

## **A STUDY OF ONLINE USER'S BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS FACEBOOK SOCIAL NETWORK**

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*ABSTRACT: The socio-economic environment provides the possibility of using the Internet in different ways in order to be accessed by the online consumers to either study, be informed, to buy, work, interact, play or even communicate. The premises of the paper are based on the research of the compartmental online utilisation focused on the time spent, the different activities in which they are engaged at that particular moment and the existing reasons behind the decisions they take within the networking, the main purpose will be however the Facebook Networking. In the paper we will address to different conceptual aspects regarding online marketing, online users behaviours, so that we can easily observe how they manifest on the Facebook platform. To predict how the online behaviour of users express within the Facebook Networking it was put together a marketing research aiming their behaviour and their future intentions of accessing the Networking.*

*Keywords: Marketing Online, Marketing Research, The behaviour of Online Users, Facebook Social Network.*

*JEL Codes: M31*

### **Introduction**

The Internet represents a friendly environment where the online marketing applications develop significantly offering benefits both to individual user and also to organisations.

These benefits include, without being limited to the rapid exchange, virtual rash of messages and information, charge less spread to potential users of the information, but also as new possibilities related to service and product marketing having a powerful impact on society with the main aim to satisfy different needs.

The reason that stayed behind choosing this study is given by the fact that in quality of online user of the Facebook Network, we have tried to capture how the online user interact (mainly through the behaviour that shows at the time the access the platform).

Therefore the **main objective** monitored in this paper is emphasized by the significance of the online user's behaviour, the reasons and future intention to access this socialisation platform.

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## Literature review

### The concept of marketing online

Known and theorized as part of the economic field, **marketing** creates new subdomains developed in order to match with the current market requirements. One of them is the cyber marketing defined as the science of complex systems control, using the power of computer networks and online communication, also using the digital environment and interactive digital environment to achieve marketing objectives. (Keeler, 1995 cited in Orzan, 2007, p. 7).

A first definition of Cybermarketing was proposed by Imber Jane, which means "the process of creating and maintaining customer relationships through online activities by facilitating the exchange of ideas, products and services to meet the needs of both parties" (Orzan, 2007, p .8), then deriving the concept of online marketing, which involves the placement of a business or online product to be accessed by millions of users so that the website becomes a powerful tool to maximize sales and its potential (Cosma, 2008).

If at the beginning of utilisation the online term send the reader to the meaning of computers technology and telecommunication, in present his meaning is addressing the communication area and human interactions. The term refers to the capacity to bind everyone around via Internet (Yadin, 2006).

One of the most comprehensive definitions of online marketing is provided by Mohammed and others (2002, p.4), they had defined **marketing online** as "the process of building and maintain customer relationships through online activities in order to facilitate the exchange of ideas, products and services so that can be obtained the buyers but also from sales perspective". In the online surroundings, the marketing specialist is in continuously interactive contact either with the client, producer or the distributor with the purpose of achieving and retains a representative number of loyal customers, this being possible only by knowing all their needs.

The main characteristics of online marketing refers to: **the character of "process"** based on the concept of "trade", the online marketing trace could be detected in the online environment but also in the offline one; **the presence of a virtual domain of action**, the activities that take place here have as support the usage of Internet; **focusing on building and maintain customer relationships**, by using online methods is the ultimate goal of marketing defined by earning customer and buyers satisfaction.(Grosseck, 2006, p. 55).

Compared with the traditional marketing, *online marketing* is particularly dynamic, involving technologies that are in a relentless changing. "The approach of market research, along with the place and time of communication, building the image, communication direction and interactivity" are major elements that separate online marketing of the traditional marketing (Grosseck, 2006, p. 57).

Strauss et al. (2006, pp.11) noticed that the develop of *online marketing* led to the upgrade and efficiency of traditional marketing. These mutations are characterized by: **moving the power from sellers to customers**, this happens because customers can chose any seller that activates on the global market with one click, **market fragmentation**, the companies that creates products and communication are aiming a specific, limited group of persons, reducing the distance, is further and further less important with the help of Internet, time compression, the companies can more and more to be at the client disposal at any time in the day, and not to forget the collection and analysis more easily of the customers information.

### **The social networks - Specific instruments used in online marketing communication**

*The social networks* are virtual communities that allow users to build a profile, to distribute text, images, and pictures, to connect with other through applications or groups. These are used by users with the purpose of socialisation and to exchange information, thoughts or event to make friends. The social platforms like Facebook, Tweeter, LinkedIn etc. are selling advertising space to companies that can use the information from the users profile in order to provide specific targeted publicity. Furthermore, social networks are used by the marketers to interact with customers and invite them to discuss, by using this approach they develop tight professional relationship with them. (Lin, Kuan-Yu, Lu, Hsi-Peng, 2011, p. 1152).

According to Collin et al. (2011), social online networks offer a wide variety of benefits, from generating educational results to establish more easily relations and identities. Social Online Networks are perceived to be able to consolidate interpersonal relations, mostly when both worlds online – offline are converging, along with supporting the development of new interpersonal relationships.

Social online Networks are capable to offer a sense of nexus and to stimulate self-esteem. The content that the users are sharing is playing a critical role in the development of the sense of membership within a social online group and creates a collective identity because of the allegiance to a small scale community.

In Romania, Facebook had 0.5 million users in January 2010 to 2.4 million in January 2011. In September 2011 Romania had over 3.7 million track users of Facebook (Negraru, 2011). In 2014, Romania has been registered more than 7 million users, almost 38% of population who has a Facebook account (Facebrands, 2014).

#### **Methods**

The steps in the preliminary stage of research are to determine the decision problem, the purpose and also the objectives of the research (Cătoiu and others 2009).

Thereby arise *the need of deep researching of the reasons* determined which the Facebook Network is based on, *the existing behaviour* which leas behind the users motivation of the social networks focused on the activities taken but also *the future intentions* regarding the decision of accessing the social network studied – Facebook.

To achieve the research objectives it was considered the survey method, which involves the design and use of a questionnaire to collect data from respondents. This is an exploratory marketing research.

The respondents were selected through Facebook Social Network, where the link invitation of questionnaire (eSurveysPro) has been distributed to be completed. This sampling method is called Snowball Method and the study have been achieved 125 completes. Also, we have set up steps like: the research purpose, the objectives, the research hypotheses, to determine the structure of the sample, questionnaire design, methods of collection and systematization of data, analysis and interpretation of results, the conclusion of research.

**The purpose** of this research is to identify the reasons, behaviours and intentions of online users of continuing to socialize through Facebook's using various applications.

The questionnaire contains 28 questions that have been prepared to fulfil the purpose of research. The first of these is the question filter, which is designed to select individuals that are part of the collectivity investigated. In the questionnaire, it can be identified five descriptive questions, which have the role to describe the characteristics and profile of respondents, such as socio-professional status, age, income and gender.

Also, the questionnaire has compartmental questions like the time spent on Facebook, for how long the online users have a Facebook account, the most common application, the frequency of using the Facebook platform and the future intentions of utilizing this social website.

### A study of Online User’s Behaviour Towards Facebook Social Network

#### Objectives

- Objective 1.** Identifying motivations of the online users in accessing Facebook social site;
- Objective 2:** To identify the online user’s behaviours on Facebook social networking;
- Objective 3:** To identify the frequency which online users are accessing Facebook;
- Objective 4:** Measuring the satisfaction of online users regarding the Facebook social network;
- Objective 5:** To study the post-adoption attitude of communication technology online through Facebook;

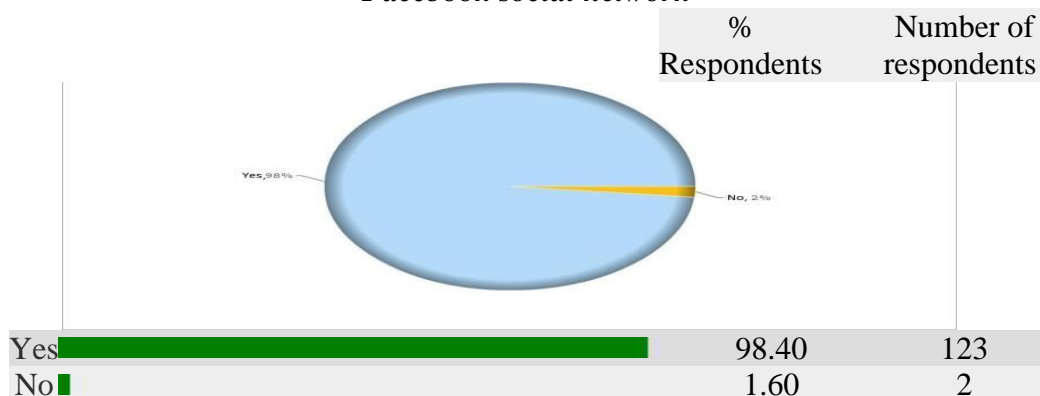
#### Hypothesis

Statistical hypotheses related variable:

- Hypothesis 1:** There is a direct and positive relationship between consumers' perceptions about *the usefulness* of using the Internet in communicating online through the Facebook platform and perceived *benefits* in the context of accessing this social networking site.
- Hypothesis 2:** There is a direct and positive relationship between consumers' perceptions about *the benefits* of using the Internet in communicating online through the Facebook platform and *online consumer behaviour* in the context of accessing the Facebook social network.
- Hypothesis 3:** There is a direct and positive relationship between *consumer attitudes* on the use of the Internet for communication online through the Facebook platform and *online consumer behaviour* in the context of accessing this social networking site.
- Hypothesis 4:** There is a direct and positive relationship between *consumer attitudes* on the use of the Internet for communication online through the Facebook platform and *online consumer satisfaction* in the context of accessing the Facebook social networking site.
- Hypothesis 5:** There is a direct and positive relationship between *consumer behaviour* on Internet use in communicating online through the Facebook platform and *intend to continue in accessing the platform*.

### Analysis and results interpretation

#### Facebook social network

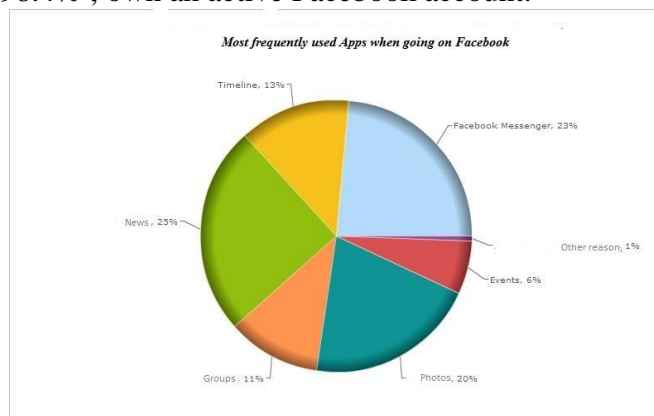


**Total number of respondents**                    **125**

**Number of respondents who didn't answer this question**                    **0**

**Figure 1. Distribution of online users with an active account on the**

The analysis revealed that 123 out of a total number of 125 surveyed persons, which stands for a share of 98.4% , own an active Facebook account.

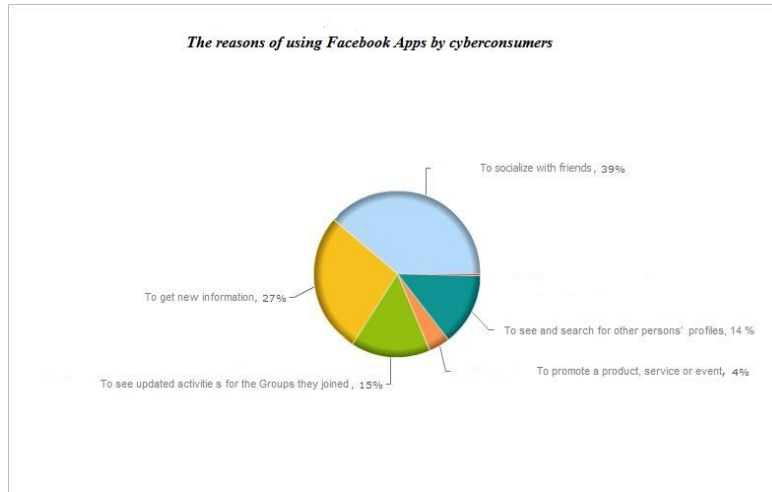


	%	Number of Respondents
Facebook Messenger	23.48	85
Timeline	13.26	48
News Feed	24.86	90
Groups	11.05	40
Photos	20.44	74
Events	6.35	23

**Figure 2. Most frequently used Apps when going on Facebook**

**Figure 2. Most frequently used Apps when going on Facebook** shows that 24.86% use *News Feed*, followed by the 23.48% who use *Facebook Messenger*, but also *Photos* with a share of 20.44%, these being the main Apps that users use.

Timeline (13.26%) is also of notice, showing that online users are preoccupied with their continuous updating of profile, while 11.05% are members of some *Groups*. The less used app is *Events*, with a percentage of 6.35%, showing that users are not very accustomed to this app.

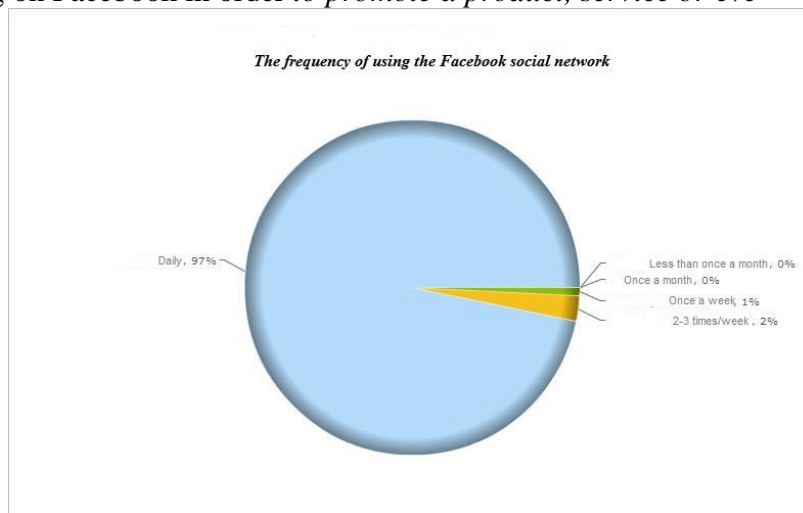


	%	Number of Respondents
To socialize with friends	38.7	115
To get new information	27.2	81
To see updated activities for the Groups they joined	15.4	46
To promote a product, service or event	4.0	12
To see and search for other persons' profiles	14.1	42

Number of respondents 125

Figure 3. The reasons of using Facebook Apps by cyberconsumers

Figure 3. The reasons of using Facebook Apps by cyberconsumers described above shows that, although users had the opportunity to choose between various possible answers, the main reason for which they go on the Facebook social network is *to socialize with their friends* (38.7%), followed by the opportunity *to get new information*, with a share of 27.2%. A share of 15.4% and 14.1% go on Facebook *to see updated activities for the Groups they joined* and *to see and search for others persons' profiles*, respectively. A less important reason is going on Facebook in order *to promote a product, service or eve*



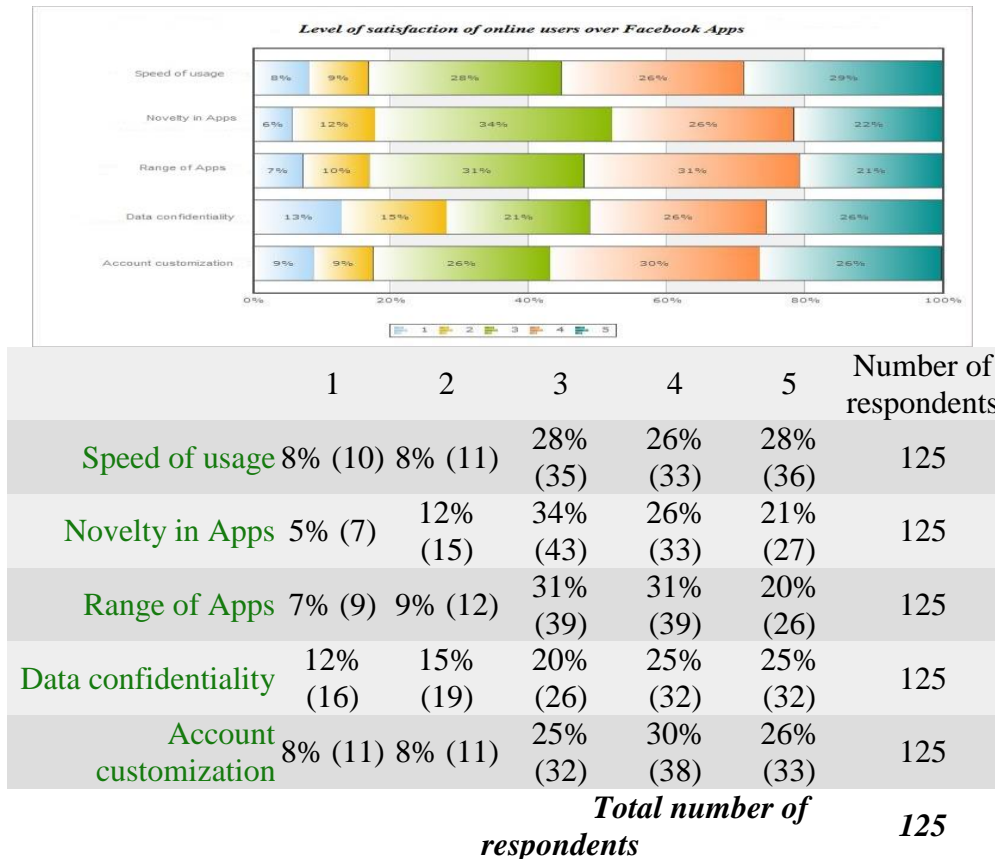
%	Number of Respondents
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	nts	
Daily	96.80	121
2-3 times/week	2.40	3
Once a week	0.80	1
Once a month	0.00	0
Less than once a month	0.00	0

**Total number of respondents 125**

**Figure 4. The frequency of using the Facebook social network**

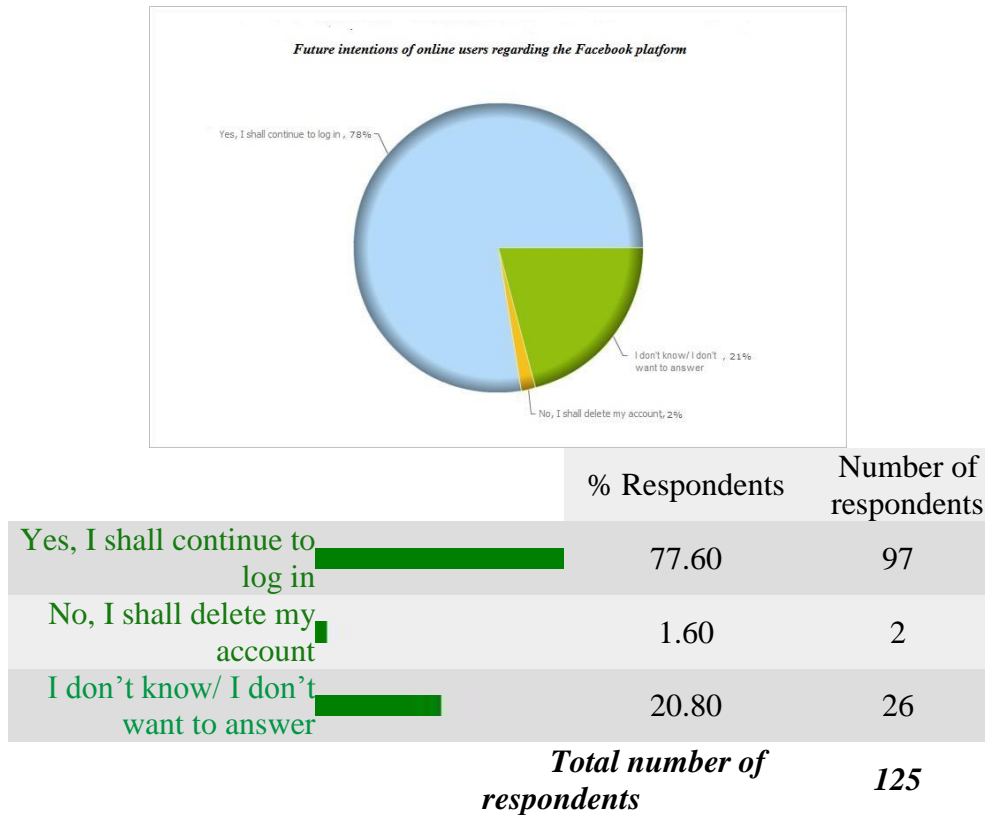
Figure 4. The frequency of using the Facebook social network shows that most of the respondents use Facebook *daily*, in a share of 96.8%, while only 2.4% said that they log in on Facebook only *2-3 times/week*. A very small percentage of the respondents, 0.8%, sign in on Facebook only *once a month*. Therefore, it can be concluded that the frequency of using this platform is high, turning into a „must” of the day-to-day activities.



**Figure 5. Level of satisfaction of online users over Facebook Apps**

The level of satisfaction among Facebook users, as shown in Figure 3.5, is high regarding the *Range of Apps*, with a share of 31%, consisting in 39 valid responses. 28% of the respondents are *very satisfied* with the Facebook *speed of usage*. The other attributes have also been rated with a high level of satisfaction, but in a smaller share: 25% for *data*

confidentiality, 26% for *account customization*, followed by 21% for the degree of *novelty in Apps*.



**Figure 6. Future intentions of online users regarding the Facebook platform**

**Figure 6. Future intentions of online users regarding the Facebook platform** shows that 77.6% of the respondents said that they will *continue to log in* on Facebook. On the other hand, 20.8% don't know or prefer not to answer, while 1.6% think about deleting their account in the next two years.

**Conclusions**

After careful analysis and results interpretation, the current paper shows that, among the respondents of this study, there is a great number of Romanian online users who own an active account on the Facebook social network.

The period of time since most of the respondents have begun to be active on the platform varies between 3 and 5 years.

The behaviour of online users is shown by the fact that 96.8% of the respondents log in to Facebook daily, with 24.29% of their time/day dedicated to the *Facebook Messenger* App, 24.86% of their time/day on the *News Feed*, followed by *Photos* with 24.86% time/day. This means that they use a lot of their time to socialize with their friends, get updates on current activities and publish photos in order to share their status and other personal activities. At the bottom of the ranking regarding the amount of time allocated to different Apps are the *Groups* and *Events* Apps, with a share of 11.14% and 6.57% respectively, which seem to have a lower interest to the respondents, but still significant.

The main reasons why respondents log in to Facebook are *to socialize with their friends* (38.7%), followed by the possibility *to get new information* (27.2%). With a close



share of 15.4% and 14.1%, some other reasons are *to see updated activities for the Groups they joined* and *to see and search for others persons' profiles*, respectively. A less important reason is to sign in to Facebook in order *to promote a product, service or event*.

Taking into consideration both the less important reasons for online users to log in to Facebook, like using some Apps such as Groups and Events, and the reasons for really using the Facebook platform, some improvements through a higher degree of novelty with regard to the utility for satisfying the need and also through an increased promotion in time of all the above it prove to be necessary.

The level of satisfaction among Facebook users is higher regarding the range of Apps, 31% of the respondents saying that they are satisfied with this. 28% of the respondents say they are very satisfied with the Facebook *speed of usage*. The other attributes have also been rated with a good level of satisfaction, but in a smaller share: 25% for *data confidentiality*, 26% for *account customization*, followed by 21% for the degree of *novelty in Apps*. These results indicate that, although the respondents are in general satisfied with the Facebook platform, on the other hand, there is no remarkable level of satisfaction registered, which means that it is neither an innovative thing, nor an attribute with serious systematic errors.

Concerning the opinion of users regarding data confidentiality, the research shows that 85.6% of respondents confirm to have trust in personal data confidentiality, while 14.4% feel that personal data isn't protected enough. Among the reasons mentioned for this last answer are the fact that their personal data is easily accessible, either accessed by different organisations, other Apps (especially games who require access to personal information), or they simply do not trust the online informatic systems of protection. The results show that, although with a share of 14.4%, respondents are more and more aware of the personal data confidentiality issue, becoming sceptic and losing faith in this.

Concerning the future intentions of online users regarding the Facebook platform, 77.6% of the respondents said that they will *continue to log in* on Facebook. On the other hand, 20.8% don't know or prefer not to answer, while 1.6% think about deleting their account in the next two years. This shows that online users perceive the utility of the Facebook platform and that, in the context of approaching some different behaviours and attitudes, their needs are satisfied.

### **Conclusions and recommendations**

In the present paper we have followed the online user's behaviour of the Facebook Socialisation Network through describing some themes of methodological nature concerning online marketing, analysing Facebook platform, from marketing environment perspective along with technical functions of it.

In the last part of the paper it was put together a marketing research focusing on the online user's behaviour of the Facebook social network, the main reasons behind of their behaviour but also the aspects regarding future intentions of the subjects.

The research results have shown that the online users of the Social Network are satisfied from utilisation of the applications point of view that are put to users disposal by the network, so that after identifying the existing of some direct and positive connections, between perceived benefits and behaviour, the intensity of the bound in this particularly case it is very strong, having the capacity of influencing respondents actions; moving further it was also shown between behaviour and intentions but also the existing of a connection between perceived usefulness and future intentions to access the socialisation network platform as a results of the satisfaction felt by the respondents after using the site.

All this observations discovered represent the base of future researches of the domain and can be consider a starting point in the dynamic shaping of the new business rules in order to reconfigure the online tools in general.

The instruments of the dynamic to-market will take in consideration the classic analysis, the dependent and interdependent factor that describes the business environment and that will anticipate the direction that a specific economic entity will have in the market on a long term.

Of course it will exist also the possibility of having intelligent simulations that are able to allow sketching the future market evolutions and trends. The research wanted to emphasize the possibility existence of these kinds of instruments with a high level of complexion and in the same time to present their importance in the domain evaluation and the interdependence with other domains of the market that at first view they are not connected.

Taking in consideration the observations obtained, through the *general recommendations* we can mention some with specific character. The general ones involve a thoroughgoing study and a continuous theme research in order to consolidate a strong base regarding the development of models and profiles that could be attached to the future analysis instruments with practical application.

*The specific recommendations* refers to quality research that has the ability to complete and strengthen the results obtain through quantity research. The effective measurement of determine the quality of the research exercise is the level of evaluation of the detail and also to include it in the conclusion of the study. Thereby for a high accuracy of the results it is recommended to work with a larger sample and the quantity research to be applied to the entire sample. In this situation we have to taking into account some factors that can influence the terms.

Another recommendation would be to extend the number of questionnaire`s questions so that the created profile be able to reflect the truthful behaviour of the user. Also to repeat the questionnaire time to time so it will provide information regarding the evolution in time of the behaviour but also to proactively anticipate a trend of it.

### **Managerial implications**

The Facebook social network is currently one of the most important instruments and means of communication for Marketing specialists in a variety of organisations. In an era dominated by the development of the digital environment and especially of social networks, using Facebook for implementing a diversity of Marketing activities proves to be more than a necessity, an efficient way to follow.

With access to millions of users (for Romania), Facebook offers Marketing departments a great opportunity to plan and implement Marketing activities in an interactive manner, but, furthermore, to target key audience in a specific way, leading to the possibility of saving great ressources.

Related to all of the above, for a more efficient targeting of the group audience, having a detailed knowledge of the online behaviour of Facebook users, proves to be fundamental and thus, the reason of approaching this subject as the key goal for this research. The current paper offers basic and important information which Marketing specialists should take into consideration when developing future Marketing campaigns.

As shown in this study, online users prefer interactive applications which offer them the opportunity to get directly involved and share things which are of interest to them. When communicating through Facebook, companies must therefor find those methods that manage to put the users first, by increasing the level of interactivity of their proposed Marketing activities.

Also, the significant percentage of users who commit to continue using Facebook in the future, as well as the increased time spent on this social network, show that using this platform should be of key focus in Marketing activities.

**The limits of this study** refer to the number of respondents, mainly because the exploratory research was conducted with an academic purpose and can be accompanied by other digital instruments used to measure online traffic, particularly for Facebook.

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