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Millennial Consumers: Gratifications through the use of Snapchat and its impact on impulsive motivations of purchase

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Abstract

This research examines data on 454 participants from the millennial generation. Through the theory of uses and gratifications, the researchers analyze how content strategies employed by the Snapchat impact the use and sharing of content. In addition, motivations for impulsive purchases are analyzed. This exploratory study uses quantitative methodology through an applied survey. The researchers make use of partial least squares structural equations (SMART-PLS). The results contribute to the theory through the identification of gratification factors such as interaction, relationship management, purchase savings, information, interactivity, easy access to content, distraction, creativity, fun and dynamism.

Keywords: content strategy; sharing; gratifications; use; impulsive buying.

JEL codes: M310, M370, M390.

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探讨千禧一代消费者：通过使用Snapchat应用满足理论及其对即兴购物的影响
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文章摘要

本论文通过使用与满足理论，对454位千禧一代参加者的数据进行分析，分析内容策略如何通过Snapchat影响内容的使用与分享。此外，论文同时分析刺激即兴购物的各种因素。本研究为探索性研究，通过应用问卷进行定量研究。研究人员使用偏最小二乘法的结构方程（SMART PLS）进行分析。研究结果以找出满足因素来形成理论，有如互动性、关系管理、消费节省、资讯、相互作用、取得内容简易性、娱乐性、原创性、趣味性及活力。

关键词: 内容策略、分享、利用及推动即兴购物。

JEL 分类号: M310、M370、M390。

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1. Introduction

Through the Theory of Uses and Gratifications (U & G) the researchers maintain as a research objective to analyze how content strategies through Snapchat are related to the use and shared contents. Secondly, they analyze how the use of Snapchat impacts the contents that are shared to generate motivations for impulse purchases. Through the review of literature and analysis of results, important contributions are presented about the gratifications that Snapchat content generates in its users. This study contributes with the discovery of information of vital importance on how the new social platforms like Snapchat, have changed the communicative environment and the strategic change through the communicative tactics. With more than 300 million active users, over 90 billion videos that are shared and viewed, also generate five times more click provoking marketing actions than any other social media, Snapchat is the fastest growing global platform among the younger generations (Snapchat, 2017). Millennial are a generation that has grown in immediate gratification, they expose themselves as impatient, even on their own (Sweeney, 2005). Although social networks share the functions of traditional means of providing content to users, there are differences in the relationships between users and content (Song & Yoo, 2016; Elefant, 2011). Okazaki *et al.* (2013) explains that network capacity, image transfer and personal extensibility provide businesses with new opportunities to be effective in reaching consumers. Even the use of a social media can have the positive effect on a user, provoking an attitude towards the future of the brand (Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2016).

2. Content Strategy on Snapchat

Snapchat projects visual content as if they were words that fade after the expression, with the future promise of erasing all messages (Soffer, 2016). On the other hand, Snapchat as an interactive social media allows users and brands to send images, videos and text, where the recipients will have a limited time to access these contents before being destroyed (Vaterlaus *et al.,* 2016). Then the content strategy for purposes of this research is defined as the creation and distribution of images, videos and text that are valuable, relevant and consistent which results in attracting and retaining a segment. The data from Snapchat (2017) show that Millennial are the most used group of the popular social network and achieve 5% more clicks on marketing actions than other social media. Sweeney, (2005) explains that millennial consumers expect a greater number of options and selectivity; they want more personalization; they look for good purchases at a low price; they have less need to conform and expect instant gratification. Therefore, the format of the content will be relevant to impact consumer acquisition (DeVries, Gensler and Leeflang, 2012). Then the interactive content and multisensory stimulates in the Millennial degrees of selectivity to access these contents since they provoke instant gratifications. The

few studies on Snapchat detail that its model of ephemeral content provokes in the user the impulse to share and interact more quickly these contents, since it receives instantaneous gratifications (Utz *et al.*, 2015). Therefore, an ideal theoretical framework that can provide answers is the Theory of Uses and Gratifications (U & G).

2.1. Use & Gratifications

Millennial are a generation that has grown in immediate gratification, they look like impatient (Sweeney, 2005) Park *et al.* (2009) establishes that the use of social networks is based on the needs and gratifications of users Lim & Ding (2012) explain that the use and gratification theory (U & G) provides a theoretical basis to understand the attitude and intention of consumers to use social media from the perspective of communication, so the theory seeks to explain how a means of communication is used to satisfy needs and analyzes the motivations all behaviors (Ruggiero, 2000; Wang & Yang 2011; Karimi *et al.*, 2014; Quan-Haase, 2012; Quan-Haase & Young, 2014). The theoretical framework applied to U & G must analyze the motivations and behaviors in two aspects: (a) factors that drive the use and (b) demographic factors (Karimi *et al.*, 2014). Hartmann *et al.* (2017) expose in their study of Millennial and brands in social media, that use is based on experiences, entertainment, information and participation. On the other hand, Snapchat reflected higher levels by spending time, sharing and improving social knowledge (Phua *et al.*, 2017). It is even established that the social environment significantly impacts the use of social networks (Song and Yoo, 2016; Elefant, 2011; Pelet *et al.*, 2017; Wang *et al.*, 2013). However, a lack of scientific studies on Snapchat is identified, which allow us to understand the behavioral impact that content gratifications can generate through use. So the researchers propose the first group of hypotheses.

H_1: The gratifications that motivate Millennials in the content of the strategy throughout Snapchat have a positive impact on the use of Snapchat.

H_2: The gratifications that motivate Millennials in the content of the strategy throughout Snapchat have a positive impact on the sharing of brand content.

2.2. Share Contents

Okazaki *et al.* (2013) detail that companies face a dynamic and interconnected environment, where content strategies are more personalized according to the characteristics of the target segment. Although social networks share the functions of traditional media in providing content to users, there are differences in the relationships between users and content (Song & Yoo, 2016; Elephant, 2011). Pellet *et al.* (2017) states that in order to motivate Millennial to share with brands, content must

be created taking into account the expectations of their target audience. Researchers define sharing as any action that causes exposed content in the user, resulting in a greater reach of a message. According to Snapchat statistics (2017) the platform contributes with more than 10 billion videos, which are viewed daily. Its focus on content is through a dynamic, creative communication and the use of storytelling, augmented reality and dynamic content that seeks in its users the expression of itself. Zhang *et al.* (2017) details that the active use of social networks in Millennial and the influence of the environment greatly influences the intentions to get involved with their experiences. Therefore, content sharing generates more commitment to brands (Frady, 2017). Then several advertising offers will seek an immediate reaction in the consumer, which can encourage actions to be shared through the rewards generated by the content exposed.

2.3. Snapchat Use

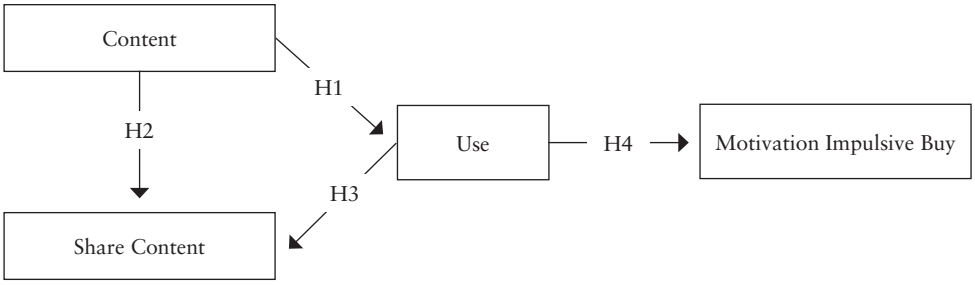
The use of snapchat is defined as any online service through which users can create and share a wide variety of content. In the case of Snapchat, the use is more associated with the connection it generates with the user (Piwek & Joinson, 2016). The extent of the use of social media increases the activity and interaction of consumers with brands and the ways in which they communicate (Mitchell *et al.*, 2016). Liuhan *et al.* (2016) argues that younger consumers maintain a greater commitment to brands and the way they communicate. Other researchers reveal that a greater relationship with the brand results in greater participation and interaction with the contents (Kohler *et al.*, 2011, Mitchell *et al.*, 2016, Wang *et al.*, 2007). Fun, relevant and entertaining content are some of the factors that drive actions to share (Rohm *et al.*, 2013). Anderson *et al.* (2014) explain that interaction has consequences in the behavior of a consumer, since it becomes the antecedent of another. The behavior of using social media is dynamic since it is constantly changing and changing in an accelerated way (Boyd & Ellison, 2008; Krishnamurthy & Dou, 2008). Then, the message self-destruction modality has become the norm and companies have adapted to the limited attention capacity of these consumers (Ekman, 2015). Greater interaction with the brand results in greater participation and involvement with the contents (Kohler *et al.*, 2011, Mitchell *et al.*, 2016, Wang *et al.*, 2007). On the other hand, sharing personal experiences and experiences of consumption can promote impulse buying behavior (Ho *et al.*, 2017). These antecedents raise the following hypotheses for researchers:

- H_3: Millennials' gratifications with use Snapchat have a positive impact on sharing branded content.
- H_4: Millennials' gratifications with use Snapchat have a positive impact on impulsive purchase motivations.

2.4. Impulsive Purchase Motivation

Impulsive purchasing behavior is defined as a sudden, hasty, urgent and hedonistic purchase, where the rapidity of the impulsive purchase decision excludes reasoning and prevents Consideration of all the information and the selection of alternatives (Jurado, Sejnaui, and Uribe 2011, Martín and Prodanova 2012, Dawson and Kim 2009). Soro (2014), states that impulse purchases generally attend to low-cost products. These arguments of the author are of interest, since Millennial consumers are characterized by seeking more options and good purchases at low cost (Sweeney, 2005). Studies show that the content strategy can capture the consumer as they extend beyond the perception of price (Alcázar 2010), and the image of the brand (Barboto and Sánchez, 2013). The Snapchat content model such as ephemeral offers, discount coupons, dynamic communication, and fresh, fun and real brand content can drive the purchase conversion faster. Sashittal *et al*. (2016) explains that Millennial and the use of ephemeral content allows for greater linkage. This means that the purchasing actions are being influenced by the new social media with a different communication strategic approach in order to take advantage in decision making (Song & Yoo, 2016 & Heinrichs *et al*., 2011; Hastings & Saperstein 2010). Then decision making begins when the consumer needs, wants or wants to engage in buying and consumption behaviors, in response to certain stimuli (Molla *et al*., 2014). After completing the literature review, the researchers develop the following research model that can be seen in Figure 1 that guides the study.

Figure 1. Research model



Source: Prepared by the researchers.

3. Method

Researchers develop a quantitative study via a survey applied to Snapchat users of the generation millennial living in Puerto Rico. The experimental study used a simple transversal type technique through a research model developed by the researchers

and based on the research objectives. The data are analyzed using SMART-PLS to arrive at the conclusions of the study.

3.1. Instrument & Data Collection

The research instrument was developed by the researchers in fusion to the research model and the literature review. The instrument was validated by a panel of experts and an initial pre-test was performed on 70 participants with the same characteristics of the study population. The final version had 6 constructs for content strategy, 4 for content sharing, 5 for use and 8 for impulsive purchase motivation. The participation requirement is that they were men or women born between 1980-2000 that belong to the millennial generation, where their age range must be between 18 and 35 years old at the time of data collection. Participants should be active users of Snapchat social media. The data was collected through an electronic survey where a total of 454 surveys were used for the analysis process. Where the most significant demographic data reflected 61.83% of the participants were women n = 277 and 38.17% were men n = 171 and 47.46% n = 215 were university students.

3.2. Reliability & Validity

Table 1 summarizes reliability and validity of the study. The discussion begins with the analysis of alpha coefficients. The data reflects ranks between .76 to .92 which meets the criterion of .70 (Nunnally's, 1978. Malhotra 2010, Hair *et al*., 2016). The second step was to analyze the indicators of the measurement model (loading factor) in order to measure the internal consistency for each assertion. The results reflect a high consistency in the indicators where the data reflect loads on the criterion of .70 (Hair *et al*., 2011 and Hensley, Ringle & Sinkovics, 2009). Lastly, validity was analyzed in the reflexive measurement model. This was analyzed through convergent validity and composite reliability. The data reflect AVE values on the criterion .50 and composite reliability on the criterion of .70 (Hair *et al*., 2014).

Table 1. Validity and Reliability Study

Dimensions	Code Variable	Factor Loading	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha	AVE
Content	CONT	0.788 0.745 0.816 0.809 0.736 0.702	.89	.86	.58
Share	COPA	0.774 0.727 0.783 0.771	.84	.76	.58
Use	USO	0.830 0.888 0.838 0.807 0.829	.92	.89	.70
Motivation Impulsive Purchase	MOTI	0.747 0.861 0.823 0.863 0.757 0.768 0.850 0.805	.93	.92	.65

Source: Elaborated on SMART-PLS data.

3.2.1. Discriminant Validity

The next step was to analyze that there is no significant variance between the different variables that could have the same meaning. Table 2 presents the analysis employed by *Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) Analyzes*. The HTMT results reflect being below the criterion of .90 and is congruent according to the criteria of Henseler *et al*. (2015), Hair *et al*. (2016) so it does not indicate problems between variables that could have the same meaning.

Table 2. Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) Analyses

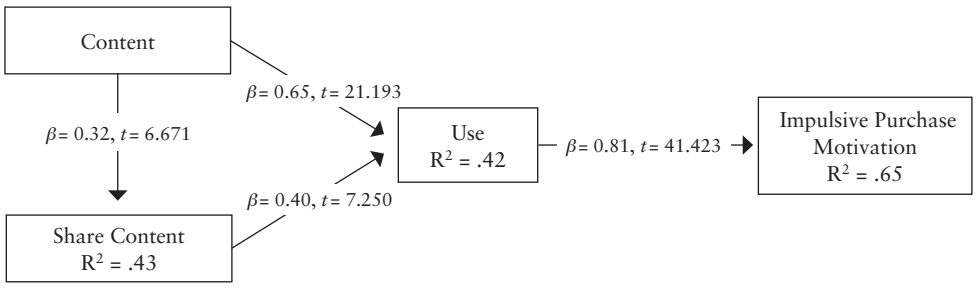
	Content	Motivation Impulsive Buy	Share Content	Use
Content				
Motivation Impulsive Purchase	0.747			
Share Content	0.708	0.708		
Use	0.730	0.887	0.735	

Source: Elaborated on SMART-PLS data.

4. Results

The summary of the results can be seen in graph 2. In general, the results show a high predictive power. The analysis begins by analyzing the gratification that the content strategy through Snapchat generates in the Millennial, which have a positive impact towards Use (H_1 $\beta = 0.65$, $p < 0.01$, $t = 21.193$, $t > 1.28$ and the sharing of brand content (H_2 $\beta = 0.32$, $p < 0.01$, $t = 6.671$, $t > 1.28$) of Snapchat, so the first group of hypotheses is supported, the results reflect how the content strategy causes gratifications in the users, which will have an impact greater on the gratification of needs and the connection with the brand through the use ($t = 21.193$) than the content sharing ($t = 6.671$) of Snapchat. The second part of the analysis focuses on analyzing whether the gratification through the use of Snapchat by Millennial have a positive impact on sharing branded content (H_3 $\beta = 0.40$, $p < 0.01$, $t = 7.250$, $t > 1.28$). Similarly observe the impact that has towards impulsive purchase motivation (H_4 $\beta = 0.81$, $p < 0.01$, $t = 41{,}423$, $t > 1.28$). So both hypotheses are supported. The data reflects that the use of Snapchat in Millennial to interact, manage relationships and information about brands, gratifies the unique needs of its users. This will result in greater receptivity which will positively impact the impulsive purchase motivation. In the same way this gratification of particular needs through use, will encourage its users to share these contents.

Figure 2. Measurement Model Results



Source: Elaborated on PLS & *Bosstraping* data.

5. Discussion

Snapchat (2017) maintains the expression of self as a value promise. This promise of value becomes the first contribution to the theory since it becomes the first factor of gratification of needs. Katz *et al.* (1973) explains that the theory is based on social and psychological factors. They also detail that the theory also explains the expectations of content consumption and how the gratifications satisfy these needs. Then interactivity, easy access to content, distraction, creativity, fun and dynamism are identified as another group of factors that contribute to the theory by explaining sources of gratification. The gratification is based on the way a medium satisfies needs and how it matches the expectations of the audience (Katz *et al.*, 1973, McQuail, 1993, Sundar *et al.*, 2013). By meeting these needs, the Millennia's will participate more actively as the communicative model generates connection on the reasons for use. Sundar *et al.* (2013) explains that the use implies an action and is not only based on a passive reception of the message. So the ephemeral content and the publication with immediacy become two new factors of gratification, reflecting a new discovery and the most important contribution to the theory. Once gratification is achieved its users will cause the sharing of content more quickly and stimulate a behavior through the satisfaction of needs. Sweeney (2005) explains that millennial consumers want more personalization and expect instant gratification. Then the interactivity between consumers and the brand is based on experiences, entertainment, information and active participation (Hartmann *et al.*, 2017). Reason why to understand relevant factors of gratification and the communication model of Snapchat to explain how a means of communication is used to satisfy the needs and motivations in certain behaviors (Karimi *et al.*, 2014; Quan-Haase, 2012, Quan-Haase & Young, 2014).

5.1. Contributions to Marketing Practice

In the practice of marketing, this research presents a new perspective on how to communicate more effectively with specific target groups. In the first place, companies must understand that the level of attention of the new generations has been dramatically reduced, where ephemeral and short-term video generates greater involvement with the brand and drives faster conversion. The statistics of Snapchat (2017) establish that they achieve marketing actions 5% more than other social media. So Snapchat becomes the ideal space to communicate with Millennial. Then, ephemeral offers strategies, discount coupons, dynamic communication, fresh, fun and real content will be relevant to connect with Millennial in new social media. Moore (2012), states that Millennial are more active in the integration of technologies in their daily lives for marketing purposes. However, companies must understand the factors of use and how they drive the gratification on the selected target market. Horst (2011), explains that cultural expressions have produced a generation of young people

willing to share more in social media. So today's companies must understand that Millennial consumers are more creative and receptive in the new environment, where they will be more interested in participating, sharing and modifying all types of content (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

5.2. Limitations

Among the limitations of the study is the lack of scientific research on the use of Snapchat and Millennial. Another limitation is the collection of data under a cross-sectional method. Given the constant change of social media platforms and how to communicate the longitudinal design may allow future researchers to see if there are changes over time. On the other hand, this strategy may allow future researchers to observe patterns of causality and reduce problems of bias. Araguen (2007) argues that to overcome these limitations should focus on how the researcher simplifies the experience, training and socialization through the recommended methodology. Finally, the researchers did not consider another group of variables such as intensity of use and level of participation, which may allow future researchers to better understand the behavior of Millennial through the use of Snapchat.

5.3. Future Research

It can be recommended to analyze the conditions that encourage or inhibit the use of social media (Bolton *et al*., 2013). This study is interesting because it will allow an in-depth analysis of the use variable. It is also recommended to analyze the ability to link brand management and its impact on geographic boundaries and how it relates to linking and interaction. This study is of interest in order to understand the behavioral factors of millennial consumers according to their geographical area.

6. Conclusions

Snapchat keeps the promise of being a social medium as the expression of itself. Then this new communicative change of Marketing is a subject that should be explored even more. This study contributes to the discovery of vital information on how new social platforms such as Snapchat, become an ideal marketing space to connect with younger generations. In addition, the study provides important information through the identification of factors of how new communication strategies change the way to attract younger consumers. In the end, the researchers raise the need to expand additional research on new communicative models that impact the behavior of Millennial consumers.

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