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# Viral communication through social media: analysis of its antecedents

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## Abstract

**Introduction:** This article describes the evolution that the word-of-mouth communication has had until the viral marketing. In addition, it identifies the emotions, the influences, the content, the execution and the media as backgrounds. These backgrounds will influence the virality of the trademark message through social media. **Methodology:** It analyses the lineal regression to explain the relationship between a variable with others. In addition, the behaviour of a variable is estimated according to the knowledge of other variables. This knowledge influences the variable behaviour. **Analysis and conclusions:** This article states that the emotions and the influences exercise a meaningful effect on the message's virality and that the execution variable is the least influential. It is recommended to the organizations to maintain relationships with the users through social media and to cooperate by designing the trademark message. By this way, the message will have a large breadth of outreach and will be more credible for the users.

### Keywords

Word-of-Mouth Communication; Electronic word-of mouth communication; Viral Marketing; Social Media, Trademark message.

### Content

1. Introduction. 1.2. Theoretical Framework. 2. Methodology. 3. Results. 4. Conclusions. 5. Bibliography.

Traducción de **I Acosta Montilla**

(Traductor jurado, Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores y de Cooperación)

## 1. Introduction

In the last years, five events have changed the consumer's social and technological life. The first of them was the *Internet* that appeared on 21<sup>st</sup> November 1969, when the first link between the UCLA and Stanford universities through the commutated phone line was created. The second one was the appearance of the first personal computer that was launched by *Olivetti Programma 101* in 1965 and *Apple II* in 1977. The third was the appearance of the *IBM Simon Personal Communicator* on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1992. This was considered the first *intelligent mobile phone*. The fourth event was the appearance of the first social network, *Classmates* in 1995. It allowed other users to maintain the contact with their old classmates. The last event, but not least important, has been the evolution from the web 1.0, that was created in 1990 by the English Tim Berners-Lee with the help of the Belgian Robert Cailliau until the appearance of the *web 2.0*. This last term was used for first time by Tim O'Reilly in 2004.

These events have not only changed the interactions between consumers and organizations from an analogue context to a digital context, but also, it has modified the attitudes and behaviours towards the trademark message. In particular, the consumers have replaced the traditional media (Hann *et al.*, 2008 mentioned in Hinz *et al.*, 2011) by the social media. Many research projects which justify the development of our project, show that the social media are the most important interfaces to spread the trademark message. However, it depends mainly on the voluntarily participation of the users. In that sense, the viral marketing appears as a process where the trademark message can connect with the users (Paus and Macchia, 2014).

By taking into account the facts mentioned before, through this research, it is proposed as a main aim to identify the factors that exercise an influence on viral communication of the trademark message. In order to explain this general aim, it is important that before, we will focus on a series of specific aims that now we enumerate:

- To analyse the relationship between the word-of-mouth communication, social media and electronic mouth-of word communication.
- To analyse the relationship between the electronic word-of-mouth communication, exponential growing and viral marketing.

For this reason, this article is organised as follows: (a) After reviewing the literature related to the word-of-mouth communication, electronic word-of-mouth communication, social media and viral marketing, it is set out an hypothesis for each of the factors that determine the virality of the trademark message. Later, it is described the used methodology and the empirical results will be presented in order to finish with the conclusions and practical implications for the organizations.

## 1.2. Theoretical framework

The viral marketing comes from the word-of-mouth communication (Paus and Macchia, 2014). The Word-of mouth communication comes from the English expression *Word of Mouth*. The first time that this English expression appeared according to the English Oxford Dictionary was in 1533 (Nyilasy, 2006). There, such expression was defined as oral communication, oral advertisement or simply conversations against the written manifestations. In Spain, the Spanish Dictionary of the Royal Academy (DRAE) of 2014 records the expression "word-of-mouth" and it defines it as "to spread news, a rumour, a praise, etc. from people to people".

One of the main definitions and one of the most agreed, is provided by Arndt (1967:3). This author understands the word-of-mouth communication as "the oral communication between two or more people where the receptor does not perceive the message as an advertisement of a trademark, product or service". For the *Word of Mouth Marketing Association* (Carcelén y Sebastián, 2014:117), the Word-of- mouth communication is "the art and science of building active and mutual communication between the consumers (consumer-to-consumer) or between the consumer and the manufacturer (consumer-to-marketer).

According to Paus and Macchia (2014), these are the two main features that have to take into account to deal with the concept of word-of-mouth communication.

The first of them is that the consumers are greater and greater more mistrustful before the messages delivered by the trademarks. And, in that context, the general advices generated by other users and opinions leaders gain more importance. This statement has been verified by a worldwide study undertaken by *Nielsen Global Trust in Advertising Survey* and whose main conclusion is that nine of each ten people rely on other users' advices (Carcelén y Sebastián, 2014). The second feature is the number of people to whom the trademark message is transmitted. The appearance of social media has made that the users have more power and that its voice goes to everywhere inside the McLuhan's galaxy. This fact has originated that the concept of word-of-mouth communication has evolved until the electronic word-of-mouth communication.

In January 2016, around 3,419 million people used the Internet and 2,307 million take part in any social media (World Population Statistics, 2016). This information reflects the importance of the Internet as a Marketing and Communication channel. Most users take part in one or several social media (Albors *et al.*, 2008). As such, the electronic word-of-mouth has become a new communication form (Hennig-Thurau y Walsh, 2003). The social media, generally, does not only offer new possibilities to enable its users the possibility of sharing opinions about products or services (Chen y Xie, 2008; Avery *et al.*, 1999), but also, they exercise more influence on the trademark.

Hennig-Thurau *et al.*, (2004:39) define the word-of mouth communication as "any positive or negative statement made by the current, potential or old clients about a product or company, that is available to a huge number of people and institutions through the Internet".

Breazeale (2009) understands that the word-of mouth communication is totally different from the electronic word-of mouth communication. Due to the evidences of the differences and having seen the research projects of Lee y Youn (2009) and of Breazeale (2009), we have identified a series of aspects that could help to differentiate both concepts and that now we point out: (1) the electronic word-of-mouth communication *is not* an *oral activity* (Pollach 2008); (2) the electronic word-of mouth communication *enables the exchange of opinions between the consumers* (Hennig-Thurau *et al.* 2004); (3) the electronic word-of-mouth communication has *opinion leaders* (Bronner y de Hoog, 2010); (4) the electronic word-of-mouth communication *is developed through platforms in the Internet, mainly through social media.* (Shu-Chuan y Yoojung 2011); (5) the electronic word-of mouth communication depends on the *Network* (Vilpponen *et al.*, 2006); (6) the electronic word-of-mouth communication is *addressed to many people, that is,* is multidirectional (Hennig-Thurau *et al.*, 2004); (7) the electronic word-of-mouth communication is *an interaction without time and localization* (Jones *et al.*, 2009); and (8) the electronic word-of mouth communication *can be anonymous* (Hennig-Thurau *et al.*, 2004);

The electronic word-of-mouth communication is usually developed through social media due to the interactive features. For that, in this research project, we explain what we understand as social media in order to understand better the process that goes from the word-of-mouth communication until the viral marketing.

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010: 61) define the social media such as " a group of applications based on the Internet that are focused on the ideological and technological fundamentals of Web 2.0. It allows the creation and exchange of content generated by the user". Recently, Buettner (2016) has defined the social media as "technologies where the computer is used and that enable the users, the companies, the NGOs, the governments and other bodies to visualise, to create and to share professional information, ideas, interests and other expression ways through virtual communities and networks". Nowadays, there are many definitions about the term, but most definitions share some features, such as the following (Obar y Wildman, 2015):

- These are interactive applications Web 2.0 based on the Internet
- It is a content generated by the user, such as: comments, photos and videos.
- The users create specific profiles for each of the social media.
- The social media enable the development of the relationships in the network through the connection of an user's profile with other users or communities.

Likewise, the social media share their own features. Kietzmann *et al.* (2011), using the model of a bee panel, achieved to identify any of the main features: (1) the *identity*, to which the user wants to reveal his environment. It can include the information about his/her name, sex, profession, study, place, etc.; (2) the *conversations*, that represent the rank in which the users are communicated. There are some social media that generate interactivity, but there are others such as the blogs in which the users adopt a role of listening to satisfy their needs; (3) the *exchange*, that represents the rank in which the users share, distribute and receive the content and can be in texts, pictures, videos or in

music; (4) the *presence*, that points out the rank in which the users are accessible, that is, the level of privacy that one could adopt; (5) *the relationship*, the rank in which the relationship with other users can be developed; (6) the *standing*, that expresses the rank in which the users can identify the position of the others and even itself through the analysis of negative and positive comments; (7) *the groups*, that represent the rank in which the users can make up communities and sub-communities based on the size and number of a group and the number of followers.

Apart from the main features of social media, it is important to distinguish the different types of social media through which the bodies can transmit their trademark messages that are (Aichner y Jacob, 2015):

- (1) *blogs*, that are understood such as websites that include as a personal diary the author or authors, contents of interest (information, photos and videos) updated daily and with the possibility to receive comments by other users;
- (2) *collaboration projects*, that are understood such as websites that gather the users with a common interest or certain knowledge with the purpose of distributing in opened code technological, scientific, academic projects and other specialized areas of interest;
- (3) *social networks of businesses*, that are understood as websites that develop a professional network that is very similar to the social network, but that is focused exclusively in the professional interactions and relationship;
- (4) *forums* that are understood such as websites where discussions or opinions of a interest topic are given;
- (5) *microblogs*, that are understood as websites, as well as, the ones known as nanoblogging that enables to the users to send and publish a short message;
- (6) *websites to exchange photographs*, that offer services such as to upload, to record, to manage and to share photographs both in a public and private way;
- (7) websites about products or services opinions where it is examined the information about people, companies, products or services;
- (8) *social bookmarkings*, that are the websites that enable the user to subscribe himself/herself to the source of a website to receive the updates of its content;
- (9) *websites for exchanging videos*, that offer services such as to upload, to record, to manage and to share videos in a public and private way;
- (10) *social games*, that are websites that make available to the users online games through social networks. It allows the interactivity between several players;
- (11) *social networks*, that are websites based on social structures where the users are congregated, are socialized and exchanged contents; and
- (12) *virtual worlds*, that are websites where a simulated environment by computer is developed. There, the user can create a personal avatar and can explore such environment by interacting with other users.

In order that the electronic word-of-mouth communication about a trademark, product or service becomes viral, it is required that the message of the trademark fulfils two requirements: (1) the first of them is that it should be exponential. It means that the message reproduction has to be higher than one, that is, it has to be transmitted to more than a peer. The result is that the growing pattern is exponential. (2) The second feature is that they are usually be reproduced through social media because nowadays, they are the most appropriate media to transmit a trademark message, product or service and to make it viral (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2011; Paus y Macchia, 2014).

The viral marketing is a current phenomena and has been discussed in the literature under a variety of different terms such as *buzz marketing* or *viral advertising* (Thomas, 2004; Kaplan y Haelein, 2011), *stealth marketing* (Kaikati & Kaikati, 2004; Kaplan and Haelein, 2011) and *word-of-mouth marketing* (Kozinets *et al.*, 2010; Kaplan and Haelein, 2011). The term of viral marketing comes from an article written by Jeffrey Rayport (1996) of *Harvard Business School* and published in the magazine *Fast Company* as "The Marketing Virus". It refers to the exponential growing pattern related to viral marketing when the marketing message diffusion is compared with the virus propagation.

The term of viral marketing is used to describe the phenomenon by which the users share and spread mutually the information sent by markets to stimulate and capitalise the verbal behaviour (Van der Lans, van Bruggen, Eliashberg and Wierenga, 2010). Rouse (2007) states that the viral marketing is any technique that incites to the websites to transmit a trademark to other places web or users and creates a exponential growing in the visibility. Golan and Zaidner (2008:961) define the viral marketing as a full range of electronic communication strategies designed to promote the trademark communication, a product or in an electronic environment between equals. Other authors such as Kaplan and Haelein (2011: 256) describe it as: "the electronic word-of-mouth communication through which any message related to the trademark, product or service is transmitted in an exponential way through the social media". Finally, Wilson (2012) understands by viral marketing any strategy that stimulates the people to transmit a trademark message to the others, by creating a potential growing in the exhibition and influence of the message.

The appearance of the viral marketing has been linked to the sense that ideas are spread as a virus. And the scientific field that is developed around this idea, the memetics, achieves its popularity in 1990. The meme, analogous to a gen, was conceived such as "a culture unit" (an idea, belief, pattern of behaviour, etc.) that is found on the mind of one or more people and that can be reproduced itself, jumping from mind to mind. Likewise, in other words, it would be considered as an influence of an individual on another to adopt a belief, now it is seen as a "replicated idea" that is reproduced itself in a new host, as it happens in the genetics field, concretely, under an interpretation (Dawkins, 2000).

According to Kaplan y Haelein (2011), in order to develop an appropriate viral marketing, it is important to follow three basic criteria that are: the appropriate people have to receive the *appropriate message* in the *suitable environment*. The first requires that the appropriate people spread the message. According to the classical laws about concentration, it can be waited that the 20 per cent of the messages come to the 80 per cent of the users; by this way, it is very important to choose the right people for issuing the trademark message, for example, influences, youtubers, bloggers, instagramers, etc. The second criterion states that only the trademark message that are memorable and very important will develop enough potential to stimulate the viral marketing phenomenon. The third criterion refers to use a social media where the most suitable people take part mainly to spread the trademark message.

In that sense, the viral marketing is shown as the best strategy to spread the trademark message to all the users to influence their attitudes and behaviour related to a product, service or management, but...What do the users do to share the trademark message? What does the user encourage to do it? For Phelps *et al.* (2004) and Dobeles *et al.* (2007), the main actor of viral marketing is the consumer

and to know the purpose of carrying out the message that is very important for the bodies. There are many research projects that confirm the influence of some variables on the virality of the trademark message, and now, we will talk about them.

The *emotions* will be considered as the variable which exercises more influence on the consumers. Many authors affirm that a viral message will count with the surprise as a basic emotion to promote the receiver's action (Phelps *et al.*, 2004; Dobele *et al.*, 2007; Montañés *et al.*, 2014; Paus and Macchia, 2014). Likewise, it has been identified the appearance of a correlation between the use of the entertainment such as the emotion of messages and those brands that have an entertaining nature (Montañés *et al.*, 2014). Likewise, to use the sadness as a basic emotion can be more appropriate when we want to obtain an immediate answer against the effects of a disaster, both environmental and human (Dobele *et al.*, 2007; Montañés *et al.*, 2014; Paus and Macchia, 2014). A positive content can be shared mainly because people prefer to be identified as someone that makes others to feel good or someone that shares happy stories against a person who shares the content and he/she makes the others to feel annoyed or sad (Berger y Milkman, 2013; Eckler and Bolls, 2011; Huang *et al.*, 2012; Shavitt *et al.*, 1998; Teixeira, 2012; Paus y Macchia, 2014). As consequence, we formulate the following hypothesis:

H<sub>1</sub> The emotions has a positive effect on the virality of the trademark message.

The *influences* are an important factor to share the trademark message. Nowadays, we are in a context where the consumers rely less on advertisements and more in their group of equals, that is, people that act as third parties between the bodies and the final consumers. These connectors can be experts, academic members, communicators, leaders of opinion, fans, youtubers, instagramers and influences (Sánchez, 2008; José-Cabezudo *et al.*, 2012). Teixeira (2012) confirmed that the fact of sharing a trademark message depends mainly on the personality of the receiver and he/she identified two essential attributes: extroversion and egocentrism. As consequence, we formulate the following hypothesis:

H<sub>2</sub> The *influences* has a positive effect on the virality of the trademark message.

The *content* has to have a practical utility to give advices, to help to obtain money, to save time or simply to help people to be more positive. (Sánchez, 2008; Huang, Chen and Wang, 2012; Berger, 2013). Some authors such as Dobele *et al.* (2007) state that provocative messages are the most viral, while Sánchez (2009) and they confirm that the messages of plots can be the *teaser* ( information fragmented as advance of a advertisement campaign) and they foster the virality. Another key variable that Berger (2013) investigates as generator of the virality is the narrative *branding* ("Storytelling"), an easy and quickly way to speak about brands. As consequence, we formulate the following hypothesis:

H<sub>3</sub> The content has a positive effect on the virality of the trademark message.

The *execution* of message. The messages have to be easy to transmit. For that, it is required to provide the users with all the needed tools to have a short duration. However, there are exceptions such as the video of "I love Laura" (Sánchez, 2008; Paus and Macchia, 2014). Vries *et al.* (2012). They showed that the sensorial intensity (entertainment, colours and pictures) and the interactivity

level (to invite to answer or to share) of the most viral message (Paus and Macchia, 2014). As consequence, we formulate the following hypothesis:

H<sub>4</sub> The execution has a positive effect on the virality of the trademark message.

The *social media*. The use of the social media has experimented such evolution that we are focused our research project only in the social media to consider that nowadays, it is the most viral media (Zarella, 2012). In that sense, Lipsman *et al.* (2012) states that the social media that are used to share trademarks are Facebook, Twitter and the posts in blogs, followed by the email and Instagram (Carcelén and Sebastián, 2014). Therefore, we formulate the last hypothesis:

H<sub>5</sub> Media has a positive effect on the virality of the trademark message.

## 2. Methodology

The methodology used in the research to carry out the proposed aims and to confirm the formulated hypothesis is based on quantitative techniques. According to Cohen y Cohen (1983) and Hair *et al.* (1995), the regression analysis is useful because it allows (1) to explain the relationship between one variable with others and (2) to assess the behaviour of a variable according to the knowledge of other variables. These influence the behaviour of the variable. In the study, this technique allows to explain the relationship between independent variables (emotions, influences, contents, execution and media) and the dependent variable (the virality of the trademark message).

For the analysis, we chose 1245 university young people (21 universities) of Spain. The main reason to choose this population is that we needed some criteria to unify the sample that we only found in such population. Spanish university young people are the population who is more present in social media and they share more content with other users. 41.9% (n=521) of the interviewers were male and 58.1% (n=724) were female. With regard to the users' ages, 46.2% (n=576) of the interviewers were between 18-22 years old; 33.6% (n=419) were between 23 and 26 years old; the 12.5% (n=155), were between 27-30 years old; and lastly, 7.7% (n=95) were between 31 and 35 years old. Most interviewers were of the Spanish nationality: 78.1% (n=973) were Spanish; and 21.9% (n=272) were foreigners. The highest percentage of foreign nationalities followed this order: Chinese, Romanian, British, French, Italian, Colombian, Venezuelan, Ecuadorian and German. With regard to the online presence of the interviewers (number of profiles that have the Internet), 5.2% (n=64) of them had a profile; 10.6% (n=131), two profiles; 22.5% (n=280), 3 profiles; and, lastly, 61.7% (n=768) of the interviewers had four or more profiles.

For the analysis, we used a survey and to registry the information, a questionnaire was used as a tool because we consider it as a research procedure that has advantages, it can be applied massively and it enables to obtain information of several questions at the same time. If we follow to García Ferrando, we can understand the survey such as a technique to use several standardized research projects. By this way, it is recorded the information and it is analysed a series of information of a sample of cases, that is representative of a population or the most ample universe that we pretend to explore, describe, predict and/or explain a series of features.



The questionnaire is made up of 39 questions divided mainly in four sections: in the first section, two filter questions are asked to verify our research project; the second would be two questions related to the use of the content generated by the trademark; the third section would be thirty questions about the variables of a study (emotions, influences, execution, content, media and virality of the trademark message); and the last one would be five socio-demographic questions. The questionnaire was made to 1245 people, with a sampling error of 3.76% and a level of confidence of 95%. Previously, it is shown the adaptation of the questionnaire through a pre-test, based on a reduced number of people (50 people).

For our questionnaire, some multiple, structured and dichotomic and scale questions were used. To measure the scale questions, we used the Likert scale of 7 points, where -3 pointed out that the interviewer was totally disagree and 3, that he/she was agree. It was used the stratified probabilistic method through which we assigned to each university a proportional part of the population of study. Likewise, we used the simple random method to choose the elements of each of the stratum at random. Lastly, he used the SPSS, to analyse and interpret the result.

#### Chart 1: Technical File of the Research

Sample and Population Features	
Geographic field	Spain
Population	University young people
Sample	University young people from 18 to 24 years old
Technique for registering the information	Personal interview
Sampling error	3.76%
Confidence level	95%
Average time of fulfilment	10 minutes
Sampling method	Stratified probabilistic sampling and simple aleatory
Sample size	1245 interviews
Registry period	September 2016
Rate of the answers	0.09%
Negative rate	6.7%
Programme to analyse the computer information	IBM/ SPSS V.20

Source: Own source

### 3. Results

In this section, the results that we present are obtained through the survey technique. The percentage offered in the following charts are calculated according to the sample size of 1245 surveys of the

simple and stratified aleatory sampling, that in size and in form, is representative of the society that is subjected to the study.

To measure the reliability of the used questionnaire, the Cronbach's alpha was applied to all the results. The results indicated that the coefficient of Cronbach's alpha was of 0.875 for all the analysed variables. Concretely, for the proposed model, it was of 0.913 for the variable of *emotions*; 0.847 for the influences; 0.818 for the content; 0.814 for the *execution*; 0.927 for the *media*; and 0.945 for the virality of the trademark message. Given that the average values are higher than 0.60, we can conclude that there is a high consistency and reliability between the statements of the questionnaire (Hair *et al.*, 2010). The results of the reliability will be showed in the following chart.

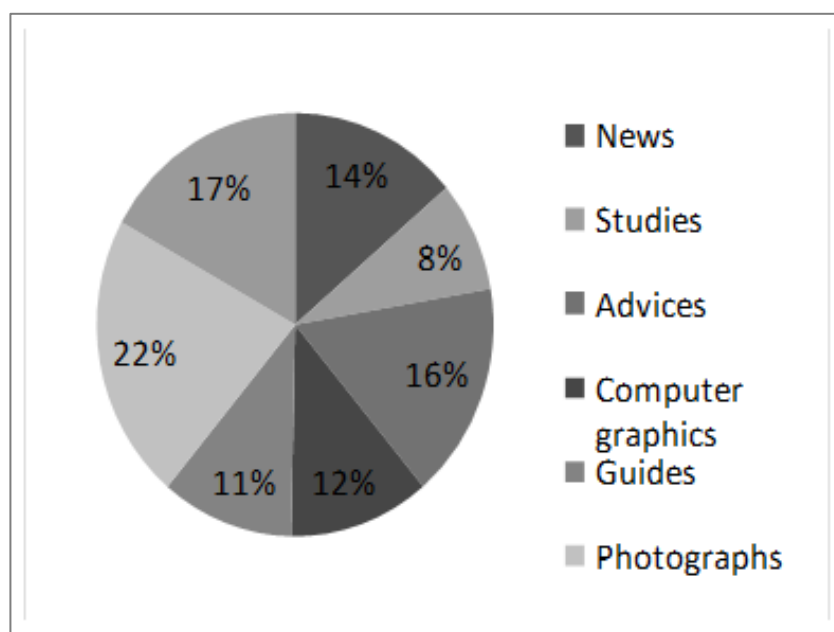
**Chart 2. Reliability Chart**

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Number of ítems</i>	<i>Cronbach alpha</i>
Emotion	5	0.913
<i>Influences</i>	5	0.847
Content	5	0.818
Execution	5	0.814
Media	5	0.927
Virality of the trademark message	5	0.945
<i>The complete questionnaire</i>	40	0.859

Source: own source

In the figure 1, we present the results of the main reasons that make the users to share the trademark message. Most interviewers state that the reason to share the content of the trademark is the quality (83.45%; n=1038), that is, that the trademark makes them to feel the best in front of all the users that share the content. The second reason is that the trademark message was provided by a influence (76.40%; n=951). It points out that the users trust more in the trademark connector than in the own trademark. The third reason is the experiences that other users have had with the product or with the trademark service (69.34%; n=863). The fourth reason is the commitment that the users develop with the trademark through the *offline* or *online* experience (59.46%; n=740). The fifth and last analysed reason, shows that, depending on the *feedback* of the trademarks by the users, they will share it or will not share it with the others (57.56%; n=716).

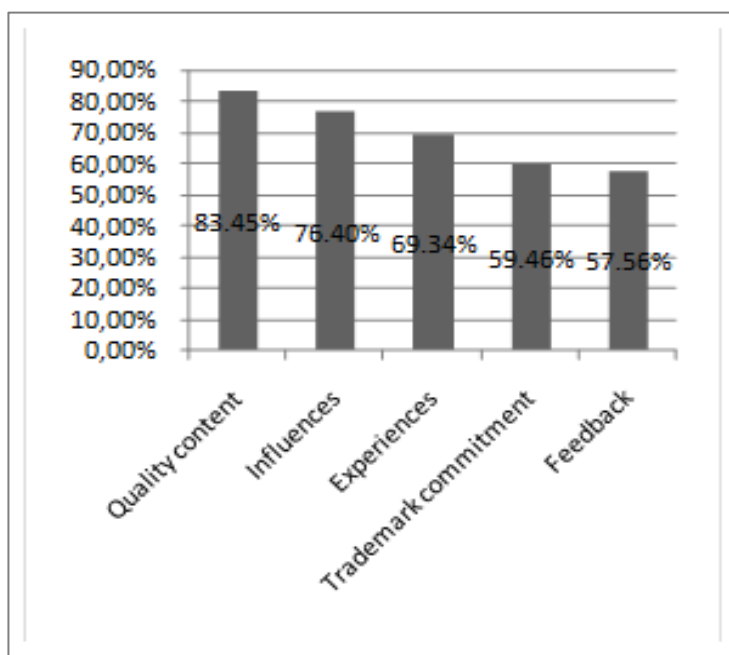
**Figure 1: Main reasons to share the trademark messages**



Source: own source

In the figure 2, it is asked to the interviewers about all types of contents that are shared by the trademark. By the type of content, we understand the news, research, advices, computer graphics, guides, photographs, videos, comparative analysis, interview results. The results pointed out that the photographs are the most shared trademark content by the users (86.45%). It is followed the video with a 67%. Recommendations are the third content 65.34%); the fourth content, the trademark news (54,89%); the fifth content, the computer graphics (45.67%); the sixth content, the surveys (43,56%); and the guides are the less shared trademark content guides with a 33.45%.

**Figure 2. Type of content shared by the users**



Source: own source

In the chart 3, it is described the average value and the standard digression for each variable in the studied questionnaire. The results show that the emotion is the variable with the highest average (3.88) and the most important from the perception of the users of the sample, while that the execution is the lowest (2.85). It points out that for the users, the execution of the trademark influences less when they have to share it with other users. The virality of the trademark message, as dependent variable, is expressed in an average of 3.73. This is considered an acceptable average.

**Chart 3. Averages and digressions of each of the variables**

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Deviation (SD)</i>	<i>Order</i>
Emotion	3.88	0.787	1
<i>Influences</i>	3.73	0.913	2
Contents	3.57	0.876	4
Execution	2.85	0.747	5
Media	3.64	0.896	3
<i>Dependent variable</i>			
Virality of the trademark message	3.73	0.994	

Source: own source

**Tabla 4: Pearson's Correlation**

	Standard deviation	1	2	3	4	5	6
1 Virality of the trademark message	1.145	1.000					
2 Emotion	1.234	0.745	1.000				
3 Influences	1.198	0.657	0.452	1.000			
4 Content	1.578	0.534	0.545	0.624	1.000		
5. Execution	0.954	0.345	0.243	0.319	0.167	1.000	
6. Media	1.238	0.456	0.497	0.497	0.461	0.245	1.000

Remarks: 1. Virality of the trademark message; 2. Emotion; 3. Influences; 4. Content; 5. Execution; 6. Media

In the chart 4, we have calculated the correlation coefficients of Pearson and as we can verify the tolerance indicator is less than 0.10. According to Hernández Sampieri, Fernández Collado and Baptista Lucio (2010), the correlations are important from 0.30. The results show a relationship between the emotion, the *influences*, the correlations are important from 0.30. The results show that there is a relationship between the emotion, the influences, the content, the execution, the media and the virality of the message.

In the chart 5, it is recorded the verification of the proposed hypothesis. As we can observe, there is a positive relationship between the emotion and the virality of the trademark message ( $t = 18.321$ ,  $p = .000$ ). As a result, it is accepted the  $H_1$  hypothesis. Likewise, the study showed the positive relationship between the influences with the virality of the message ( $t=24,583$ ;  $p=,000$ ). By this way, it allows us to accept the hypothesis  $H_2$ . The results also showed that the content is an important dimension in the message virality of the trademark message ( $t=18,389$ ;  $p= .000$ ). As consequence, the hypothesis  $H_3$  is accepted. The hypotheses  $H^4$  is about the positive relationship between the execution and the virality of the trademark message. The results show that relationship ( $t=5.982$ ;  $p=.028$ ). Lastly, in the results, we can observe that there is a positive relationship between the media and the virality of the trademark ( $t=29,726$ ;  $p= 0.000$ ). By which, the hypothesis  $H_5$  is accepted. The  $R^2$  of 0.734 shows that the model is explained in a 73%; that is, the virality of the trademark message is explained through the emotion, the influences, the content, the execution and the media. The value  $p$  (F-value=447,276) for the model was lower than 0.05. By this way, the proposed hypothesis can be accepted and it means that at least, some parameters are different from 0. Finally, the model is totally valid.

**Charter 5. Analysis of the regression of the impact of the quality of the online service according to the satisfaction of the users**

Model	Non standardized coefficient		Standardized coefficient	t	Sig.
	B	Standard mistake			
(Constant)	0.562	0.087	Beta	5.234	0.000
Emotion	0.173	0.035	0.189	18.321	0.000*
Influences	0.341	0.019	0.391	24.583	0.000
Content	0.392	0.013	0.428	18.389	0.000
Execution	0.183	0.045	0.223	5.982	0.028**
Media	0.279	0.062	0.313	29.726	0.000*

$R^2 = 0.734$ ; F-value=447,276,  $p > 0,000$

\*Meaningful to 1%, \*\* Meaningful to 5%

Source: own source

**4. Conclusions**

The first communication models were unidirectional, from one to many. By them, the brand transmitted the information through a media (newspaper, TV, radio, etc.) to the consumers. This mass communication tried to simulate the traditional model of the communication process, but it lacked the essential element to develop it: the interaction. According to Schultz (2013:15), the communication does not exist without interaction. With the arrival of the Internet and mainly, of the social media, the traditional mass communication was simplified in a more personalized communication model.

Throughout the last years, the user has experimented an enormous transformation. He/she gave up to be a passive actor in the communication process to become an active actor who controls the information and counts with a high influence power on the others through their opinions. The word-of-mouth communication, the Internet and the social media have developed a new phenomenon called viral marketing as a new technique to generate a positive and negative brand communication.

The viral marketing can be understood as a technique that consists in promoting the brand message, product or service between the user through the interactivity and the co-creation of the value. The viral marketing is characterised by the following features:

- It reduces mainly the costs because the brand message distribution is made by users freely.
- It has more credibility because it is transmitted between users and it is not transmitted from the original source.
- It offers more visibility to the brand picture due to the exponential growing.
- It presents more flexibility in the format because the messages can adopt several forms.
- It is developed through an online environment, especially in the social media due to the participative features.

From the research made, it has found five factors as backgrounds of the virality of the brand message that are: *the emotions*, the *influences*, the *content*, the *execution* and the *media*. *By answering to our main goal, all the factors together have an important statistic influence on the trademark message.*

With regard to the emotions, it is shown that the virality of the trademark message is achieved with positive emotions such as: the surprise, the joy or the fun. It is demonstrated that a positive message can be more viral because the users want to be identified as happy users. Likewise, it is interesting the contents that mix sadness with an unexpected final end and the users feel very identified.

In the last years, the influences, youtubers, instagramers, professionals or general users have developed a very important factor in the transmission of the trademark message. Our research allows us to state that the trademarks have to identify and develop the relationships with the users who influence their market to generate the products or services visibility. The user's attractive is the audience scope, that sometimes is higher than the own trademark. For this reason, the trademarks have to use influenced users as distributors of the trademark message.

The content of the trademark has to produce surprise or intrigue to be spread. Inside the content, we include a technique to be analyzed that was very used in the last years: the *storytelling*. The *storytelling* is perceived by the users as a tool that generates empathy and it gets away from the traditional and wized form in which the trademarks transmit its message. This tool generates confidence, it is easy to be remembered, presents the information as a story and creates more connection. For that, in our study, it is shown the correlation between such tool and the emotions.

The execution of the trademark message refers to the technical aspects in which it can be verified a low correlation and less influence on the virality. The users do not give too much importance to the message duration or accessibility. It is very important to highlight in this section, that messages that have high sensorial intensity (animation, pictures or colours) and invite to the interactivity, they produce more virality.

The social media have enable the users to become prosumers, that is, that they produce and consume the content about the trademark, that they want to take part and to feel identified with the trademark message. This content should be understood as an exchange coin that allows the users and its contacts to acquire a value. Our work shows that Facebook, YouTube or Instagram are social media and through them, most of the trademark messages are shared.

By answering to the specific objectives about the relationship between the word-of mouth communication, social media and the electronic word-of mouth communication, we can state that these are very different concepts because their main features that we are listed in the theoretical framework, show it.

With regard to the proposed objective about the relationship between the electronic word-of-mouth communication, the exponential growth and the viral marketing, we see a relationship because the viral marketing is an electronic word-of-mouth communication. The aspect that makes it viral is the exponential growing through the social media, that is, each user shares the trademark message to more than one user.

The organizations should know how to use the social media to find influent, involucrate users and to generate trademark defenders. However, in order to build viral campaigns and to foster the electronic word-of-mouth communication, the confidence should be established and it should be strengthened after that, to solve any reluctance by the possible consumer. It means to go beyond the traditional marketing approach and the advertisement in the websites to cover all the marketing principles of relationships that is, to create virtual environments where the users have the possibility to share knowledge and important information. A tactics for the success is that the trademarks get away from the difficult sale to adopt the notion of trademark co-creation.

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