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CATÓLICA
PORTUGUESA

CONSUMERS' PERCEPTION OF PERSONALIZED MARKETING
CONTENT AND ITS IMPACT ON THEIR ENGAGEMENT

Internship Report submitted to Universidade Católica
Portuguesa to obtain a Master's Degree in
Communication, Marketing and Advertising

By

Aurora Danieli

Universidade Católica Portuguesa

September, 2024



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Abstract

The present internship report explores how consumers perceive personalized marketing content and how it impacts their engagement with the brand within the context of geolocation-based content in food delivery applications. The attentive literature review together with the internship experiences contributed to shaping the research questions investigated in this study. The first research question evaluates consumers' perception of personalized marketing content in Food Delivery Applications. The second research question explores how personalized marketing content in Food Delivery Applications affects customers' engagement and loyalty. Both questions have been investigated through a quantitative methodology, consisting of a survey submitted to a chosen sample.

According to the key findings, consumers appear to enjoy personalized content since the majority expressed a generally positive attitude, with most of the sample describing it as relevant, useful, and valuable to enhance their customer experience. In addition, participants expressed a fair level of comfort in using their private data for personalized marketing content in the food delivery application. However, concerns related to trust in data management practices represent areas for improvement. Lastly, most of the sample did not indicate personalized marketing content as a primary factor in selecting specific food delivery applications.

With respect to consumer brand engagement (CBE), results revealed that personalized marketing content drives a moderate level of CBE. While this content typology can attract interest, receptiveness, and moderate levels of brand connection, it fails to boost high levels of enthusiasm, impact engagement on a deeper level, and maintain it long-term. In conclusion, personalized marketing content improves some aspects of CBE but showcases difficulties in reaching its complete potential. Still, it plays a significant role in fostering customers' loyalty, motivating them to keep using and recommending food delivery applications.

Keywords: Personalization; Personalized marketing Content; Consumer Brand Engagement; Geolocation; Food Delivery Application

Resumo

O presente relatório de estágio explora a forma como os consumidores percebem o conteúdo de marketing personalizado e o seu impacto no envolvimento com a marca no contexto do conteúdo assente na geolocalização em aplicações de entrega de comida. A atenta revisão bibliográfica, juntamente com as experiências de estágio, contribuíram para moldar as questões investigadas neste estudo. A primeira pergunta de partida avalia a percepção dos consumidores sobre o conteúdo de marketing personalizado em Aplicativos de *food delivery*. A segunda questão da pesquisa explora como o conteúdo de marketing personalizado em aplicativos de entrega de alimentos afeta o envolvimento e a fidelidade dos consumidores. Ambas as questões foram investigadas através de uma metodologia quantitativa, consistindo em um inquérito submetido a uma amostra selecionada.

De acordo com os principais resultados, os consumidores parecem apreciar o conteúdo personalizado, já que a maioria expressou uma atitude geralmente positiva, com a maioria da amostra descrevendo-o como relevante, útil e valioso para melhorar a sua experiência enquanto consumidores. Além disso, os participantes expressaram um nível razoável de conforto no uso de seus dados privados para conteúdo de marketing personalizado no aplicativo de entrega de alimentos. No entanto, as preocupações relacionadas com a confiança nas práticas de gestão de dados representam áreas para melhoria. Por último, a maioria da amostra não indicou o conteúdo de marketing personalizado como um fator primário na seleção de aplicações específicas de entrega de alimentos.

Com relação ao envolvimento da marca do consumidor (CBE), os resultados revelaram que o conteúdo de marketing personalizado impulsiona um nível moderado de CBE. Embora esta tipologia de conteúdo possa atrair interesse, receptividade e níveis moderados de conexão com a marca, ela não consegue impulsionar altos níveis de entusiasmo, impactar o envolvimento em um nível mais profundo e mantê-lo a longo prazo. Em conclusão, o conteúdo de marketing personalizado melhora alguns aspetos do CBE mas apresenta dificuldades para atingir seu pleno potencial. Ainda assim, desempenha um papel significativo na promoção da lealdade dos consumidores, motivando-os a continuar a utilizar e a recomendar aplicações de entrega de comida.

Palavras-chave: Personalização; Conteúdo de marketing personalizado; Envolvimento do consumidor com a marca; Geolocalização; Aplicação de entrega de comida

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Introduction

The ongoing advancement of digital technologies has favored and fastened brands to integrate personalization into their marketing strategies. This technological shift has enabled companies to collect, analyze, and implement private data into tailored marketing initiatives and communications, leading to accurate and impactful customer interactions (Dawn, 2014). As a matter of fact, with the employment of digital technologies such as the Internet, data storage, and analytics, brands are more effective in capturing customers' attention (Paulo Rita et al., 2004). As a result, these developments have enabled companies to invest more in personalization, facilitating its rise in the marketing field (Aksoy, 2021).

One key technology that has supported the previously mentioned ascent is Geolocation, which refers to the instrument that identifies the physical location of an object or a person by employing location data provided by GPS-enabled devices (Nikparvar, 2014; Pedro Palos-Sanchez et al., 2018). Through geolocation systems, companies can access large amounts of data in real time, revealing users' current location (Estes, 2016) and enabling them to deliver personalized messages based on the geospatial data obtained (Leanplum, 2019).

Thanks to these features, geolocation has become an essential part of modern marketing initiatives, as it enables companies to employ location data to generate personalized marketing initiatives (Farb, 2011; Cardoso, 2011). With this approach, brands can address consumers' demands more effectively, increase their engagement (Saini et al., 2023), and improve the efficiency of marketing campaigns (MarketingProfs, 2019). In this regard, geolocation systems offer valuable insights into customers' behavior, allowing companies to adjust their strategies accordingly (Ovramenko, 2023).

Regarding consumers, geolocation improves their shopping experience (Tarabsz et al., 2017) by providing them with information, offers, and promotions based on their real-time geographic location, way of living, and consumption habits from a geospatial perspective (Cardoso, 2011). Moreover, with geolocation systems implemented in social media platforms, users can exploit such location data to connect meaningfully, express their identities, and cultivate valuable relationships (Su et al., 2012). However, the incorporation of geolocation-based systems in social platforms has provoked the emergence of ethical concerns (eMarketer, 2015). Due to the widespread of smartphones and social media in

people's lives, their location is constantly being tracked, posing significant privacy and safety issues (Sultan, 2018). As a consequence, companies are required to be transparent concerning the collection and the process of private data (Boshell, 2019).

After having outlined one of the technologies that contributed to the arrival of personalization in marketing, it becomes important to introduce the concept of personalization. Personalization is the procedure of providing customers with products, services, offers, or content based on their specific needs, preferences, and behaviors. It consists of using private data to generate a more personalized customer experience (Aksoy et al., 2021) in line with their demands and desires (Nobile et al., 2023). Among the benefits that brands can access through personalized marketing are increased revenue, customer loyalty, and an overall improved brand experience (Arora et al., 2021). The advantages, just pointed out, emphasize how essential personalization is in modern marketing strategies for companies (Adobe Experience Cloud Team, 2023).

As a matter of fact, the importance of personalization has relevantly risen in the current competitive business landscape, which has resulted in companies need to find innovative strategies to stand out from the competition, draw customers, and consequently maintain their edge (Chandra et al., 2022). At the core of this new challenge is the increase in consumers' expectations of personalization (Experience Cloud Team, 2023), driven by their intrinsic need to be acknowledged, understood, and valued by brands on a more personal level (Ocak, 2023). To face the competition in the market, meet this demand, companies have indeed begun to invest and apply personalization in their strategies by collecting private data to tailor their offerings and communications to consumers (Chandra et al., 2022).

In light of this first introduction to geolocation and personalization, this internship report narrows its investigation on a specific study object: food delivery applications, which represent a typology of application that employs geolocation technology to deliver personalization. These platforms employ user-provided location data to provide customers with tailored experiences, encompassing features such as recommendations, promotions, real-time tracking, and faster delivery based on the most efficient path to reach users' current location (Shankar et al., 2021). However, similar to other forms of personalization, food delivery applications can provoke contrasting reactions from users concerning data privacy and management (Food On Demand, 2021).

These concerns mentioned before are a significant part of the debate concerning the ambivalent reactions caused by personalized approaches, revealed by the analysis of the literature review chapters. From one point of view, personalization enables brands to provide customers with tailored content in line with their preferences, thereby improving their customer experience and increasing engagement (Tong et al., 2020). On the other hand, personalized strategies elicit significant privacy concerns related to data collection methods, treatment, and their further employment for marketing initiatives (Lambillotte & Poncin, 2023). In this regard, two main theories have been considered: “the personalization-privacy trade-off” (Karwatzki et al., 2017: 372) and the “personalization-privacy paradox” (Zeng et al., 2021: 668). The first pertains to users’ willingness to exchange personal data for perceived benefits and thus, value. The second refers to the constant tension between the advantages and the privacy concerns that personalization raises.

The previously outlined debate concerning the ambivalent perceptions of consumers towards personalized marketing content represents the first research problem to which this study aims to contribute. More specifically, this research focuses on understanding consumers’ perceptions of personalized marketing content in food delivery applications, which employ geolocation technology to deliver tailored content to users’ locations. However, this study is not limited to addressing this issue, it also contributes to a second research problem raised by an additional ongoing debate concerning Consumer Brand Engagement, or CBE.

Despite the broad presence of engagement in marketing studies, scholars have consistently encountered difficulties in defining Consumer Brand Engagement, or CBE, correctly (Brodie et al., 2013). The lack of agreement on the definition also appeared in the CBE driving factors and outcomes, which became part of the second research problem investigated in this study. As a matter of fact, this research proposes itself as a contribution to the debate concerning CBE antecedents by hypothesizing that personalized marketing content could be a potential one. According to Arora et al. (2021), personalization plays a significant role in retaining long-term engagement and loyalty as well. Personalization represents a chance for companies to engage with their consumers (Aguirre et al., 2016) since this approach provides them with hyper-tailored experiences and communications (Harvard Business Review Analytic Services, 2018) based on a deeper knowledge of the consumers (Britt, 2020). Concerning geolocation content, Saini et al. (2023) highlighted that marketing strategies based on location data enable companies to address their target

desires efficiently and, consequently, increase their engagement. As a result, personalized marketing content could be a potential factor in improving CBE in food delivery applications.

As noted previously, this lack of scholars' consensus extended to defining a common scale measurement scale. In the third chapter, the main CBE scales from the literature are presented and discussed, with particular interest in the Dwivedi scale developed in 2015, selected to measure CBE in this study. Dwivedi proposed an innovative approach for evaluating CBE, based on three main aspects including vigor, dedication, and absorption, and he identified loyalty as an outcome of CBE (Islam and Rahaman, 2016). Given that authors such as Arora et al. (2021) stated that personalization holds a role in driving loyalty, this research has taken into account to measure loyalty as well. Thus, this study addresses the impact of personalized marketing content on both consumer brand engagement and loyalty.

After introducing the main concepts, and the two research problems investigated in this study, it becomes imperative to present the structure of this internship report by highlighting the content of the three chapters of the literature review, the research approach, and the methodology selected to explore them. The literature review provides an extensive theoretical framework for the three main concepts analyzed in the study: Personalization, Geolocation, and Consumer Brand Engagement (CBE). The first chapter addresses the historical development, significance, history, benefits, different classifications of personalization, and the privacy concerns related to data collection, providing a comprehensive understanding of how personalization has changed to adapt to the dynamic needs of consumers and businesses. Geolocation evolution, application in the marketing field, and general features are discussed in depth in the second chapter, which aims to delineate the importance of location in marketing strategies. Lastly, the third chapter explores the concept of Consumer brand engagement by focusing on its evolution, antecedents, outcomes, and measurement scales.

With respect to the methodology, the study has adopted an interpretive philosophy since the knowledge collected through the research is socially constructed and dependent on the context of the participants. The variables investigated in the study, including perception, engagement, and loyalty, significantly depend on and are shaped by the social context of the

individuals. Moreover, it allows us to obtain more context-specific insights rather than generalizable theories to apply in the field since it contributes to existing literature and debates.

The research approach selected is deductive since the study disposed of theories and hypotheses (Hassan, 2024). to test through the data collection method chosen, analysis, and discussion. The two research questions, objectives, and hypotheses presented in the methodology chapter are investigated through a quantitative method, consisting of numeric data collection obtained through a survey submitted to the chosen sample. The findings are subsequently evaluated through a descriptive analysis and the discussion to reveal significant insights on the subject. The insights mentioned before are transformed into conclusions in the seventh chapter, which presents the final responses, limits, and suggestions related to the study. Lastly, the descriptive memory of the internship report, composed of a description of the internship context, role, and the main conclusions gathered from the experience, is presented in the last chapter.

To conclude, this introduction has comprehensively delineated the key research problems selected for the investigation, together with the structure of the internship report, which begins with the first three chapters of the literature review, then moves to the methodology, data analysis and discussion, conclusions, and finally, the Internship descriptive memory.

Chapter 1 : Personalization in Marketing

1.1 What is personalization, how it is applied to marketing, and which benefits can generate its implementation

“People today expect personalization” (Harvard Business Review Analytic Services, 2018, p. 1), as a consequence, companies are now required to include personalization in their strategies, if they want to maintain their edge on the competition (Chandra et al., 2022) and boost their business results (Harvard Business Review Analytic Services, 2018). According to a recent survey undertaken by McKinsey & Company, all organizations that master personalization successfully can achieve “40 percent more revenue from those activities than average players” (Arora et al., 2021, p. 2).

This personalization expectation, that businesses must meet, originated from the emergence of an underlying customer need identified by marketers (Chandra et al., 2022): “Consumers expect brands to demonstrate they know them on a personal level” (Arora et al., 2021, p. 4). Other factors that facilitated its spread was the emergence of a need among customers to be “seen and understood” (Ocak, 2023: 50), as well as to believe that the company is listening to them and is genuinely interested in them (Dodda, 2022). Indeed, consumers demand companies learn about them, comprehend their interests, and acknowledge them as individual beings to make them feel unique (Arora et al., 2021). As a result, companies should be aware of all the touchpoints with their customers to gain extensive knowledge of them (Chandra et al., 2022) and develop suitable personalization strategies (Valdez Mendia et al., 2022).

However, the significant propagation of personalization was triggered not only by the recent changes in customers’ needs but also by the rapid growth of new digital technologies (Chandra et al., 2022). The latest have indeed fastened the incorporation of personalization processes into organizations, as a result of their application into the generation and the delivery of valuable tailored offers (Pffiffelman et al., 2022). But before delving more into detail into the reasons that have contributed to determining the value of personalization in organizing strategies, it’s essential to define what personalization is.

Over the years, several authors have depicted the concept of personalization differently (Aksoy et al., 2023). As a matter of fact, personalization has been studied by a wide range of disciplines, including "marketing, computer science, architecture, information science,

social sciences, education, and production engineering" (Kaneko et al., 2018, p. 834). As a result, its denotation has been constantly evolving, making it difficult to provide a comprehensive and unique definition of the term.

It makes sense to start by comparing previous definitions of personalization to more modern denotations of the term. In 1999, Peppers and Rogers delineated personalization as the practice of tailoring some characteristics of items or services to enable the client to appreciate additional accessibility, discounts, and other advantages. In a similar perspective, in 2000 Hanson included personalization as a typology of product discrimination, and he also emphasized the personalization capability of customizing offerings for a determined individual (Vesanen et al., 2006). Only one year later the researcher Doug Riecken depicted the concept of personalization as a tool for generating customer loyalty through one-on-one interactions based on the comprehension of each customer's demands and the achievement of an objective that satisfies each individual's demands in a particular situation (Adomavicius et al., 2005)

However, several subsequent authors have focused more on the personalization concerning communication content, rather than the differentiation of product offerings. As depicted by Coner in 2003, personalization is managed by organizations and it relies on combining tailored content with defined customers (Vesanen et al., 2006). In the same year, Roberts stated that personalization has been characterized as the procedure of generating specific communication for an individual grounded on declared or implicit predilections (Chandra et al., 2022), a description that emphasizes the application of personalized practices to the creation of communication content.

More recently the Oxford Dictionary has stated the word personalization as "the action of designing or producing something that meets someone's individual requirement" (Chandra et al., 2022, p. 1529). From a similar perspective, Valdez Mendia and Flores-Cuautle have described personalization as the organization's capability to acknowledge the singularity of each customer and deal with it accordingly (2022). Both previous definitions point out the value of personalization in providing tailored offers by taking into account consumer individuality, an aspect also supported by Nobile and Cantoni when portraying personalization as a procedure based on matching something to a person's requirements and desires (Nobile et al., 2023).

Other definitions of the concept associate the mentioned value of personalization with an important component in building customer relationships (Lambillotte & Poncin, 2023), namely customer experience. According to Aksoy et al. (2021), the term refers to the practice of employing customer data to generate a more tailored customer experience. A vision also supported by Tileagă and Oprișan, who identify personalization as a critical tool in the implementation of improved "customer experiences according to what their target market is" (Tileagă & Oprișan, 2021, p. 89).

The different perspectives presented in the preceding paragraphs attest to the broadness of the personalization concept, which can be further clarified by outlining its differences with the term customization. Both personalization and customization indicate the procedure of tailoring content (Lambillotte & Poncin, 2023) and products for each customer (Nobile et al., 2023), therefore these two terms are often used interchangeably. Despite their similarities, personalization and customization represent two distinctive processes. Personalization is commonly regarded as a general term that incorporates customization as one approach to developing it (Fan & Poole, 2006). The same perspective has been supported by other authors such as Imhoff et al. in 2001, who also portrayed customization as an element of the personalization approach.

According to Montgomery & Smith (2009), personalization can be referred to as a "company-initiated concept" (Lambillotte & Poncin, 2023, p. 215) since customers don't directly manage the creation of tailored content. In other words, through personalization, marketers take advantage of consumers' information and insights to conform the marketing mix to customers' preferences, resulting in personalized offerings fitting the client's desires (Chandra et al., 2022). Customization, on the other hand, is pointed out as a "customer-initiated concept" (Cavdar Aksoy et al., 2021, p. 2), because it significantly relies on customers to develop customized content that satisfies them (Lambillotte & Poncin, 2023) and more focused on the buyer (Wind et al., 2001). As explained by Montgomery & Smith (2009), in the customization process customers own direct control over the production of content in line with their interests.

To conclude, one of the main objectives of personalization is to deliver "the right content in the right format to the right person at the right time" (Tam et al., 2006, p. 867), and to accomplish this request, it employs an automated process (Cavdar Aksoy et al., 2021).

Thanks to automation, marketers can implement tailored content from customer data (Lambillotte & Poncin, 2023). Customization is often regarded as being built on the customers' query (Montgomery and Smith, 2009), and it is more related to the generation of retailers' strategies to discern physical products (Nobile et al., 2023). The customization approach enables companies to obtain preferences from customers and, thereby provide offerings as much as possible in line with them (Arora et al., 2008).

After having provided further clarification of personalization through the analysis of past and present definitions of the term as well as having explored the differences with customization in the preceding paragraphs, it is necessary to ultimately apply the concept to marketing, as the focus of this internship report is related to this field. The application of personalization in marketing has resulted in a significant shift from traditional marketing, which relied on "one-size-fits-all" (Ocak, 2023, p. 49) marketing tactics to attract a wider audience, to a form of marketing centered on the customer and on generating relevant interactions (Ocak, 2023). This significant shift was partly triggered by the marketers' need to distinguish their industry as a result of the intensification of the market competition worldwide, the persistent menace of budget cuts caused by the economic downswing (Dawn, 2014), and the advent of innovative manufacturing technologies (Goldsmith & Freiden, 2004).

Before the emergence of one-to-one marketing strategies, marketers employed traditional marketing, also appointed as mass marketing. This conventional approach depended on the management of demands and aimed to attain extended customer segments by providing expensive and general marketing campaigns (Dawn, 2014). These campaigns were displayed in mass media and were characterized by a narrow ability to target (Ocak, 2023). The inefficiency in creating content that coheres with most of the consumers was caused primarily by a lack of private information and limited interactions with companies (Dawn, 2014).

The advancement of digital marketing technologies has enabled companies to converge an ample amount of private data (Ocak, 2023), which was consequently stored and analyzed to provide personalization. Moreover, thanks to the spread of the Internet, businesses have augmented their interaction with users, their awareness of their preferences (Goldsmith & Freiden, 2004), and their receptiveness to them (Deighton, 1997). As a result of the

improvement in marketing and data-gathering capabilities, companies have started to assign their target audience to different segments according to demography, geography as well as wider criteria and employ marketing techniques based on consumers' demands, predilections, and attitudes (Ocak, 2023). As it becomes clear, the employment of personalization in marketing has led to a revolution in market segmentation as well as the delivery of a more tailored form of communication throughout all new media (Aguirre et al., 2016).

Despite the recognition of Personalized Marketing as “the key to success” (Strycharz et al., 2019: 636) of the digital era by eMarketer in 2018, organizations have only recently recognized the importance of personalization in the definition of their strategies, and as a result, company investments in this process have significantly increased (Chandra et al., 2022). This growing and acknowledged value of personalization can be easily traced into the wide range of benefits that companies can access through a more personalized strategy.

One of the first assets that companies can benefit from is increased income (Adobe Experience Cloud Team, 2023). According to Murthi et al. (2003), personalized marketing tactics can relevantly impact a company's revenue by augmenting transactions. An example to support this thesis is the personalization of a shopping experience, which can drive customers to reiterate their purchases, and the businesses that implement tailored experiences report a significant rise in the number of transactions, customer retention, as well as profit per negotiation (Murthi et al., 2003). On a similar perspective, Paulo Rita et al. (2004) have stated that the combination of digital technologies and personalized strategies can result in assets such as boosting incomes, cutting down expenses, and expanding the dimension of the corporate market. This latest statement has been supported also by the authors Pan and Yang (2022), who added that the provision of more tailored services allows the company to acquire an edge over the market competition, and increase its marketing achievement rate.

Apart from economic benefits, personalization has the potential to generate positive feedback from customers (Cavdar Aksoy et al., 2021), therefore businesses that implement personalization strategies have more possibilities to boost satisfaction, loyalty, and purchasing likeability (Lambillotte & Poncin, 2023). To the previous list highlighting some benefits released by the employment of personalization, Strycharz (2019) mentioned

additional ones such as an enhanced rate of responses, and greater compelling influence. The mentioned favorable results stem from the customers' perceptions of receiving more useful content (Tam et al., 2006), hence reducing their “cognitive overload” (Ansari & Mela, 2003, p. 131). However, these beneficial effects can be analyzed from a more psychological standpoint.

According to Petty et al. (2002), personalization practices are capable of building a tie between the individual self and the message present in the content, and the link can be attributed to self-referencing. In other words, customers tend to privilege items or concepts that are more related to them, resulting in positive reactions to messages that refer more to themselves (Pfiffelman et al., 2022).

Another aspect of personalization that makes it valuable in today’s business environment is the enhancement of clients’ experience (Tong et al., 2020), and the consequent driving advantage in customer relations (Pfiffelman et al., 2022). According to Ho and Lim (2018), businesses are recently delivering a broader range of ways to consume their experiences, thereby generating benefits for both (Pfiffelman et al., 2022).

In a survey carried out in 2018 by Epsilon is stated that “eighty percent of customers” favor dealing with companies providing them with proposals and communications extremely personalized (Gilman, 2022). Indeed, personalization is perceived as a basic demand in all forms of interactions with businesses, and, as such, it represents the key to retaining long-term engagement and loyalty (Arora et al., 2021). Consumers prefer to deal with companies offering them a more satisfying customer experience, and the more satisfying the customer experience is, the more likely the leads will turn into loyal consumers (Adobe Experience Cloud Team, 2023). As a matter of fact, the satisfaction releases a long-lasting impact on customers, who will become attached to the brand in the long run (Adobe Experience Cloud Team, 2023) and, correspondingly, the company can profit from positive word of mouth and thereby improved brand reputation (Murthi et al., 2003).

Consequently, enterprises today have a great strain because if customers do not enjoy the experience given, they have the option of switching to something offered by a different company. This negative outcome is shown in a survey undertaken by Mckinsey & Company, which revealed that “over three-quarters of consumers” (Arora et al., 2021, p. 5) perceive tailor-made communications as a driving agent in reckoning a company, while 78 percent

(Arora et al., 2021) affirmed that they are more inclined to buy again from a brand if such personalized content occurs. Concerning these statements, previous studies show that tailored content is assumed to be more remarkable and compelling content than common one, and customers are more likely to be more attentive to tailored content and employ it for the process of carrying out decisions (Lambillotte et al., 2023).

To conclude the listing of personalization benefits, it's important to mention the advantage that its implementation can bring to the companies' platforms. The adoption of personalized strategies can assist organizations in creating additional channel consistency, indeed, to be perceived as truthful and credible by customers, the brand should implement a consonant and more common tone throughout all platforms (Adobe Experience Cloud Team, 2023).

All the mentioned benefits generated by personalized marketing have further upgraded thanks to the parallel advancement in digital technology. Customer-centric aspects define digital technologies such as the Internet, data storage, and analytics, and thanks to them brands can reach client's attention more effectively than before their introduction (Paulo Rita et al., 2004). In addition to the overall advantages outlined, technology advancements have brought about relevant changes in specific areas of personalized marketing. According to Suman Kumar Dawn (2014), new technologies have had a substantial impact on four major aspects: targeting, messaging, execution, and delivery.

In the phase of targeting, it is now possible to obtain a comprehensive perspective of a consumer by merging data coming from an extensive range of formats, places, and platforms across the company (Dawn, 2014). The merging of data processing devices facilitates businesses in conducting "customer analysis, segmentation, and profiling" (Dawn, 2014, p. 352). The second influenced area is messaging, which represents a crucial tool in attracting customer's attention. Messages can now conform to consumers' features such as their predilections, transactions, or current life situations, and their reactions to each content section can be easily tracked (Dawn, 2014). The third area impacted is execution, which consists of finding out the ideal time to approach a client for a product proposal. During this step, marketers can uncover potential opportunities by identifying when a consumer is most responsive to communications, thereby improving customer satisfaction (Dawn, 2014).

The last personalized marketing aspect is the delivery of individualized messages, which is a key strength in the definition of a customer-company connection (Dawn, 2014). Marketing

professionals may now conduct all types of communications, including "scheduled campaigns, event-driven programs, and real-time conversations with customers across multiple channels - including electronic and print" (Dawn, 2014, p. 372), and can build an integrated strategy aiming to deliver an optimal offer to single customers at the best moment and on their favorite platform.

Nowadays, organizations are able to strengthen their personalized marketing efforts as a result of technical advancements. Thus, it's undeniable that the progress of digital technologies has substantially enriched the employment of personalization and its ascension in the marketing field (Aksoy, 2021).

1.1.1 Marketing Personalization Classification and Types

The previous subchapter clarified the roots of personalization as well as its definition in the marketing field, but to keep gaining a comprehensive understanding of marketing personalization it makes sense to investigate also how it can be classified. In this regard, by considering the typology of information transmitted between organizations and clients, personalization is possible to be classified into three categories – a proposal developed first by Fan and Poole (2006), and then improved by Aksoy (2021), and by Chandra et al. (2022). Indeed, the segmentation of personalization into three dimensions has been extrapolated from their literature, as follows:

1. Individual-level personalization: It consists of an individual-focused method based on the combination of personalization tactics that take individual behaviors, responses, and predilections (Aksoy et al., 2023) into account. According to Aksoy (2023), this form of personalization can be ulteriorly divided into 2 practices, namely past digital behavior and attitudes and preferences. The first one indicates the gathering of individual data from the consideration of user's digital actions accomplished in the past and the employment of this information to generate personalization. Examples of the mentioned digital actions can be represented by past purchases, reviews, sites visited, social media posts, likes, and comments (Aksoy et al., 2023). As also indicated by Unver in 2017, past digital behavior refers to all the user interactions occurring in a digital environment, such as social networks. The second practice of individual-level personalization refers to the collection of private data by considering users' present digital actions or what they prefer and how they

behave to create specific personalization for them (Chandra et al., 2022). According to Spiekermann and Van de Garde-Perik (2002), chatbots as virtual assistants can be outlined as an example of individual-level personalization, which can be also created with data provided directly by users by demanding their predilections (Kwon et al., 2012).

2. Social level personalization: This typology is strictly related to the surroundings of the individual, particularly the social environment in which he is involved (Chandra et al., 2022). In this regard, both physical and digital social groups are considered. According to Aksoy (2023), social-level personalization gathers personal information by analyzing the social context, together with his judgments on it, to produce suitable personalization. E-commerce platforms and social media networks are two platforms that have made extensive use of this type of personalization (Chandra et al., 2022). A lot of e-commerce platforms pursue the relevance of social impact in customers' behavior in defining social groups, who are thought to share analogous predilections and shopping patterns and are thus suggested with comparable product offerings (Li & Karahanna, 2012; Schroeder, 2014). According to Ochi et al. (2010), this typology of information is employed to break down similarities in alike customers and allocate them to comparable user groups. Along with e-commerce, this personalization typology is commonly utilized in social networks, with the addition that individuals with similarities are studied by examining both known and unknown users (Li and Karahanna, 2012; Chung et al., 2016).
3. Situation-based personalization: Differently from the others, this form of personalization depends on the conventional environment surrounding the individual and so, the circumstances in which he is involved (Chandra et al., 2022). Time and location are employed to define the individual current situation and, thereby they are included in situation-based personalization (Fan et.al, 2006). The first relies on the collection of personal information based on the actions accomplished by the individual at a specific time, while the second gathers data from the position of the individual (Aksoy et al., 2023). Both environmental elements are believed to be essential facets of personalization (Schilke et al., 2004). One example has been outlined by the authors Ho and Chau (2013), who have pointed out the receipt of

location-based messages near a specific store as a form of situation-based personalization.

In addition to the classification proposed previously, other authors have classified personalization according to its process. In 1997, Peppers and Rogers were regarded as the precursors of the four-stage personalization process theory, which included “customer identification, need identification, customer interaction, and product customization” (Chandra et al., 2022, p. 1536).

Subsequently, the four-stage personalization process should be reduced into three. According to Murthi and Sakar: the personalization process needed to be composed of only three stages: “learning, matching, and evaluation” (Aguirre et al., 2015, p. 36). The first step is dedicated to the gathering and analysis of private data, which facilitates the company in apprehension of customers’ preferences and interests (Aguirre et al., 2015). In agreement with the Digital Marketing Institute, to obtain valuable data, it is essential first to identify data-collection techniques (Digital Marketing Institute, 2017). Once they are defined and the necessary data is gathered, companies can determine insights and models by using analytic devices, such as learning algorithms (Mehta, 2023). The insights, extracted from clients' information, are employed by the enterprise to lay out product offers that mostly resemble market needs, and deliver them to the most suitable segment in the market (Murthi et Al., 2003). The outlined actions are part of the matching stage, which implicates the tailoring of consumers' experiences.

Lastly, the third stage concerns the evaluation of the personalization strategy implemented through the learning and matching stage (Aguirre et al., 2015). In this final step, companies should be able to assess the value created for them and their clients through the personalization process and determine how to improve it (Murthi et al., 2003). In the digital context, the evaluation step converts into the assessment of personalized strategies' efficacy with quantifiable tools, including click-through rates (Aguirre et al., 2015).

The personalization process was further investigated in 2006 by Jari Vesanen and Mika Raulas, who analyzed different precedent literature on the subject and synthesized their common features in a more comprehensive model. The authors have identified nine common elements, presented in all the descriptions of personalized marketing as crucial for its execution: “customer, dialogue with customer, customer data, analyses of customer data,

customer profile, customization, marketing output, delivery of marketing output, and systems” (Vesanen et al., 2006, p. 8). However, they decided to include only eight factors in the synthesized model, as follows:

1. Customer: Represents the foundation of personalized marketing. As a matter of fact, individual demands and predilections are the drivers for tailored offers, and their difference determines a variety of customer segments (Vesanen et al., 2006).
2. Customer Data: There are numerous sources from which private data can be gathered, but the following can be considered the main ones: “: (a) customer interactions, changes, or opportunities in existing customer status; (b) external data sources that provide new potential; or (c) matching external data with internal customer data” (Vesanen et al., 2006, p. 10);
3. Processing: The treatment of data acquired from the previous elements results in the generation of client profiles, which are employed to segment customers. This process has been facilitated by emerging techniques such as “data-mining, neural networks, and fuzzy logic” (Vesanen et al., 2006, p. 10);
4. Customer profile: By evaluating clients' information, attitudes, and interests, companies can build customer profiles that differentiate them based on what they prefer (Vesanen et al., 2006);
5. Customization: The above-mentioned profiles are used in the personalization of marketing outcomes (Vesanen et al, 2006);
6. Marketing Output: It is the result of the personalization process;
7. Delivery: It refers to how the client receives the personalized marketing output. The choice of the platform for the delivery depends on consumer’s preferences.
8. New interaction: The delivery of the marketing output induces the customer to respond, and this response represents a new form of engagement with the company, which will be able to acquire additional data on the customer and define a more precise profile.

All these elements are combined into a circle that constantly progresses and has become quicker through technological advancements. In this regard, businesses have begun to progressively focus on a typology of personalization that is real-time or dynamic (Vesanen et al., 2006).

Following this same reasoning line and according to the literature, personalization not only can be classified into distinctive categories, but it can also assume a variety of typologies due to the wide range of platforms through which it can be delivered, such as websites, emails, e-commerce channels, search engines, social media, mobile apps, messages and beyond (Murthi et al, 2003). As stated by Murthi and Sarkar (2003), one of the most frequent personalization forms is product suggestions. This statement is supported by the survey carried out by Harvard Business Review, which discovered that recommendations together with product offerings are the domains with the highest application of personalization (Harvard Business Review Analytic Services, 2018).

Following product offerings and suggestions, companies also make use of promotional offers, usually delivered to specific customers through "email, surface mail, and telemarketing" (Murthi et al., 2003, p. 2). Two other approaches are targeted banner ads displayed on websites and the personalization of website pages. The latest is used by companies to provide customers with personalized online experiences by tailoring landing pages on their websites in agreement with the target's interests. According to a national poll performed by the CEO of Jainrboain, Larry Drebes, approximately 74% (Bump, 2021) of users perceive a feeling of frustration when engaging with website content not aligned with their interests. As a result, the customization of website content represents a key factor in attracting customer attention and consequent engagement with the brand.

All the antecedent paragraphs highlighted only a few examples of types of classification and typologies since many other authors are focusing on different ones from the ones presented previously. Thus, it becomes clear that personalization is a wide and versatile concept that can be introduced by different categories, and formats, as well as delivered through a significant number of channels. Since users tend to interact with brands throughout numerous platforms, companies should implement an omnichannel approach in their personalization strategy (Hopkins, 2022). In this way, customers can be reached wherever they find themselves, rather than wherever the brands envision them to be (Hopkins, 2022).

1.2. Data collection, consumers privacy concerns and government regulations

Following the analysis of the personalization and personalized marketing fields, it becomes relevant to address the data collection practice, as well as the privacy concerns and regulations deriving from it. Indeed, their inclusion in the chapter dedicated to

personalization is to be reconducted to the role of data in providing critical information to implement personalized strategies.

The art of collecting and analyzing data has become a cornerstone in today's world driven by data, which allows businesses to reach clients as never before (Dawn, 2014). In this regard, companies dispose of customer touchpoints equipped with systems and platforms able to record and insert private information into vast databases (Segijn et al., 2021). As a result, massive volumes of data can be collected from all sorts of interactions with customers, and thanks to the ease of Internet access, as well as the proliferation of mobile devices and applications, it is easier to track online user actions (Pan & Young, 2022).

The omnipresence of data access occasions (Zanker et al., 2019) in both digital and offline environments represents a valuable asset in the company toolset. Private data enable organizations to enhance strategic decisions quality, and business value (Duan et al., 2022), as well as profile users and deliver hyper-personalized experiences and communication based on a better understanding of customers (Harvard Business Review Analytic Services, 2018). These forms of personalization represent an opportunity for companies to encourage customers to engage with them (Aguirre et al., 2016).

According to Chen, the current era of Web 3.0 (Zanker et al., 2019) traces the emergence of new procedures for interacting and methods that transcend tools and settings, such as algorithms. The latest is able not only to conform user interface functionality and content delivered to the data collected but also can learn from the contact with customers (Harvard Business Review Analytic Services, 2018) as well as determine the time and the way to interact with them (Zanker et al., 2019). These advancements, together with the business benefits comported by data, have prompted organizations to invest in data collection and analysis (Duan et al., 2022). These investments aim to deliver greater personalization (Aguirre et al., 2016), and to drive business income (Harvard Business Review Analytic Services, 2018). However, to implement personalization and achieve such benefits, organizations need to retrieve valuable information about those consumers (Aguirre et al., 2016).

Companies dispose of two distinguished strategies for acquiring data: overt and covert data collection (Aguirre et al., 2015), also known as explicit and implicit data collection (Lambillotte & Poncin, 2023). The first pertains to users' awareness of their personal data

registration (Sundar & Marathe, 2010) at a particular moment, given that the organization explicitly informed the customer of the collection (Aguirre et al., 2015). As such, it means that customers consciously share private information, for example by filling out a digital form (Lambillotte & Poncin, 2023) or by disclosing a personal email address (Aguirre et al., 2016).

On the other hand, covert information collection implies the gathering of private data without users' consciousness, and it usually occurs during the navigation of the customer on the Internet (Aguirre et al., 2015). An example is the tracking of users' online activities to capture their interests and profile them (Kim et al., 2018). Covert information is usually gathered discreetly, and this discreetness allows companies to obtain "unbiased data" (Aguirre et al., 2015: 36). While this approach can benefit consumers by not interrupting their online navigation, it can also pose significant concerns. By not being aware of their data being registered, customers tend to experience a loss of control over their information and start to perceive the company as deceptive (Aguirre et al., 2016). Consequently, customers expect companies to be more transparent, and it represents a demanding task for businesses that privilege covert information methods (Aguirre et al., 2015).

Data-driven personalization can elicit both positive and negative reactions at once (Lambillotte & Poncin, 2023). Despite the recognition of personalization value in easing their accessibility to more tailored content and hence a better experience online (Duan et al., 2022), users may still raise privacy concerns regarding the way their data is obtained and processed. Positive reactions and attenuation of privacy concerns can be reached, if customers recognize the benefits of personalized content and experience based on their data (Aguirre et al., 2016). The "personalization–privacy trade-off" (Karwatzki et al., 2017: 37) indicates the willingness of users to divulge data and make use of personalized offerings in exchange for a specific benefit that outweighs their privacy concerns (Karwatzki et al., 2017). Indeed, when users are provided with personalization that resonates with their demands, they tend to feel more attracted and less annoyed by them since they recognize their utility (Duan et al., 2022).

Furthermore, customers are more likely to agree to tailored solutions whether the business reveals the justification behind the employment of their private data in the offer (Aguirre et al., 2016). Former researchers have in fact studied systems to improve transparency such as

" Information-use transparency features "(Karwatzki, 2017: 372), which enable consumers to be aware of the type of private data gathered as well as the manner and the purpose for which the information will be treated by the company (Karwatzki et al., 2017). As a result, these transparency mechanisms can decrease privacy distress and augment the use of personalized services by improving customers' perception of the procedure as fair and promoting cooperation (Karwatzki et al., 2017).

However, if companies fail to provide users with transparency attributes, and gather personal data without any apparent obligation, users tend to guard their data limits and resist disclosing their information (Karwatzki et al., 2017). In fact, if justifications are not given, customers will start to be doubtful concerning the company's intentions (Aguirre et al., 2016) and their privacy risk perception will rise (Duan et al., 2022). Customers tend to assume that the organization has a deceiving objective, such as gathering an excessive amount of data and trading it to third parties. These suspicions can lead to lower engagement, brand reputation, and customer satisfaction (Duan et al., 2022). Consequently, privacy issues can damage the company by increasing users' risk sensation, and reducing their trust (Van Slyke et al., 2006), thereby affecting corporate income.

The negative response of customers toward the employment of their data is based on "cognitive reasoning" (Aguirre et al., 2015, p. 35), which involves assessing the advantages and drawbacks of granting organizations access to their personal information (Awad and Krishnan, 2006). Despite this cognitive analysis, customers frequently react instinctively to stimuli, rather than engaging in in-depth reflections. Their discernment suffers as a result of their rapid reactions. For example, according to Cloarec et al. (2022) and Bornschein et al. (2020), customers may disclose relevant information without completely comprehending the corresponding and estimating the trustworthiness of their personal data for personalization.

To safeguard customers' personal data in the face of increasing privacy threats, governments stipulated specific policies concerning the matter. In Europe the General Data Protection Regulation, also known as GDPR, was established first in 2016, to be subsequently enforced in 2018 (Segijn et al., 2021). The GDPR demarcates the limits of data security for European users, it involves all worldwide organizations interacting with customers' private data from Europe, and therefore these organizations must conform their operations pertained to data and get involved in transparent information (Kumar, 2018). Another example of legal

progress concerning data privacy is "California Consumer Privacy Act" enacted in the USA. It imposes substantial transparency obligations (Segijn et al., 2021) on all companies involved in data gathering and treatment activities as well as reinforces and protects customers' right to have authority over their private information (Segijn et al., 2021).

As mentioned previously, governments have stipulated legal regulations concerning customers' privacy protection. As such, companies must exercise caution in the way they employ data, not just to prevent negative reactions from consumers, but also to follow data privacy rules (Segijn et al., 2021). In the Harvard Business Review study, at least one-third of participants stated that their companies have increasingly invested in "data management, consent tools, or legal or data experts in response to GDPR" (Harvard Business Review Analytic Services, 2018, p. 7). However, many customers prefer to exercise their own privacy authority rather than rely on industry or government rules (Aguirre et al., 2016).

1.2.1 Personalization-privacy Paradox

Studies on personalization have brought about clues concerning significant privacy concerns prompted by the exchange of potential personalization advantages and risks, also recognized as the "personalization-privacy paradox" (Zeng et al., 2021, p. 668). It alludes to the constant conflict between the organization's demand for private data to implement personalized customer experiences and customers' requirements for privacy (Cloarec et al., 2022). This prior definition was later modified in 2023 by the authors Lambillotte & Poncin, who referred to the paradox as the strain between the benefits and the privacy worries that personalization might provoke.

These tensions generated in the personalization-privacy paradox have escalated with the scent of new technologies employed to record and profile in delivering personalization (Zeng et al., 2021). Marketers accumulate and treat "identity-related consumer data, such as email addresses, location, demographics, or lifestyle details" (Karwatzki et al., 2017, p. 370) to deliver personalized online navigation and experience to their users, although the mistreatment of this information may raise privacy concerns (Cloarec et al., 2022).

As a matter of fact, there have been cases in which organizations have been conducting personalization activities based on data gathered without users' consent, as a consequence of not having distributed statements such as guarantees of privacy and statements concerning personalization (Zeng et al., 2021) or not having required users' authorization. These

unauthorized activities can generate a feeling of discomfort and anxiety among consumers (Zeng et al., 2021). Records of the mentioned mistreatments of private data have become more frequent, particularly because individuals' attitudes towards privacy haven't been modified, despite their rising concern about it (Cloarec et al., 2022).

Due to the negative consequences caused by the paradox, many professionals have been investigating potential solutions to it. Information systems researchers have outlined more technical instruments such as “local privacy-safe application and the optimal feature selection method” (Zeng et al., 2021, p. 669). While authors such as Fue et al. (2021) have proposed the “self-disclosure” method, which consists of granting the choice to divulge and access data from the company to the customers. This practice allows consumers to receive personalization built on disclosed data, and as a result, it increases the likelihood of engaging as well as the possibility of building a relation with the organization that is more intimate, interactive and mutual (Zeng et al., 2021).

Two effective strategies related to self-disclosure are privacy guarantee and personalization statements (Hui, Teo, & Lee, 2007). The first supports users in evaluating the privacy risks by defining the liability of the organization in protecting their personal information, thus creating a feeling of control over these risks in the customers. The second is employed to state the advantage that the company can bring to the consumers, to encourage their agreement to self-disclosure (Zeng et al., 2021). Indeed, according to Aguirre et al. (2016), despite their difficulty in being fully comprehended by consumers, personalization declarations are considered effective since they can even induce individuals to divulge more personal information.

All the solutions proposed in the previous paragraphs share a main value, which is to build up customers' trust in a strategic way (Aguirre et al., 2016). Together with control over private data, consumers' trust is determinant in relieving their distress concerning privacy and as such should be included in the company toolkit (Lambillotte & Poncin, 2023).

Chapter 2: Geolocation

2.1 Location's Significance, Geospatial technologies, and the Evolution of Location Based Services

“Tell me where you live, and I will tell you who you are” (Ramadani, 2017, p. 100), with these words, Ramadani perfectly captures the pivotal role of location in defining individuals' identities. Thanks to the progress in location-based technologies, it has become possible to track users' positions constantly, no matter when and where (Junglas et al., 2008). This technological progress has built up the potential for location to affect multiple facets of people's lives, making it a valuable asset in today's interconnected world and a great source of interest due to its vast scope of application and influence (Raper, 2007).

As portrayed, location owns a remarkable value nowadays, but it will not be possible to talk about it without exploring more in detail the technologies that have enabled its race to the top. For this reason, it becomes essential to start with the definition of location-based services, to continue with their history and developments until today. According to Huang et al. (2018), the appearance of the first Location-based service was led back at the beginning of the 1990s, even though it became a field of research solely at the start of the 2000s (Mohammadi et al., 2021). This delayed consideration of Location Services as a study subject is attributed to the cessation of the limited use of Global Positioning Systems, also known as GPS, for purely military purposes (Huang et al., 2018).

In 2000, specifically in May, the former president of the United States Bill Clinton declared GPS public availability, resulting in its increased responsiveness to both civil and commercial users all over the world (Satirapod et al., 2001). From that occasion, GPS-enabled applications have emerged, contributing to raising the curiosity of academics and industry to Location Based Services (Brimicombe et al. 2009). On the same line, Mohammadi et al. (2021) stated that the advancements in technology based on position, along with users' accessibility to service networks in motion, have brought about the localization of services.

According to Junglas and Watson, localization-based services refer to services considering the “geographic location of an entity” (Junglas and Watson, 2008, p. 67). When the authors mentioned the term “entity”, they meant to indicate the being, whether human or not, provoking the release of information concerning location. Moreover, location-based services

always call for the participation of a minimum of two entities, and one of them is designated as the subject whose geographic information is collected (Junglas et al., 2008). One year later, Bricombe and Chao (2009) have amplified the definition of Location Based Services, or LBS, to mobile computing applications providing personalized information based on the geographic position and the setting of both the individual and the device employed.

In an analogous perspective, the authors presented in the subsequent paragraphs have associated the LBS notion with the application. According to Yun et al. (2013), LBS can be seen as “commercial applications” (Yun et al., 2013, p. 194) relying on geographic location and positioning data to offer customers valuable services, which include tailored information, transactions, and entertainment based on their current location. However, in the same year, Ahmad Dar & Alam Khan elaborated an alternative definition of LBS, describing it as “information services” (Ahmad Dar and Alam Khan, 2013: 194) possible to access with mobile devices through the network and that avail the possibility to exploit the mobile device location. According to Pedrana (2014), LBS can be indicated as services crafted on consumer geographic position and derived from the spread of mobile technology. A concept that was already introduced by Steininger, Neun, and Edwardes in 2012 when they designated LBS for all the services that can be entered through mobile networks.

More recently, LBS have been identified as technologies strongly relying on the monitoring of the current location to work, thereby one of their main advantages is local-ability, which derives from the combination of its dependence on both time and position (Yun et al., 2013). Users’ positions, both geographic and physical, are constantly tracked and employed to deliver activities and services. Once and if the user gives free access to its location, LBS can make use of the GPS installed in its mobile device by determining its real-time position. So, in other words, LBS can be associated with any services availing of current geographic data from mobile devices, such as smartphones, to deliver knowledge, amusement or safety (Freedman, 2023)

In the research field of LBS, an essential discernment lies between location traffic services and location-aware services. According to Freedman (2023), the first typology of service divulges geographical information on the user to external entities. On the other hand, the second provides the user with requested information and personal data related to his geographic position. In another perspective, location-aware services can be appointed also

as a computing system, operating to deliver the user with services created on his real-time whereabouts (Pedrana, 2014).

However, this distinction of LBS is not the only one present in this research field. In 2020, Gravitare Inc. outlined three stages delineating Location-Based Services evolution (Koeppel, 2021). The first included all the services requiring the manual entering of the position by the user inside the system. The second refers to the ones able to identify the position automatically, but with limited accuracy. The third marked an enhancement from the second, by determining users' location automatically with a higher degree of accuracy and providing the users with informational content or events related to the geographical position. Building from this classification, Britt (2020) categorized LBS as pull-based and push-based. The first one delivers geographic information to the device upon demand from the user, whereas the second one provides information without a user's direct involvement.

After having cleared the definition of Location Services and their distinction between location traffic and location-aware services, it becomes evident the significant part that geospatial technologies have assumed not only in the creation but also in the functionalities of LBS. As a matter of fact, some geospatial technologies were nominated previously, necessitating to provide a comprehensive overview of the main ones.

Geospatial Technologies encompass models able to precisely forecast the physical position of the users and contribute to the development of geospatial applications including “search tools, event detection, disaster response management, targeted advertising, and security application” (Pappas et al., 2018, p. 1). Among the considerable amount of such technologies, GPS ranks in the first position, since it results difficult to comprehend the development of LBS without recognizing its essential role (Raper et al., 2007). GPS is the acronym for Global Positioning System, and as mentioned before, it belongs to the category of location traffic services. It consists of a multitude of satellites built for detecting objects, both static and in motion, all over the globe to facilitate orienting and coordinating in a physical area (Madleňák, 2021). All the devices equipped with GPS receivers can connect and communicate with at least four of the satellites. The result of the connection is the individuation of the device's real-time location and immediate indication to navigate (Freedman, 2023).

Another member of the traffic location category is the Wi-Fi, which has a slightly different way of working from GPS. Indeed, devices can adhere to only one Wi-fi network at a time, and it employs IP addresses to monitor geographic data (Freedman, 2023). All the networks are supplied with IP addresses, which act as location addresses, allowing them to be localized and their information to be transmitted through the internet framework (Diaz, 2022). As a result, when a user device connects to a WI-fi network, it combines with its IP address, enabling Location services to determine his actual location. A similar tracking base is in QR Codes, or quick response, which are technologies renowned for their rapid data restoration and apparatus to control mistakes, resulting in efficient data decoding (Martinez et al., 2011). Once a device scans a QR code, it immediately registers all the accessible information from the scanning, and thereby through each scan the device's position is identified (Freedman, 2023).

The propagation of this location traffic and aware technologies empowered the implementation of an extensive amount of ramified technology applications, from content and services customized on the users' physical position to the employment of cloud archiving to synchronize devices across a wide range of mobile platforms as well different places for the users (Estes, 2016). A lot of these apps constantly monitor individuals' real-time location to deliver essential services. However, there exists a category of applications that, rather than offering such services, utilize the collected data to arrange more effective communication approaches (Kamiya et al., 2021).

As it is possible to notice from the previous paragraphs, with the introduction of geospatial technologies and applications, the field of LBS has seen significant transformations. Firstly, the prompt evolution of empowering technologies, including mobiles and telecommunication. Secondly, the emergence of novel interfaced technologies such as empowered smartphones, smartwatches, or augmented reality (Ratti et al., 2016). Lastly, LBS has growingly invaded people's daily lives, impacting notably the way they interact with each other as well as their attitudes in different environments (Huang et al., 2018). From this last perspective, it is crucial to analyze in detail the role of mobile devices in LBS from their emergence until today.

Companies have experienced a substantial growth of mobile technology in their business. In 2018 Comscore reported that the number of smartphones has overcome the number of

notebooks in several countries, including the USA, Brazil, and the UK. This increment in the prevalence of smartphones among the population discloses a worldwide tendency towards the usage of mobile devices, which accounts for a larger share of web browsing (Kamiya et al. 2021). On a similar perspective, Paolo-Sanchez et al. (2018) stated that among all devices, smartphones result to be the ones employed the most to enter networks. A point of view that has been lately shared by Van de Sanden et al. in 2019, when they stated that smartphones could be recognized as the “most powerful and widely adopted device” (Van de Sanden et al., 2019, p. 1514) for users to get in connection in any place and at any time.

The increase in connection has been demonstrated by World Meter Online in 2019, in which it was shared an estimation stating that by 2030 almost 50 billion connected devices will be present in the world (Liu, 2019). This quick and frenetic rise of connectivity has contributed to augmenting the unlimited entry to information, also for decision-making enhancement purposes (Van de Sanden et al., 2019). According to a survey conducted by eMarketer in 2018, in Cina, the USA, Norway, and Russia, digital channels have not only become the primary channel but have also conquered the primate of “the dominant ad medium in expenditure” (Kamiya et al., 2021, p. 200).

Smartphones have surely impacted companies, but they have also assumed a critical role in consumers’ lives (Kamiya et al., 2021) since they represent the most widespread device owned by individuals nowadays (Fulgoni et al., 2016). Indeed, according to Palos-Sanchez et al. in 2018, the most employed technology to connect to the internet from everywhere are mobile devices, and such represent a crucial source for users, who nowadays need to be constantly connected. Mobile technology advanced rapidly in the late 1990s, with social networks, automation, mobile payments, and e-commerce among the most notable examples (Parasuraman et al., 2015). As a result of these additional features, consumers have widely adopted this type of technology, using it for diverse purposes: expenses, payments, research, and communication with other people. For these reasons, they represent a valuable resource of data for companies to enhance their conversion rate (Fulgoni et al, 2016).

Since e-commerce channels have become more prominent, the ascent of mobile commerce has provided companies with the opportunity to reach customers with a more efficient action (Kamiya et al. 2021). Indeed, the widespread use of mobile devices, and hence digital communication, has surfaced as an indispensable component of the shopping experience

within and beyond the shops (Pantano et al., 2018). What marketers and researchers gathered from all these technological progress in the mobile field is the importance of fully comprehending them in order to grasp the qualities of the modern digital consumer (Madleňák, 2021).

Smartphones have made easier the delivery of LBS besides having expanded their possibilities (Jardar et al. 2015). The implementation of GPS and Bluetooth technologies into smartphones has attracted the interest of marketers, who have recognized the opportunities coming from them. Through location-based technologies, mobiles can be tracked, and customers can be reached “whenever and wherever they are ready to buy” (Kenny et al., 2000, p. 119). This assertion is also supported by Ding et al. (2023), who affirmed that mobile devices represent a prospect for enterprises to monitor potential leads and deliver information custom on their current physical position.

Apart from influencing the buying decision path, smartphones’ location functions have contributed to the emergence of new communication methods relying on the customers’ geographical position (Kamiya et al. 2021). Mobile devices enable marketers to obtain insights on marketing events in ways that were impossible previously, given that smartphones can access users’ real-time location, along with a considerable amount of data collected through them (Madleňák, 2021).

More recently, social media have become an important mobile device instrument at users’ disposal. Indeed, as individuals use their phones for more aspects of their lives, they have begun to overshare their day-to-day experiences and to enter connection with their social network via their smartphones (Tussyadiah, 2012). Social networks enable the communication and the creation of communities in different social contexts, on the other hand, mobile devices allow the mentioned experience to be real-time and widespread (Hazimeh, 2020). In addition, location-aware technologies enable them to become “context-aware”, and as such allow users to gain and display current information related to the context for procedures of decision-making related to generic experiences of consumption (Tussyadiah, 2012). Examples of actions that user can accomplish include: share a wide range of content with geotags, show their real time location publicly, comment on events happening a specific location in the same moment, or leave feedback for a location. Among location based applications Furini et al. mentioned “Foursquare, Facebook, Google+,”

Twitter, and Instagram” (Furini et al., 2015, p. 4). These applications give user the ability to share, connect with people they know and obtain advertising based on their geographical position.

In the presented social media landscape, the physical location of a user can be detected from user-willing access to applications or from the technology embedded in the applications, such as GPS or IP addresses (Furini et al., 2015). According to Madleňák (2021), the commercialization of location-based services relies on an active and a passive technique/strategy. In the first one mentioned, the users willingly grant consent to his localization, and the marketing professional must respect his privacy settings. While in the second approach, all the mentioned activities are undertaken by software. Disregarding the method employed, the outcome obtained consists of content conformed to the geographic location of the user geographical location where the person generated it (Furini et al., 2015).

To conclude, as it is evident from previous paragraphs, the importance of location is far from being novel, rather, it has been a persistent factor throughout history, evolving alongside technological advancements. Indeed, the development of location-based services technologies, as well as the dynamic changes in the social media landscape, which it integrated with innovative location-based features, have further established and elevated the pivotal role of location.

2.2 Location based marketing and its ascent in the marketing landscape

In today’s dynamic marketing field, location Data has emerged as the new frontier of personalization, and as such it is considered one of the most misconceived in the field (Czarny, 2018), with marketing professionals still having difficulties leveraging it in an effective way (Forbes Agency Council, 2017). However, according to Britt (2020), marketers are increasingly being entrusted with becoming data-driven professionals, and data based on location serve as tools for empowering them in every stage, from having a deep knowledge of the audience and engaging with them, to evaluating the outcomes of their strategies and consequent success. Hence, this type of information enables marketers to craft more tailored marketing strategies, which integrate physical position and behavioral targeting (Bernitter et al. 2021).

In agreement with the latest statement, Hendricks (2018) indicated Location Based Marketing as one of the most prominent newly embraced approaches of marketing. Given

that marketing revolves around providing customers with value through products or services, the growth of Location-based marketing into a decisive member of the modern business landscape didn't come as unexpected (Bansal, 2023).

A terminology often employed to point out Location Based Marketing is Geomarketing. As elucidated by Miller in 2019, this term refers to geography, analogous to the geographic position of the user, from which location-based marketing is derived. Since the advent of geographic position determination, location has become a significant part of Marketing. Indeed, as noted by Act-On (2015), the study of geographic position in the marketing area can be traced back to the 19th century, when the definition of a specific location was made possible through the address.

From that moment, it has been required for businesses to incorporate their location into their marketing activities to provide clients with instructions to get to the company and accomplish purchases of their products or services (Britt et al., 2020). This same information was also employed by businesses and marketing professionals to obtain access to more critical areas and markets, setting the ideal strategy to target. Consequently, the location became the perfect marketing tool to reach potential leads in their current location rather than relying on their impending arrival at the company itself (Munoz, 2019).

That final realization has led to the recognition of a great marketing value to the knowledge of customers' geographic position (Hendricks, 2018) since it enables companies to identify and connect with clients at the right moment and place (Miller, 2019). As a matter of fact, according to Hazimeh, location-based marketing can be condensed into a few words, "putting your business in front of customers when they are most interested in buying your product or service" (2020: 50), increasing the probability for a potential lead to purchase from the business itself. Once a customer accesses an area of shopping, he immediately turns into a potential lead. This particular occasion becomes crucial for companies, as it represents an opportunity for businesses to engage with them with a relevant message that will ultimately induce them to accomplish a purchase (Kurtz et al., 2021).

After the exploration of Location-based marketing roots, also known as Geomarketing, it becomes imperative to delve deeper into its definition and uncover its evolution according to a review of this specific literature. One of the earliest definitions of the term dates to 2000 when Nattemberg described Geomarketing as a marketing notion extended by the disclosure

of the geographical affiliations of all organizations' facets, and facilitated by the incorporation of geographical information systems (Ramadani, 2017). One year later Latour amplified the previous description by encompassing Geomarketing as a system projected to generate valuable information for the process of decision-making through instruments integrating "digital cartography, graphs and tables" (Baviera-Puig et al., 2016, p. 1207). Furnishing an elaborate method for assessing the physical position of the target enables the attainment of superior profitability (Latour et al., 2001). From a similar viewpoint, Amparo Baviera-Puig (2016) appointed Geomarketing as the employment of Geospatial Technologies to collect and examine location data to facilitate retail conclusions aimed at satisfying consumers' demands and accomplishing a profit at the same time.

According to Geodan in 2004, Geomarketing can be viewed as a tool within the marketing domain, expanding and reinforcing marketing actions. It includes a comprehensive set of analyses and applications that, when paired with the organization's geospatial information and other mapped data, can enhance marketing initiatives (Ramadani, 2017). Other authors, such as Jaradat et al., emphasized the ability of Geomarketing to elevate marketing activities. In 2015 they described location-based marketing as a category including all applications, services, or campaigns reliant on geographic position aiming at providing and improving marketing services or communications.

When pointing out marketing initiatives improvement, researchers referred to the potential personalization possible to achieve with geospatial information. Chamberlain (2017) elucidated that Location Marketing stands for any marketing approaches employing location-related data to maximize possibilities for conveying targeted messages to the customer at the fitting moment and site. Geomarketing, indeed, is empowered by the ability to generate targeted and segmented principles at opportune occasions in time and location (Leanplum, 2019), resulting in extremely tailored and customized marketing endeavors (Forbes, 2017).

Targeting and Segmentation represent two main fundamentals of Geomarketing, as noted by Hendricks in 2018. Throughout the evolution of marketing, location has always had a pivotal role in defining targeted and segmented criteria for approaching specific market segments and customers. As location technologies progress over time, the sophistication of location-based marketing will advance as well (Saini et al., 2023).

In terms of targeting and segmentation capabilities, through Geomarketing marketers can identify the clients' behaviors and leverage this knowledge obtained to improve their targeted marketing strategies (Ramadani et al., 2017). By providing more pertinent, relevant, customized experiences and content, Location-based Marketing becomes a cornerstone in refining marketing procedures (Shaitura, 2020) and aligning them to customers' preferences. As shown by a recent survey carried out by Leanplum in 2019, 89% of clients would consider it advantageous to get promotions or coupons from the shop while pursuing their purchases. Through this procedure, location-based marketing delivers relevant value since it contributes to generating improved contextual experiences for shoppers and raising the likelihood for them to interact and turn into customers.

Through this form of geospatial personalization, companies seek to bring their business activity directly in front of customers. The final objective is indeed to entice potential leads at the moment their interest in purchasing from the company is at its peak (Hendricks, 2018). According to Hazaimah et al. (2020), the procedure previously depicted demands a reciprocal interactivity between the company, which straightly interacts with the target, and the client, who reacts to the marketing tactic with which has been approached. Hendricks (2018) speculated on location-based marketing as a process to get to customers in a determined physical position with targeted promotions, offerings, or advertising, guiding them toward the company to finalize purchases.

After having delved more in detail into the notion of location-based marketing and its instruments, it becomes crucial to discuss the reasons behind its success among researcher, businesses, and users. According to the founder and president of Location Based Marketing association, Asif Khan, its rapid ascent is due to the increased value recognized by both companies and customers in it (Britt, 2020). As a matter of fact, modern users acknowledge the worth in trading off their location data, and this shift in perspective is strictly related to the development of social media. A survey undertaken by Salesforce (2014) marketing discovered that 76% of users who divulge private data related to location affirmed that helps them in obtain more relevant content, and 73% stated that they value location sharing features as useful (Jadarat et al., 2015). Users have grown more comfortable in disclosing

their geographic position on social networks, despite the presence of a reward in return (Britt et al. 2020).

However, this change in users' willingness to disclose private information is not the only factor contributing to the Geomarketing expansion. According to Hazimeh (2020), this marketing method has considerably facilitated the engagement between companies and clients, fostering a more intimate and straightforward relationship. Indeed, Saini et al. (2023) pointed out that Location-based marketing strategies support marketers in gaining a more comprehensive understanding of their target demands, helping them to address them efficiently, and thereby improve their engagement. As a result of this stronger connection, businesses and customers have increased the employment of Geomarketing techniques, since it has revolutionized different aspects, including profitability for companies and purchasing experiences for consumers (Baviera-Puig, 2016).

Geomarketing is becoming increasingly relevant as a marketing campaign approach, and it's projected to thrive since it has been identified as an essential technique for both the present and future (Hendricks, 2018). Indeed, its growing adaption in the marketing field is to attribute to technological advancements, including instruments and systems for collecting geographic data, which represent the primary factors of its ascent (Miller, 2019). As a matter of fact, Location Marketing is globally spreading thanks to the emergence of “location-aware hardware and software” developed by businesses, marketing agencies, and advertisers (Ramadani et al., 2017).

After the comprehensive analysis of Geomarketing provided in the previous paragraphs, it becomes imperative to delve into one of its core pillars: the gathering of location data, also named Geolocation. One of the earliest definitions of the term Geolocation dates back to 2003 when Beal appointed it as a technique to discover the geospatial dimension of a specific object. Despite owning similar features as tracking systems, Geolocation differs in its aim of achieving a significant location, to put it differently, this technology represents more than just assessing geospatial coordinates (Nikparvar, 2014).

In a more contemporary perspective, Pedro Palos-Sanchez et al. (2018) indicated geolocation as a concept concerning the awareness of sites, objects, and customers' physical locations at the current time and automatically, by employing instruments including "Internet, browsers, mobile telephony satellites, PDAs, smartphones or tablets, among other devices" (Pedro

Palos-Sanchez, 2018: 261). Through these systems, geolocation allows businesses to transmit their brand value through messages built on users' physical position, which is gained through the current location of their devices (Leanplum, 2019). As a matter of fact, this technology facilitates the gathering of significant amounts of information in present time, along with pinpointing the accurate location of the user (Estes, 2016).

When companies decide to integrate geolocation into their tactics, they must carefully accomplish two main activities: record their geographic position and include information and materials like pictures, videos, or documents that can be disclosed via geolocation instruments such as QR codes, Bluetooth, and other similar technologies. Through this procedure, Geolocation is finally able to evaluate and determine viable places for distinct selling points (Sanchez, 2018).

Once the company is geolocated, it can benefit from the advantages coming from the implementation of geolocation. Geolocated businesses gain the potential to attract new clients, who are more encouraged to discover it due to their proximity to the company location and to enhance existing customers' loyalty (Red.es, 2012). More frequently, brands are employing geolocation data to partake in a broad range of marketing activities, comprehending proximity marketing, which is the delivery of advertising content related to a certain location, for the customers having the company's app installed on their device, and it can result "15% lift in retail foot traffic and a 73% increase in the likelihood of purchase among shoppers" (Sultan, 2018).

Resulting from the exposure to an overload of different information and promotions, clients often can experience difficulties in choosing products or services in line with their needs. The implementation of geolocation can indeed resolve the situation and enhance their shopping experience by providing them with geospatial offers, which contribute to decrease their confusion (Tarabsz et al., 2017). In this regard, one of the primary advantages of Geolocation strategies in a company is the ability to reach a more targeted audience, since they enable marketing professionals to interact directly with clients significantly near the business, thereby augmenting the effectiveness of the marketing campaign (MarketingProfs, 2019).

In fact, long-term clients' interest stems from targeting their purchasing habits, and in this way, conveying to them the perception of receiving customized marketing communications

(Farb, 2011). In this way, customers can obtain information, promotions, or offerings in proximity to their real-time location but also suited to their way of living and consumption habits from a geospatial standpoint (Cardoso, 2011). Valuable insights on the way the customer behaves: LBS facilitate the identification of crucial details on consumers buying habits. These include the amount of users landing on the business website page, the timing of such visits and they response to the company offers. Through BS, companies receive precise data analytics on their customer base, fostering a greater understanding of their target and enabling continuous enhancements on their offers (Ovramenko, 2023).

As a result, businesses can strengthen loyalty and relationships with customers, while obtaining ongoing feedback, maintaining a consistent presence, and launching more localized marketing initiatives (Pedro Palos-Sanchez, 2018). By identifying users' typology of connection or favorite device, marketers not only obtain valuable analytics but also can define their interaction with them. For instance, if the person owns a more rapid internet connection, it would be more effective to target the user with content in video format (Figaro Digital, 2021).

To conclude, the discourse in this subchapter emphasizes the impact of location in the marketing field and customer engagement, especially given the growing usage of mobile devices in people's daily lives and the pervasive spread of social media networks. As such, it is undeniable that location data represent a valuable asset in marketing activities, user experience, and in particular, in the delineation of company and customer relationships.

2.3 Geomarketing: geolocation data across different targeting methods, benefits, and its integration within social media networks

The previous subchapters delineated a discussion from the earliest acknowledgement of location as valuable, to its application in location-based services, until its most recent developments into Location Marketing. Since the analysis of geolocation content is an integral part of this research, it is imperative to conclude the discourse on location with a thorough examination of the multifaceted nature of Geolocation technology and its role in shaping the dynamic landscape of marketing content, specifically considering the use of data.

As previously discussed, Geolocation is directly related to Geomarketing since it serves as one of the main technologies to determine the physical position of an individual (Djuknic et

al, 2001), and subsequently use the location data obtained to craft tailored marketing strategies grounded in geographic positioning.

In 2020, the California Privacy Rights Act (2020) released its definition of geolocation data, which, according to DataGuidance (2022), describes location data as all data "derived from a device and that is used or intended to be used to locate a consumer within a geographic area that is equal to or less than the area of a circle with a radius of 1,850 feet" (DataGuidance, 2022). This formal definition marks the importance of geolocation data in the substantial proliferation of geographical big data, which accounts for 80% of all big data categories (Farmer & Pozdnoukhov, 2012). This theoretical perspective was also stressed by Leszczynski in 2019. He referred to Geolocation as a broad socio-technological trend, closely linked to a series of milestones such as the incorporation of geographical location systems in contemporary digital technologies, the ability of smart objects to determine the physical position, the proliferation of IoT-connected devices, and most importantly the spread of geolocation data (Leszczynski, 2019).

According to Estes (2016), the previously mentioned geolocation data can be divided into categories based on the method used to gather them: "active user/device-based information and passive server-based lookup/data correlation" (Estes, 2016, p. 1). With the first typology, data collection is accomplished through the users' action of activating geospatial location on their device, whose accurate position is estimated from the geolocation software. On the other hand, data can be obtained passively via IP addresses associated with the physical position in databases. Nevertheless, the crossing of both collection methods results in more precise geospatial information (Genchur, 2014).

Geolocation data can be employed in three main methods to target the audience. The first is Geotargeting, often pointed out as "Geo-framing", which depends upon IP addresses rather than GPS coordinates to support marketing professionals in identifying potential customers (Ramadani, 2017). Marketers' recourse to IP addresses when combining geospatial and behavioral data to optimize targeting according to users' predilections (Leanplum, 2019). Through this approach, marketers design campaigns for individuals belonging to an exact range on a definite day, and it is used extensively for situations in which a person is linked to the zone frequently (Leanplum, 2019). Thanks to these features is regarded as a successful technique, as evidenced by the augmentation of applications based on it (Chen et al., 2017).

With Geotargeting, marketers can reach the target audience with content built on the most significant geographic position for their marketing campaigns (Handly B., 2019), thereby reaching unparalleled levels of personalization depending on geospatial locations gained through mobile device signals (Baye, 2019). According to Ramadani (2017), wider geographical zones are better suited for Geotargeting, since they enable marketing professionals to detect particular devices displayed at precise positions on a specific day and provide personalized offerings to these identified users.

However, only buyers located within a settled radius of the shop are recognized by the business as relevant to be targeted, since following the geotargeting logic, the closer the client is to the physical store, the lower the cost of their travel and therefore, if presented with the right offer at the right moment, are more likely to accomplish impelling purchases (Lian et al., 2019). As a matter of fact, a few studies on the relationship between temporal targeting and geotargeting carried out by Luo et al. (2014) and Molitor et al. (2013) have revealed that delivering a personalized promotion at the correct moment and site is known to be more successful.

Geofencing, as opposed to Geotargeting, is considered more suitable for dynamic circumstances, where the user is in motion (Leanplum, 2019). In further detail, geofencing pertains to delineating a geospatial zone surrounding one or more locations of interest, such as businesses or shopping spaces (Brown et al., 2014), through GPS-enabled apps, RFID, mobile data, or Wi-fi systems. As soon as the user enters the designated area, also known as the “activation perimeter” (Kamiya et al., 2021, p. 211), he or she is reached directly with real-time and tailored material, including mobile marketing messages, in-app notifications, and other variations of communication (Finkelstein, 2021).

Radii and Polygons are the two most commonly applied methods to accomplish the procedure. The radius establishes a circle surrounding a focal point and supposes that any device accessing the predetermined area is a visitor to the site. The disadvantage of radii is that even momentary bystanders in the delineated zone are taken into consideration as visitors. The second tool, polygons, tends to be more accurate since it profiles the physical shape of the target spot (Handly, 2019). To make the prior detailed descriptions of the geofencing process more comprehensive, it is necessary to note that in the geofencing process, the individual crossing the imaginative fence is regarded as "trackee" since the

system activation is dependent on tracking its physical position. Furthermore, the marketing communication delivery is initiated not only once the trackee trespasses the fence, but also once he leaves it (Greenwald et al., 2011).

Geofencing enables companies to obtain insights into their customers' habits and most frequented places, allowing marketers to develop better-targeted campaigns and customer experiences, resulting in higher profitability (Finkelstein D., 2021). Despite these beneficial features, geofencing is incapable of providing high-quality data either when the targeted location is not frequented or has a small number of shops, as well as when events on the site are insufficiently long to reach a proper audience (Swedberg, Jamie, 2017). To the previous list of geofencing limitations, Stephanie van de Sanden (2019) added its difficulty in capturing precise data when applied to an internal location.

The last tool works differently from the ones previously presented, Beacons indeed demand users to download the application to produce valuable information for companies to enhance their targeting activities (Verhoef et al., 2017). Furthermore, differently from Geofencing, Beacons can be employed indoors to assist the company in incorporating the role of combining in-shop information supply and demand (Martin, 2014). After highlighting the main difference distinguishing this technology from the others, it becomes crucial to provide a complete definition. When addressing Beacons, Smith (2014) defined them as low-powered Bluetooth tools emitting signals to devices in imminent proximity (Smith, 2014).

With the employment of Beacons, companies benefit from gathering relevant data, tracking current purchasing pathways, and personalizing offerings, especially push notifications (Beeck et al., 2017). In recent years, there has been a significant acknowledgment of Beacons for their potential to link retailers and consumers in the right location and moment, fostering in this way customized and more significant purchasing experiences (Inman & Nikolova, 2017), a quality also recognized by EMarketer in 2014, when outlining their ability in enabling shopping. However, in order for Beacons to function, users must actively participate, which might be challenging to achieve.

The preceding paragraphs have elucidated more in detail the procedure for collecting location data as well as their distinguishment in categories based on their collection method. With the spread of mobile devices, the volume of geospatial information possible to be obtained has substantially grown, leading to what has been pointed out by Leszczynski and

Crampton as “location Big Data” (2016: 1). Indeed, thanks to the functionality of smartphones to enable internet access from every place, they have become the most employed technology by users, providing an opportunity for companies to extend their location-based marketing techniques (Florez et al., 2012). From these assertions, it becomes clear the critical role of mobile devices' rapid development, together with the increasing popularity of social media platforms, in the advancement of Geolocation (Beltrán, 2011). The unequal rise in the number of individuals using mobile devices has provoked the disclosure of location data to become a social media trend (Kim, 2016).

The convergence of GPS-enabled devices and social media platforms has driven the emergence of a new version known as "social geolocation". This approach enables users to disclose their real-time whereabouts, including associated location information like pictures or activities, within their social network community (Zhao et al., 2012). As a result of this recent form of geolocation, businesses have been prompted to adapt to this growing phenomenon and boost their visibility to the target audience. For this reason, numerous social media platforms and applications with integrated mapping features have emerged, placing attention on geolocation functionalities (Beltrán, 2011).

According to Beltrán (2011), through Geolocation systems, companies can gain a substantial amount of quantitative data concerning consumers' behavior. A viewpoint echoed by the international marketing Director at Digital Element. According to Andy Ashley, through the mentioned data is possible to delineate the customers' shopping patterns, and their decision-making processes, as well as more technical insights such as the number of users landing on the business website page, the timing of such visits, and their response to the company offers (Freedom, 2013). Equipped with these insights, marketers can tailor their marketing strategies to provide customized and contextually relevant content, which will guide them in their purchase path, also known as the customer journey. The latest is indeed easier to comprehend and study for companies through the use of geolocation data, in order to satisfy their need at the right time and place (Sultan, 2018). In a similar viewpoint, the research analyst Rashmi Sundar added that the comprehension of individuals' purchasing behaviors increases the chances of converting them from leads to customers (Farb, 2011).

Another use of geolocation data from companies has been pinpointed by Sultan (2018), who stated that some companies are indeed making use of geolocation data to enhance their

attribution analysis, which involves assessing if the receipt of a promoted offer, advertisement, or a given customer contact point for a demographical group can prompt sales in the future. In this way, businesses are able to determine and ensure which promotions are effective and for whom, all by using geolocation data. A few examples of geolocation analytics typologies from which companies can benefit include “analytics to track consumption patterns, current and historical, and gauge what consumers are likely to be interested in, and how they can customize their offers to appeal to these consumers” (Farb, 2011, p. 34).

Through the use of geolocation analytics on their customer base, such as the ones listed above, companies can foster a greater understanding of their target and undertake continuous enhancements on their offers (Ovramenko, 2023). Moreover, marketers can craft more compelling messages to reach the leads with a higher likelihood of being interested (Mura, 2013), indeed the tailoring of messaging make them more relevant for the customers, resulting in a maximization of marketing campaigns as well as an increase in engagement (Ovramenko, 2023). In this regard, Tim Hickernell, the associate lead analyst at Info-Tech, believes that relevancy is the key to effective marketing messages, and geolocation is not an exception.

However, users also avail themselves of Geolocation, especially when integrated into leading social networks to encourage their social interactions. Currently, users have unlimited access to these networks at any occasion and place, resulting in the emergence of a new principal concerning interchanging, disclosing, and downloading content with valuable information in the current digital setting, also referred to as SoLoMo notion, social, location and mobile (Madleňák, 2021). Geolocated social media platforms serve a wide range of goals, including “geotagging, check-in, and self-presentation” (Guo et al., 2023). On these platforms, individuals employ geographic data to connect with users nearby, thereby enhancing social capital, planning collective activities, and expressing their identities (Su et al., 2012). On this theoretical line, the development and maintenance of social contacts among individuals might result in reciprocally advantageous relationships (Madleňák, 2021).

Regardless, the incorporation of geolocation systems into social media as well as into applications has provoked the emergence of ethical concerns (eMarketer, 2015), specifically

related to the tracking of users' geographical position and movement while passively using them (Gómez, 2022). This procedure can contribute to the improper exploitation of such data. Nowadays, mobile devices have become an integral part of users' daily lives, and their constant monitoring poses significant privacy and safety issues (Sultan, 2018).

Consequently, since the monitoring of geolocation data is widespread, it became crucial for businesses to be transparent concerning the collection and process of Location Data (Boshell, 2019). As discussed in the previous chapter, Europe has disclosed the GDPR guidelines, which gave users rights to access, restrict, correct, and transfer private information previously held by companies (Sultan, 2018). This protocol highlighted the cruciality of protecting users' privacy and safety in location data analysis, despite the numerous benefits provided by it for both companies and users.

Chapter 3: Consumer brand engagement

3.1. Definition of Consumer Brand Engagement and theoretical foundations

Customers and businesses are becoming increasingly intertwined in today's technology-driven world. According to a survey conducted by Statista in 2019, the widespread usage of mobile devices and the expansion of social media networks are two of the primary factors contributing to the development of such relationships, as a result of social media platforms being means for businesses and clients to connect (Rosado-Pinto et al., 2020).

The foregoing statements are supported by Statista's finding from a prior investigation on the subject in 2018 and the ones obtained in 2019: half of the globe's population utilized mobile devices, and precisely 2.77 billion use social media networks, respectively. Consequently, it has become critical for researchers to broaden their comprehension of this modern relationship between brands and consumers, particularly of one of the most influential variables, engagement (Rosado-Pinto et al., 2020).

The notion of engagement has been appraised in a diverse range of study fields, including political science, sociology, psychology, and organizational behavior (Mondak et al., 2010). However, 2005 marked the ascent of customer engagement and brand engagement in the Marketing discipline. Indeed, their analysis has gradually grown in popularity among marketing academics and professionals, particularly for its role in establishing and keeping long-term relationships (Cuevas-Molano et al., 2021) as well as widening the comprehension of both companies and customers (Lourenco et al., 2022).

Despite the spread of engagement into marketing academic studies, scholars faced challenges in defining it and clarifying the differences discerning it from similar concepts such as “participation” or “involvement” (Brodie et al., 2013, p. 105). By acknowledging this lack of information, the Marketing Science Institute in 2010 highlighted the necessity for additional investigation concerning customer engagement, since it represented a crucial area for improving the academic understanding of consumer behavior within interactive and co-creative settings.

This increased emphasis given to customer engagement continues to be resisted to this day, as evidenced by the investigations on specific controversies related to the subject and the flourishing character of the correlated literature. Besides, this burgeoning curiosity towards CE has provoked a significant fractionation in the associated literature, composed of

diversified connotations and interpretations (Harmeling et al. 2017). The absence of confirmation could give rise to future misunderstandings and contradictions. Hence, finding a more conformed conceptualization of CE became crucial (Ng et al., 2020).

Acknowledged researchers have provided the most complete definition of CE, by looking at the subject from diverse perspectives with the same objective of achieving the persuasion of inducing consumers to perform a specific wanted behavior (Weng et al., 2022). According to Ng et al. (2020), CE has been included in four major study approaches: behavior demonstration (Broodie et al., 2011); a state of mind (Storbacka et al. 2016); inclination to undertake actions; and procedure involving a variety of customer decision-making process' stages (Maslowska et al. 2016). One of the most important authors speculating on the subject is Broodie et al. (2011), who referred to CE as a "psychological state that occurs by interactive, co-creative customer experiences with a focal agent/object (e.g., a brand) in consumer brand relationships" (Broodie, 2011, p. 260), implying the importance of customer experiences in building up consumer engagement (Yadav et al., 2022). According to Bijmolt et al. (2010), engagement can manifest in multiple ways at diverse customer journey phases.

The attitudinal manifestations pointed out by the authors specifically refer to actions transcending mere buying deals and that can be regarded as consumers' behavioral expression with a company focal center, surpassing mere buying actions, arising from impetus factors. The aforementioned behavioral demonstrations encompass positive and negative, as well as they can allude not only to brand relationships but also to a wider number of existing or potential subjects (Van Doorn, 2010). A point of view also shared by several scholars (Bijmolt et al., 2010) together with the Marketing Science Institute (2010), who supported that Customer Engagement mainly encompasses behaviors exceeding business deals, and hence purchases.

According to Algesheimer et al. (2005), consumer engagement is customers' internal motivation to interact and collaborate with community members (Tia et al., 2022). More in specific, an inclination to engage denotes an inner condition, in which an individual perceives a desire or propensity to engage, implying the accomplishment of behaviors (Fehrer et al. 2018). This is further clarified by Stobarcka et al. (2016) when explaining actor engagement, affirming that is both the inclination of a subject to engage as well as the

interactive procedure of acting in a dynamic procedure of "resource integration within the institutional context provided by a service ecosystem" (Stobarcka, 2016, p. 3009).

According to a distinguished study viewpoint, Sashi (2012) described Customer Engagement as a method aimed at exceeding the competition by generating a higher worth and fostering faith and fidelity in long-standing connections. Similarly, Vivek et al. (2014) looked at it as the depth of genuine engagement and relation possible to reach the customer with the brand offers and initiatives, whether started by consumers or organizations. CE boosts relations reciprocal advantageous for both the client and the company offering the service, improving brand loyalty and trust (Samarah et al., 2022). In point of fact, also the authors Mollen and Wilson (2010) have highlighted CE as customers' cognitive and emotional dedication to interact actively with the company.

However, the majority of scholars have pointed out the multi-dimensional nature of Customer Engagement (So et al., 2014). More specifically, cognitive, affective, and behavioral. The first is related to clients' curiosity towards a company, the second concerns the motivation created by a brand, and the third one refers to customers' "effort and energy" to connect with a specific organization (Zemin et al., 2022).

As a matter of fact, one of the earliest definitions of the increasingly adopted concept of Customer Engagement dates back to 2006 when Patterson et al. described it as the emotional, cognitive, and physical involvement to which the customer can extend while interacting with a company. A viewpoint supported also by Bowden in 2009, when he alluded to Customer engagement as a psychological procedure encompassing cognitive and affective facets.

After delving into the notion of customer engagement, it becomes important to examine a second component of CBE, namely Brand Engagement. Its growth is attributed to brands' relevance in shaping customers' choices, alongside the marketing mix and product marketing efficacy (Keller, 2016). Hence, it justifies brand engagement's indispensability in commercial initiatives, known study fields (Heding et al., 2020), and especially in today's technology-driven world.

Nowadays customers aren't merely buying brands, they also own the ability to affect them by disclosing their interactions with other clients and companies employing social media platforms (Gupta et al., 2018). As a result, upholding a high level of engagement with

consumers has become fundamental for all organizations seeking to gain an edge over the competition (Kumar et Pansari, 2016).

One of the first authors to define Brand Engagement was Kahn in 1990, referring to it as individuals' attitude to integrate or exclude their authentic selves when performing a working role. During the 1990s the majority of researchers tended to provide more attention to work and role engagement, describing it as a mental state influencing people's behaviors (Vivek et al., 2012). This early concept is related to the perspective of Sprott et al. in 2009, when they alluded to brand engagement within a "self-concept" context, claiming that it indicates customers' disposition to incorporate companies in the way they see themselves. However, in the same year, a distinguished viewpoint emerged, the researcher Bowden (2009) conceptualized Brand engagement as a cognitive procedure delineating the concealed systems to provoke recurrent consumers' purchases. This statement was upheld by Vivek et al. (2012), who considered it as a cognitive procedure determining all the elements needed to drive a client's repetition of product purchases.

Other authors associated the definition of Brand Engagement with the degree of consumers' involvement in initiatives planned by the company (Sohaib et al., 2023). This participation, if heightened, was believed to strengthen the emotional tie with the organization over time, consequently increasing the likelihood of repeating purchases (Unal et al., 2013). Indeed, brand engagement represents a key mediator in sustaining robust client connections (Kumar, 2020).

The analysis of customer and brand engagement has revealed their pivotal role in defining the relationship between customers and brands. Customer Brand Engagement (CBE) originates from the intersection of these two dynamic notions, combining attributes of both into a single distinct concept. As a result, after having delved deeper into the dual components of Customer Brand Engagement, it's crucial to investigate its main theoretical foundations according to three main authors Vivek et al. (2012), Brodie et al. (2011) and Hollebeek, 2011): relationship marketing theory (Vivek et al., 2012); (2) service-dominant logic perspective (Brodie et al., 2011); and (3) social exchange theory (SET) (Hollebeek, 2011b).

Notably, the first two mentioned theories have been employed as theoretical background for marketing analysis of consumer and brand engagement. One of the first definitions of the

theory was proposed by Berry and Parasuraman in 1991 when they claimed that relationship marketing encompasses attracting, building, and maintaining successful connections with consumers. Three years later, Morgan and Hunt affirmed that relationship marketing includes all the marketing activities “aimed at building, enhancing, and upholding effective relational interactions” (Morgan & Hunt 1994, p. 22). As such, it stands as a congruent definition to Aijo's (1996) findings regarding an agreed conceptualization of the term, which includes an intimate enduring relationship among all the subjects engaged in trading valuable assets.

The theory of relationship marketing represents a significant evolution in marketing, both theoretical and practical, indeed all the previous presented definition have contributed to emphasize the external relationship of an enterprise, specifically the ones with customers (Morgan et al., 1994). In this way, it enabled a significant passage from a perspective of marketing as an isolated transactional event to an approach focused on generating continuous relations (Möller et al., 2020).

The second theory is the service-dominant (S-D) logic, which extends beyond the conventional perspective of marketing relations, acknowledging that customers' behavioral responses are provoked by their interactive experiences of value creation with companies or other actors (Brodie et al., 2011). This logic reshapes the notion of service, considering it essential to all interchanges across sectors and settings, rather than those with traditional service traits (Zeithaml, Parasuraman, & Berry, 1985). Through the broadening of the comprehension of services, S-D logic broadened also the purpose of service study by increasing its importance and applicability (Vargo, et al., 2020b).

As outlined by Vargo and Lusch (2008a), this logic encourages the employment of network resources for the advantage of others with the expectation of receiving a service in return. In this way, S-D logic points out service as a key mechanism for interchange and value generation (Broodie et al., 2011), as also shared by Chandler et Vargo (2011) when claiming that this logic represents people and organizations as members of interrelated networks and communities, in which the main focus is trading services to generate value within their daily routine. By highlighting this complex system of value co-creation consisting of subjects constantly combining, implementing, and interchanging resources from a wide range of

sources, the perspective of S-D logic has evolved to acknowledge value generation (Chandler & Vargo, 2011).

On the other hand, the SET theory enables the examination of CBE from a psychological standpoint (Razmus, 2021). As claimed by Emerson in 1976, customers interact with other subjects or objects, such as the brand, on the grounds of the potential benefits they could gain through their involvement. To put it another way, the company extends courtesy to its customers, expecting to obtain something in return in the future, such as "brand engagement and consumer loyalty" (Razmus, 2021, p. 2).

According to this SET theory then, both parties to the exchange aspire to equilibrium in their relationship (Hollebeek, 2011b). People get involved in relations evaluating cost and benefits, and they are more likely to uphold these connections on the assumption that they will be limited to balanced transactions with equivalent assets (Brinberg and Castell, 1982). The previously explained cost/benefit analysis has been pointed out by scholars for its correspondence to customer engagement's collaborative nature (Hollebeek, 2011b). This association aligns with the elementary stance of SET, asserting that a sequence of codependent interactions can foster attachment.

According to Gambetti et al. (2012), CBE alludes to the procedure intensifying with the brand's capability to identify customers' needs and hopes. Other researchers interpreted CBE as a reflection of a company's performance (Bowden, 2009), linking results such as "brand referrals, sales, growth, customers co-creation, and profitability" (Cuevas-Molano et al., 2021, p. 143533). In a similar literal vein, Ndhlovu et al. (2022) related the term to the dynamic exchanges and experiences occurring among brands, consumers, and other actors.

Amidst the diversity of scholars' perspectives, there is a general agreement that CBE comprises reciprocal advantageous connections between a subject and a central entity. Customers participate, alongside other subjects, in an "interactive service ecosystem" (Ndhlovu & Maree, 2022, p- 231) ruled by public institutions and their regular policies. More specifically, customers contribute to this ecosystem by providing more than just transactions, hence protracting resources that improve offers and value results, favoring all actors involved, including the company and other stakeholders (Jaakkola & Alexander, 2014). As a result, involved customers are more likely to dedicate a considerable amount of

assets to the company relation, thereby cooperating to generate value through the exchange of services (Hollebeek et al., 2019).

The study of the aforementioned interactions between consumers and companies has resulted in the identification of three major CBE dimensions: cognitive, emotional, and behavioral (Bowden, 2009), which are further supported by Vivek et al. (2012), Brodie et al. (2011), Hollebeek (2011), and Dessart et al. (2016). These three dimensions have contributed to the characterization of CBE as a multifaceted concept, also described by Hollenbeck, one of the leading scholars on the subject, as the “brand-related and context-dependent state of mind characterized by specific levels of cognitive, emotional and behavioral activity in direct brand interactions” (Hollenbeck, 2011, p. 790). However, the research on each dimension remains restricted (Cheung et al., 2021).

As claimed by Neisser in 2014, cognition includes human processes such as perceiving, transforming, reducing, elaborating, storing, retrieving, and using stimuli and sensory inputs. CBE research incorporates various components and exemplifications of cognition. Hollebeek proposed the first one in 2011 when employing the social trade-off theory to clarify customers' cognitive allotment to obtain interpersonal advantages with a company, for example, attention. Despite this contribution, Hollenbeck further enriched the theory in 2014, by denoting cognitive processing as an information one taking place within a customers-organization interchange.

The theory has gained traction, especially with the increased usage of social networks. Indeed, users tend to pursue helpful and valuable information related to the brand they are interested in while connecting with marketers and disclosing thoughts with individuals sharing similar mindsets. (Muntinga et al., 2011). These interplays have been identified by Algharbat et al. (2020) as participatory since they encompass the rise of views, the disclosure of information, and the development of suggestions for enhancement, hence being considered as the factors provoking cognitive engagement.

Nevertheless, according to Lourenco et al. (2022), the theoretical foundation of CBE cognitive facet is the equilibration theory proposed by Piaget (1978), who affirmed that cognitive equilibrium is an ongoing loop of incorporation and adaptation, together with several concurrent procedures in response to cognitive stimuli. In point of fact, customers

experience cognitive stimulation in every stage of the relationship with the company (Lemon and Verhoef, 2016).

After having explored the cognitive dimension, it logically follows to direct the discussion towards the emotive one. When addressing a customer context, emotions serve as reactive responses based on affection concerning perceived situations with a company (Lourenco, 2022). The sentiments that arise from this situation and throughout the ritual of consumption are directly related to customer satisfaction, boosting attraction towards products and post-consumption sensations (Richins, 2008).

Despite the recurrent employment of the emotional dimension in CBE studies, a clarified description of the concept is rarely given due to the prioritization of the behavioral viewpoint (Hollebeek et al., 2021). However, according to Lourenco et al. (2022), interaction with a brand provokes the emergence of a variety of sentimental states associated with a customer's behaviors or intents (Ivens et al., 2015). Indeed, Dwivedi (2015) supported that emotional engagement is a result of the communicative interactions or the initiatives from the company, and it's demonstrated by customers' degree of affection and commitment intensity.

More specifically, academics such as Hollebeek and Chen (2014) allude to this emotional aspect of CBE with the "valenced affective" concept, which confers to customers' cognitions the ability to generate direct reactions. Clore et al. (1988) previously investigated this notion by stating that this exchange produces meaning created by "affective-cognitive reciprocation". As resumed by Kensinger et al. (2014), the cognitive and emotional dimensions are inextricably linked, hence the affective complexity maintenance depends on the cognitive one. To summarize, emotions emerging from the combination of cognitions and feelings about a corporation are responsible for the emotional aspect of engagement.

Concluding the analysis of CBE dimensions, it is crucial to examine scholars' contributions to the understanding of the attitudinal one. As previously mentioned, in the marketing literature addressing CBE, there is a tendency to place disproportionate significance on its behavioral aspect, making it a recurring metric among professionals and researchers (Roy et al., 2018). Originally, this attitudinal component was defined as the amount of effort and time invested by the customers in companies during interactions (Hollebeek et al., 2014). From a distinguished viewpoint, Dessart et al. 2016 viewed it as an act of manifesting aimed

directly at the engagement subject, driven by intrinsic motivation. Lastly, Vivek et al. (2014) and Dwivedi (2015) focused on the social interaction aspects for behavioral intents and the emotive-attitudinal state, respectively.

To conclude, the discourse developed in the subchapter unveils the fragmentation within marketing studies concerning consumer brand engagement, both in relation to its definition and components. Consequently, the forthcoming subchapters become crucial to providing a comprehensive understanding of consumer brand engagement requisite for this research.

3.2 Antecedents and Outcomes of Customer Brand Engagement

In the preceding section, the concept of engagement and its further evolution towards CBE have been introduced. Together with them, also its theoretical foundations and its component dimensions have been delineated. As a logical progression, the discussion continues in this subchapter with an investigation concerning the driving forces and potential results that CBE can elicit since they represent two important factors to investigate for this research.

The discussion begins with the three key factors influencing CBE hypothesized by Harrigan et al. (2018): involvement, participation, and self-expressive brand. The first also pointed out as the primary one by scholars (Brodie et al., 2011; Leckie et al., 2016; Vivek et al., 2012), clarifies the extent to which customers gain the perception of an item's worth, depending on their consistent demands, ideals, and predilections (Zaichkowsky, 1985). The higher this involvement factor is, the more customers desire to connect with the company besides consuming.

Involvement influences both theoretical and affective parts of CBE (Parihar et Dawra, 2018), hence demonstrating more effort in engaging through reflections, emotions, and actions toward it (Gordon et al., 1998). Based on these customers' contributions, a new integrated definition of the concept emerged, claiming it refers to the reciprocal cooperation between companies and consumers started and motivated by the company to develop worthy information and enhance results in different steps of innovating processes (Katona, 2022). This form of relationship underlies the reliability of consumer involvement, driven by their recognition of a future advantage from the interaction (Gronroos, 1995).

Previous studies illustrated that clients with higher degrees of involvement tend to show a more profound engagement (Vivek, Beatty, & Morgan, 2012). This notion can be partly

demonstrated by Dwivedi's findings (2015), which revealed that consumers often exhibit elevated degrees of attachment and rewarding experiences with companies they frequently interact with. Consequently, these customers are more inclined to invest in perpetuating such brand relationships (Lambe, et al., 2001).

Aside from the involvement effects highlighted before, Goodman et al. (1995) claimed that there is a higher possibility of customers' being eager to dedicate time and energy to brand content co-creation when involved (Goodman et al., 1995). Nevertheless, it's essential to denote that all the consumer involvement effects reported so far, assume a positive impact on all the CBE dimensions within social networks setting (Hollebeek et al., 2014).

One other highlighted prominent driving factor contributing to elevating CBE is consumer participation. It alludes to the extent to which customers contribute to the generation of service and the distribution procedure, by spreading knowledge, giving advice, exchanging personal information, and taking part in the decision-making system (Cheung et al., 2021). In other words, consumer participation represents an essential form of clients' voluntary performance displayed in their interchange with the brand (Auh et al., 2019). Thanks to this partaking, consumers will gain a more comprehensive knowledge of the company, redefine their assumptions, and have a strengthened impression of personalization and cost diminution (Carvalho et Fernandes, 2018).

All the information above pinpoint the behavioral and functional nature of customer participation (Auh et al. 2007), as well as its variety since it can include customers' actions from minimal physical involvement to operative co-creators (Chan et al., 2010). As denoted by Bagozzi and Dholakia (2006), customers' participation in connection with a common interest between them and the brand results in a heightened enthusiasm degree, leading to higher engagement and an enhanced relationship with the company (Cheung et al., 2021). These advantages have been further studied and developed by Choudhry et al. (2008) and Von Hippel (2009), who affirmed that customer participation leads to increased accessibility to rapid information, enhanced offers, and the generation of innovative services.

The third agent is a self-expressive brand, which can be described as the extent to which customers perceive a brand as a reflection of their intrinsic self (Carroll et Ahuvia, 2006). The relevance of self-expression in the CBE derives from the motivation it provides to customers in collaborating in the creation of the company value, and as a consequence, they

are more likely to be significantly engaged with the organization (de Vries et al., 2017). Despite the limited amount of research concerning self-expressive brand influence on CBE, a few are exhibiting its impact on the affective attitudinal aspect of CBE (Carroll et Ahuvia, 2006). As a result, authors such as Sprott et al. (2009) have supported companies' self-expressive role partially affects consumers' engagement with them.

To the three drivers provided in the previous discussion, Amelia Carvalho and Teresa Fernandes (2018) added two additional factors to the list: customer interactivity and customer flow experience. As claimed by Wu (2006), interactivity is the mental state endured by a person during interactions, and its frequency can contribute to an increase in the engagement levels with a company (Sashi, 2012). Even though the position of interactivity concerning CBE has been debated scarcely in precedent studies (Alalwan et al., 2020), some scholars have acknowledged it as a precursor to CBE (Hollenbeck et al., 2011). Findings provided by Utami et al. (2021) demonstrate its favorable relation with all the typologies of CBE.

The same acknowledgment has been made for the flow experience (Brodie et al. 2011), which depicts an oblivious condition perceived by an individual when he is entirely concentrated and appreciating the action taking place (Liu et al. 2016). When applied to the marketing field, it assumes the connotation of customers' actions throughout all the steps in their exchange with the brand (Isarsoft, 2024). As discovered by Novak et al. (2000) in this context, customers living the flow are more disposed to recognize it as captivating and start being more involved with the company.

However, other authors have theorized on the subject of CBE drivers, pointing out alternative ones. According to Ahn and Back (2018), brand experience, including its affective, sensory, attitudinal, and cognitive components, is a key factor influencing all CBE dimensions and enhancing future customer behaviors. In point of fact, the marketing field has recently grown interest in this notion, due to its critical part in enabling companies to achieve an edge over the competition (Khan and Rahman, 2015). Shaw and Ivens were among the first to address it, claiming that customer experiences stemmed from the interchange between clients and products or the company itself, provoking a consequent response from them (Shaw & Ivens, 2002). This initial definition was further developed in

2009 by Brakus, who added that it represents customers' subjective and intrinsic attitudinal reactions to organizations' inputs.

From this point forward, all the typologies of customer brand experience mentioned at the beginning of the subchapter will be introduced and investigated in further detail to analyze their effects on CBE. Affective brand experience is associated with sentiments prompted by companies or their emotional relationship with them (Zarantonello and Schmitt, 2010), exerting a substantial impact on CBE (Garg et al., 2005). As claimed by Schmitt in 1999, indeed, emotional experiences can elicit consumers' feelings, resulting in a heightened interest in the organization. Consequently, they are driven to actively seek out and interact with company information, thereby affecting the cognitive aspect of CBE (Ahn et Back, 2018). Similarly, Hollenbeck (2011) emphasized how customers' favorable sentiments foster a sentimental tie with the company, and Ahn and Back (2018) outlined how it can raise their propensity to engage with the brand, influencing in this way the other two components of CBE.

In a similar vein to emotional experiences, sensory ones release a positive influence on CBE. This category refers to the situations in which clients perceive products or services stimulations, involving their minds and senses (Beig et al., 2021). Such stimuli can ignite the cognitive aspect of CBE by promoting reflection and interest in a company (Ohman, 2017). Likewise, these sensations can impact enthusiasm, provoking an elevated emotional engagement and connection with the brand (So et al., 2014). Finally, when a sensory experience with the brand provides satisfaction to the customer, it improves the likelihood of their participation in initiatives proposed by the brand (Bowden, 2009).

Moving from the affective and sensorial experiences, the analysis shifts at this point to the last two experiences discussed by the author: behavioral and cognitive. The first one alludes to the consumers' bodily experiences aroused by the interchange with brands, which encourage individuals' actions or intents (Ding et Tseng,2015). These aforementioned actions emerge from the satisfaction gained by customers in such experiences, which encourage them to seek brand-related information, thereby causing a reinforcement of cognitive engagement. In addition, Kelly (2004) identified two different effects: the improvement of the company-consumers emotional ties and the eliciting of behavioral

responses from the consumers. The latest may involve physical engagements with the brand and action-oriented characteristics of the brand (Ahn and Back, 2018).

Finally, the intellectual category of brand experience is associated with the company prompting customers' reflection, interest, and critical thinking and a richer comprehension of the company, exerting influence on the cognitive facet of CBE (Ligaraba, 2024). For instance, an elevated status of cognitive experience can arouse a consumer's identity sense, and attachment to the brand (Ahn & Back, 2018), fostering the generation of distinguished and significant relations with it (Brakus et al., 2009).

Nevertheless, customers' intellectual experience doesn't merely impact the cognitive CBE, but also the attitudinal and emotional one. Clients who experience favorable intellectual experiences are more inclined to interact behaviorally with the brand (Fang et al., 2017). While, concerning emotive engagement, as long as clients are pleased with the intellectual experience, there is a higher possibility that they will establish a profound and intimate bond with the company (Ahn and Back, 2018).

Following scholars' divergent perspectives on CBE drivers, it's logical to transit to the investigation towards its outcomes and benefits. As emphasized in the CBE literature analysis, this concept represents a determining factor impacting several marketing results (Islam et Rahman, 2016). In particular, Razmus in 2021 pointed out three main outcomes: “loyalty intention, consumer satisfaction with the product, and perceived value of the brand“(Razmus, 2021, p. 6). The first alludes to consumers' willingness to promote the company, by sharing favorable information on it, advocating it to other individuals, and stating to buy from it in future occasions (Zeithaml et al., 1996). Since CBE is considered a relational construct, it is believed to provoke the creation of psychological ties with an organization (Harrigan et al., 2017), encouraging clients to maintain these bonds.

In these ties, loyalty may represent a regulator (Dwivedi, 2015), as demonstrated by studies concerning relations, which pinpoint the consideration of loyalty in analyzing and comprehending customer engagement (Aljuhmani et al., 2023). Moreover, some early research outlined the beneficial association between the two concepts (Algharabar et al., 2020). While underlying the importance of loyalty in CBE studies, some authors shared

findings related to the subject, stating that customers characterized by engagement tend to react behaviorally and develop loyalty toward companies (Kwon et al., 2020).

Moving to the following outcome, in agreement with Islam and Rahaman (2016), satisfaction is considered a general assessment of how an offer has performed (Gustafsson et al., 2005: 210), similar to the definition provided by Westbrook in 1987 when he described it as comprehensive evaluation concerning the use of an offering.

According to Razmus (2021), CBE provides superior satisfaction attributable to the effort invested by customers in the company itself. As a result of this statement, it becomes logical that consumers with an elevated degree of CBE might experience satisfaction with the organization. From this point of view, the theoretical doctrine establishing satisfaction as a repercussion of CBE gains significance (Brodie et al., 2011), and a favorable relationship between the two is presumed (Hollebeek et al., 2014).

Despite this expected relationship, CBE and satisfaction differ for the moment in which they occur (Fernandes et Moreira, 2019). Satisfaction is correlated to an assessment generated consequently to an interaction with the company or the usage of its offer. On the other hand, CBE arises during connections with the brand (Calder et al., 2016).

The last outcome hypothesized by Razmus is perceived value (2021), which indicates the perception of the quality based on the price paid, together with the balance between inputs and outputs in relation to the competing options (Johnson et al., 2006). In a further elaboration of the concept, Hai et al. (2018) have portrayed it as the juxtaposition within the consumers' spending, also in terms of time and effort, and the advantages obtained, building what the authors defined as "benefit-sacrifice discrepancy construct" (Hai et al., 2018, p. 138). Apparently, according to Vivek et al. (2012), exceptionally engaged people gain intrinsic and extrinsic value from this involvement effort. Following similar research findings, perceived value has been pointed out as a CBE result (Chen, 2017).

However, not all the authors agreed upon the outcomes presented by Razmus in 2021, indeed Ndhlovu and Maree (2023) have shared in their latest article, two additional results: Brand Evangelism and Consumer Based Brand Equity. The first refers to a strong devotion towards a brand shown by consumers (Purohit et al., 2023) through their behavioral actions, including purchases from the brand, spreading positive advocacy and

word of mouth regarding the company, and sharing negative insights concerning competitors (Becerra e Badrinarayanan, 2013).

All the activities just pointed out are part of brand evangelism components, (Jaakkola and Alexander 2014), and they are the result of a higher degree of engagement perceived by the customers, hence engaged consumers are more likely to become also evangelistic towards the brand (Algesheimer et al., 2005). A conclusion was also shared by Nyadzayo et al. (2020) when stating that CBE affects in a favorable manner brand evangelism, thanks to the strong influence exerted by brand evangelists and their tactical role in supporting organizations (Harrigan et al., 2020). As a matter of fact, brand evangelism can impel customers toward the intent associated with the company (Warshaw & Davis, 1985).

The second consequence of CBE highlighted by the authors is Consumer Brand Equity, which alludes to customers' reactions when choosing between a branded and a not branded attributes offering with similar degrees of marketing stimulations and attributes (Keller, 2016). More specifically, according to a subsequent definition provided by Aaker in 2014, brand equity is the consumer perception of the company value, determined by awareness, perceived quality, and the image of the company.

Consequently, according to these definitions, it becomes important for organizations to engage with the customers and build strong relationships with them, to have an edge over the competition and establish themselves (Vo Minh, 2022). This relation builds the brand asset and exerts a significant effect on consumer-based brand equity (Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2016). On this occasion, CBE becomes a critical tool for organizations, thanks to its nature based on interactions (Dwivedi, 2015) and co-creation, which allows brands to exploit customers' abilities and awareness to enhance their equity (Kuvy Kaite et Piligrimiene 2014).

To conclude, despite all the several outcomes pointed out by the different scholars, it becomes clear that CBE is a cornerstone in brand management. Overall, it is a beneficial component for companies, not only to enhance their business results (Kumar and Pansari, 2016 et al., 2016) but also to develop emotionally loyal consumers (Hwang et Kandampully, 2012).

3.3 Customer Brand Engagement Measurement Scales

As viewed in the precedent subchapters, CBE represents a controversial for most researchers due to the lack of agreement from its definition until its antecedents and results. This absence of a general agreement among scholars involves its measurement as well. As highlighted by both Ndhlovu & Maree (2022) and Razmus (2021), the growing interest and investigation on CBE didn't prevent it from becoming the object of discussion and fragmentation concerning its scales of measurement.

In agreement with both authors, a wide range of scales have been elaborated and employed in distinguished contexts (Ndhlovu & Maree, 2022), which play a significant part in the CBE scales implementation (Razmus, 2021). These contexts include cultural ones (Ndhlovu & Maree, 2022), along with service and product ones (Kuijken, Gemser, & Wijnberg, 2017).

However, consumer brand engagement has been measured by taking into consideration two main areas: CBE related to online company components such as online groups or its social media content (Karpinska-Krakowiak, 2014); CBE in the offline environment (Sprott et al., 2009). As a result, this discussion will first indicate different academic scales in order of year, while pointing out also their theoretical background.

The first scale presented is Sprott et al. (2009), which provides the first technique for assessing consumer brand engagement (Razmus et Laguna, 2019). This construct proposed by Sprott et al. in 2009 stood out for the novelty of the method adopted in CBE postulation and measuring (Razmus, 2021), differing from all previous scholars' proposals (Escalas 2004).

This original construct was based on the necessity of comprehending engagement as a general proclivity to incorporate brands as a component of self-concept (Sprott et al. 2009).

Sprott et al. (2009) developed BESC, or brand engagement self-concept, on the foundation of the "cognitive schema theory" (Razmus et Laguna, 2019: 2), which defines the self as a conglomeration of schemas standing for a knowledge framework (Markus, 1977).

The BESC scale is a one-dimensional measurement composed of eight elements with significant intrinsic coherence across several clusters separated by demographics such as age, sex, earnings, and educational background (Flynn et al. 2011). The results of the BESC scale imply that the higher the scoring rate is, the stronger customers' predisposition to

incorporate the brand in their self-conception, in other words, their propensity to associate themselves with the brand (Goldsmith, 2015). The measuring method proposed by Sprrott et al. (2009) has been applied in several countries and settings of consumption (Bitter et al. 2014), demonstrating its value in the marketing and consumer behavior field, due to its influence on customer constructs associated with brands (Razmus et laguna, 2019).

Subsequently, three significant measurement scales emerged in 2014: Hollebeek et al., So et al., and Vivek (2014). Specifically, the Hollebeek team proposal has been the most widely accepted CBE scale among academics (Obilo et al., 2021). In fact, it was the first one addressing consumer brand engagement without alluding to the self (Razmus, 2021), as seen previously with Sprrott et al. (2009).

Hollebeek's scale found on the analysis of 10 social-media-related elements (2014) and three main CBE dimensions: “cognitive processing (CP), affection (Af) (emotional), and activation (Act) (behavioral)” (Lourenco et al., 2021: 1). This measuring approach is aimed at the evaluation of customers' mental, affective, and attitudinal actions, throughout or linked with their connections with companies in the social network environment (Hollebeek et al., 2014).

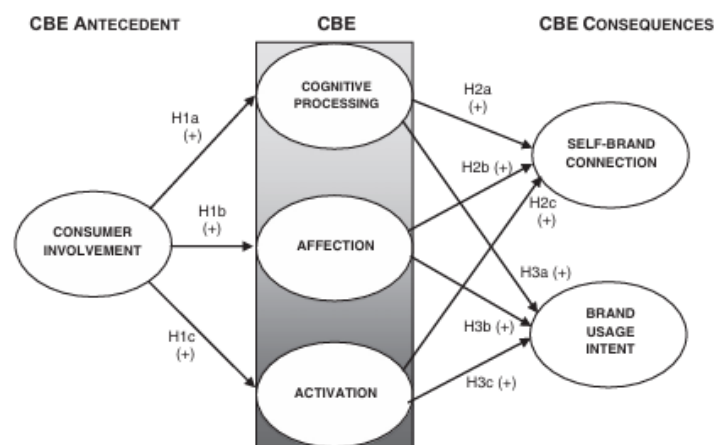


Figure 1 Hollebeek’s scale -Nomological net of selected CBE conceptual relationships (study4), developed by Hollebeek, L., Glynn, M. and Brodie, R. in 2014

In the same year, So et al. (2014) proposed a fifth-dimensional scale consisting of absorption, attention, enthusiasm, identification, and interaction (Lourenco et al., 2022), capturing several aspects of CBE. This measurement approach relied on 25 elements and was applied to the tourism industry without being verified in different settings (Razmus, 2021).

However, in the tourism and hospitality field, Harrigan et al. (2017) argued that the five factors could be reduced to three by incorporating enthusiasm with absorption. In this way, the research presented a new scale composed of only three dimensions and 11 items, which could be applied to a variety of cultural settings (Mkumbo et al., 2020).

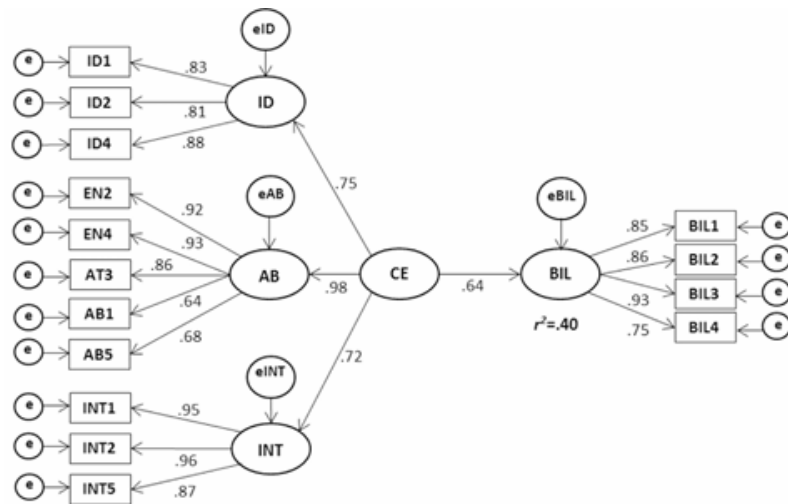


Figure 2. The proposed three-factor model of CE structural model, developed by Harrigan, P., Evers, U., Miles, M. and Daly, T. in 2017

Lastly, Vivek et al. (2014) proposed a new CBE measurement scale with ten items and three dimensions, encompassing conscious attention, enthused participation, and social connection. The ideation and implementation of the scale were based on trading and technological settings, but it was adopted across a variety of additional environments (Rasmus, 2021). Thanks to its comprehensive analysis of CBE, its emphasis on customer engagement transcending purchasing relations, and its adaptability to different contexts, it has become prominent in marketing academic studies (Mkumbo et al., 2020).

One year after the emergence of the previous measurement approaches, the discussion on the subject shifted to a different setting, namely the CBE in the offline world. In 2015, Dwivedi presented an innovative method for measuring CBE in real-life scenarios, exceeding the boundaries of social networks and brand groups on the internet. This measuring theory is supported by Rasmus's (2021) findings, outlining that customers prefer to be involved with companies in real life, rather than through social networks.

The scale implemented by Dwivedi (2015) was composed of three aspects: vigor, dedication, and absorption. Its outcomes demonstrated that CBE impacts loyalty by fostering

connections and satisfying experiences with the company enhanced by the customers' higher engagement (Dwivedi, 2015). From this statement is clear, that CBE is an antecedent of loyalty in real-life settings (Islam and Rahman, 2016).

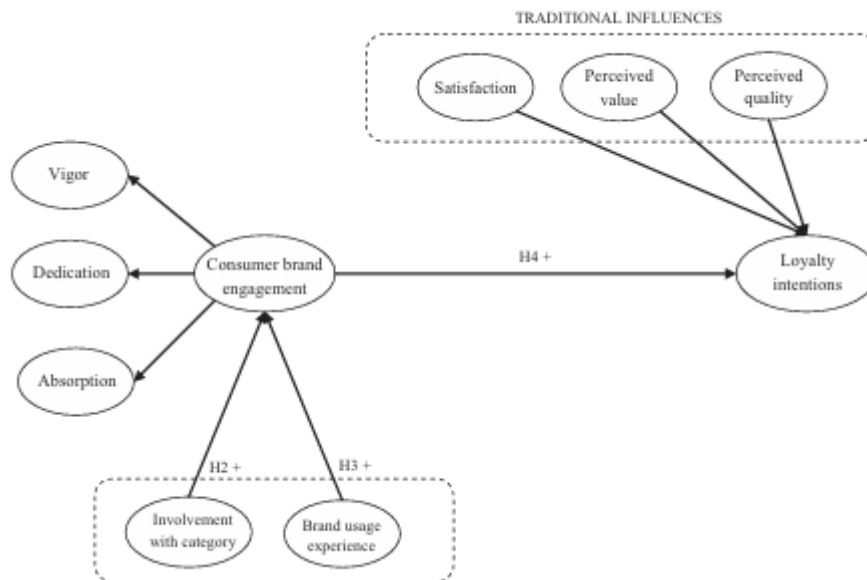


Figure 3. Dwivedi Scale measuring the impact of consumer brand engagement on loyalty intentions, developed by Dwivedi A. in 2015

Even though this approach can be employed to investigate engagement in both online and offline environments, and to raise awareness around consumer behavior, some CBE indicators in the scale come from distinguished settings and their significance may not be relevant to the brands' field (Razmus, 2021). In light of this limitation, Fernandes and Moreira (2019) merged Dwivedi's scale with another to create an improved version.

To conclude, Ndhlovu et al. (2022) have contributed to the subject with the construction of two multidimensional CBE scales tailored for two distinct circumstances: product and service brand contexts. The significance of considering these two settings relies on CBE context-specific nature, along with the service and product differences for their tangible and intangible qualities (Hollebeek et al., 2019). Previous scales have widely overlooked the context by making generalizations, in which service contexts have been incorporated into others, such as the product ones (Brandao et al., 2019).

	This study		Hollebeek et al. (2014)		Vivek et al. (2014)	
	Product	Service				
No of items	29	20	10	25	10	
Dimensions (items)	Affection (9) Reasoned behavior (20)	Affection (6) Identification (4) Absorption (3) Social connection (7)	Affection (4) Cognitive processing (3) Activation (3)	Absorption (6) Attention (5) Enthusiasm (5) Identification (4) Interaction (5)	Conscious attention (3) Enthusied participation (4) Social Connection (3)	
Context of development	Smartphones	Social media	Social media	Tourism services	Apple products and retailers	
Cultural context	Non-Western (African)	Non-Western (African)	Western (New Zealand)	Western (Australia)	Western (USA)	
<i>Fit indices</i>						
χ^2/df ratio	3.17	2.10	3.65	2.55	Apple: 2.05	Retail: 1.80
RMSEA	0.065	0.047	0.069	0.08	Apple: 0.07	Retail: 0.06
CFI	0.919	0.954	0.981	0.94	Apple: 0.99	Retail: 0.99
TLI/GFI/NFI ¹	TFI: 0.913	TFI: 0.946	GFI: 0.956	TLI: 0.94	NFI: Apple: 0.98	Retail: 0.98
SRMR	0.053	0.049	0.034	0.046	Not reported	

Figure 4. Summative comparison of the study and refinement source scales, developed by is Ndhlovu, T., Maree, T. in 2022

This proposal establishes its theoretical background in the Service-Dominant (S-D) logic suggested by Brodie in 2011, highlighting the co-creation value underlying CBE. The result of the refining procedure by undertaken by Ndhlovu et al. (2022: 1) lead to the implementation of the following scales:

- A two-dimensional scale-based affection and reasoned behaviors, generated by 29 elements in a product context (smartphone).
- A four-dimensional scale consisting of affection, identification, absorption, and social connection. Additionally, it is based on 20 elements in a service circumstance (social media).

According to the authors (Ndhlovu et al., 2022), these scales are worthy of marketing purposes, since they enable organizations to recognize and understand how to align their initiatives and communications to the CBE dimension prominent in a specific market setting.

To conclude, all the previous discussion underlines the absence of universally accepted scale to measure CBE. As a matter of fact, thanks to its multidimensional and context- specific nature, CBE measure depends on different factors and variables concerning the field of research, the context, and the dimension considered.

4.Methodology

This chapter focuses on presenting the research problem addressed in this internship report, as well as the research methodology applied for its analysis. In the beginning will be introduced the research problem chosen for the study, including the research questions, objectives, and hypotheses related to it. Following this introductory part, the discussion will delve into more technical aspects, such as the research design, methodological choices, and data collection techniques. The research strategies and techniques employed are grounded on guidelines and theories to ensure the acquisition of relevant data and insights.

4.1 Research problem and relevance

As outlined in the previous chapters, the demand for personalization stems from customers' desire to be recognized and treated as unique individuals by companies (Arora et al., 2021). To stay competitive and satisfy customers' demands, brands need to incorporate personalized content in their marketing strategies (Chandra et al., 2022). The widespread of mobile devices and social media networks has significantly fastened this integration, since both have become an integral aspect of consumers' lives, enabling constant connectivity and interaction (Goldsmith & Freiden, 2004).

When it comes to personalization, particularly geolocation, users recognize a value from exchanging private information with companies, as it enables them to interact more meaningfully, express their identities, and cultivate valuable relationships (Su et al., 2012). Geolocation features enable users to share real time, context-aware communication, making their content more relevant (Tussyadiah, 2012). This understanding of geolocation's value has prompted customers to share their location-based data, as it benefits them in social interactions and digital experiences (Madleňák, 2021).

However, the profound literature review showed that personalized approaches' application in marketing has elicited ambivalent perspectives (Lambillotte & Poncin, 2023), related to the way their data have been collected and employed, as well as for the reasons behind the collection of such data (Aguirre et al., 2016). Since there is an open debate concerning consumers perception of personalized data without the definition of a prevalence of a positive or negative position, this study contributes to that debate by providing a better understanding of users' attitudes toward personalized marketing content, specifically geolocation-based content.

Similarly to personalization, the field of consumer brand engagement has been characterized by different perspectives concerning its driving factors and scale of measurement (Rasmus, 2021). As a result, this study will contribute to the ongoing debate, by investigating the potential of personalized marketing content in representing a driving factor of consumer brand engagement and also a measurement scale from the literature review to evaluate its influence on consumer brand engagement.

The previous paragraphs contextualizing the research problem highlight its relevance. Understanding how consumers perceive tailored information is crucial for businesses aiming to meet their evolving needs and sustain a competitive edge. This comprehension enables businesses to produce content and marketing campaigns that resonate with consumer interests, thereby more engaging and effective.

4.2 Research questions, objectives, and hypotheses

The preceding subchapter has elucidated the research problem and its relevance within the field of study, consequently, it is imperative to identify the correlated research questions, objectives, and hypothesis.

The current study has been built on two main research questions:

RQ1: Which is consumers' perception of personalized marketing content in Food Delivery Applications?

RQ2: How does personalized marketing content in Food Delivery Applications affect customers' engagement with the brand?

The presented research questions have been subsequently discerned into objectives, as follows:

1. Assess consumers' perception of personalized marketing content in food delivery applications
2. Measure Food Delivery Applications' personalized marketing content influence on Consumer Brand Engagement

Below has been added a table to highlight the investigative question, theoretical framework, and objectives:

Table 1. Overlay Matrix composed by Research Questions, Theoretical framework and objectives of the study. Developed by Aurora Danieli, based on the model of Choguill (2005).

Research Question	Theoretical Framework	Objectives
RQ1. Which is consumers' perception of personalized marketing content in Food Delivery Applications?	Personalization; Personalized Marketing Content; Geolocation; food delivery applications, data collection	Assess consumers' perception of Personalized Marketing Content in Food Delivery applications
RQ2. How does personalized marketing content in Food Delivery Applications Affect customers engagement with the brand?	Personalized Marketing Content; Geolocation; Food Delivery Applications Consumer brand engagement	Measure Food Delivery Applications' personalized marketing content influence on Consumer Brand Engagement

Subsequently, the definition of the research problem, research questions, and objectives is imperative to identify related hypotheses based on the theories presented in the chapter of the literature review. Before delving into the hypotheses developed for this research, it is important to provide a general definition and the key role of the hypothesis.

According to Lund (2022), the research problem and associated hypotheses are the primary factors in conducting the study. The hypotheses are predictions built on existing knowledge together with assumptions, and they are stemming from the research question. However, hypotheses are directed by data, whereas the research question is by hypothesis. Indeed, hypotheses can be validated and employed to identify the type of information or data required to address the research question (Willis, 2023).

As previously stated, the hypothesis represents a researcher's expectation, which, according to Dayanand (2021), is formulated on the relation between the research

variables. The latest encompass a wide range of typologies, however in this discussion only independent and dependent are considered. The first reflects a variable on which the research has control, while the second stands for a variable that can be only observed and estimated by the researcher (McCombes, 2023).

After having provided a comprehensive definition of the hypothesis, the next paragraphs will present the two hypotheses related to this specific study and also the theoretical background on which they have been based. Every hypothesis will be first introduced by its theoretical background.

The first hypothesis was derived from the first research question related to understanding consumers' perception of food delivery applications, which represent the typology of personalized marketing content chosen for this study. As reported by a survey carried out by Epsilon in 2018 at least 80% of consumers favor companies delivering significant personalized marketing initiatives and communications (Gilman, 2022). Significant results can be sustained by Pfiffelman et al. (2022), who claimed that customers prefer products or concepts in line with them, leading to favorable responses to messages that refer more to themselves. To conclude, past research has demonstrated that personalized content is perceived as more remarkable and compelling than general one, attracting consumers' attention and simplifying their purchasing decisions (Lambillotte et al., 2022). This point of view was supported by Arora et al. (2021) and Lambillotte et al. (2022), who affirmed that most consumers tend to perceive personalized content as critical, impactful, and engaging. Based on these theoretical statements, the following hypothesis has been developed:

H1. Consumers perceive personalized marketing content in food delivery applications as more relevant and valuable content compared to non-personalized marketing content.

In the last chapter focused on consumer brand engagement a lot of CBE driving factors have been presented, demonstrating the rupture among scholars when agreeing on specific ones. Even though among the several authors mentioned in the chapter there isn't one focusing on the impact of perception on consumer engagement, Harrigan et al. (2018) pointed out involvement, participation, and self-expressive brand as key factors, and the first one is the nearest to the notion of perception. Indeed they affirm, also in accordance with Zaichkowsky (1985), that involvement is the degree to which customers

gain the perception of an item's worth, depending on their consistent demands, ideals, and preferences, leading to a higher willingness of the consumers to interact with the company beside mere purchasing, thereby fostering deeper engagement (Vivek, Beatty & Morgan, 2012).

Since perception relates to the value recognized or not by consumers concerning personalized marketing content delivered by the company, this content typology can enhance this perception, leading to improved customer brand engagement. Moreover, according to Arora et al. (2021), personalization is essential to maintain long-term consumer engagement. This point of view is supported by Ovrmenko (2023), who stated that personalized messages are more relevant for customers and contribute to increasing their engagement. Specifically, Saini et al, (2023) argued that customized marketing content based on location enables companies to address their target demands, consequently fostering their engagement with the brand. Therefore, by improving consumer perception through personalized content contributes to sustaining and deepening their engagement with the brand. From the previous theoretical background, the following hypothesis has been determined:

H2. Personalized Marketing Content in Food Delivery applications increase customer brand engagement.

4.3 Study object

This subchapter will clarify the study object chosen to address the research problem concerning consumers' perception of personalized marketing and its impact on consumer brand engagement. The typology of personalized marketing content considered for this study is geolocation-based content. To obtain relevant data from the methodology it becomes imperative to select a specific tool of geolocation as well as a context, which will contribute to defining the sample for the data collection. This approach will ensure the acquisition of meaningful insights for the research problem of this study.

As introduced and thoroughly explained in the second chapter of the literature review, geolocation-based personalization entails tailoring marketing initiatives and content on location data, thereby enhancing the customer's experience overall. This approach consists of targeting customers with content relevant to their real-time location, ensuring that marketing efforts are effective and engaging.

Among all the platforms implementing geolocation to deliver personalization to customers, this research will focus specifically on food-delivery applications. The latest refers to mobile applications for online food ordering and delivery as well (Ray et al., 2019). According to Kaur et al. (2021), food delivery applications belong to delivery platforms, which include “restaurant-to-consumer delivery and aggregator-to consumer-delivery” (Zanquet et al.,2024: 5). Since not all restaurants employ their own channels for food delivery (Hwang et al., 2020), they choose to use “third-party platforms and food aggregators” in order to facilitate online food delivery and reach a wider market (Williams et al., 2020). Examples of the mentioned applications include Uber Eats, Glovo, Deliveroo and Bolt Food. This typology of food delivery application is the one taken into consideration for the study.

Through Geolocation Data gathered from users, these applications employ such data to enhance different aspects of the customer experience, making it more personalized (Shankar et al., 2021). First of all, location-based data enables food delivery applications to provide real-time order monitoring, which consists of sharing current updates on the order, delivery progress and predicted time or arrival. Secondly, food delivery applications optimize delivery trails by assessing the shortest path to pursue and deliver more efficiently. Thirdly, thanks to the knowledge of the geographical position of the user, these applications send target promotions or discounts nearby via notifications. Lastly, food delivery applications not only associate customers with restaurants near their geographic position to keep food quality and minimize delivery times, but they also create tailored suggestions to present users with a relevant variety of options (Shroff et al., 2022).

Thanks to all these forms of personalization that food-delivery applications can provide, customers are growingly using them to make the food delivery convenient and fast (Tandon et al., 2021). Indeed, according to a survey undertaken by Real Research media in 2021, consumers enjoy food delivery application because they have the possibility to select products and serviced based on their convenience. As a matter of fact, the majority of respondents gave choosing from a wide range of menus and convenience as the main reason behind their usage of online food delivery applications.

After explaining what food delivery applications are, how they use location data to deliver personalization, and why consumers use them, it is relevant to explore the context of the online food delivery industry, particularly in Europe. According to a survey conducted by Statista, the online food delivery industry in 2023 ranks its position as one of the major e-commerce categories in Europe, with a number of users accounting for 380 million in 2024 (Statista, 2024). Among European countries, according to the data gathered by Statista in 2023, the United Kingdom represents the largest market for online food delivery (Statista, 2024).

To conclude, as introduced at the beginning, online food delivery applications exemplify tools employing geolocation to implement personalized marketing content. By collecting and utilizing location data, this application can deliver a wide range of personalization to customers to improve their experiences. However, similarly to other personalization marketing tools can elicit concerns related to data collection. Indeed, according to a report carried out by pCloud, national food delivery apps are among the most aggressive in collecting data and are more inclined to disclose or sell these data to third parties (Food On Demand, 2021). As a result, food delivery apps represent the right tool to include in the study, since they embody both the positive and negative perspectives that personalization can create, and it can impact customers' brand engagement.

4.4 Research Philosophy, approach and methodological choices

After having clarified the research questions, objective, hypothesis and the study object, it has become imperative to address the research philosophy, approach and the methodology chosen to conduct the study and effectively respond to the research questions.

The research philosophy outlines a structure of beliefs and assumptions concerning knowledge advancements in a specific study field (Saunders et al., 2009a). It indicates theories related to the nature of the reality under examination and the processes through which knowledge is formed and validated (Mauthner, 2020). Essentially, research philosophy represents the beliefs regarding how data from a specific phenomenon should be gathered, examined, and employed (Bajpai, 2011). As a result, it becomes important to define an adequate research philosophy for the relevance of the methodology, since it

stands for the way the researcher sees the world, and it enables the researcher to identify the right approach and the reasons behind the choice (Chetty, 2016).

The authors mentioned in the paragraph before outlined five major philosophies: Positivism, Interpretivism, Realism, and Pragmatism. This research adopts the one of Interpretivism, which specifically indicates “a socially constructed activity, and the reality it tells us about therefore is also socially constructed” (Willis, 2007, 96). In other words, the knowledge generated with this typology of research relates to the individuals involved and the study context (McChesney et al., 2019). Consequently, the findings of this research do not define “laws or theories” applicable to everyone. Instead, they offer deeper, context-dependent insights and interpretations (Saunders et al., 2009).

The two variables explored in the research, perception, and brand engagement, depend strictly on the perspective of each participant and on the circumstances in which the study has been conducted. After illustrating the research philosophy adopted for the research, the following paragraph highlights the research approach.

The research approach followed for this study is a deductive approach, which consists of testing theories or hypotheses through the gathering and examination of data (Hassan, 2024). All the data collected through the selected research methods is based on hypotheses, resulting from existing theories showcased in the literature review. As a result, the tool used to gather the necessary data to verify the hypothesis was a quantitative one, the survey. Since the research problem is already consistent, and the purpose of this research is to provide additional and valuable contributions to it, the choice of a quantitative method results is the most appropriate one.

This section clarified the research philosophy and approach, which are fundamental for identifying the appropriate methods to collect data and addressing the research questions. Consequently, the following subchapter outlines the data collection and sample.

4.5 Data Collection and Sample

This subchapter provides a more detailed description of the Data collection tool used and the sample selected to conduct the study. The research was based on the collection of primary data, which are obtained through direct data collection. This firsthand data was collected through a quantitative method: the survey.

Surveys represent a quantitative research method consisting of gathering data from a chosen sample via structured questionnaires or interviews. This procedure aims to discover potential patterns, comprehend the relation among variables, and derive conclusions concerning the representative sample examined (Hassan, 2024). Moreover, surveys are usually employed to explore the predilections, opinions, or beliefs of a specific group (McCombes, 2019). In this research, the survey investigates people's perception of personalized marketing content and their engagement with the brand. Consequently, the survey represents the most suitable data collection for this study.

The third chapter listed and explained different scales for measuring consumer brand engagement, since one of the primary objectives of the research is to assess the impact of personalized marketing content on consumer brand engagement it becomes imperative to select and apply one of the scales. The latest, along with other theoretical frameworks, was employed to build the survey and analyze its results. The scale adopted for the current study was proposed by Dwivedi et al. in 2015. The latest identified three main aspects: vigor, dedication, and absorption, and the outcomes of this scale emphasized that customers' brand engagement extends beyond purchases to include a more profound emotional connection with the brand.

In the Dwivedi scale is pointed out that CBE influences loyalty by boosting connections and satisfying experiences with the company, improved by an increase in customer brand engagement. As a result, Razmus in 2021 concluded that loyalty is a natural effect of CBE, citing loyalty intentions as one of the key CBE outcomes. CBE is believed to be a relational construct, causing the creation of psychological ties with an organization (Harrigan et al., 2017), hence motivating clients to retain these bonds. Indeed, previous studies have identified loyalty as a significant factor in analyzing and understanding customer brand engagement (Aljuhmani et al., 2023).

Moreover, early research outlined the positive association between the two notions (Algharabar et al., 2020). While highlighting the importance of loyalty in CBE studies, some authors revealed that engaged customers are more likely to react behaviorally and develop loyalty toward brands (Kwon et al., 2020). Based on this theoretical foundation, the research applies the Dwivedi et al. (2015) scale, focusing on loyalty as the primary engagement outcome analyzed in the survey.

To conclude, in order to obtain valuable insights from the survey, it becomes imperative to define the characteristics of the sample taken into consideration for this study. The age of the chosen sample has been defined on the analysis of reports and surveys carried out by different organizations concerning food delivery applications age groups. According to a study undertaken by Zion and Hollman in 2019, the main users of food delivery application are individuals between 18 and 29 years old, which account for 68%, followed by the ones between 30 and 44 years old, accounting for 51%. In agreement with the previous results, two studies undertaken by Statista in 2017 and in 2019, also pointed out that the main users of food delivery applications belong to a group category define as “young adults”, which represents all the age groups under 35 years old. From the insights gathered, the sample selected has encompass every age group between 18 and 44 years old. Moreover, the sample will take into consideration only individuals living in Europe at the moment of the survey distribution.

4.6 Survey questions and theoretical background

Following the definition of the data collection method and the sample considered in this research, it is imperative to provide a comprehensive overview of the theoretical framework upon which the questions are based. This subchapter is dedicated to showcasing the academic foundations behind the selection of each question included in the survey, drawing on the literature analysis presented in the previous chapters, and ensuring alignment with the research questions and objectives.

The survey opens with a short presentation of the research objectives and the ethical considerations. This initial section of the survey ensures that the participants have a clear understanding of the study objectives, and the ethical considerations involved, enabling them to make a more informed decision. Once the prior information has been submitted to the participants, the survey displays a section dedicated to demographic questions, which delineates the sample of interest for the study.

Upon defining the sample features, the survey starts addressing the first hypothesis and objective of the study, which concerns the understanding of consumers' perceptions of food delivery applications. To verify the hypothesis and the objective, the survey includes questions, more specifically from 6 to 10, designed to evaluate consumers' knowledge of personalized marketing content, their experiences with food delivery

applications, and the types of food delivery applications they use. The examples of food delivery applications included in the survey are derived from the study object explained in the preceding subchapter.

The 11th question was based on the insights from a survey undertaken by Real Research Media in 2021. According to the results obtained, consumers enjoy food delivery applications because of the opportunity to choose products and services based on their convenience. Specifically, the majority of respondents stated that choosing from a wide range of menus and convenience were the primary reasons behind their usage of online food delivery applications.

To address effectively the first hypothesis and objective of this research, the subsequent section of questions from 12 until 15 has been developed on the theoretical foundations, stating that, similarly to other personalized marketing tools, food delivery applications can provoke ambivalent responses concerning data collection. As demonstrated by a report published by pCloud in 2021, national food delivery applications are particularly aggressive in gathering private data and are more likely to share or sell them to third parties (Food On Demand, 2021). In light of these theoretical premises, the questions from 12 until 15 explore consumers' perceptions and personal experiences with data collection for personalized marketing content in food delivery applications.

Following, the questions from 16 until 19 were developed on key insights from prior literature research. According to a survey carried out by Epsilon, at least 80% of consumers have a preference for companies that provide them with personalized marketing initiatives and communications (Gilman, 2022). On a similar perspective, Pfiffelman et al. (2022) discovered that products and messages in line with personal preferences, tend to elicit positive reactions from consumers.

Previous studies highlighted that personalized content is more effective and engaging than generic ones since it attracts consumers' attention and makes their purchasing choices (Lambillotte et al., 2022: 3). This view was further sustained by Arora et al. (2021) and Lambillotte et al. (2022) when they stated that consumers generally find personalized content relevant, useful, and impactful.

The second part of the survey delves into the impact of personalized marketing content in food delivery applications on customer brand engagement. Harrigan et al. (2018)

underscored the significance of customer involvement in fostering deeper connections with brands, noting that consumers' perception of a product's value is shaped by their preferences and demands (Vivek, Beatty & Morgan, 2012). This aligns with the view that personalized marketing content influences customer engagement levels, as highlighted by Arora et al. (2021), who emphasized the role of personalization in maintaining long-term customer relationships. Therefore, improving consumer perception through personalized content contributes to sustaining and deepening their engagement with the brand. The theoretical background outlined consisted of the framework upon which question 20 was built.

The final set of questions, more specifically from 21 until 28, incorporated in the survey concerns the scale chosen to measure consumer brand engagement (CBE), more specifically the impact of personalized marketing content in food delivery applications on CBE. As outlined in the previous subchapters, this study adopts the Dwivedi measuring scale, which consists of three key aspects: vigor, dedication, and absorption. Dwivedi's scale pointed out that CBE affects loyalty by enhancing satisfying experiences and connections with the company, further improved by increased customer brand engagement. Consequently, Razmus (2021) concluded that loyalty represents a natural effect of CBE, mentioning loyalty intentions as one of the main CBE outcomes.

CBE is believed to be a relational construct, causing the creation of psychological ties with an organization (Harrigan et al., 2017), leading consumers to retain these bonds. Previous studies have identified loyalty as a significant factor in understanding CBE (Aljuhmani et al., 2023). Additionally, early research outlined the positive association between the two notions (Algharabar et al., 2020). While highlighting the importance of loyalty in CBE studies, some authors revealed that engaged customers are more likely to react behaviourally and develop loyalty toward brands (Kwon et al., 2020). Based on this theoretical foundation, the questions from 22 to 29 have been developed.

The survey was mainly composed of close-ended questions, allowing the gathering of numerical or one-word answers and ensuring the facilitation of the analysis in terms of comparing and identifying correlations. Furthermore, data analyses from the Excel spreadsheet, on which all the data have been collected, are facilitated by the quick coding and entry typical of close-ended responses (Hyman & Sierra, 2016). These close-ended

questions were a combination of multiple choice and Likert scale. A survey question built in a Likert scale enables the researcher to gather rank-ordered replies to evaluate, in this specific context, the degree of agreement and disagreement with the declarative statement proposed (Assessment and Research, 2021). In this survey, the Likert Scale was composed of a rank of five, in which one represented “strongly disagree” and five “strongly agree”.

To conclude, as also outlined at the beginning of this subchapter, all the questions of the survey are grounded in the theoretical framework detailed in the literature review chapters and the Study Object section of the Methodology Chapter. The structure of the survey, composed of all the questions, is available in the Appendices (Appendix 1) of this internship report.

4.7 Ethical considerations

This section is related to the set of principals employed to conduct the data collection. All the participants have been informed concerning the following ethical considerations in order to protect their rights, improve the validity of the research and maintain academic integrity.

Firstly, all participants are free to opt in or out from the survey at any point without any pressure or coercion to continue and they are required to provide a reason for not participating or leaving the survey before its completion (Saunders et al., 2012).

Secondly, full consent from participants to take part to the survey is obtained before filling out the survey, as outlined in the 10 major principles to follow, created by Bryman and Bell (2007). All voluntary participants will be provided with an informed consent with all the information needed regarding the research purpose, procedures, advantages, and risks in order to be able to make a conscious choice concerning their participation.

Thirdly, the survey will be anonymous, which means that all the data collected will be anonymous, strictly reserved and they will be used only for academic purposes related to the research. This practice will ensure the anonymity and the confidentiality of the participants (Bryman et al., 2007).

Lastly, there are no harms or potential risks related to this research. Participants' participation will only contribute to having a clearer comprehension of the research problem addressed in the study.

4.8 Sample Test Final survey

This section is dedicated to approach a preliminary survey test conducted with a smaller sample group before the final submission to a larger audience. The test's purpose consisted of individuating any mistakes or misunderstandings concerning the survey's questions before its final distribution to the sample identified and described in the previous sections.

The test survey involved a sample composed of 10 participants, 9 belonging to the age group between 18 and 29 and one belonging to the age group between 30 – 44, all currently residing in Europe. Google Forms was the tool chosen for building the survey, and once finalized, it was submitted to this group on the 17th of July 2024 at 12:40 pm. All the responses of the sample test were gathered by 5 pm.

The survey was submitted online to the sample through a link shared on WhatsApp. Convenience played a role in the platform selection, ensuring rapid and easy access to the survey. No mistake or misunderstanding during the filling of the questionnaire has been pointed out by the participants, concluding that the survey was ready to be finally submitted to a larger audience.

5. Data Presentation and Analysis

This chapter presents the findings of the quantitative collection tool chosen for this study, the survey. In the beginning, there will be a general summary of the survey in terms of the number of responses, distribution tools, the timeframe, and the survey structure. Afterward, each question's results will be presented in a section highlighting relevant insights from the responses obtained, which will constitute the foundation for further discussion in the following chapter.

As previously mentioned, the survey was distributed to the audience using a Google Forms link and subsequently shared on social media platforms, including WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook. Google Forms was chosen as a platform for administrating the survey due to its user-friendly design, features, and service variety.

At the end of the survey distribution, on the 30th of July 2024, the responses amounted to 269. As exposed in the Methodology Chapter, the sample characteristics included living in Europe, knowing personalized marketing content, and having at least one experience with food delivery applications. To guarantee that sample criteria were respected, the survey was designed with questions for each of the features, and with the selection of "no" at one of them, the survey would shut down to consider only participants who met the requirements.

5.1 Data descriptive analysis

The data for each question will be presented in sections, as mentioned in the preceding subchapter, to facilitate the presentation and the examination of the results. The demographic division is shown first, followed by the food delivery application usage and motivations, personalized marketing content perception, and finally, the impact on consumer brand engagement and loyalty. Each paragraph begins by outlining the data, expressed mainly in percentages, and then the associated graph. The following paragraphs showcase each category and question individually:

1. Demographic Information

At the end of the survey distribution, the respondents amounted to 269. As a matter of fact, from the 271 individuals that accessed the survey link, 99,3% (n= 269) decided to continue the survey, and only 0.7% (n= 2) didn't participate.

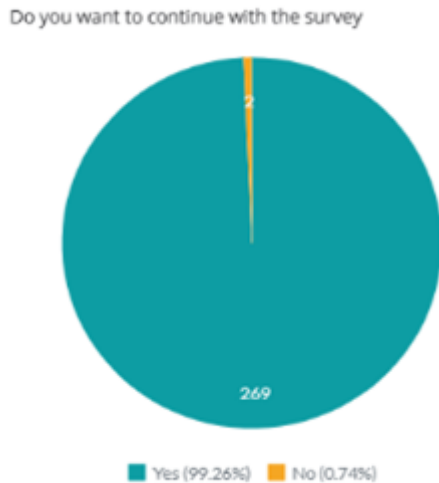


Figure 5 Pie chart for “Do you want to continue with the survey?” question, developed by the Author.

Of 269 respondents, the larger part, 75% (n= 203), consisted primarily of females, and males made up the remaining 24,5 % (n= 66). Concerning age, more than half, specifically 70.6% (190), consisted of individuals belonging to the 18 – 29 category, followed by 30-44 with 17, 1% (n= 46), and 45-60 with 9.7% (n= 26). Lastly, individuals over 60 accounted for 2,6% (n= 7).

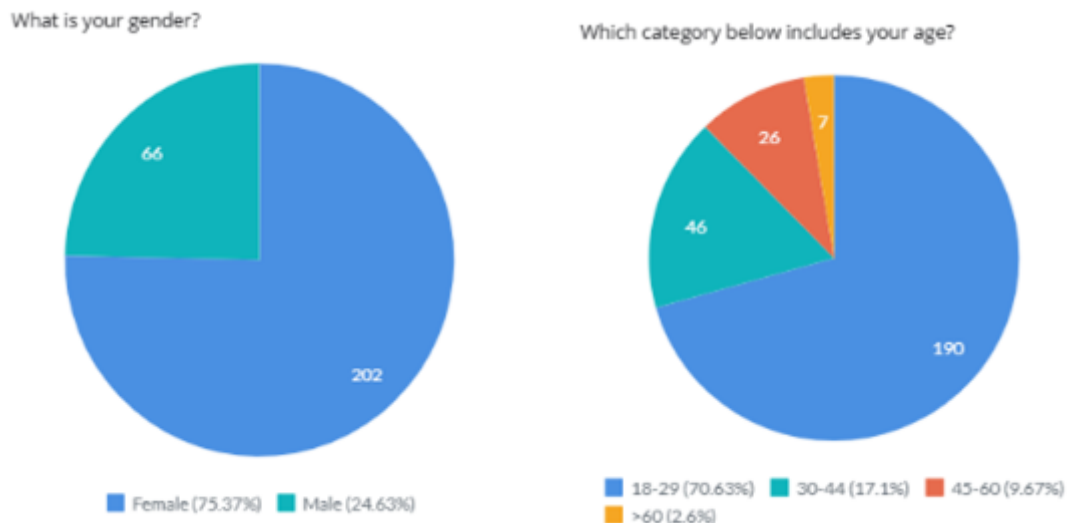


Figure 6 Pie chart on the question “What is you gender?” , developed by the Author

Figure 7 Pie chart on the question “Which category below includes your age?”, developed by the Author.

Regarding education (Figure 7), the Bachelor's degree represents the largest segment, representing 38.7 % (n= 104) of the respondents. Secondly, Master's degree appoints 35.7% (n= 96), and in the third position is the High School degree or equivalent. Lastly, the segment Less than high school degree and Doctorate (PhD) accounts for 7.1% (n= 19) and 1.9% (n= 5) respectively.

What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

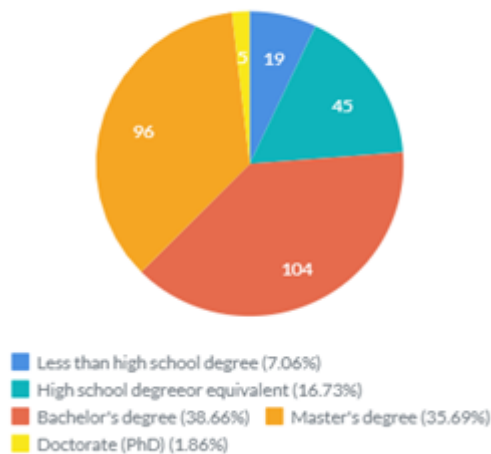


Figure 8. Pie chart on the question “What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?”, developed by the Author.

Concerning the working situation, the vast majority of participants, accounting for 34,94% (n= 94), are full-time employed. This is followed by the second most numerous group, which consists of Students accounting for 32,71% (n= 88). Corresponding to a sixth of all respondents, working students represent 17.47% (n= 47) and come in slightly ahead of the small but significant self-employed segment, achieving 5.95% (n= 16). To conclude, the final categories, which are Part-time, Retired, and Unemployed represent respectively 4.46% (n= 12), 2.97% (n= 8), and 1.49% (n= 4) of the total.

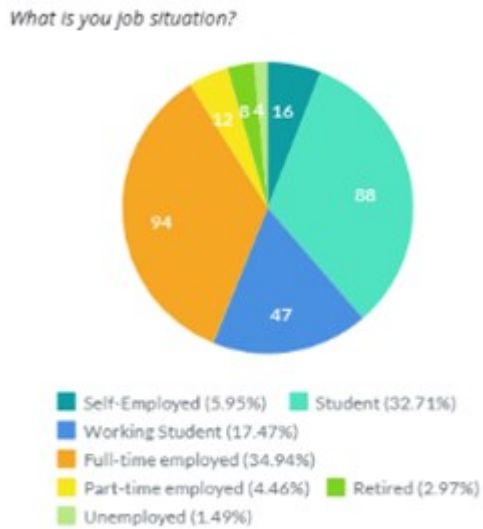


Figure 9. Pie chart on the question “What is your job situation?”, developed by the Author.

Two of the following three questions were used to select the respondents for the study's final sample. The first question (Figure 9) was designed to consider only participants living in a European country. The majority, more specifically the 92.2% (n= 248), represent the ones living in Europe, while the 7.8% (n= 21) selected " No". The second filter question (figure 10) evaluated participants' knowledge of personalized marketing content. A considerable 87.1% (n= 216) affirmed being familiar with personalized marketing content, while 12.9 % (n= 32) indicated the contrary. These screening questions reduced the initial sample size from 269 to 248 and subsequently to 216, ensuring that only those participants in line with the sample criteria proceeded with the survey.

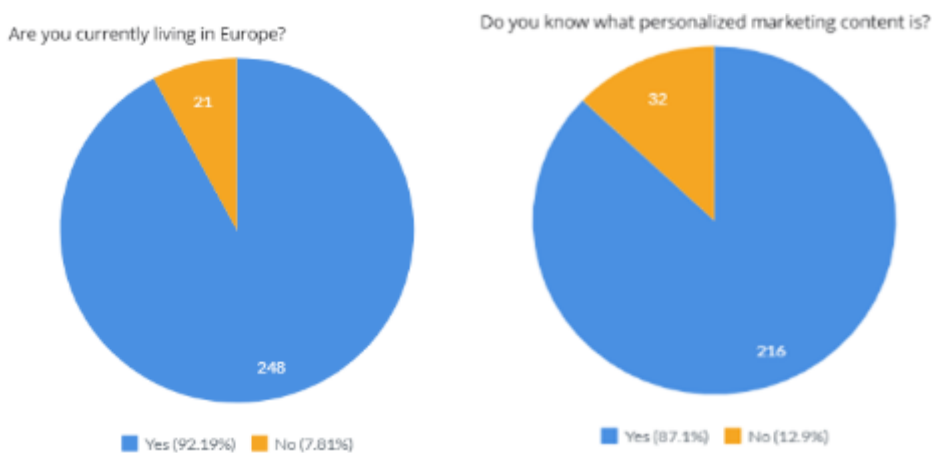


Figure 10. Pie chart on the question “Are you currently living in Europe?”

Figure 11. *Pie Chart on the question “Do you know what personalized marketing content is?”, developed by the Author.*

After the first two screening questions, the 216 respondents were asked to define whether they have ever had an experience with personalized marketing content from a brand (Figure 11). The 77.3% (n= 167) affirmed having received this typology of marketing content, while the 13.4% (n= 29) responded negatively, and 9.3 % (n= 20) replied with “Don’t know/ Not applicable“.



Figure 12. *Pie chart on the question “Have you ever experienced personalized marketing content from a brand directed towards you?”, developed by the Author*

2. Food Delivery Applications

The first question (Figure 12) of this category represents the last screening question, employed to take into account individuals belonging to the sample. By asking if the participants have ever used food delivery applications, the findings pointed out that the majority, more specifically 88.4% (n= 191), used food delivery applications at least once in their lives, and 11.6% (n= 25) replied negatively. After this question, the number of respondents reached 191, indicating exclusively the participants with qualities consistent with the research objective.

Have you ever used Food Delivery Applications at least once?

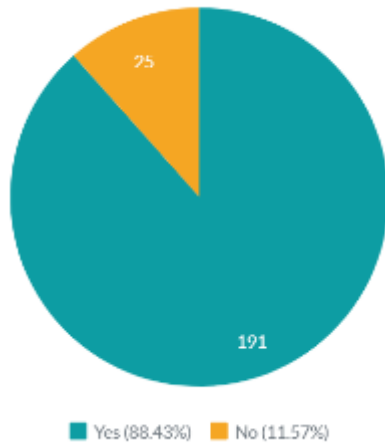


Figure 13. Pie chart on the question “Have you ever used Food Delivery Applications at least once?”, developed by the Author.

The participants were asked to share the name of the food delivery application they have used at least once, which contributed to gaining more knowledge on consumers' behaviour toward food delivery applications. As the bar chart (Figure 13) shows, the most popular application is “Uber Eats”, with 61.3% (n= 117), followed by “Deliveroo” with 60.2% (n= 115). With several users amounting to 52.9% (n= 101), Glovo held the third position. “Just Eat” and “Bolt Food” are ranked fourth and fifth, with 43.4% (n= 83) and 25.7% (n= 49) respectively. Subsequently, “Wolt” with a percentage of 1.6% (n= 3), all the other food delivery apps obtained a lower percentage of 0.5% (n= 1), as follows: Hello Fresh, Foodora, Lieferando, Takeaway, Thuisbezorgd, Hungry Panda, Starbucks and local pizza shop with its delivery service (Other).

Choose the food delivery applications you have used at least once. (Select all the options that apply)



Figure 14. Bar graph on the question “Choose the food delivery application you have used at least once”, developed by the Author.

Afterward, the participants pointed out the main reasons for using food delivery applications. By looking at the bar chart (Figure 14), it is evident that “Time-saving”, selected by 75.4% (n= 144), and “the Ability to choose products and services based on your convenience”, selected by 52.9% (n= 101), represent the two major reasons. Following, there is “A variety of food options” in third position with a percentage of 42.9% (n= 82) and “Faster delivery (minimized food delivery time)” in fourth place with 33.5% (n= 64).

Subsequently, 28.3% of respondents indicated targeted “Promotion or discounts”, and just after 24.6% (n= 47) pointed out “Real-time order monitoring (updates, delivery progress, predicted time of arrival)”. Notably, fewer participants, 7.9% (n= 15) and 5.8% (n= 11) chose “Personalized restaurant, shop, and food suggestions” and “High food quality” as motivation to use food delivery applications.

Lastly, a few respondents specified additional reasons not listed in the survey. With a percentage of 0.5% (1) each, participants mentioned: Laziness in cooking; Not liking cooking; the possibility of paying with cash; avoiding the need to go out; using the service on holidays; laziness in picking up the order and using it rarely on special occasions.



Figure 15. Bar graph on the question “What is the main reason you use food delivery application?”, developed by the Author.

3. Consumers’ perception of personalized marketing content in Food Delivery Applications

Understanding how consumers perceive personalized marketing content in Food Delivery Applications is crucial. Every question in this section has been crafted on the contributions of Gilman (2022), Lambillotte et al. (2022), and Arora et al. (2021), for example, as mentioned in the section about the theoretical background of the survey, to gain deeper insights into participants' points of view and attitudes toward private data usage to generate customized content.

The first question assesses individuals’ enjoyment of personalized content (Figure 15), especially of tailored recommendations and offers in food delivery apps. As represented in the image below, there is a predisposition to find this content enjoyable. As a matter of fact, 36.6% (n= 70) “agree “, and 18.8% (36) “strongly agree” with the statement provided. However, 33 % (n= 63) of the participants kept a “neutral” position, while only 8.4% (n= 16) “disagree” and 3.1% (n= 6) “strongly disagree” with the statement. The majority, composed of 55.4 % (n= 106), experienced good feelings as testified by the total number of respondents choosing “agree” and “strongly agree”, with a significant part selecting “neutral” and a lower percentage going for “disagree” and “strongly

disagree”, representing the 11.5 % (n= 22). In general, tailored recommendations and offers are well-received and enjoyed by the participants.

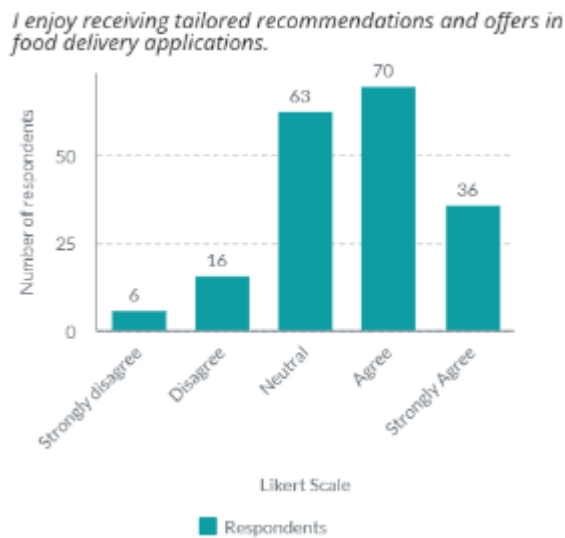


Figure 16. Bar graph on the question “I enjoy receiving tailored recommendations and offers in food delivery applications”, developed by the Author.

From this moment, the questions focused on data usage in the content generated by Food Delivery Applications. As already showcased by the previous bar graph, when it comes to the comfort level of personal data used in food delivery applications, the general tendency is directed toward the neutral and agreement section. As presented in the image below (Figure 16), this tendency remained in question 13. The “neutral” option made up 31.9% (n= 61), while the “agree” option slightly declined from 31.4% (n= 60) to reach 11% (n= 21) in the “strongly agree” option. On the other hand, the percentage of respondents who disagreed reached 5.2% (n= 10) for the “strongly disagree” option and 20.4% (n= 39) for the “disagree” one. The sum of the "agree" and "strongly agree" alternatives results in a relevant amount of 42.4 % (n= 81), which overcomes the "neutral" option with 31.9% (n= 61), and the "disagree" and "strongly disagree" combination with 25.6% (n= 49). Overall, while a notable number of respondents remains neutral, the graph in Figure 16 displays a strong propensity to agree, suggesting that the majority feels comfortable sharing and employing personal data for tailored content in food delivery applications.

I feel comfortable with the use of my personal data in food delivery applications for tailored recommendations and offers.

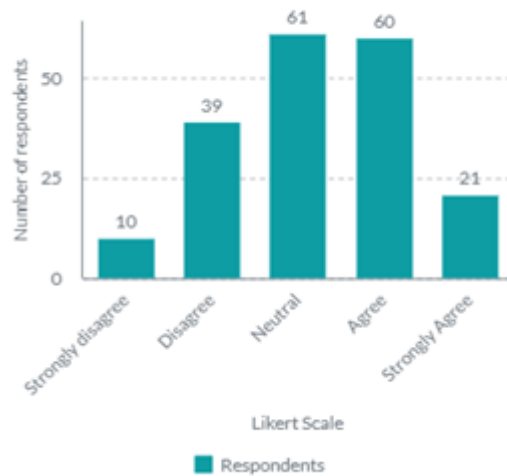


Figure 17. Bar graph on the question “I feel comfortable with the use of my personal data in food delivery applications for tailored recommendations and offers”, developed by the Author.

The following graph, shown in Figure 17, doesn't depart from the other ones, as it indicates a tendency to be neutral and in agreement, even though the neutral position has a distinctive amount compared to the others. The highest response selected is indeed “neutral” with a percentage of 41.9% (n= 80), followed by 28.3% (n= 54) in “agree” and 19.9% (n= 38) in “disagree”. As shown until now, the extreme option tends to be the least selected by respondents, with 1.6% (3) and 8.6 % (16) strongly disagree and strongly agree. Even when adding "strongly agree" and "agree", their total percentage of 36.9 % (n= 70), results lower than the "neutral" alternative. Similarly, the sum of "disagree" and "strongly disagree", 21.5% (n= 54), remains under the percentage of "neutral" and also of "agree" and "strongly agree" sum. To summarize the results, participants are more likely to select the “neutral” alternative, despite a significant portion leaning towards the agreement, when evaluating the safety with which food delivery applications manage their data.

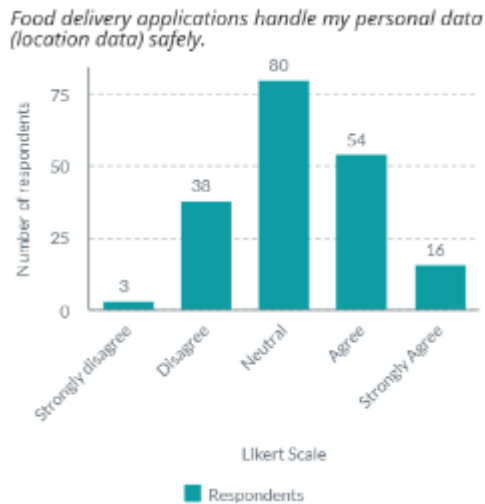


Figure 18. Bar graph on the question “Food delivery applications handle my personal data (location data) safely”, developed by the Author.

In the question related to how the management of personal data affects trust in food delivery platforms, as displayed in Figure 18, this pattern is reversed. The results were more favorable towards the statement, as showcased by the percentage of 32.5 % (n= 62) in “agree” and 13.6% (n= 26) in “strongly agree”, which together represented 46.1 % (n= 88) of the sample. Differently from previously, the “neutral” and “disagree” percentages seem to have a lower difference in respondents’ amount, which consisted of 25.7% (n= 49) and 22.5% (n= 43). Lastly, “strongly disagree” reached only 5.8% (n=11), and combined with "disagree", represented 28.3% (n= 54) of participants. These results demonstrated that while a relevant group of respondents fell under the “agree” option, suggesting that they believe that personal data management affects their trust, a portion remained neutral or skeptical by selecting either “neutral” or “disagree”.

The handling of my personal data by food delivery applications affects my trust in these platforms.

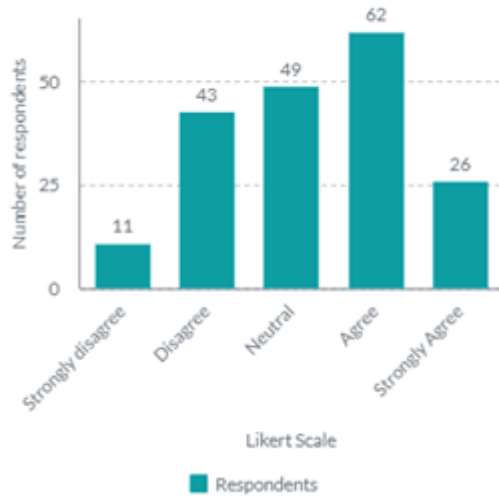


Figure 19. Bar graph on the question “The handling of my personal data by food delivery applications affects my trust in these platforms”, developed by the Author.

The last question regarded more specifically the individuals’ concerns related to the use of personal data in marketing content for food delivery applications (Figure 19). The three main reasons individuated are “Privacy concerns” with 60.7% (n= 116), “Misuse of data” with 46.6% (n= 89), and “Third-party transactions” with 39.3% (n= 75). Lastly, 15.7% (n= 30) expressed not having any concerns, while the two respondents, representing 0.10% (n= 2), shared that their concerns related to “how strong the cyber security measures are” and “people knowing my address and location”. The data outline that privacy, data misuse, and third-party transactions are the primary concerns for users when it comes to personal data management by food delivery apps, and a smaller portion expressed no concerns.

What concerns, if any, do you have about the use of your data to personalize marketing content in food delivery applications? (select all the options that apply)

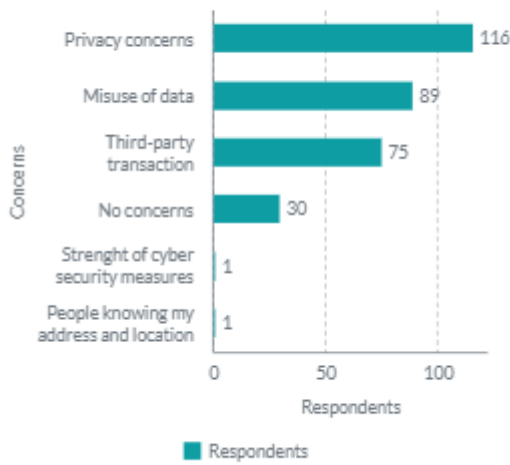


Figure 20. Bar graph on the question “What concerns, if any, do you have about the use of your data to personalize marketing content in food delivery applications?”, developed by the Author.

The bar chart (Figure 20) of the statement presented here displays an alignment on “neutral”, in fact, 32.5% (n= 62) of respondents declared being neutral concerning their likelihood of using a food delivery app that offers personalized marketing content over one without it. By combining the percentages of “agree” and “strongly agree” the total amount of participants inclined to use food delivery applications with personalized marketing content reaches 35.6% (n= 68), which is slightly higher than the united percentage of “disagree” and “strongly disagree”, accounting for a total of 31,9% (n= 61). Specifically, the portion of respondents choosing “agree” is 23.6% (n= 45), and that of those selecting “strongly agree” is 12% (n= 23). On the other hand, the percentage of respondents going for “disagree” is 20.4% (n= 39), while the percentage of respondents for “strongly disagree” is 11.5% (n= 22). The results suggest a slight inclination toward using food delivery applications offering tailored content. As a matter of fact, the combined percentages of "agree" and "strongly agree" overcome the percentage of "neutral" and the combined one of "disagree" and "strongly disagree".

I am more likely to use a food delivery application that offers personalized marketing content compared to one that does not.

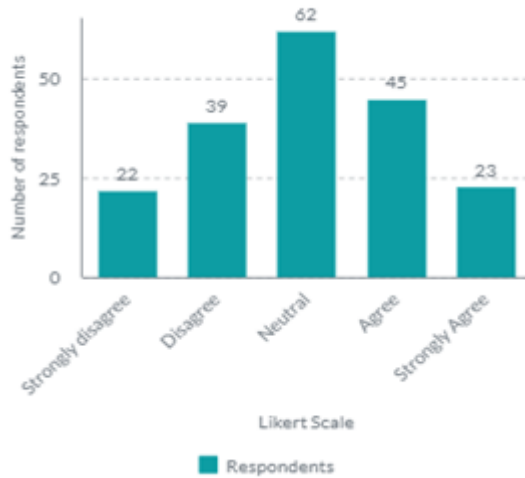


Figure 21. Bar graph on the question “I am more likely to use food delivery applications offering personalized marketing content compared to one that does not”, developed by the Author.

In contrast to the precedent bar chart, this Likert scale (Figure 21) illustrates an evident difference between agreement and disagreement. Notably, the “neutral” and the “agree” options collected the same amount of 31.9% (n= 61), indicating a close alignment between them. The last option, representing “strongly agree”, came in with a lower percentage of 15.2% (n= 29). On the other hand, the “strongly disagree” and “disagree” options are relevantly lower, gaining only 5.2 % (n= 10) and 15.7 % (n= 30) respectively. This distribution points out a strong trend in the direction of agreement, since the combination of “agree” and “strongly agree” results in a total of 47.1% (n= 90), which closely surpasses the 31.9% (n= 61) of neutral and the 20.9 % (n= 40) of “disagree” and “strongly disagree” combination. Overall, there is a favorable sentiment towards personalized marketing content for an improved consumer experience.

Personalized marketing content makes my overall experience with food delivery applications better.

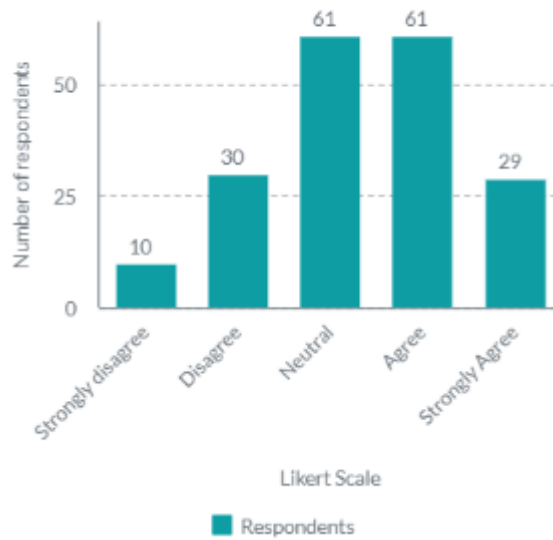


Figure 22. Bar graph on the question “personalized marketing content makes my overall experience with food delivery applications better”, developed by the Author.

The questions move to focus on participants' frequency in noticing a typology of personalized marketing content (Figure 22), especially personalized recommendations. The pie chart displays the majority of respondents noticing “Sometimes” this type of content with a percentage of 42.4% (n= 81), lightly higher than the “Often” option at 35.6% (n= 68) and the “Rarely” one at 12.6 % (n= 24). The smallest segments of the pie chart are occupied by “Always” with 6.3 % (n= 12) and “Never “with 3.1% (n= 6). The findings demonstrate a greater propensity among participants to pay attention to tailored recommendations, with the majority noticing this content frequently.

How often do you notice personalized recommendations (e.g., tailored restaurant suggestions, promotions) in food delivery applications?

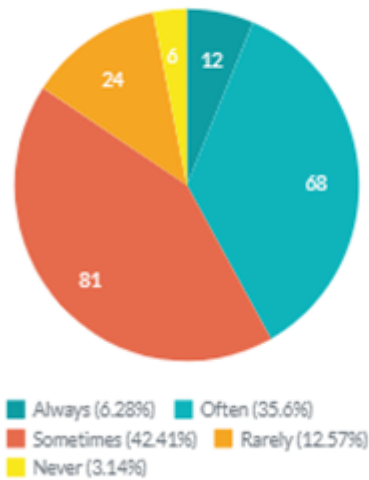


Figure 23 Pie Chart on the question “How often do you notice personalized recommendations in food delivery applications?”, developed by the Author.

At this stage, the set of questions transitions from concerns to how people perceive personalized marketing content in food delivery applications. The graph chart (Figure 23) presented is based on a Likert scale from 1 to 5, illustrating a notable and positive inclination towards the statement. Differently from above, the highest rate of responses concentrates on “agree”, with 42.4% (n= 81). In the second position, the “neutral” stance is held by 27.7% (n= 53), followed by “strongly agree” with 14.1 % (n= 27). The latest overcomes slightly “disagree” composed of 13.6% (n= 26) of the total sample. In the last position, there is “strongly disagree” with 2.1% (n= 4), demonstrating a strong consensus among respondents that personalized marketing content is relevant and useful. In point of fact, by merging “agree” and “strongly agree”, the resulting percentage is 56.5% (n= 108), which is remarkably higher than the 15.7% (n= 30) of “disagree” and “strongly disagree” as well as the “neutral” option accounting for 27.7% (n= 53).

I find personalized recommendations from food delivery applications relevant and useful.

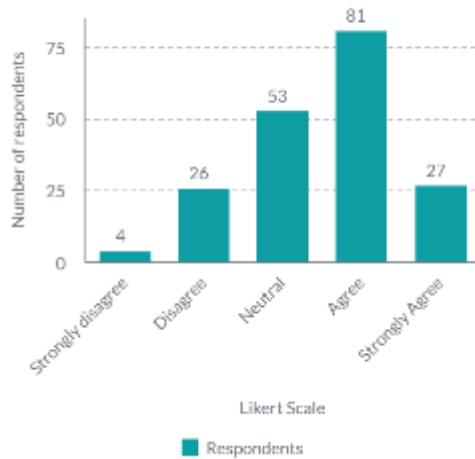


Figure 24. Bar Graph on the question “I find personalized recommendations from food delivery applications relevant and useful”, developed by the Author.

4. Consumers Engagement with personalized marketing content in Food Delivery applications

In this section, all the questions related to consumer brand engagement, including the ones based on the Dwivedi scale, have been inserted. The questions’ set starts by demanding the sample to indicate how often they actively engage with tailored content in food delivery apps. By reflecting a similar pattern to the previous pie chart, the results show a relevant high frequency of engagement (Figure 24). The largest portions of the pie chart included: “Sometimes” with 44.5% (85) and “Often” with 27.7% (53). “Rarely” comes next with a rate of responses accounting for 16.6% (32). However, the lowest amount went for “Always”, at 3.7% (7), following “Never” with 7.3% (14). These findings suggest that a notable portion of the sample engages with the content occasionally, with a significant number of participants more frequently.

How often do you actively engage with personalized content provided by your preferred food delivery application (for examples recommendations based on your location)?

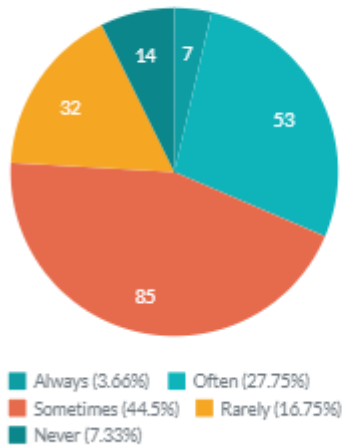


Figure 25. Pie Chart on the question “How often do you actively engage with personalized content provided by preferred food delivery application?”, developed by the Author.

The bar graph, presented in the Figure 25 depicts respondents' reactions to receiving personalized offers by employing a Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). As evident from the chart, 37.7% (n= 72) chose “neutral”, pointing out a more moderate stance taken by the majority of the sample. Subsequently, 27.7% (n= 52) “agree” with the proposed statement to indicate their favorable inclination towards such tailored offers. A less optimistic view is shown by the 11.5% (n= 22) and 17.3% (n= 33) of the “strongly disagree” and the “disagree” option. Lastly, only 6.3% (n= 12) “strongly agree” with the statement. Overall, the data presented reveal an inclination mainly toward “neutrality”, with a smaller amount showing strong reactions for or against personalized offers. In point of fact, the association of “agree” and “strongly agree” represent the 34% (n= 64), which slightly lower than the 37.7% (n= 72) of “neutral”, but notably higher than “disagree” and “strongly disagree” with 28.8% (n= 55).

When I receive personalized offers from the food delivery application I use, I feel excited and eager to engage with it.

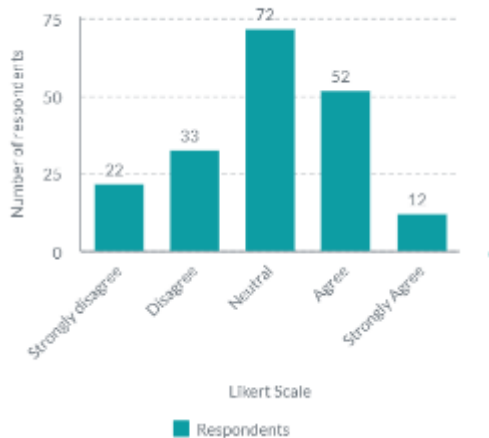


Figure 26. *The bar graph on the question “When I receive personalized offers from the food delivery application I use, I feel excited and eager to engage with it”, developed by the Author.*

The bar graph, presented in Figure 26, is the first to show an almost opposite tendency concerning the ones presented until this point. In contrast with previously, the inclination shifts towards disagreement while maintaining a high neutrality rate. The highest number of responses focused on the “neutral” alternative characterized by an amount of 30.4% (n= 58), followed by 27.7% (n= 53) in “disagree” and 22 % (n= 42) in “strongly disagree”. On the other hand, “agree” and “strongly agree” account for 16.8% (n= 32) and 3.1% (n= 6) respectively. By merging “strongly disagree” and “disagree”, the total amount emerging ,49.75% (n= 95), significantly surpasses the 19.9% (n= 38) of “strongly agree” and “agree”, and the neutral percentage of 30.4 % (n= 58). To summarize, the chart suggests that most participants assume mainly a disagreement position, followed by a “neutral” one, towards personalized marketing messages boosting an emotional connection with the application.

I feel a strong emotional bond with the food delivery application I use, because of the personalized marketing messages I receive

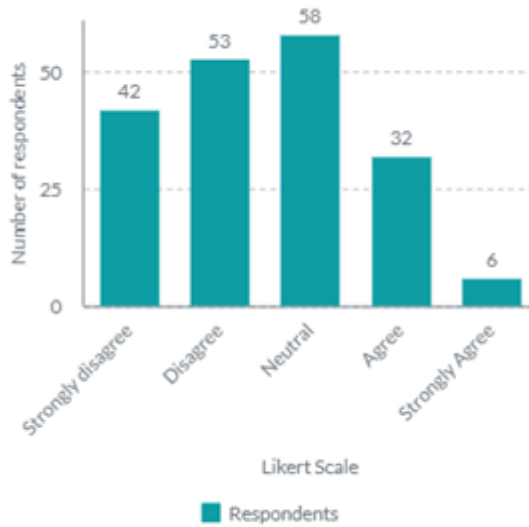


Figure 27. Bar graph on the question “I feel a strong emotional bond with food delivery application I use, because of the personalized marketing messages I receive”, developed by the Author.

Similarly to the previous bar graph, the image below (Figure 27) shows participants expressing a tendency towards disagreement and a more moderate position. With a response rate of 31,4% (n= 60), the “neutral” option ranks in first position, followed by “strongly disagree” and “disagree” with 24.1% (n= 46) and 23.6% (n= 45). On the opposite side, 18.3% (n= 35) of the sample “agree” with the statement, and only a small percentage composed by 2.6 % (n= 35) “strongly agree”. However, by merging "strongly disagree" with disagree, the resulting percentage is 47.7 % (n= 91), which is substantially higher than the combination of "agree" and "strongly agree", 20.9 % (n= 40), as well as the "neutral" option with 31.4% (n= 60). The results highlight the lower relation between emotional bond and personalized messages and offers, as shown by the percentages in “disagree” and “strongly disagree”.

I often find myself completely focused on the personalized messages and offers from the food delivery application I use.

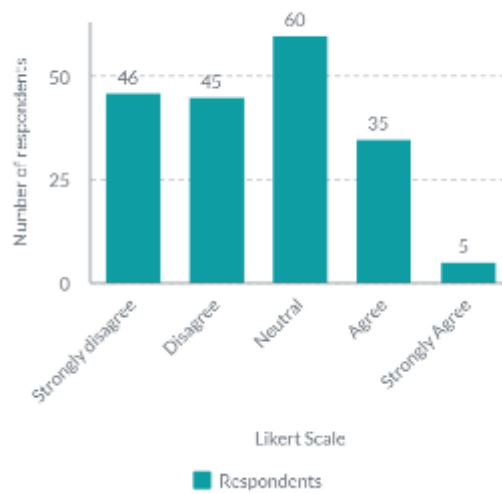


Figure 28. Bar graph on the question “I often find myself completely focused on the personalized messages and offers from the food delivery application I use”, developed by the Author.

The less favorable inclination presented until this point changes with the bar chart depicted in Figure 28, pointing out a return towards a more neutral and positive tendency to feel a connection with the brand through personalized recommendations. However, the “neutral” alternative maintains the highest rate, 31.4% (n= 60). Ranking second position, there is “agree” with 28.3% (n= 54), while “strongly agree” reached only 7.3% (n= 14) of the response rate. The “strongly disagree” and “disagree” alternative, 16.2% (n= 31) and 16.8% (n= 32) respectively, have comparable percentages. To understand better the tendency of respondents, it becomes imperative to combine the percentage of the two different sides, agreement and disagreement. The total amount of "agree" and "strongly agree" corresponds to 35.6 % (n= 68), which is slightly higher than the combined percentages of "strongly disagree" and "disagree", representing 33% (n= 63). Generally, despite the fair distribution of responses along the scale, there is a moderate propensity in the “neutral” and “agree” direction. Although not all participants agreed, the findings suggest that a part of the sample believes that personalized recommendation has the potential to foster brand connection.

Personalized recommendations in food delivery applications make me feel more connected to the brand.

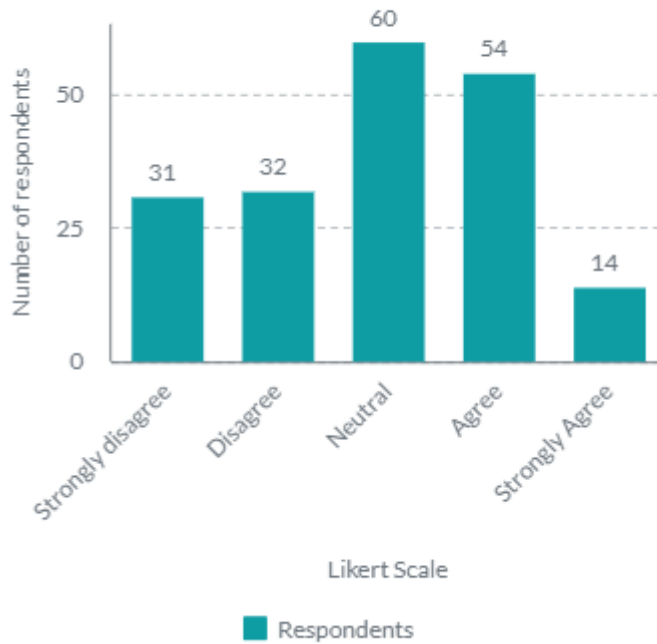


Figure 29. Bar graph on the question “Personalized recommendations in food delivery applications make me feel more connected to the brand”, developed by the Author.

The last graph in the image (Figure 29) below illustrates whether the sample perceives personalized marketing content as a valuable asset in food delivery applications. In contrast to the other findings, in this case, most respondents preferred the “agree” option, 34% (n= 65), closely followed by “neutral” with 31.9% (n= 61). The less favorable options have been chosen by the 15.2% (n= 29) and the 5.8% (n= 11), standing for the “disagree” and “strongly disagree”. An even lower amount, specifically the 5.8% (n= 11), expressed a strong agreement with the statement. Nevertheless, when the "strongly agree" and "agree" amounts are summed up, the result increases to a noteworthy percentage of 39.8% (n= 71), which exceeds the combination of "disagree" and "strongly disagree", accounting for 21% (n= 40), and the "neutral" alternative with 31.9% (n= 61). Therefore, it is possible to imply that the sample generally considers food delivery applications with personalized marketing content more valuable.

I find personalized marketing content in food delivery applications more valuable than non-personalized content.

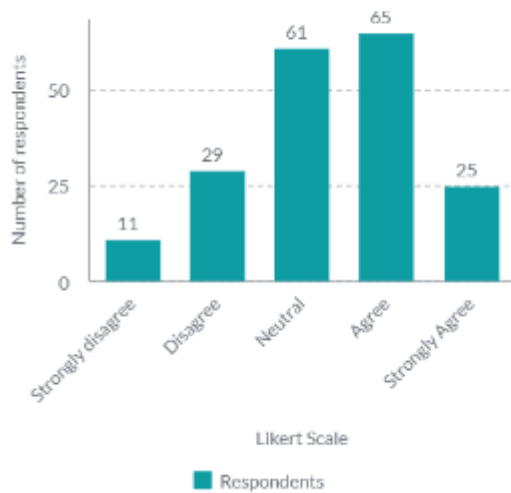


Figure 30. Bar graph on the question “I find personalized marketing content in food delivery applications more valuable than non-personalized content”, developed by the Author.

5. Loyalty towards food delivery applications

The final set of questions aimed to assess whether personalized marketing content contributes to loyalty. In the first bar chart, shown in Figure 30, it is possible to denote an unexpected decrease in the respondents’ “neutral” position, accounting for 21.5 % (n= 41), while the “agree” and “strongly agree” amounts represent the highest ones, at 46.1% (n= 88) and 22% (n= 42) respectively. Indeed, the sum of "agree" and "strongly agree" represents 68.1% (n= 130) of the sample. On the other contrary, the percentage of respondents who chose the “strongly disagree” and “disagree” options, 2.6% (n= 5) and 7.9% (n= 15) respectively, combined made up a lower amount of 10.5 % (n= 20). Generally, the sample presents a relevant likelihood to continue using their preferred food delivery application in the future, suggesting that it could effectively foster consumers’ loyalty.

I am likely to continue using my preferred food delivery application in the future

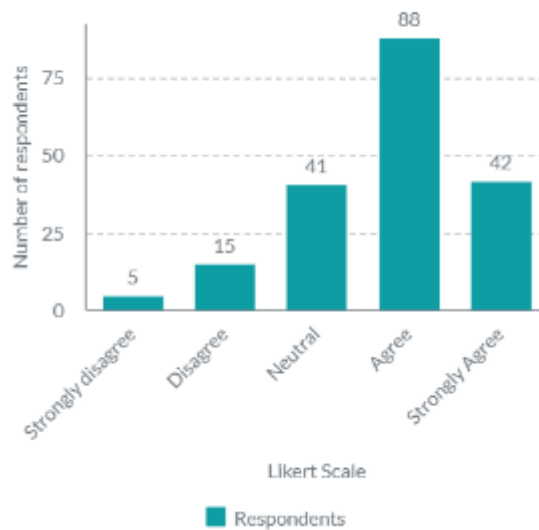


Figure 31. Bar graph on the question “I am likely to continue using my preferred food delivery application in the future”, developed by the Author.

Similarly to the previous bar chart, in the image below, the selected sample expressed a positive attitude towards their likelihood of recommending their favorite food delivery application to others. The highest rank is indeed for the “agree” bar, showcasing a percentage of 41.9% (n= 80), and also for the “neutral” option with an amount of 27.7% (n= 53). The next highest response rate is the “strongly agree” alternative of 16.8% (32), followed by 9.4 % (n= 18) of the “disagree” bar and 4.2% (n= 8) of the “strongly disagree”. By combining "agree" with "strongly agree", the total amount corresponds to 58.7 % (n= 112), which is remarkably higher than "neutral" with " 27,7% (n= 53) and "disagree" and "strongly disagree" with a total of 13.6% (n= 26). Overall, the participants direct a more positive sentiment towards the opportunity to recommend their food platform to other individuals, with a lower amount being in contrast with it.

I am likely to recommend my preferred food delivery application to others.

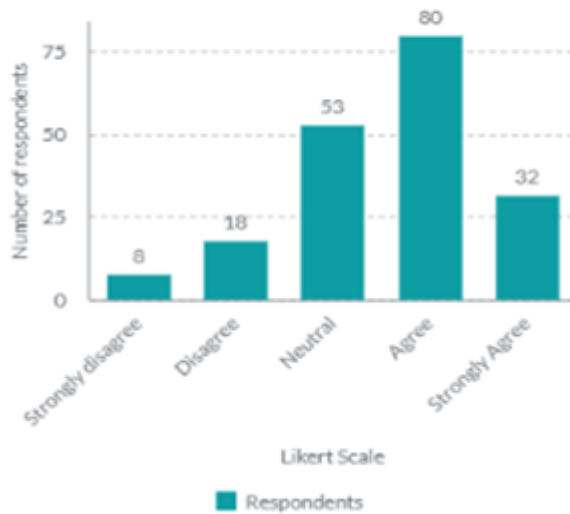


Figure 32. Bar graph on the question “I am likely to recommend my preferred food delivery application to others”, developed by the Author.

The findings of the last question, depicted in Figure 32, showcase a greater likelihood of respondents maintaining their loyalty to their food delivery applications. The “agree” option ranks first position with an amount of 34.6% (n= 66), just followed by 29.8% (n= 57) of the “neutral” option and 18.3% (n= 35) of the “disagree” alternative. The lowest ranks have been reached by "strongly agree" with 12 % (n= 23) and “strongly disagree” with a percentage of 5.2% (n= 10). The combination of "agree" with "strongly agree" results in a total of 46.6% (n= 89) exceeding the "neutral" rate of 29.8% (n= 57) and the sum of "strongly disagree" and "disagree", which is 23.5 % (n= 45). These findings suggest a strong tendency among participants to remain loyal to their delivery food applications.

I am likely to remain loyal to my preferred food delivery application even if other options are available.

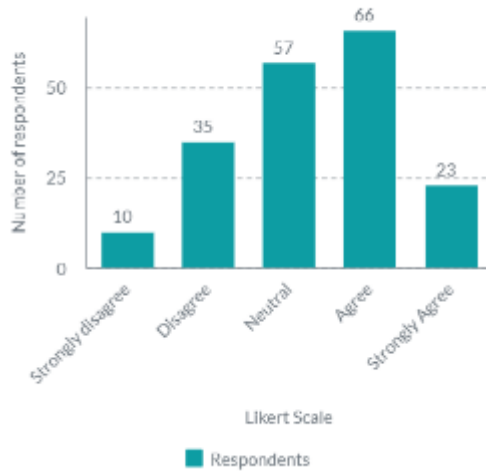


Figure 33. Bar graph on the question “I am likely to remain loyal to preferred food delivery application even if other options are available”, developed by the Author.

To sum up, this subchapter reported in detail, through percentages, the number of respondents and figures, and the results obtained by the survey. The next chapter goes into further discussion, by considering their theoretical background as well.

6. Discussion

As mentioned in the preceding chapter, this section delves into the survey findings to identify key insights and correlations. The chapter starts with a more detailed explanation and evaluation of the survey result, subsequently, it goes on to highlight relations with the literature review and research questions to create the foundations for the overall conclusions of the study.

Firstly, it becomes imperative to note that the survey reached a 99.3% completion rate, in fact, 271 individuals accessed the survey, but 269 completed the survey fully, enabling a deeper analysis. Upon examining the demographic section of the results, there is a gender distribution notably in preference to females, constituting the majority of the respondents to the survey. On the other hand, the high proportion of participants belonging to the 18-29 age range is congruent with the earlier research, already mentioned in the study object subchapter, identifying the major users of food delivery applications in the age group between 18 and 29 years old, followed by 30 and 44 years old (Zion & Hollman, 2019), a finding supported as well by the results of this study. According to these first findings, younger people not only represent a key target for food delivery applications, but also, they appear to be more responsive to personalized marketing content due to their relevant use of these applications.

With respect to the educational background, the preponderance of respondents indicated owning a master's or bachelor's degree, which raises the potentiality of a correlation between higher education and the use of food delivery applications, possibly due to lifestyle factors commonly associated with university students and a higher interest in topics such as personalized marketing content and food delivery applications. When it comes to working status, the biggest segment declared occupying a full-time position, followed by the second largest group composed of students, indicating that working professionals and students are significant demographics for food delivery applications.

To guarantee an alignment with the study's geographical criteria, exclusively European respondents have been considered. Most of the audience, the 92.2% (n= 248), proclaimed living in Europe during the survey distribution. From this European residents' segment, it is evident that most of them are familiar with personalized marketing content. Overall, it is noticeable that personalized marketing content in food delivery applications is well-

known among European residents. This insight is reinforced by the survey conducted by Statista (2024), pointing out that the online food delivery industry in 2023 is one of the major e-commerce categories in Europe, with several users accounting for 380 million in 2024.

Nonetheless, the decline in the total number of participants following the first screening inquiries points out a residual portion who is either unaware of or indifferent to it. A smaller but notable segment of the sample has affirmed either not having or not being aware of having experienced personalized marketing content from a brand. This implies that despite the majority, more specifically the 77.3% (n= 167) reporting experiences with it, the results reveal a reduced proportion remaining unaware or indifferent to this concept.

This widespread knowledge of personalized marketing content is supported by the overwhelming majority of respondents, 88.4% (n= 191), affirming that they have used food delivery applications at least once in their lives. This finding suggests the extensive adoption and presence of food delivery platforms in users' consumption habits. Moreover, the applications selected by users delineate Uber Eats, Deliveroo, and Glovo as major players in the food delivery market, possibly due to their major presence in Europe, and their high brand reputation.

When examining the motivating factors contributing to encouraging users' usage of food delivery applications, it became clear that they revolve mainly around time-saving, convenience, and variety of food options. As already highlighted in the Study Object section, users are growingly making use of these platforms because of the decreased delivery times and the variety of food options available (Shroff et al., 2022), supporting their usage is based on the convenience and quickness of their food delivery (Tandon et al., 2021). This suggests that food delivery applications should improve these key factors to retain users' usage of these platforms, since users seem to value efficiency, wide food selection, and convenience, as also pointed out by the findings of Real Research media in 2021, stating that consumers enjoy food delivery application because they can select products and service based on their convenience.

Faster delivery, targeted promotions and discounts and real-time monitoring come in second to these considerations. Although these features hold value for users, they

represent a less critical factor in comparison to the prior ones. This indicates, therefore, that despite convenience being a priority, an improvement of such secondary features could enhance users' retention.

Concerning the results on the perception of personalized marketing content, generally, the sample displayed a positive attitude towards them. Indeed, the majority shared a significant enjoyment towards tailored recommendations and offers in food delivery applications. This positive attitude is consistent with the words of Cavdar Aksoy et al. (2021), claiming that personalization has the potential to create favourable responses from customers. Nonetheless, a considerable portion of participants kept a neutral position, indicating indifference or lack of a strong opinion on the subject.

As already discussed in the literature review, data collection for personalization can raise both positive and negative reactions (Lambillotte & Poncin, 2023), therefore while acknowledging value, consumers may still develop concerns regarding the methods used to gather, analyze, and implement their data (Duan et al., 2022). According to this study's findings, most of the participants felt comfort or, even if in a smaller quantity, neutrality towards this practice, despite a minority of the sample manifesting discomfort with it. These conflicting responses echo the speculations about the topic, presented at the beginning of the paragraph.

The methodology chapter has marked a study undertaken by pCloud, whose results determined food delivery applications as one of the most aggressive platforms for gathering, disclosing, or selling data to third parties (Food On Demand, 2021). However, on the way that data is handled by these applications, the sample expressed mostly a neutral, or slightly positive, view on it, with a reduced portion being skeptical. Thus, this suggests that while some level of trust is still present in the sample, it is not particularly strong, meaning that there is room for increasing users' confidence in food delivery application data management.

Most respondents shared an appreciation for the correct management of data since it can potentially affect their trust in such platforms. However, it isn't the sole determinant since a smaller number of respondents shared disagreement or neutrality in determining whether data management affects their trust. When required to indicate the main concerns about this practice, the majority selected three primary factors: Privacy, Misuse

of Data, and Third-party transactions. Reexamining the literature review reveals that privacy (Duan et al., 2022), data mistreatment (Cloarec et al., 2022) and third-party transactions (Aguirre et al., 2016) have been highlighted as concerns multiple times, especially when Cloarec et al. (2022) affirmed that the misuse of personal information might provoke privacy concerns.

Regarding the perception of personalized marketing content in food delivery applications, the findings indicate an overall positive attitude with most participants considering it useful and relevant. As pointed out by Tam et al. (2006), this favorable perspective on tailored content derives from customers' perception of being provided with more valuable content. Similarly, Arora et al. (2021) and Lambillotte et al. (2022) support this perspective by claiming that consumers are more likely to consider this typology of content as content relevant, useful, and impactful.

Despite the majority being favourable, there is still a relevant portion being neutral or in disagreement, suggesting that personalized marketing is appreciated but not universally. In point of fact, most participants shared a neutral and slightly positive stance on personalized marketing content being a determining factor in the selection of an application over one another. In summary, despite being beneficial, it is not a primary differentiator for every user. This result slightly contrasts with the McKinsey & Company study revealing that "over three-quarters of consumers" (Arora et al., 2021: 5) perceive tailor-made communications to be a key differentiator in evaluating a company. In addition, a survey undertaken by Epsilon in 2018 supported a similar view, when revealing that at least the 80% of consumers have a preference for companies that provide them with personalized marketing initiative and communications (Gilman, 2022). This can communicate that personalized marketing content might not be a decisive factor in selecting a food delivery application for all users, despite being appreciated by the majority.

In line with the favourable perceptions mentioned previously, the majority views personalized marketing content as beneficial in improving customers' experience, indicating that they seem to recognize an added value in such content. This favourable disposition appears also in participants' frequency of noticing personalized recommendations in food delivery applications, testifying to the important presence of

such content in attracting customers' attention within the app. In point of fact, data showcased that the majority is aware of the content, with a frequency between *often* and *sometimes*. These findings can be supported by the speculations of Lambillotte et al. (2002), who stated that personalized content is more effective in attracting their attention and simplifying their buying choices.

The first research hypothesis, based on the theoretical contributions of Gilman (2022), Pfiffelman et al. (2022), Lambillotte et al. (2022), and Arora et al. (2021), claimed that consumers perceive personalized marketing content in food delivery applications as more relevant and valuable content compared to non-personalized marketing content. By crossing it with the discussion of the previous results, it is possible to notice that the sample majority has the perception of this typology of content as more valuable and relevant. However, this point of view isn't unequivocal, since a remarkable segment of the sample seems indifferent or non in agreement with this statement.

After having intersected the results of the initial sections of the survey with the first research hypothesis, it becomes crucial to discuss them with the first research question: "What is consumers' perception of personalized marketing content in Food Delivery Applications?". When evaluating participants' perceptions of such content in food delivery applications, it is observable that they displayed a general positive attitude towards it. Most of the sample affirmed enjoying this content, and of considering it as valuable, relevant, and useful.

In spite of the speculations in the literature review, the preponderance of the sample exhibited a fair comfort with the employment of their data for personalization purposes, as well as trust in food delivery applications' handling of their private information. Lastly, despite the appreciation and overall positive perception, viewing this form of marketing content as beneficial for an enhanced customer experience, the majority seem not to recognize it as a determining factor in the choice of food delivery application.

Moving to the second part of the survey, concerning CBE and loyalty, this moderate positive perception of personalized content is reflected in the active engagement of the sample with this typology of content within food delivery applications. Most of the sample stated that they engaged with this content often or sometimes, suggesting a comprehensive interest and receptiveness in line with the speculations of Lambillotte et

al. (2022), who highlighted that personalized content tends to attract consumers' attention.

However, the lower portion always points out the difficulty in maintaining a stable engagement. These findings are supported by participants' hesitant enthusiasm and eagerness towards the possibility of interacting with personalized marketing content, as revealed by the moderate or slightly favorable attitude assumed by most of them. Personalized marketing content appears to be partially effective, although it doesn't elicit strong excitement and enthusiasm among participants.

Nevertheless, the inclination moved once more in the direction of a neutral and positive view on perceiving a connection with the brand due to personalized marketing content. Even though neutrality remains the most popular choice, a growingly positive sentiment developed, indicating a moderate propensity to believe that this content can cultivate a connection with a brand. When respondents were required to declare if personalized marketing content holds more value than content without, the majority selected agreement and neutrality. This outcome pinpoints that personalized content is broadly recognized as added value for food delivery apps, according to users.

At this point, it becomes crucial to discuss the earlier findings concerning engagement on the Dwivedi Scale (2015), upon which the engagement questions have been founded. As was previously explained, the scale measures CBE through three main aspects: vigor, dedication, and absorption. The results highlighted that the sample showed a moderate level of eagerness and enthusiasm to engage with personalized marketing, aligning with the vigor trait. In terms of dedication, the moderate and slightly positive attitudes displayed by respondents, indicate that personalized marketing content partially contributes to building a connection with the brand but is not effective in installing this dedication among the sample. Participants mainly responded neutrally or negatively regarding the emotional bond: this implies that this type of content is not particularly adequate in fostering such a deeper level of brand commitment. Comparably, the sample's inconsistent responses toward their focus demonstrate that despite being recognized as valuable, personalized marketing content is not enough alluring to completely absorb their attention.

Since one of natural outcomes of CBE is represented by loyalty (Rasmus, 2021), the last findings concerning it, have been included in the discussion. The latest suggested a favorable sentiment in the direction of personalized marketing content influencing users' loyalty to food delivery applications. Firstly, the sample affirmed keeping using their favorite food delivery application due to the presence of personalized content, fostering such loyalty. Secondly, most of them agreed that they would be inclined to recommend their food delivery platform, and, in the final question, there is evident a clear tendency to stick with their preferred application. Comprehensively, these data suggest that engagement with personalized marketing content plays a key role in increasing users' loyalty. These findings align with the speculations of Know et al. (2020), who stated that engaged customers are more likely to develop loyalty towards a brand.

The second hypothesis of this study, built on the contributions of Dwivedi (2015), Harrigan et al. (2018), Zaichkowsky (1985), (Vivek, Beatty & Morgan, 2012), and Arora et al. (2021), stated that personalized marketing content in Food Delivery applications increases customer brand engagement. When assessing the impact of tailored content in incrementing consumer brand engagement, it becomes evident that this speculation is only partially sustained. The sample generally recognizes its value, but it tends to engage with it on a more moderate level, as it is possible to derive from the steady results obtained in each of the Dwivedi scale categories.

Lastly, it is crucial to cross the previously discussed results with the second research question of this study: "How does personalized marketing content in Food Delivery Applications affect customers engagement with the brand?". As partly highlighted in the previous paragraph, their personalized marketing content seems to drive consumer brand engagement to a moderate extent. Despite a general interest and receptiveness towards it, this typology of content has difficulty in keeping the participants engaged in the long term. Most of the sample exhibits a fable enthusiasm and excitement, corresponding to the Vigor category, in engaging with such content. However, personalized marketing content appears to own an ability, even if partial, to build a connection with the brand, indicating a moderate level of dedication. While, in terms of absorption, personalized marketing seems inadequate to drive an emotional and deeper level of brand commitment.

However, when considering only one of the CBE outcomes, it becomes clear that personalized marketing content influences respondents' loyalty. Participants exhibited a propensity to keep using their favorite food delivery application because of the presence of such content. In addition, the sample expressed a strong willingness to recommend their preferred food delivery application, which further pinpoints the connection between loyalty and personalized content. To conclude, these last sections of the discussion highlighted how personalized marketing content may not generate a deep level of engagement, but it contributes to effectively sustaining participants' loyalty.

7. Conclusions

The conclusion chapter's primary objective is to outline the study's key findings by retracing the literature review, the research questions, and objectives and connecting them to the survey's results. In this way, it will be possible to locate the responses to each research question and to determine if all the objectives stated in the methodology chapter have been met. It is appropriate to first reminisce about the research problem, questions, and objectives. Before starting to delineate conclusions, the chapter recalls first the research problem on which this study has been grounded. To be more precise, the attentive literature review conducted beforehand has highlighted two debates to which this research represents a contribution.

The first open debate is a result of the increasing demand for personalization among customers, requiring companies to incorporate it into their strategies to maintain their position in the market and meet their consumers' expectations (Chandra et al., 2022). However, this new requirement has led to a broader discussion about consumers' ambivalent attitudes toward personalized marketing content (Lambillotte & Poncin, 2023). This ambivalence stems from the perceived value and the concerns expressed by consumers when engaging with content based on the collection and elaboration of their private data. As a result, there is no clear agreement on whether consumers' perceptions are predominantly positive or negative, leaving the possibility for this research to contribute to this open and ongoing debate.

To refine the study research problem, it was considered one typology of personalized marketing content, geolocation-based content. The latest is the result of geolocation technology, which allows companies to collect user-provided location data and deliver tailored content, and, according to Madleňák (2021), enhance social connections and digital experiences. Based on this choice, the study was further narrowed by analysing only a particular tool employing geolocation technology to implement personalization, that is Food Delivery Applications. These platforms represented an adequate match for this study object due to their exposure to contrasting reactions from customers concerning their approach to private data collection and implementation in personalized marketing content (Food On Demand, 2021). Resulting from this foundation, the first

research question and objective address this problem by discovering and assessed which is consumers' perception of personalized marketing content in food delivery applications.

By crossing the insights gained from the sample's responses in the survey, it is possible to confirm that both the first research question and objective have been thoroughly investigated due to the variety of insights and attitudes registered through the survey responses, which provided a clear understanding of the sample perceptions on the study object. On the whole, the majority expressed a positive perception, citing its usefulness, relevance, and value in improving the overall customer experience. In addition, most of the sample found it enjoyable, specially tailored recommendations and offers in food delivery applications and noticed them frequently.

The positivity outlined before aligns well with the existing literature stressing personalization effectiveness in generating favourable customer reactions. Time-saving, convenience, and variety are among the key features highlighted by the sample to lift tailored content effectiveness in food delivery applications. Moreover, higher attention to the approach with which data are managed by such platforms, as well as to privacy, misuse of data, and third-party transactions concerns, may potentially enhance consumers' trust, which in turn may increase the impact of this content on them. Despite the majority feeling quite comfortable in sharing their private information, the findings pointed out that trust in food delivery applications' data management is not comprehensively solid among the sample, representing an area for improvement to increase their confidence in data handling practices. As a consequence, these companies should be more transparent with users concerning their data management practices to build their trust in the platform.

From this summary, the study confirms that this typology of content is well-perceived by the sample. Nonetheless, its impact varies among users, and while it offers acknowledged benefits, the results revealed that not every user considers it a primary determinant in the choice of a food delivery application for every user.

The second area investigated in this study pertains to the debate surrounding the factors impacting consumer brand engagement. As a matter of fact, over the years, there have been several discussions concerning the driving factors, the outcomes, and the suitable scale to measure consumer brand engagement (Razmus, 2021), leaving room for

additional contributions to this debate, as in the case of this study. More precisely, this research investigated a potential driving factor of consumer brand engagement, represented by personalized marketing content.

Authors including Arora et al. (2021), Zeng et al (2021), and Ovrachenko (2023) emphasized personalization's ability to increase consumer engagement. On a similar perspective, Saini et al. (2023) claimed that this form of marketing based on location data enables companies to understand their target demands, address them effectively, and increase their engagement. As a result, the survey investigated how personalized marketing content in food delivery applications influences consumer brand engagement, and the objective was to measure its influence on Consumer Brand Engagement, more specifically to one of its outcomes, which is loyalty (Aljuhmani et al., 2023).

After having reviewed the literature associated with the second research question and objective of the study, it is pertinent to reflect on the analysis and the discussion of the results to outline the conclusions of this second section. From the analysis and the discussion chapters, it emerged a moderate level of engagement toward tailored marketing content in food delivery platforms. While being able to generate interest, receptiveness, and moderate levels of brand connection, it fails to elicit strong enthusiasm and eagerness.

In addition, the survey results reveal a shortfall in creating deep emotional engagement and full absorption. As mentioned at the beginning of the paragraphs, these insights indicate that overall personalized marketing content has a moderate impact on CBE since it can attract initial attention but holds a deficiency in impacting consumer brand engagement at a deeper level and in the long term. When comparing it with the Dwivedi Scale (2015), it is possible to claim that personalized marketing content influences vigor and dedication, even moderately, but it results inadequate in driving absorption. Concluding that personalized marketing content in food delivery platforms contributes to increase some aspects of CBE, but it fails to unlock its full potential.

Nonetheless, focusing on just one of the CBE outcomes makes it evident that tailored content plays a significant role in fostering and enhancing customers' loyalty. The findings showed that the availability of such content motivates the sample to keep using and recommending it to others their preferred food delivery application. These insights

lead to the conclusion that users engaging with personalized content on these platforms are likely to develop loyalty towards them.

To conclude, both the research questions and objectives have been explored, and as noted in the chapter, the findings represent additional contributions to the debates present already in the field. The limitations and the recommendations arising from the study are discussed in the subsequent subchapter.

7.1 Limitations and Suggestions

As suggested previously, this subchapter presents several limitations of the research and potential suggestions derived from the findings. The discussion starts with identifying all the limitations encountered during the implementation and execution of the study, then moves to the recommendations that can be gathered from the discussion and conclusions of the results.

Starting with the limitations, of the first one can be identified in the research methodology adopted. Specifically, this study has been designed also with a quantitative approach, which provided statistical insights from a broader sample. However, differently from qualitative approaches, quantitative ones are limited in their ability to delve deeper and uncover additional nuances in the perceptions and attitudes of the sample investigated. The second limitation is connected to one of the criteria employed to define the sample, which is the geographic requirement. In fact, the study was limited to the European continent, excluding insights from other countries and restricting the generalization of the results obtained. Similarly, another limitation can be represented by the age range chosen for the study, which didn't consider the perspectives of older and younger generations.

Finally, these limitations indicated areas of potential development for future research, including broadening the geographic and demographic criteria, as well as considering employing a mixed methods approach to explore more in-depth the findings obtained, for example, revealing the hidden reasons behind users' ambivalent position towards data sharing and management as well as their implementation in personalized marketing content. After delineating the study limitations, it becomes imperative to advance on the suggestions.

Firstly, as mentioned before, future research could broaden the geographic and demographic scope to comprehend whether and how cultural, geographic, and generational features impact consumers' perceptions and engagement with personalized marketing content. In addition, this study considered geolocation-based content in food delivery applications, so it will be interesting for the researcher to explore other forms of personalized marketing content to comprehend which is most effective in influencing consumers' perceptions and engagement.

Concerning the food delivery industry, the platforms in this field should consider being more transparent concerning data management to enhance consumers' trust in such platforms and, consequently, their potential engagement with the application. Furthermore, the study findings highlighted the ineffectiveness of personalized marketing content in generating a deep level of CBE because of its shortfall in producing profound emotional engagement and long-term absorption. As a consequence, future research could investigate and explore how to ameliorate personalized marketing content features to drive more of these two components, and, therefore, CBE.

8. Internship descriptive memory

The eighth chapter describes the overall internship experience, detailing the working context, the role, the responsibilities, and the tasks associated with it. Additionally, it elucidates how the internship contributed to the definition of the research topic of this internship report.

8.1 The context of the Internship

This subchapter will focus on presenting the context of the internship, by offering an extensive overview of the agency. It describes the agency's history, mission, organizational structure, core services, as well as primary clients and collaborators. This information background provides the basis for a more in-depth exploration of this working experience.

The full-time internship took place at Unika Studio, a creative agency based in Lisbon, more specifically situated in the neighborhood of Campo de Ourique. During the six months, more specifically from mid-January until mid-July 2024, the internship initially followed a schedule from 9am to 5.30 pm, however, in the last months, the timetable turned to 8.30 am until 5 pm.

Unika Studio is a creative agency founded by Grethel Signamarcheix and Sergio Castro in 2015 in Bali, Indonesia. In 2017, the founders expanded their creative vision by establishing a second studio in Lisbon, Portugal (Design Hunger, 2022). The Lisbon studio is organized into two departments: marketing, led by the founder and director Grethel Signamarcheix; and design, led by the founder and creative director Sergio Castro. Currently, Unika Studio counts on a talented team composed of six people.

On the side of Unika Studio, in 2017 Grethel Signamarcheix launched Design Hunger, an online magazine covering various domains, including timeless design, interior design, fashion, beauty, lifestyle, Lisbon, and travel (Design Hunger, n.d.). The magazine strives to inspire and explore by featuring and cooperating with artists and brands from around the world, assisting them in reaching the exposure and the acknowledgment they merit. Design Hunger positions itself as a “collaborative platform” for brands, fostering connections and showcasing creativity across diverse sectors (Design Hunger, n.d.).



Figure 34. *The logo of Design Hunger Online Magazine, developed by Design Hunger Online Magazine*

When it comes to defining the Unika Studio's mission, their founders, in collaboration with their team, support brands in delineating their "purpose, mission, and DNA" (Design Hunger Magazine, 2022). With significant expertise, they aim to establish enduring and cooperative partnerships with clients by offering ongoing support throughout the creative journey. Their motto, "We don't do logos, we create brands" (Design Hunger Magazine, 2022), embodies their commitment to developing impactful conceptual and visual frameworks through improved techniques and narrative. Moreover, Unika Studio emphasizes its team of designers and marketers is passionate about assisting brands in their creation, growth, and evolution (Design Hunger, 2022).

Brand identity, brand strategy, art direction, web development, interior design, digital marketing, brand management, fashion, and product design constitute the core services provided by Studio Unika (Studio Unika, n.d.). By closely partnering with clients, the studio crafts effective "brand, communication, and marketing strategies" (Studio Unika, n.d.), enabling them to achieve their primary focus: employing creative strategies and storytelling to craft visually pleasing and emotionally compelling experiences that vividly animate brands (Studio Unika, n.d.).

As evidenced in the previous paragraph, Studio Unika seeks to adopt a flexible and adaptive approach to the creative process through close collaborations, assisting clients in defining distinctive narratives consistent with their values and market positioning (Studio Unika, n.d.). With this approach, the studio was able to build a diverse and

growing portfolio of clients from a different industries and nationalities, including brands from Europe, South America, Australia, and Asia. Here following some projects from Studio Unika:



Figure 35. *Brand Identity and Packaging for the Chilean wine brand Atiq wines, developed by Studio Unika.*

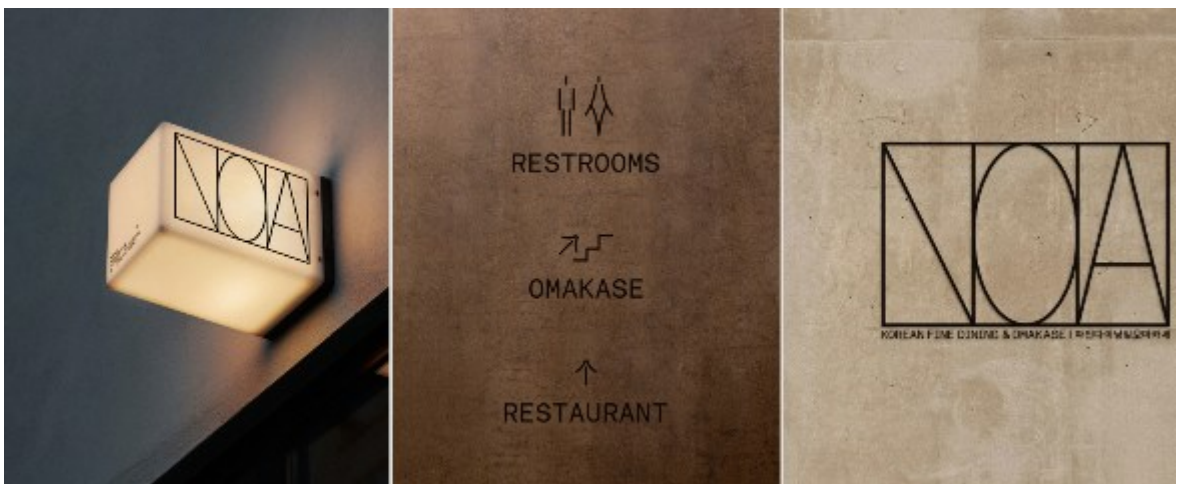


Figure 36. *Brand identity, Brand strategy, Print material and social media management for the Korean restaurant Noa in Bali, developed by Studio Unika.*

To summarize, understanding the internship setting has prepared the groundwork for a deeper examination of the overall experience in the upcoming subchapter. Studio Unika's history, talented team, and expertise contributed to creating a supportive and nurturing environment, which favored my professional and personal growth as well. In conclusion, here are some of the founders' insightful words, which capture the essence of this creative studio: “The way a brand communicates is often what the consumer will remember and

recognize the most. That's why offering a strategic marketing proposal is a way to convert viewers into lifelong consumers.” (Design Hunger Magazine, 2022).

8.2 Framing the Internship Role at Unika Studio

After having presented the working set, it becomes imperative to outline the distinctive aspects of the role I assumed in the six-month internship. More in detail, the tasks, the responsibilities, and the challenges encountered to delineate the overall impact of this valuable experience on me, professionally and personally.

At Studio Unika, I was hired as a marketing intern, becoming part of the marketing team initially composed of four people, including the founder, Grethel Signamarcheix. However, throughout the internship, I had several occasions to collaborate with the design team. The first two weeks consisted of extensive training provided by the previous intern in my position. During this training phase, I received instructions concerning the primary tasks, the tools, and responsibilities, as well as the clients, the agency, and core services. This typology of training implemented in the Studio allows each intern to assess how much they have learned in the sixth months, and impart their knowledge to the next trainee, ensuring continuity and growth. In the following section, each paragraph describes each task completed during the internship.

Firstly, I worked on projects related to digital marketing, particularly concerning social media management. Initially, I was assigned to three key accounts at the beginning, including Sunnd Wellness (plant-based products for health and wellness), D_Tres studio (3D renders and packaging), and Lisbon Collective (Lisbon guides). In this area, my responsibilities encompassed implementing monthly social media planning, disposing of content on Figma, and writing copies in line with the brand guidelines. Once the social media planning was created and approved, my role involved managing the accounts by handling posting, boosting, and replying to direct messages. However, as the internship progressed, I was assigned to larger clients, which required a higher level of attention in the development of social media plans and accounts management.

As mentioned before, in the second half of my internship, I started managing Design Hunger Online Magazine, and Ace and Freak. Although the tasks remained consistent, the social media plans for these accounts needed to be completed at least two months before the monthly meeting with the client. The strict guidelines for copywriting, posting,

and content preparation made these accounts management particularly challenging. Specifically for Ace and Freak, I also contributed to ideating new graphics for posts and stories to share with the design team, who subsequently developed them.

Among all the accounts I had the opportunity to manage, Lisbon Collective was the distinct one. Indeed, the account was created to share Design Hunger Lisbon guides and promote new openings or interesting events in the city. Differently from other accounts, Lisbon Collective didn't have a social media plan. Three times a week, I was in charge of choosing the venues and the events to publish on the account. As the account's following grew, venues and events organizations began reaching out through direct messages and emails with requests to be published in posts or stories. Usually, content and copies for these partnered posts were provided by the interested parties.

Secondly, I contributed to the ideation and creation of content for some of the clients, consisting of conceptualizing designs for both posts and stories, which were shared with designers for further development. Additionally, I was responsible for producing content, including pictures, videos, and reels. The reels were mainly related to recapping events or, in the case of Design Hunger magazine, presented new articles or projects and showcased products sent by partners.

Aside from social media and content management, one of my main responsibilities was related to magazine editing, which involved writing articles, press releases, and guides for Design Hunger Online Magazine. The topics covered ranged from design and interior design to fashion, beauty, and the city of Lisbon. The choice and assignment of each article were carried out by the founder Grethel Signarmacheix.

After being assigned to a piece redaction, I would begin writing the first draft by adding all the required text and pictures. Once the draft was finished, it would be uploaded to Squarespace, together with affiliate links, and Seo-Optimized text. Each article was then reviewed by every member of the marketing team to be approved and incorporated into the monthly editing calendar. On publication days, it was responsible for promoting the new article on Design Hunger platforms such as Instagram, Pinterest, Facebook, LinkedIn, WhatsApp community, and sometimes even TikTok. Regarding Pinterest, in addition to sharing articles, I also promoted collaborations or affiliate links by creating a post with the interested brand details.

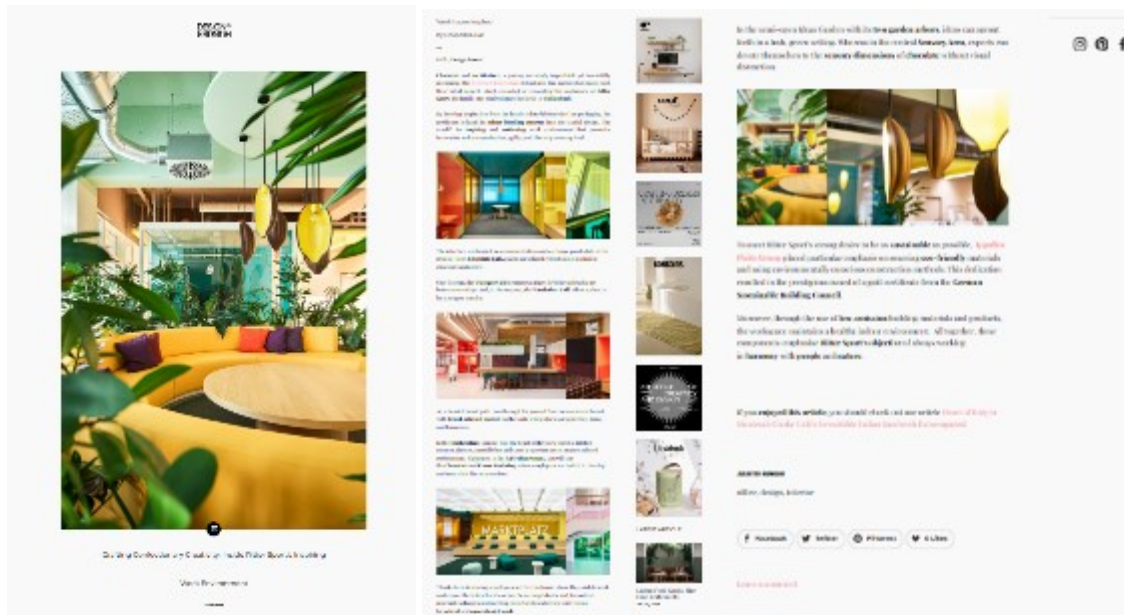


Figure 37. “Crafting Confectionary Creativity: Inside Ritter Sport’s Inspiring Work Environment”, developed by the Author for Design Hunger Online Magazine.

Besides writing articles, I drafted Design Hunger Magazine's monthly newsletters. The procedure consisted of organizing all the articles of the month into a document and creating an introduction, title, preview text, and cover for each one. Once the draft was ready, it was sent to Designers for finalization. After completion, I was responsible for uploading the newsletter on Mailchimp. This included defining preview text, adjusting the recipients, scheduling a time to send, and sending test emails before the official distribution at the end of the month. On Mailchimp, I also supported my marketing manager with contact management by updating current contacts and adding new ones.

In the initial months of my internship, I had the opportunity to participate in the rebranding of Langley’s Gin. The project comprised conceptualizing and executing a photoshoot following the new rebranding guidelines. My role primarily involved sourcing references for the photoshoots, assisting in the set's implementation, and art direction for video production during the photoshoot days. Over a week, two parts of the photoshoot were held: one at the studio, and the second and other one on a beach in Costa de Caparica.



Figure 38. . *Behind the scenes of the photoshoot at Studio Unika, pictures taken by the Author at Studio Unika*

As it is possible to denote in the previous paragraphs, I have been assigned to a variety of duties, which contributed to defining my skills across distinctive working areas. Throughout this experience, I worked with clients from different industry backgrounds and with both the marketing and design teams. These collaborations favored my interpersonal skills improvement and provided me with valuable insights.

To conclude, throughout this working experience, I was entrusted with increasing responsibilities, which challenged me and facilitated my growth. Initially, I struggled with the volume of tasks and time management, but over time, I overcame these challenges by adopting more effective solutions. Through this process, I gained key knowledge in organization, prioritization, problem-solving, and, most notably, time management.

8.3 Main conclusions from the internship experience

In the previous subchapters, an overview of the company, the role, and the primary tasks was provided. This internship experience has granted me a more comprehensive understanding of the inner workings of a creative agency, starting from the client's initial briefing to the development of a brand and communication strategy.

This experience has been both fulfilling and comprehensive, as I had the opportunity to work on a wide range of tasks and was given significant responsibility from the beginning. Although I initially felt overwhelmed by the dynamic and fast-paced environment of the agency, I quickly adapted and began prioritizing my tasks effectively. Additionally, the informal and relaxed atmosphere at Studio Unika allowed me to grow my interpersonal skills, get to know my colleagues, and learn from each of them.

In relation to my internship report, my experience at Studio Unika provided me with more practical experience, skills, data, and insights that directly contribute to the definition of my research topic and questions. More specifically, at Studio Unika I assisted in the definition of new branding strategies, and I also contributed to the generation of content and copywriting in line with brand guidelines, which were based on the characteristics and data of the final audience.

Through the insights, I was also able to gather more information on the audience in terms of demographic data and behavior on social media. Additionally, I noticed how it was difficult for organizations to obtain certain users' information because of the current privacy regulations. This contributed to increasing my interest in consumer data and privacy concerns, specifically related to marketing and communication strategies.

Moreover, through the performance analysis and the definition of new strategies and content to obtain more engagement, I gained valuable knowledge on the consumer brand engagement subject and to thoroughly deepen it in my literature review. Indeed, I also supported brainstorming sessions to define content that could provoke an increase in consumer engagement. To achieve this, together with the marketing team, I had to revise the insights to understand which content typology was more effective in terms of engagement.

As mentioned before, this working experience also gave me important knowledge to comprehend better the research objectives and questions. Indeed, some of the articles and content typologies were based on audience preferences, which led me to discover more about personalization and marketing content based on it. While concerning engagement, the research on the most engaging content made me wonder about personalized content's impact on engagement.

To conclude, my professional experience at Unika significantly contributed to building up my curiosity and supported me in gaining significant professional and practical knowledge concerning the topic that I chose to investigate in my internship report.

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Appendices

Appendix 1- Structure of the survey developed by the Author .

I'm Aurora Danieli, a Master's student at Universidade Católica Portuguesa studying Marketing, Communication, and Advertising. My research focuses on how personalized marketing through food delivery apps influences consumer brand engagement and loyalty.

This survey explores your perceptions of personalized marketing content, particularly how it impacts your interactions with brands via food delivery applications.

Your insights will be a crucial contribution to my research. Thank you for participating!

Ethical Considerations:

Your participation in this survey is voluntary, and you may withdraw at any time without needing to provide a reason.

Before starting the survey, you will be asked for your full consent, ensuring you have all the information about the research purpose, procedures, benefits, and risks. All responses will be anonymous and confidential, used solely for academic purposes.

Participating in this survey involves no risks, and your input will help advance understanding in this field.

1. Do you want to continue with the survey?
 - Yes
 - No
2. What is your gender?
 - Male
 - Female
 - Other
3. Which category below includes your age?
 - 18 – 29
 - 30 – 44
 - 45 – 60
 - > 60
4. What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?
 - Less than high school degree
 - High school degree or equivalent
 - Bachelor's degree
 - Master's degree

- Doctorate (PhD)
5. What is your job situation?
- Self-Employed
 - Student
 - Full-time employed
 - Part-time employed
 - Retired
6. Are you currently living in Europe?
- Yes
 - No
7. Do you know what personalized marketing content is?
- Yes
 - No
8. Have you ever experienced personalized marketing content from a brand directed towards you?
- Yes
 - No
 - Don't know / Not applicable
9. Have you ever used Food Delivery Applications at least once?
- Yes
 - No
10. Choose the food delivery applications you have used at least once.
- Uber Eats
 - Glovo
 - Deliveroo

- Bolt Food
- Just Eat
- Other (please specify)

11. What is the main reason you use food delivery applications? (Select all that options that apply)

- Convenience
- Variety of food options
- Time-saving
- Real-time order monitoring (updates, delivery progress, predicted time of arrival)
- Faster delivery (minimized food delivery time)
- Targeted promotions or discounts
- High food quality
- Ability to choose products and services based on your convenience
- Personalized restaurant, shop, and food suggestions
- Other (please specify)

12. On a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is "Strongly Disagree" and 5 is "Strongly Agree," please rate the following statement:

I enjoy receiving tailored recommendations and offers in food delivery applications.

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

13. On a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is "Strongly Disagree" and 5 is "Strongly Agree", please rate the following statement:

I feel comfortable with the use of my personal data in food delivery applications for tailored recommendations and offers.

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

14. On a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is "Strongly disagree" and 5 is "Strongly agree," please rate the following statement:

Food delivery applications handle my personal data (location data) safely.

1. Strongly disagree
2. Agree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly agree

15. On a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is "Strongly disagree" and 5 is "Strongly agree", please rate the following statement :

The handling of my personal data by food delivery applications affects my trust in these platforms.

1. Strongly disagree
2. Agree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly agree

16. What concerns, if any, do you have about the use of your data to personalize marketing content in food delivery applications?

- Privacy concerns
 - Misuse of data
 - Third-party transaction
 - No concerns
 - Other (please specify)...
17. On a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is "Strongly disagree" and 5 is "Strongly agree," please rate the following statement:
I am more likely to use a food delivery application that offers personalized marketing content compared to one that does not.
1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Neutral
 4. Agree
 5. Strongly agree
18. On a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is "Strongly disagree" and 5 is "Strongly agree" , please rate the following statement:
Personalized marketing content makes my overall experience with food delivery applications better.
1. Strongly disagree
 2. Agree
 3. Neutral
 4. Agree
 5. Strongly agree
19. How often do you notice personalized recommendations (e.g., tailored restaurant suggestions, promotions) in food delivery applications?
- Always
 - Often
 - Sometimes

- Rarely
 - Never
20. On a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is "Strongly disagree" and 5 is "Strongly agree", please rate the following statement:
- I find personalized recommendations from food delivery applications relevant and useful.*
1. Strongly disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Neutral
 4. Agree
 5. Strongly agree
21. How often do you actively engage with personalized content provided by your preferred food delivery application (for examples recommendations based on your location)?
- Always
 - Often
 - Sometimes
 - Rarely
 - Never
22. On a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 "Strongly Disagree" and 5 is "Strongly Agree" , please rate the following statement:
- When I receive personalized offers from the Food Delivery Application I used, or I'm currently using, I feel excited and eager to engage with it.*
1. Strongly Disagree
 2. Disagree
 3. Neutral
 4. Agree

5. Strongly agree

23. On a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 “Strongly disagree” and 5 is “Strongly agree” , please rate the following statement:

I feel a strong emotional bond with the Food Delivery Application I used, or I'm currently using, because of the personalized marketing messages I receive.

1. Strongly disagree

2. Disagree

3. Neutral

4. Agree

5. Strongly agree

24. On a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 “Strongly Disagree” and 5 is “Strongly Agree” , please rate the following statement:

I often find myself completely focused on the personalized messages and offers from the food delivery application I used, or I'm currently using.

1. Strongly disagree

2. Disagree

3. Neutral

4. Agree

5. Strongly agree

25. On a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is “Strongly disagree” and 5 is “Strongly agree” , please rate the following statement:

Personalized recommendations in food delivery applications make me feel more connected to the brand.

1. Strongly disagree

2. Disagree

3. Neutral

4. Agree

5.Strongly agree

26. On a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is "Strongly Disagree" and 5 is "Strongly Agree," please rate the following statement:

I find personalized marketing content in food delivery applications more valuable than non-personalized content.

1. Strongly disagree

2. Agree

3. Neutral

4. Agree

5. Strongly agree

27. On a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is "Strongly disagree" and 5 is "Strongly agree" , rate the following statement:

I am likely to continue using my preferred food delivery application in the future.

1. Strongly disagree

2. Disagree

3. Neutral

4. Agree

5. Strongly agree

28. On a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is "Strongly disagree" and 5 is "Strongly agree", rate the following statement:

I am likely to recommend my preferred food delivery application to others.

1. Strongly disagree

2. Disagree

3. Neutral

4. Agree

5. Strongly agree

29. On a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is “Strongly disagree” and 5 is “Strongly agree” , rate the following statement:

I am likely to remain loyal to my preferred food delivery application even if other options are available.

1.Strongly disagree

2.Disagree

3.Neutral

4.Agree

5.Strongly agree

