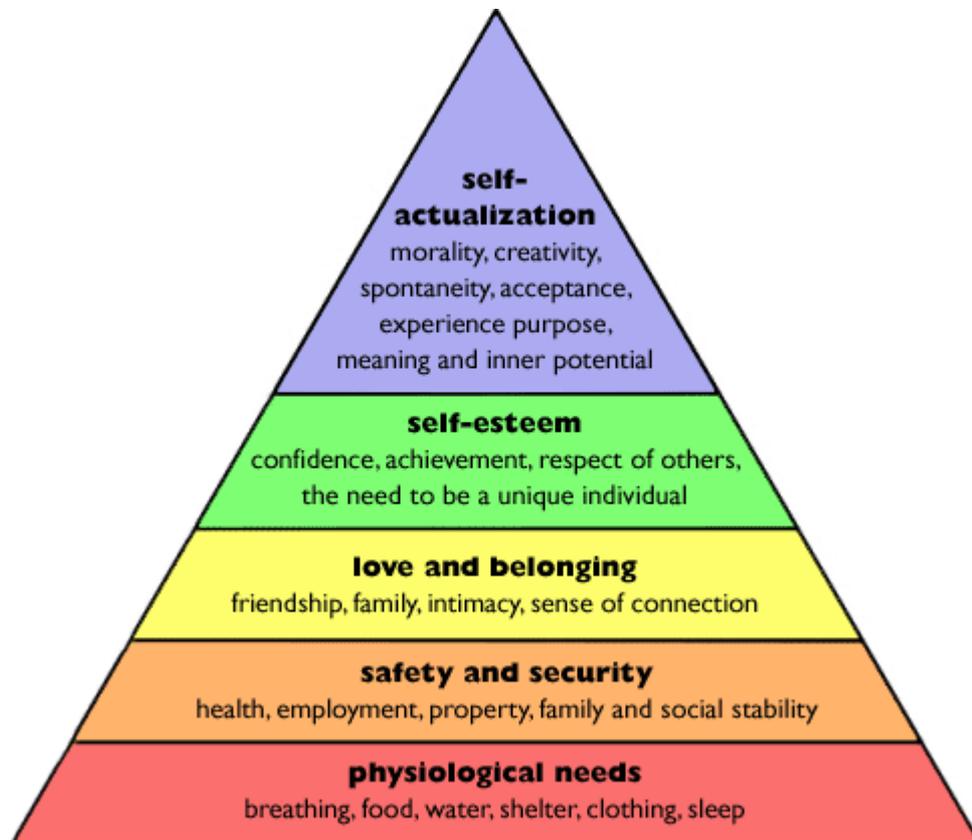


Figure 1: Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1943)

In fact, this pyramid teaches to marketers that the desire to socialise and to be accepted has to strongly be taken into account because they are part of the basic needs of any individual. Besides, Daugherty et. Al (2008) use Smith's (1973) work, saying that one of young adults' motivations is social adjustment, in which people express attitudes or behaviour that are agreeable to others. It means that people in ages between 18 and 29, as for anyone else, adapt their attitudes and behaviour to their pairs' ones. As a result, young adults want to be on social networks to do like their friends.

In addition, Ridings and Gefen (2004) found that social support and friendships represent the two main reasons for participating in online communities, things allowed by social networks.

Furthermore, according to Smith and Chaffey (2005), Internet users want to have control and power, which online shopping allows.

Otherwise, Word of Mouth (WOM) is an important tool, not to forget because people between 18 and 29 years old are more up to follow advices from their friends. As a matter of fact, Chu and Kim (2011) give a definition of WOM based on Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) work which is *'the act of exchanging marketing information among consumers, and plays an essential role in changing consumer attitudes and behaviour towards products and services'*.

### 2.3. Different ways to attract consumers in ages between 18 and 29

If a marketer wants to target people between 18 and 29 years old, she needs to know the different ways of attracting them. These ways will be presented here.

First, according to Hongjun (2010), the company needs to create a positive and desirable image on social media and the consumers' culture needs to be taken into account in order to use their passions and desires to encourage the purchase. He also adds that convenience; effort and cost of participation (cost in time, reputation,

privacy and in money) have to be taken into consideration to better attract young consumers.

Furthermore, generating a positive WOM can be useful to promote the company's brand because curiosity, enjoyment, and fun are good factors to attract youth (Palmer and Koenig-Lewis, 2009).

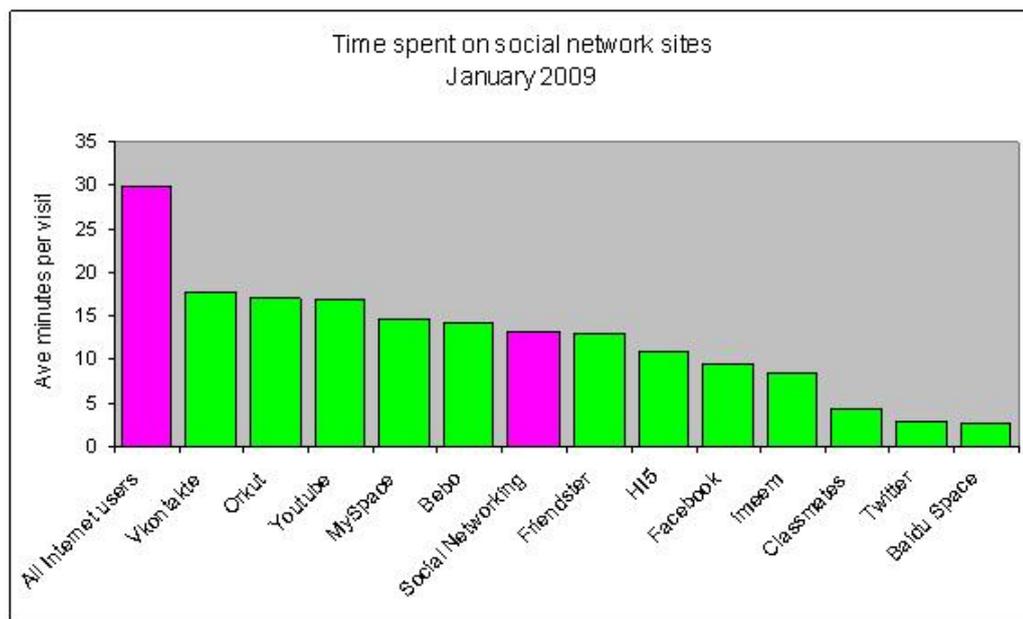
Otherwise, the brand needs to seem authentic, friendly, but *'being authentic does not mean "pretending you aren't a brand" [...]. The point is to create a message that emotionally affects your target [...]. Today's consumer needs to feel that they have a relationship with a brand'* (Jones and Minton, 2009, p. 89).

#### 2.4. An increasing use of social networks thanks to the consumers in ages between 18 and 29's use

Youth need to entertain friendships, to interact with each other and to be accepted by others. Social networks are very good tools to allow this. A quotation of Cotterell (1996, p. 7) mirrors a part of the situation that has motivated the research project: *'The interactions between a person and members of the network of others provide the social provisions which create community, confirm identity, and prevent loneliness'*. In fact, social networks allow responding to the primary needs defined by Maslow (1943), like it was said above. As a consequence, consumers between 18 and 29 join more and more these networks.

Moreover, the research by Forrester Jennings (2007) indicated that audiences and attention is moving to online channels as 52 per cent of Europeans are regularly online at home. Around 36 per cent of European Internet users watch less TV, 28 per cent have reduced their newspaper and magazine reading and 17 per cent have decreased listening to the radio since going online. Furthermore, over half (54 per cent) of Internet's users between 16 and 24 have set up their own page or profile on a social networking site (Ofcom, 2008).

To finish, 'online social networks sites are seen by young people as an integral part of their life' (Palmer and Koenig-Lewis, 2009). As a consequence, as consumers in ages between 18 and 29 need to be a part of social networks where their friends are, the use of social networks increases thanks to them. And if time spent of social networks is analysed, the high level of minutes per website can be verified:



Source: ComScore, Inc. January 2009

### **3. Facebook as a path to success**

#### **3.1. Facebook as the most used social network**

Facebook is known as the current most used social network. Indeed, Clift (2011) likes to say that '*it is difficult to discuss social media without using some insight from the unquestioned leader in the field: Facebook*'.

As a matter of fact, with more than 500 million members globally, 10 million of people becoming a "fan" of a brand each day and more than 1.4 million branded fan pages, Facebook is the world's largest social network. It is also the 20<sup>th</sup> in the Technology top 20 (Bradshaw, 2010).

*'Facebook likes to point to the example of Adidas, the sportswear maker which has more than 2.7m fans on its Adidas Originals page. Each fan is estimated to be worth around \$100 a year in footwear'* (Bradshaw, 2010). It means that all successful brands have to have a Facebook's fan page because it represents also a lot of potential customers and so a lot of potential value.

### 3.2. Facebook as a way to control rumours

WOM is a common thing on Facebook, but it can be positive or negative. The aim for a company is not to ignore the negative ones because it can lead to many complaints and accusations and so discourage potential customers (Bradshaw, 2010).

Moreover, *'word of mouth is the most important consumer touch point when it comes to decisions about products, services, and brands'* (Keller and Libai, 2009).

Debbie Klein, joint chief executive of Engine, a UK-based agency group, add that *'these websites have fundamentally transformed marketing from a monologue to a dialogue. Brands cannot hide'*. Because of that, brands now have to use Facebook to control all potential rumours, because people between 18 and 29 often launch those ones.

### 3.3. An accessible way to use Marketing

Referring to above, Facebook is world's largest social network, so brands ought to have a fan page. For example, the brand Coca-Cola has almost 22 million fans in their Facebook's fan page (Accessed: 18 January 2010).

Furthermore, one of the biggest advantages of social networks like Facebook is the cost. Jason Klein, co-president of LBi in New York, a digital agency says *'the beauty of social media is that they are accessible across a large range of budgets'*. Bradshaw (2010) add that is *'for only the cost of maintaining the page'*.

Bradshaw also found a good example of an easy campaign launched through Facebook: *'Last year, Burger King's "Whopper Sacrifice" offered a free hamburger*

*to anybody who deleted 10 of their Facebook friends. Each sacrificial victim was sent a message explaining what had happened, and so the message spread (at least, until Facebook made Burger King tone down its application after more than 200,000 such sacrifices were made)'. This example clearly shows that it is worth for a company to be on a social network like Facebook.*

#### **4. Conclusion**

Being present on social networks is now a source of competitive advantage for a firm (Van Laere and Heene, 2003). That is why every company has to be aware of the psyche and motivations of people between 18 and 29 if they want to target them.

As a matter of fact, young adults need to be part of communities, to do like their pairs, therefore a lot of people between 18 and 29 are present on social networks, spending a lot of time on them. This is why, companies need to be present on websites like Facebook, which also allow firms to initiate positive WOM or at least control negative WOM.

# **Chapter 3:**

# **Methodology**

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the research procedure of this project in order to show that the primary research that was conducted is valid and reliable.

First of all, the problem definition will be presented. Furthermore, the research philosophy and the research approach will be defined and applied to this project. Moreover, a research design strategy and a form of data collection method will be chosen. Finally, the choice of sampling will be explain.

## **1. Research problem**

According to Saunders et. Al (2007), a research can be defined as '*something that people undertake in order to find out things in a systematic way, thereby increasing their knowledge*'. That is why at the end of this research, as for anyone else, something will hopefully be taught.

## **2. Problem definition**

The first step of a marketing research is to define the problem (Domegan and Fleming, 2003). As a result, the researcher will introduce the topic by giving research questions and then write her hypothesis which is an educated guess to answer to the research questions. Finally, the three objectives allow proving or discrediting the hypothesis.

### **2.1. Research questions**

*Question 1:*

Why the use of social networks is increasingly used by companies?

*Question 2:*

Why companies use social networks to target people in ages between 18 and 29?

### **2.2. Research hypothesis**

As of today, it is positive for companies to use social networks if they want to target people between 18 and 29 years old.

### 2.3. Research objectives

#### *Objective 1:*

To analyse how people between 18 and 29 years old use social networks.

#### *Objective 2:*

To determine why people in ages between 18 and 29 use social networks.

#### *Objective 3:*

To evaluate how companies use Facebook to target people in ages between 18 and 29.

### **3. Research philosophy**

#### 3.1. Positivism

According to Flowers (2009), the basic principles of positivism are:

- The basic world exists, both objectively and externally and is viewed in an objectively way.
- The social world is observed by collecting objective facts.
- The social world consists of elements to which it can be reduced.
- Quantitative methods like surveys and experiments are used here to do some observations and experiences.
- The researcher is independent, taking the role of an objective analyst.

#### 3.2. Interpretivism

According to Flowers (2009), the basic principles of interpretivism are:

- In the social world, people analyse and interpret situations based upon their individual experience, memories and expectations. Therefore, the social world is constructed and given meaning subjectively by people.

- People give their viewpoint when they interpret the meanings.
- The researcher is part of what is observed and use self-reflection.
- The research is driven by interest.

### 3.3. Realism

According to Flowers (2009), the basic principles of realism are:

- Share principles of positivism and interpretivism.
- There are social processes and forces beyond the control of humans consciousness, which affect our beliefs and behaviour
- Realists would accept that subjective interpretations are not unique and people share similar interpretations
- They accept that reality may exist in spite of science or observation and so even if this reality is not proven, people have to recognise it.

### 3.4. Choice of the researcher

The researcher will orient her research by using positivism and interpretivism. Indeed, the researcher will use a positive philosophy by observing and interpreting facts in an objective way, but will also analyse these facts through a subjective way, using self-reflection where it can be useful.

Furthermore, the objectives 1 and 3 will require just a positivism philosophy while the objective 2 will require both interpretivism and positivism philosophy.

## **4. Research approach**

### 4.1. Deductive approach

According to Saunders et. Al (2007), the deductive approach (testing theory) can be defined by:

- Developing a theory and hypotheses, and designing a research strategy to test the hypothesis
- Searching to explain causal relationships between variables

#### 4.2. Inductive approach

According to Saunders et. Al (2007), the inductive approach (building theory) can be defined by:

- Collect data and develop theory resulting from the data analysis
- Get a feeling of what is happening

#### 4.3. Choice of the researcher

The researcher has decided to choose the deductive approach, because she wants to explain the links between each variable of her objectives. Indeed, each of the 3 objectives is composed of 2 variables, therefore it seems more appropriate for this research to use a deductive approach.

### 5. Research design

#### 5.1. Exploratory research design

Exploratory research design is a qualitative data collection method which enables to *'explore and discover issues about the problem'* (Domegan and Fleming, 2003). The aim is to provide insights and understanding and the research process is flexible and unstructured. In fact, the aim here is to discover new ideas, develop hypotheses and it may illuminate specific conclusive findings (Malhotra and Birks, 2003).

#### 5.2. Descriptive research design

Hair et al., (2003) define descriptive research as *'a set of scientific methods and procedures to collect raw data and create data structures that describe the existing characteristics'*. Therefore, the aim is to describe the market characteristics and variables (Malhotra and Birks, 2003). Descriptive research design mainly uses a quantitative data collection method (and also a bit of qualitative method) to describe consumers' attitudes or behaviours toward a market for instance.

### 5.3. Causal research design

According to Domegan and Fleming (2003), '*causal research aims to establish a cause and effect relationship between two or more variables*'. This kind of research design is more dealing with a quantitative data collection method.

### 5.4. Choice of the researcher

The descriptive research design is the most relevant to collect primary data for this project because the researcher seeks to describe the existing characteristics of the social networks market. Moreover, the attitudes and behaviours of people between 18 and 29 toward social networks need to be described for this research.

Furthermore, each research objectives of this research requires a descriptive approach to respond to them because of the use of 'why' and 'how'.

## **6. Data collection method**

### 6.1. Secondary research

Domegan and Fleming (2003) define secondary data as '*information that has already been collected by someone else or another reason*'. These are data used by students for the literature review when then they create their dissertation.

According to Crimp (1990), there are two types of secondary data:

- Internal data: data gathered by a firm for financial reports or marketing purposes
- External data: data collected by a third party such as official sources, government, trade bodies.

For this research, the researcher needed both internal and external secondary data.

Indeed, this research and the research objectives are about:

- First, to analyse how people between 18 and 29 use social networks, so the researcher will need internal data like marketing or behavioural purposes.

- Second, to determine why people between 18 and 29 use social networks, so this part of the research will require internal data like behaviour reports for example.
- Finally, evaluating how companies use social networks to target people between 18 and 29, so the researcher will use both internal and external secondary data like marketing purposes and official sources.

## 6.2. Primary research

Primary data are data found out by the researcher in order to solve the research problem (Malhotra & Birks, 2003). In a dissertation, primary research comes after secondary research in order to compare results between them.

According to Saunders et. Al (2007), there are two types of primary data and so of observation:

- Participant observation: the purpose is to discover the meanings that people attach to their actions
- Structured observation: the purpose concerns the frequency of those actions.

The researcher will use both participant and structured information because the research objectives are about people between 18 and 19's behaviour, and why they use social networks or why companies use social networks to target those people. But the objectives are also about how companies and people use social networks, which more requires a structured observation.

## 7. Research approach

### 7.1. Qualitative research

Domegan and Fleming (2003) define a qualitative research as '*the collection of data which is open to interpretation, for instance on attitudes and opinions, and which might not be validated statistically*'. Therefore, qualitative approach should be conducted in conjunction or after quantitative method (Malhotra & Birks, 2007) to obtain better validity and reliability of results (Hair et al., 2003).

Methods used to conduct qualitative research are: In-depth Interviews, Focus group and Projective techniques (Domegan and Fleming, 2003).

### 7.2. Quantitative research

Quantitative research through surveys or experiments allows gathering marketing data on a large number of respondents (Hair et al., 2003).

According to Saunders et. Al (2007), *'quantitative is predominantly used as a synonym for any data collection technique or data analysis procedure that generate or uses numerical data'*.

The main techniques for conducting a quantitative research are: Surveys / questionnaire, Panels and Observation (Domegan & Fleming, 2003).

### 7.3. Choice of the researcher

For this research, both approaches of research can be used, because the research can be oriented on the behavioural aspect (qualitative) or on the numerical / factual aspect (quantitative). In this case the researcher prefers to do exclusively a quantitative research because she decided to use a descriptive research design, which is associated only with quantitative research approach.

As a questionnaire can be created in order to analyze attitudes, behaviours, intentions, feelings or awareness in relation to a variable (Malhotra & Birks, 2007), the researcher has found that a questionnaire is more appropriate to the topic in hands. Therefore, a quantitative research will be done.

According to Domegan & Fleming (2007), there are three main survey methods: personal interview, telephone interview and postal interview.

As a result, the researcher chose to use personal interviews for the advantages involved. Firstly, they allow better interaction than post or e-mail interviews in the case of misunderstandings because the interviewer can clarify each question. Secondly, personal interviews facilitate the administration of reliable questionnaires

and allow the collection of more information than the other two methods, as people are less likely to refuse to answer.

## **8. Sampling**

### **8.1. Profile of response**

The author of this study decides to select a sample of people who are between 18 and 29 years old because she had to choose which type of people can be included in the definition of "young people". Therefore, the sample starts with people who are 18 or over because it will be easier for the researcher if those persons are major. Then, the researcher prefers to focus on people who are in their twenties. Therefore, she limits the sample to people up to 29.

Given that the study focuses on the Dublin Business School population, the primary research will be conducted in Dublin, Ireland.

### **8.2. Sampling type**

According to Hair et al., (2003), sampling consists of *'the selection of a small number of elements from a larger defined target group of elements and expecting that the information gathered from the small group will allow judgments to be made about the larger group'*.

#### **8.2.1. *Probability Sampling***

According to Saunders et. Al (2007), *'with probability samples the chance, or probability, of each case being selected from the population is known and is usually equal for all cases'*.

There are five types of Probability sampling (Domegan and Fleming, 2003):

- Simple random sampling
- Systematic random sampling
- Stratified random sampling
- Cluster and area random sampling
- Multi-stage random sampling

### 8.2.2. *Non- Probability Sampling*

Non-probability sampling is a subjective choice; it means that the researcher make her own choice. The probability of selection of the members is unknown (Saunders et. Al, 2007).

Moreover, according to Domegan and Fleming (2003), there are four types of non-profitability sampling:

- Quota sampling
- Purposive sampling
- Judgment sampling
- Convenience sampling

### 8.3.Choice of the researcher

The researcher has decided to choose the non-probability sampling because each unit does not have an equal chance for being selected.

Furthermore, convenience sampling is a '*method in which samples are drawn at the convenience of the researcher or interviewer*' (Hair et. Al, 2003). It seems to the author, that this is the most appropriate form for this study, because she intends to question the users of social networks in Dublin Business School exclusively.

## 9. **Research limitations**

The main limitation of the research is the limitation of age in the sample because the researcher will not take the responses of people who are under 18 or over 29 years old into account.

Moreover, the sample is just about Dublin Business School population. Therefore, this can be another limit to the research.

Furthermore, the sample size is the last limitation because the research and findings would have been more reliable and representative if the sample was 200 people instead of 50.

Finally, after drawing her questionnaire, the author has pre-tested the questionnaire on 4 persons to avoid errors in the research. According to Domegan & Fleming (2003), the pre-test questionnaire is not definitive and allows reducing misunderstandings, lack of continuity. It also ensures the smooth flow of questions and the correct wording of questions.

## **10. Conclusion**

In the purpose for this research, both positivism and interpretivism philosophy will be used. Therefore, the researcher has decided to use a deductive approach and a descriptive research design.

Regarding the data collection method, both internal and external secondary data are needed and both participant and structured information will be used for the primary data.

After that, the researcher will conduct her research through a quantitative method, and more precisely with a questionnaire.

To finish, a non-profitability sampling, a convenience sampling will be employed.

# **Chapter 4:**

## **Data analysis & Findings**

## 1. Introduction

According to Domegan & Fleming (2003), data analysis is a process which provides useful information in order to draw conclusions and make decisions.

To perform, the research requires the following procedures:

- Editing
- Coding
- Tabulation
- Summarisation

Questions 1 to 3 are ‘filter questions’ because they enable researcher to address to the right target and therefore do not distort the survey.

Questions 4, 6 and 7 are related to consumers in ages between 18 and 29’s attitudes and behaviours towards social networks (Objective 1).

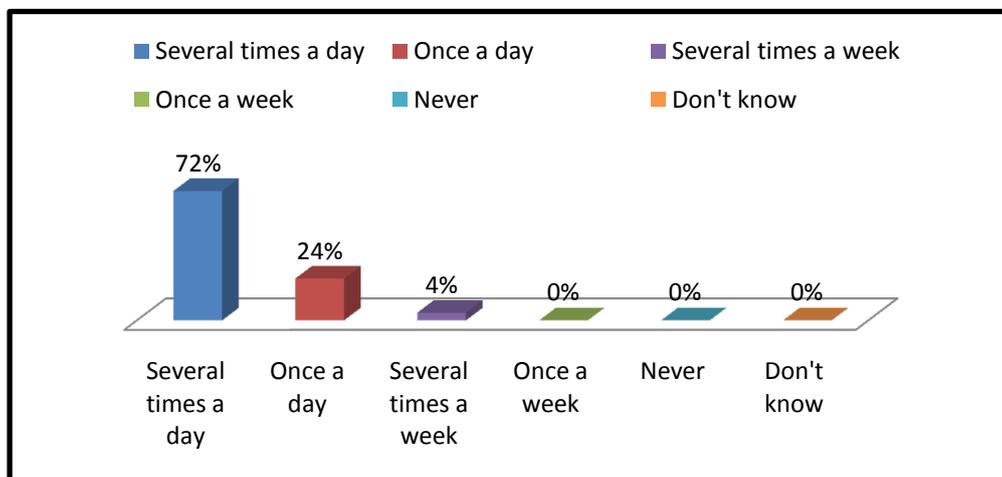
Questions 5.a. to 5.g. allow knowing why people in ages between 18 and 29 years old use social networks (Objective 2).

Questions 8 and 9 examine the use of Facebook by companies to target people in ages between 18 and 29 (Objective 3).

## 2. Objective 1 / Findings

### ➤ **General Findings**

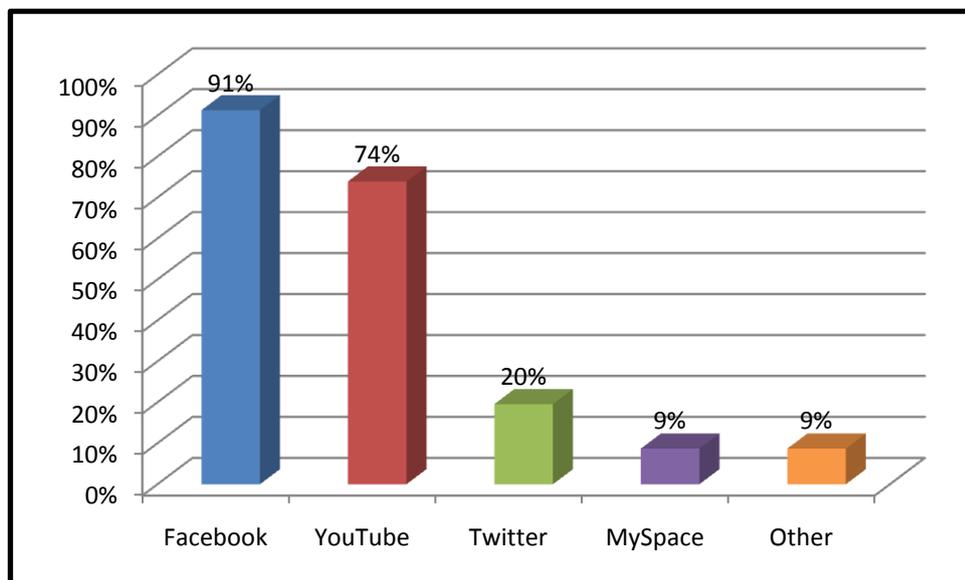
*Figure 1: Time spent on social networks per week (1)*



This bar chart shows clearly that people in ages between 18 and 29 tend to spend a lot of time on social networks. To better understand why those people use social networks so regularly, please refer to chapter 2, section 2.4.

Indeed, the entire sample interviewed spends more time than once a week on social networks. And 72% feel the need to use them several times a day, which obviously proves that social networks are becoming part of the everyday-lives of people between 18 and 29.

*Figure 2: Type of social media used*

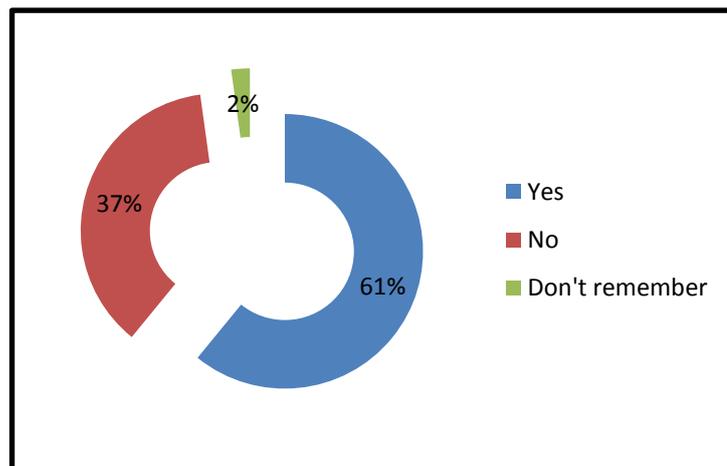


If an overall picture could be given through this bar chart, it is that two social networks are widely more used than the other ones: Facebook and YouTube. If we refer to definition of those last ones given in chapter 2, section 1.3., we can notice that people in ages between 18 and 29's favourite social networks are in fact sharing networks.

Over 90% of the sample interviewed prefers to share and interact with their contacts through Facebook. And more than two thirds of the sample uses the video-sharing website YouTube.

The other proposed social networks are not that frequently used by the sample because each time, less than 20% utilise them.

*Figure 3: Have you ever 'like' a brand in order to get more information about it? (1)*

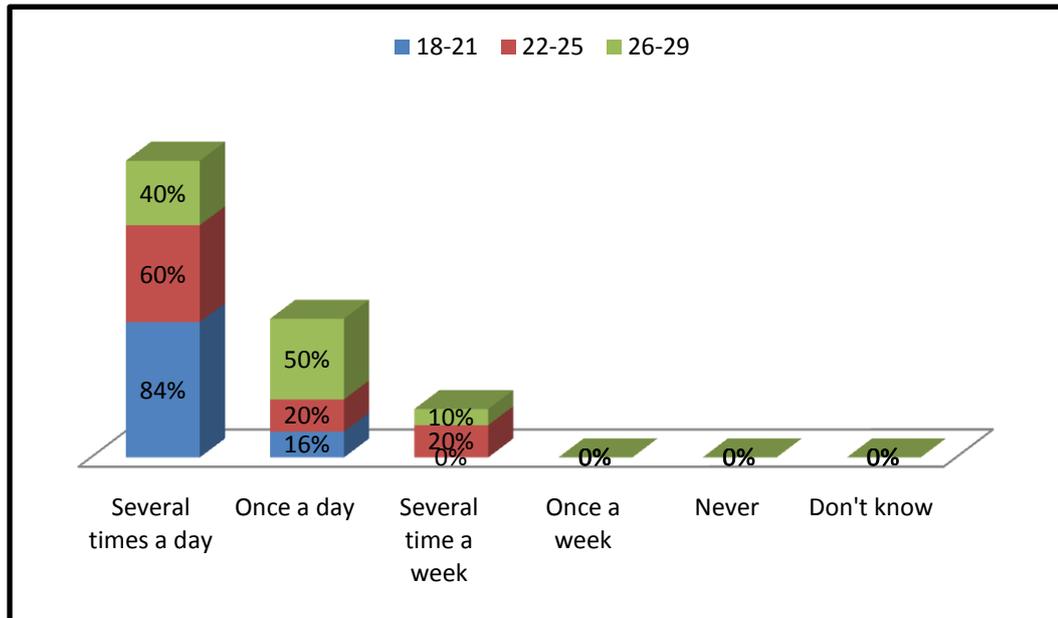


It can be assumed that people between 18 and 29 could find it interesting to have more information about a brand because a bit less than two thirds of them have already 'liked' a brand on Facebook.

However, a bit more than a third of the sample do not want brands to be part of their lives on social networks, which is why they never 'liked' a brand on Facebook to get more information about it.

➤ **Specific Findings per age**

*Figure 4: Time spent on social networks per week (2)*

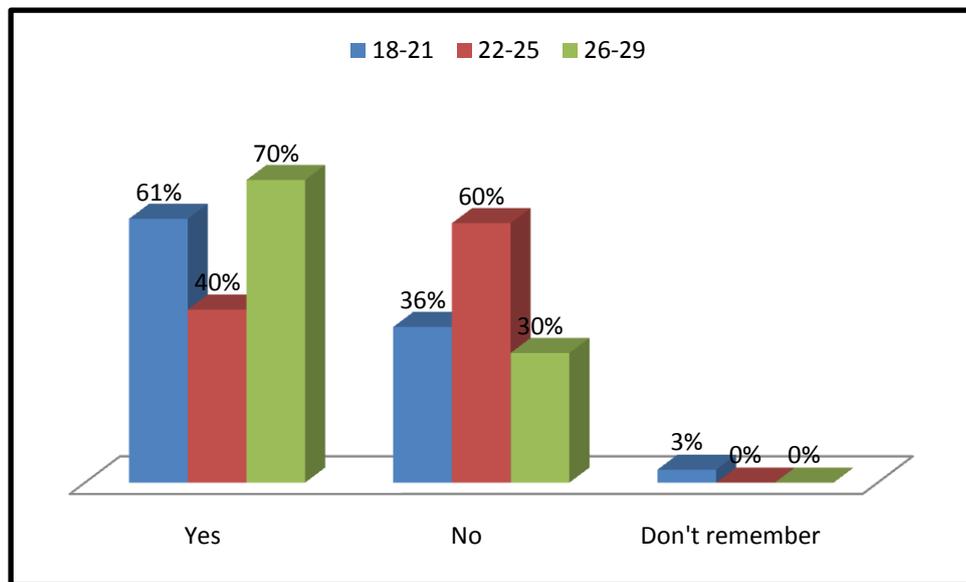


This bar chart clearly shows that the youngest spend more time on social networks than the other ones. Indeed, 84% of people between 18 and 21 go on social networks several times a day while the other of them does it once a day.

Regarding people in ages between 22 and 25, they spend less time on social networks because 60% use them several times a day while the other use them at least several time a week.

Otherwise, people between 26 and 29 are those who spend less time on social networks because the half of the sample answered they use it just once a day.

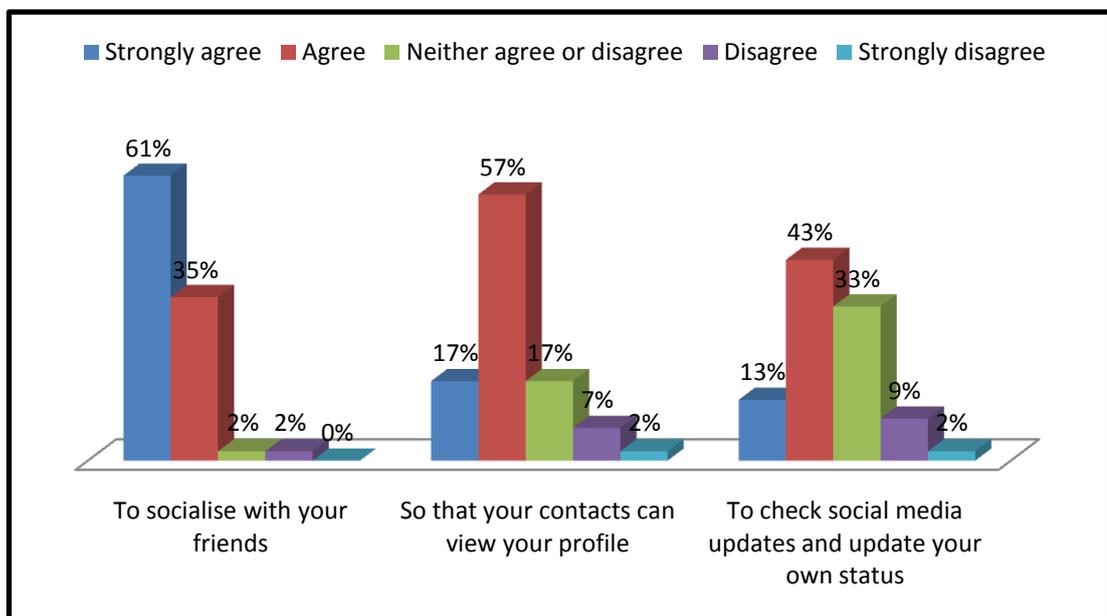
*Figure 5: Have you ever like a brand in order to get more information about it? (2)*



This bar chart highlights a major difference of thinking and acting depending on the age. In fact, people between 18 and 21 and people between 26 and 29 think almost the same way. Indeed, people between 18 and 21 and people between 26 and 29 are more likely to receive supplementary information about a brand (simultaneously 61% and 70%) than people between 22 and 25 who tend more to ignore brands on Facebook (60% responded no).

### **3. Objective 2 / Findings**

*Figure 6: Do you use social networks for social motivations?*



It can widely be assumed that social reasons are driving people in ages between 18 and 29 to use social networks. To better understand those motivations, please refer to chapter 2, section 2.2.

Furthermore, for people in ages between 18 and 29, social networks are first a socialisation tool (96% of the sample agree or strongly agree with that statement).

Otherwise, 74% and 56% of the respondents think they use social networks by interest: they want their contacts to be aware of their online-lives, by viewing their profile or checking their updates on status.

*Table 1: Do you use social networks for social motivations?*

		<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neither agree or disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
<b>18-21</b>	b <sub>1</sub>	71%	26%	0%	3%	0%
	c <sub>2</sub>	19%	52%	19%	6%	3%
	e <sub>3</sub>	16%	42%	29%	10%	3%
<b>22-25</b>	b	40%	60%	0%	0%	0%
	c	0%	80%	0%	20%	0%
	e	20%	20%	60%	0%	0%
<b>26-29</b>	b	40%	50%	10%	0%	0%
	c	20%	60%	20%	0%	0%
	e	0%	60%	30%	10%	0%

*b<sub>1</sub>: To socialise with your friends*

*c<sub>2</sub>: So that your contacts can view your profile*

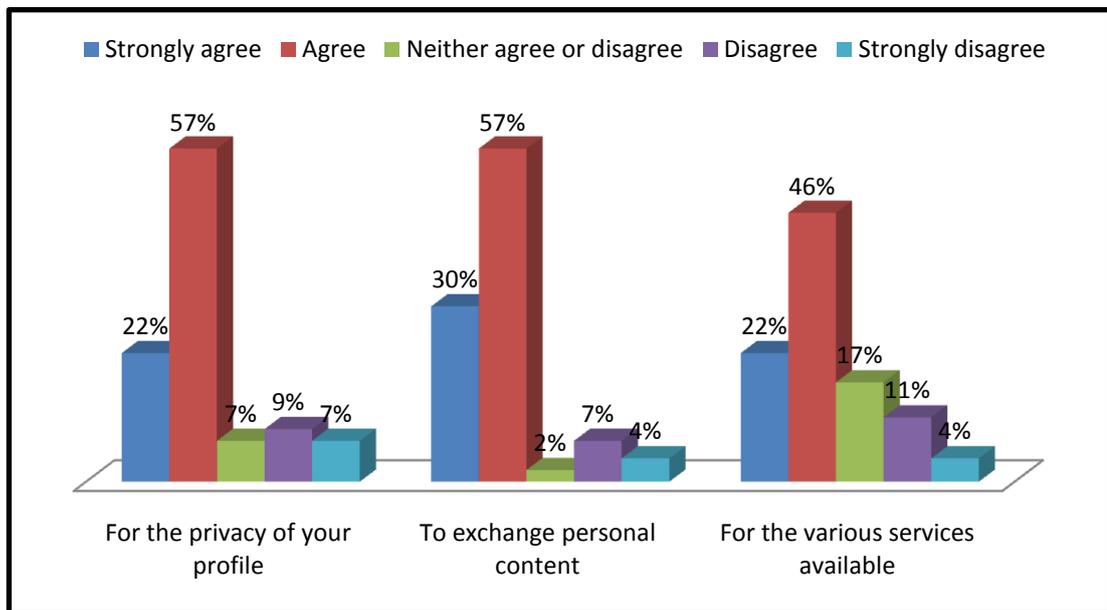
*e<sub>3</sub>: To check social media updates and update your own status*

If we have a more precise look per age category, few differences appear.

Firstly, it can be seen that the socialisation aspect that represent social networks is more recognised as such for people in ages between 18 and 21 (71% of them strongly agree) than for the others (40% of them strongly agree in each case).

Secondly, responses regarding the interest social networks' users can have by using them also show divergences because responses of people between 18 and 29 are scattered, whereas answers of people in age between 22 and 29 are more focused on one point (nowadays, 80% of people between 22 and 25 think that they use social networks so that their contacts can view their profile).

*Figure 7: Do you use social networks for the service in itself?*



Through this bar chart, it has been found that the service provided by social networks is considered as an important aim for the sample interviewed because in each case, at least 70% agree with the questions asked.

Furthermore, it can be noticed that the vast majority of the sample (79%) really care about the privacy of their profile, they don't want information about them to be disclosed. This can perhaps be explained by the fact that people in ages between 18 and 29 start thinking about facts that can have an impact on their professional lives later on.

In addition, one of the principal functions of social networks, which is exchanging personal content, is also well appreciated by the sample because 87% of them agree or strongly agree to that question.

*Table 2: Do you use social networks for the service in itself?*

		<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neither agree or disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
<b>18-21</b>	a <sub>1</sub>	23%	61%	3%	13%	0%
	d <sub>2</sub>	39%	48%	0%	6%	6%
	f <sub>3</sub>	26%	35%	19%	13%	6%
<b>22-25</b>	a	0%	40%	0%	0%	60%
	d	20%	60%	0%	20%	0%
	f	20%	60%	20%	0%	0%
<b>26-29</b>	a	30%	50%	20%	0%	0%
	d	10%	80%	10%	0%	0%
	f	10%	70%	10%	10%	0%

*a<sub>1</sub>: For the privacy of your profile*

*d<sub>2</sub>: To exchange personal content*

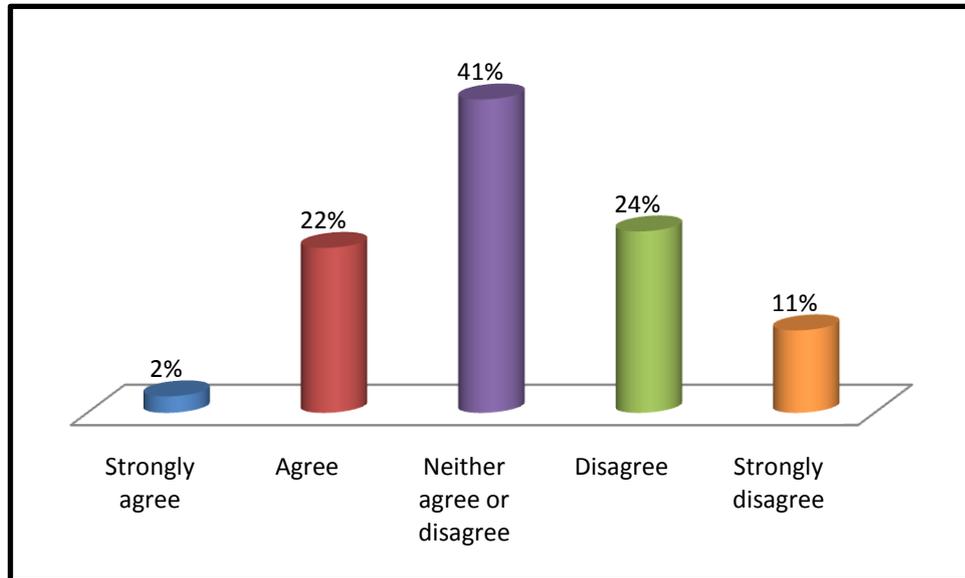
*f<sub>3</sub>: For the various services available*

A more precise look at the motivation's question allows distinguishing some variations.

Firstly, people in ages between 18 and 21 and in ages between 26 and 29 have not the same expectations regarding the privacy that people between 22 and 25. Indeed, for both people between 18 and 21 and people between 26 and 29, the security of their profile is a very important point (in both cases, at least 80% of them agree or strongly agree with that), but for people between 22 and 25 it is a less important point (60% of them strongly disagree with the fact they use social networks for their profile to stay private).

On the other hand, the entire sample thought approximately the same way regarding the function provided by social networks which allows exchanging personal content: almost everyone agreed.

*Figure 8: Do you use social networks to give your opinion about a product?*



At a first sight, it can easily be noticed that the sample has not really an opinion on this question. Or maybe they never ask themselves if they used social networks to give their personal opinion about a product.

Moreover, if the other responses are analysed, it can be observed that mixed views: 22% agree with the question while 24% disagree with it. But in a general way, people in ages between 18 and 29 more disagree than agree with that question (simultaneously, 35% and 24%).

*Table 3: Do you use social networks to give your opinion about a product?*

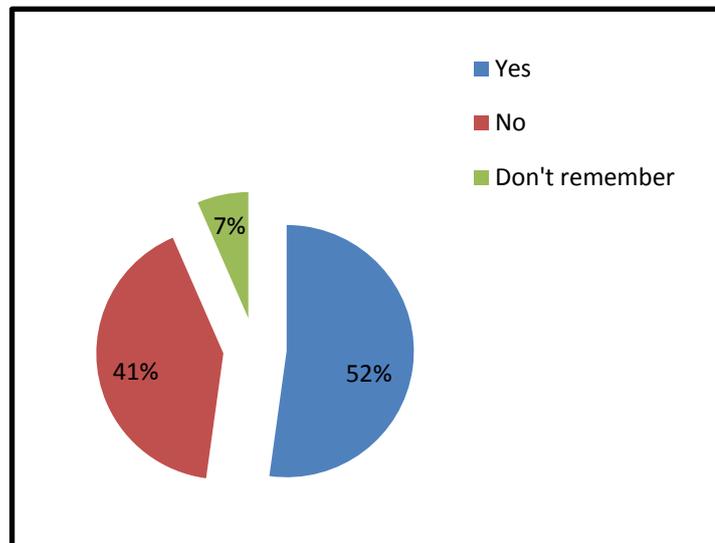
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
<b>18-21</b>	0%	16%	45%	23%	16%
<b>22-25</b>	0%	40%	40%	20%	0%
<b>26-29</b>	10%	30%	30%	30%	0%

A more thoroughly look to that question allows seeing that the one who more disagree are the youngest ones: they are the only category of ages that strongly disagree with that question (16% of them) and only 16% agree.

Otherwise, the more favourable age category to that question is people in ages between 22 and 25, with 40% of them agreeing to the fact that they used to give their opinions about products on social networks.

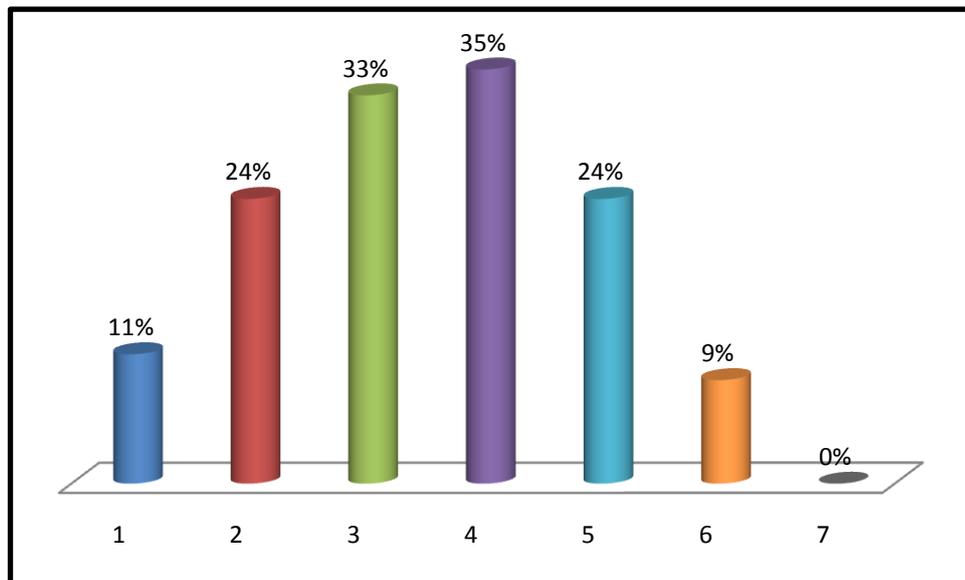
#### 4. **Objective 3 / Findings**

*Figure 9: Have you ever clicked on an advertisement on Facebook?*



This pie chart enable to see that it is worth for companies to be present on Facebook because the half of the sample already have clicked on an advertisement on this social network, whereas 40% of them never did.

*Figure 10: On Facebook, which type of advertisements attracts you more?*



1: Contests' advertisements

2: Advertisements about a price

3: Advertisements that your friends already liked

4: New products or brand's advertisements

5: Advertisements about something free

6: None

7: Other

This question allows analysing what kind of advertisement is the most useful for a company who wants to target people between 18 and 29.

Four types of advertisements used by companies prove to be more interesting than others because they have a higher impact on people between 18 and 29. The two kind of ones which had the biggest impact on the sample were advertisements that their friend already liked and advertisements about new products or brands, which prove again that companies have to try to be friendly with their customers on social networks (for more information, please go back to chapter 2, section 2.3.).

Otherwise, the two kinds of advertisements that the sample found attractive were advertisements about a price and advertisements about something free, which proves that people in ages between 18 and 29 care about their money, and so companies have to highlight this point on their advertisements' campaigns on social networks.

## **5. Conclusion**

This data analysis and the ensuing findings allow having a better understanding of the psychological aspect and the motivations of people in ages between 18 and 29.

It is now proved that people between 18 and 29 spend a lot of their free time on social networks that they principally use for social motivations and the service in itself. But they also sometimes like to get more information about a brand or give some impressions about a product, which is why companies have to really care about their presence on social networks and how they deal with it.

Furthermore, this data analysis allows companies to determine what kind of advertisements better attracts their target, which can result in new customers.

# **Chapter 5:**

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

### **1. Conclusion / Objective 1**

The objective 1 was to analyse how people in ages between 18 and 29 use social networks.

It has been found that young adults' attitudes toward social networks can vary from an age category to another one. Indeed, even if it is proven that every people in ages between 18 and 29 spend a lot of their free time on social networks as it is becoming part of their everyday-lives, it can also be assumed that the younger people are, the more time they spend on social networks.

Furthermore, people between 18 and 29 years old use several types of social networks, which is an interesting point to know for companies who want to target them through these communication tools. But in that case, companies also have to be aware of the favourite social networks of young adults in function of the age category they specifically want to target and to know the main characteristics of these networks if they want to obtain a better impact.

Afterwards, when people in ages between 18 and 29 are using social networks, they sometimes like to have a more specific look at brands or companies and give their impressions about a product or service they experienced. So they wish that companies seem friendly and attentive to their needs and their thoughts.

### **2. Conclusion / Objective 2**

The objective 2 was to determine why people between 18 and 29 years old use social networks.

It has been proven that the reasons why people in ages between 18 and 29 use social networks are primary personal. In fact, it can undeniably be stated that young adults' acts are conducted by the self-esteem need and the need of socialisation. As a consequence, social networks is an easy way to socialise with your friends and to check your contacts' updates and profiles, social networks are popular among people between 18 and 29 years old.

Another major motivation is the service in itself, because at the same time social networks are a communication tool that guarantees the security of their profile, but it also enables to exchange personal content with their friends and it can be accessible everywhere through new mobile phones for example.

Finally, Word-of-Mouth is an important factor and an effective tool not to forget to take into account, because people in ages between 18 and 29 are more up to follow advices from their friends, and if their friends use and are interested about brands' presence, they will probably act in the same way.

### **3. Conclusion / Objective 3**

The objective 3 was to evaluate how companies use Facebook to target people in ages between 18 and 29.

It has been proven that Facebook is the current most used social network and is preeminent the most used by people between 18 and 29 years old. As a result, companies try to be present as much as they can on this social network, either through advertisements or a "fans' page" on the website.

In the case of a "fans' page", companies create a profile page where they speak about their brand, their products, or their services that people can "like" or become "fan". As it was proved that people in ages between 18 and 29 like innovation and new products, companies have to always be present and active on their fans' page. Moreover, companies have to keep in mind that young adults first use social networks to keep in touch and maintain relationships with their contacts, therefore firms need to be seen as authentic, friendly if they want to acquire potential customers in ages between 18 and 29.

Besides, generating a positive WOM can be useful to promote the company's brand because young adults are often attracted by curiosity and what their friends recommended. Furthermore, Facebook can also be used as a way to control rumours that can circulate on the social networks.

Finally, it has been proven that companies also can be present on Facebook through advertisements, and companies have to be aware of the more attractive kind of them for people between 18 and 29 years old if they want to catch the attention of this target and so result in new customers.

#### **4. Conclusion / Hypothesis**

The hypothesis was that as of today, it is positive for companies to use social networks if they want to target people between 18 and 29 years old.

The researcher decides to confirm that hypothesis. Despite the fact some people in ages between 18 and 29 do not care about or reject the presence of companies in social networks, it remains positive for firms to use social networks as part of their Marketing campaign if they want to target young adults. Moreover, in the literature review, it has been found that using social networks is becoming part of young adults' lives. And the researcher has found in the data analysis chapter that people between 18 and 29 years old sometimes like to receive further information about a brand or just give their opinion about a product or service. From time to time, they also click on advertisements they found on their social networks' pages.

As a result, the popularity of social networks were proven, which involves that they are a good way for companies to get potential customers, especially those in ages between 18 and 29, so it is positive for firms to use social networks if they want to target people between 18 and 29 years old.

#### **Limitations:**

The first limitation of this study concerns the sample size. The research and findings would have been more reliable and representative if the sample was at least 200 people instead of 50.

The second limitation of the research is the limitation of age of the sample because the researcher did not take into account the responses of people who are under 18 or people who are over 29 years old.

To finish, the last limitation is the lack of research experience, the fact of never conducted primary research before.

## **5. Recommendations**

This research was just about the influence of potential customers' ages into companies' decisions to use social networks as part of their Marketing campaign, but another research can also be undertaken to measure if the gender also can have a particular role on this subject.

Furthermore, this research was just about the Dublin Business School population, so another research can perhaps be conducted to analyse the differences between students' behaviour against "normal" people in ages between 18 and 29.

Finally, companies should more fragment their sample in terms of age categories when they want to target people between 18 and 29 years old because as we prove it in this research, needs and envies can change from an age category to another one.

## **APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE**

In order to carry through a Market Research, I am pleased to invite you to participate in a survey that aims at analyzing the use of social networks in Marketing to target people in ages between 18 and 29 years old. The questionnaire will only be used for the purpose of an academic research and all answers are anonymous.

**1) What is your age?**

- Under 18
- 18-21
- 22-25
- 26-29
- Over 29

**2) Do you have an access to Internet?**

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

**3) Do you use social networks?**

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

*If you are less than 18 years old or more than 29 years old, or have answered 'no' for at least one of the two last questions, you have already finished the questionnaire. Thank you for your help.*

**4) How often do you use social networks per week?**

*Please tick one cell for each question.*

- Several times a day (1)
- Several times a week (2)
- Never (3)
- Once a day (4)
- Once a week (5)
- Don't know (6)

**5) Generally, you use social networks to:**

a) For the privacy of your profile (access control to your profile, etc.)

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

b) To socialise with your friends

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

c) So that your contacts can view your profile

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

d) To exchange personal content (photos, videos, music, comments...) with your contacts

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

e) To check your social media updates and update your own status

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

f) For the various services available (instant messaging technology, access via mobile phone, applications...)

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree or disagree

- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

g) To give your opinion about a product

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

**6) Among the following list of social networks, which ones do you use?**

- Facebook (1)
  - MySpace (2)
  - Twitter (3)
  - YouTube (4)
  - Other (Please specify) (5)
- 

*If you don't use Facebook, you have now finished the questionnaire. Thank you for your help.*

**7) Have you ever "like" a brand in order to get more information about the brand (promotions, events, new collection...)?**

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Don't remember (3)

**8) Have you ever clicked on an advertisement of the Facebook's page?**

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- Don't remember (3)

**9) On Facebook, which type of advertisements attracts you more?**

*You can tick several cells.*

- Contests' advertisements (1)
- Advertisements about a price (2)
- Advertisements that your friends already liked (3)
- New products or brand's advertisements (4)
- Advertisement about something free (5)
- None (6)
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_ (7)

*You have now finished the questionnaire. Thank you for your help.*

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