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Development plan of social media marketing to increase purchases.

Case study: Viope Solutions Ltd.

THESIS
ABSTRACT

School Kajaani University of Applied Sciences	Degree Programme International Business

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Title Development plan of social media marketing to increase purchases. Case study: Viope Solutions Ltd.

Optional Professional Studies	Supervisor(s) Jääskeläinen Elina
	Commissioned by Viope Solutions Ltd.

Date Spring 2014	Total Number of Pages and Appendices 56 + 25

Social media marketing has gained to popularity in the last few decades. A huge number of companies has engaged in social media channels and utilized them for different marketing purposes. Viope Solutions Ltd, therefore, has also participated in social media channels. However, their social media channels have not been utilized relatively effectively. Thus, the aim of this thesis is to identify a development plan for company in social media utilization as a marketing channel to help company increase their purchases.

In theoretical part, social media definition and its classification will be explained. The discrepancy between traditional and social media marketing is compared to point out the essential benefits of the latter. Some promotional methods which can foster the growth of purchases and engaged in social media are also listed.

Two methods of research was were utilized ie. quantitative research with questionnaire and benchmarking method with observation analysis. Targeting to game development students in Kajaani UAS, the survey is generated with the purpose of understanding respondent's attitude and behaviour toward social media marketing. To supplement the result of questionnaire, two companies involved in game and e-learning industries were selected to observe their social media sites and analyse the company's interaction with followers, content of posts as well as the display of social media on their own websites.

Based on the analysis, it is suggested that company should focus on developing certain channels which customers are commonly using. On the other hand, the company website should be modified so that the display of social media will be easily eye-catching, bringing their current customers to engage in those channels, leading to potential customers' purchasing intention due to users' reviews on social media sites.

Language of Thesis	English

PREFACE

First of all, I would like to give a huge appreciation to my supervisor, Ms. Jääskeläinen Elina, my statistics supervisor, Mr Simo Määttä and my commissioner, Mr Mika Lackman for giving me many useful advice and suggestions for my thesis. Without your assistant, I am hardly able to finish this.

I also would like to send my gratitude to my family, especially my mom who have encouraged and inspired me a lot in a whole 4 –year journey of studying bachelor. She always stands by me whenever I have to encounter any challenge as well as share happiness moment.

My very special thank to Ms. Ruey Komulainen. You are such a great mentor who has accompanied with us for the last 4 years and give us sincere advices and support.

Last but not least, I am thankful to all of my friends as well as my boyfriend for their support. They have fostered and motivated me a lot to accomplish my thesis and study.

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1 INTRODUCTION

The usage of social media has gained into popularity over the world nowadays. In the last recent years, the number of people registering for account and using Twitter, Facebook, Instagram etc. is increasing significantly. Mc Kinsey Global Institute reported in July 2012 that 1.5 billion people are using social networking around the world. Day by day, millions of people participate in those social networking channels in order to maintain their social relationship with their family and friends, updating current news, follow their idols and celebrities' activities, and other entertaining purposes. In contrast, others prefer writing blogs with a purpose of sharing their opinions, daily routines or experience while people access to YouTube for either uploading their own videos or watching other users' interesting videos. Consequently, the overwhelming boom of social media utilization brings 70% of corporations and firms joining social media (Mc Kinsey Global Institute, July 2012). Besides of traditional marketing channels, companies also build up their own pages and launch many advertising campaigns via social media channels in order to raise brand awareness, maintain and develop customer relationship. Through those channels, firms can easily communicate and interact with their current or potential customers, and vice-versa. Generally, social media is not only a place for socializing and entertaining but also opportunities for business.

Having recognized the importance of social media in marketing and business aspect, Viope Solutions Ltd. has emerged a question in seeking feasible strategies to approach customers positively through social media channels, which is likely to influence company's sales situation. With a personal interest and certain experience background of this marketing area, author has decided to implement a research about this field. The author discussed further with the employer in Viope Ltd. and conducted a research to meet the company's need and identify the operational model in order to improve current social media situation as well as purchases situation.

Case study: Viope Solutions Ltd.

Viope Solutions Ltd. is an e-learning software company. Company provides e-learning platforms and online courses. The target customers are segmented mainly into two major groups: institutions and individuals. E-learning platform and online courses have been provided to educational institutions, universities or colleges mainly in Finland and some

other European countries. On the other hand, company also provides programming and game development courses which focus on individual customers. Target customers of those courses are programming or game development individual learners.

Currently, Viope Ltd. has appeared and activated in several social media channels including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn and blog. Those channels have been managed and updated with company's activities, products, promotion and advertising campaign and communication between companies and audiences. However, the challenge in acquiring audiences' attraction and the high level of interaction has been emerged and requires an in-depth research.

Thesis objectives and research problems

Although company is using different social media to approach customers, the attraction and engagement of audiences to those channels is still low. The response of promotion campaigns was not relatively feasible. In particular, the conversion between social media channels and company's front page which indicates amount of clicks to link leading to company website or number of course signing up is not so high. Consequently, there is a need in exploring better approaching way to audiences and bringing them to company's front page for a possibility of sales.

The thesis aims to investigate communication approach and interaction way to identify development plan of utilization of social media channels for marketing purpose in order to improve Viope Ltd's sales situation. The operational guide and marketing activities will be conducted in the end of thesis with the purpose of studying how the case company can interact with audiences on social media and turn them to be their real customers.

The author will answer those following questions in the thesis:

- Which is the most common social media channel that target customers utilize for communicating and acquiring information?
- How can social media be used more actively, interactively and attractively to customers?
- How do marketers bring audiences from social media to company's front page to raise the possibilities of purchasing the products?

Scope of the research

Viope has two main customer segmentations: universities and individual learners. However, since the researcher realized a challenge in approaching and contacting with headmasters of universities and colleges, the former customer group is not chosen for this research. The research therefore will be focused on the later segmentation which is individual learners. Consequently, a product line that is compatible with the selected target group is programming and game development personal courses. In other words, due to individual customers as research group, the research is restrained to study about Business –to – Customer marketing in social media sites. Within the scope of this study, Game Development students studying at Kajaani University of Applied Sciences are considered as the main targets of the study.

The main goal of research is to identify a development marketing plan on social media sites to increase purchases in Viope Ltd. Solutions. Hence the study involves discussion about promotional mix which can be applied in social media sites and helps companies to boost their sales and purchases.

2 SOCIAL MEDIA AS MARKETING CHANNELS FOR COMPANIES

Michael (2014) defines social media as "a powerful tool for interacting with others". In other words, from marketers' point of view, it is a collaborative process where information is generated, spreaded out, modified and destroyed (Dave, 2012).

According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), social media refers to a group of Internet –based applications which are evolved based on the technological and ideological foundations of Web 2.0, allow the generation and exchange of User Generated Content. In this definition of the term, two related concepts are mentioned: Web 2.0 and User Generated Content. Web 2.0 was published in 2004, describing a new way of utilizing the World Wide Web as a platform whereby all users can continuously adjust the content in a participatory and collaborative way. Web 2.0 requires a set of basic functionalities for the purpose of its functioning, which consists of Adobe Flash (a method for adding audio/video streams to webpages), RSS (Really Simple Syndication) and AJAX (Asynchronous Java Script). Another related concept, User Generated Content, was merged in 2005, which refers to the different forms of media content that are available in public and generated by end-users.

2.1 Classification of social media

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) categorized social media into six main types, including blogs, social networking sites, virtual social worlds, collaborative projects, content communities and virtual game worlds. Those main types are classified and measured from high, medium to low scores based on the richness of the medium/the degree of social presence and the degree of self-disclosure /the type of self-presentation.

Table 1. Classification of social media by social presence/media richness and self – presentation/self-disclosure (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010)

| | | Social presence/ Media richness | | |
		Low	Medium	High
Self-presentation/ Self-disclosure	High	Blogs	Social networking sites (e.g., Facebook)	Virtual social worlds (e.g., Second Life)
	Low	Collaborative projects (e.g., Wikipedia)	Content communities (e.g., YouTube)	Virtual game worlds (e.g., World of Warcraft)

The table above shows that blogs and collaborative projects acquire a low degree of social presence and media richness since those applications are text –based and only allow simple exchange. Staying in the medium level of social presence and media richness is social networking sites and content communities. In addition to text-based communication, users are able to share pictures, videos and other forms of media on these applications. Virtual social worlds and virtual game worlds score highest in this element due to their effort in replicating all dimensions of face –to –face interactions in a virtual environment. Refers to self –presentation and self –disclosure, collaborative projects obtain lower scores than blogs since the former are majorly concentrated on specific content. With the similar reason, content communities acquire lower degree of self –disclosure than social networking sites. Ultimately, compared to virtual game worlds, virtual social worlds score the higher level of self –disclosure as in this environment, users are required to behave in a certain way by its strict guidelines. (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010.)

2.1.1 Collaborative projects

According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), collaborative projects are considered to be the most democratic manifestation of User Generated Content, in which end –users are able to create the content jointly and simultaneously. Within collaborative projects, wikis are websites where users can add, delete or adjust text –based content. The most popular example of this is the online encyclopaedia Wikipedia which is available in over 230 languages. Michael (2014) state that the collaborative sites can be either on Internet, where information will be accessible publicly or on company's intranet where only people with

secure network access are able to access. Another classification of collaborative projects is social bookmarking sites, such as Reddit and Delicious (Micheal, 2014, 3), where end –users are allow to collect and rate Internet links or media content.

It is aware that there is a trend toward collaborative projects becoming the major source of information for plenty of users even though the information written on eg. Wikipedia sometimes tend to be not true (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010).

2.1.2 Blogs

Blogs are websites on which entries stamped with date and time are shown in reverse chronological order (OECD, 2007). Individuals or group are allowed to add content on a webpage as a series of submissions (Michael, 2014). People use those for various purposes such as personal diaries or summaries of information in a specific content field. Although blogs are usually managed by individuals, users are allowed to comment on author entries and interact with authors. Since they are considered as an earliest form of social media, the majority of blogs are text -based. However, the different media formats such as links, images, music and video have been adapted to blogs. (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2014.)

In contrast, a variant of blogs is microblog, on which end -users are allowed to post short messages. Exemplary microblog is probably Twitter, on which text messages (tweets) are posted and read in a maximum length of 140 characters. According to Twitter (2014), Twitter is available in more than 35 different languages. There are 241 million monthly active users and 500 million Tweets are sent every day. Nevertheless, 77% of accounts are outside of United States while 76% of Twitter active users are on mobile.

2.1.3 Content communities

End –users are allowed to share media content with others on content communities. The various media types of content communities, consisting of text (e.g. BookCrossing), photos (e.g. Flickr), video (e.g. YouTube), and Power Point presentations (e.g. Slideshare). Users

volunteer for creating personal profile page where some basic information such as the amount of video shared, the registration date are available. (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010.)

Thanks to the high popularity of content communities, many firms consider them as an attractive contact channel for business purpose. However, the sharing of copyright – protected materials has been merged as the risk that corporations cope with. Despite of the copyright –protected rules in many content communities, it is not evitable that popular videos has been uploaded on YouTube. (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010.)

2.1.4 Social networking sites

Social networking sites allow users to connect with friends, family and colleagues through their personal information profiles. People can invite others to have access to those profiles, interacting between each other by sending emails or instant messages. On the personal profile pages, users can post content with different formats including photos, videos, audio files, and blogs. The biggest and most popular social networking site is Facebook (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010.). Besides other general social networking sites are Google Plus and MySpace, others concentrating on specific audiences such as LinkedIn, for business and professionals.

2.1.5 Virtual game worlds

Virtual worlds are platforms which allow users to appear in form of personalized avatars and interact with others in three –dimensional environment. Virtual game worlds are one form of virtual worlds, which force users to follow strict rules in context of a massively multiplayer online role-playing game. An example of this is "World of Warcraft", on which approximately 8.5 million subscribers explore the virtual planet of Azeroth in the form of human or animals to fight monsters and look for treasure. Many firms utilize those virtual game worlds to approach potential customers, launching in –game advertising and traditional communication campaigns. (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010.)

2.1.6 Virtual social worlds

Another classification of virtual worlds is virtual social worlds. Virtual social worlds allow users to behave more freely and act in virtual life same as their real life, which differentiates them from virtual game worlds. In other words, there are no rules limiting possible interactions, apart from basic physical laws such as gravity. Second Life application is a good example of this. Users of this application (residents) can not only do everything similar to their real life (e.g. speaking to others, walking, etc.) but also create the content (e.g. design virtual clothings or furniture items) and sell it for exchange of Linden Dollars, a virtual currency.

2.2 Social media as marketing channel

Social media marketing is described as a process where people are empowered to promote their websites, products or services via online social channels and interact with huge community, as opposed to traditional marketing channels. Moreover, social media is characterised as the collective rather than the individual. Within various shapes and sizes of communities, people are communicating with others. Thus, marketers need to leverage these communities properly by listening communities and building the relationships with them. (Weinberg, 2009.)

Drury (2008) also agreed and noticed that social media marketing regards the development of relationship and the conversation with audience. With a respect to the social media, marketing is a two –way process engaging a brand and customers. It involves receiving and interacting perceptions and ideas, rather than just delivering a message in traditional marketing. Hence businesses and non -profit organizations can use the social media for various purposes: spreading their messages to customers, soliciting feedback or inputs, or interacting with their existing and potential customers (Golbeck, 2013, 213).

The popularity of social media usage motivates many businesses to utilize them as marketing channels. As a result, surprisingly, DEI Worldwide's research on the Impact of Social media on Customer behavior (2008) reported that 70% of consumers visit social media to get information, of which 49% found the influence of information that they found on social

media sites in their purchasing decision. It is also mentioned that 45% of respondents searching for information through social media channels engaged in word –of –mouth, as opposed to 36% who found information on company or news sites. Furthermore, De Valck et al. (2009) also pointed out the remarkable impact of recommendation on social media sites on need recognition, actual behaviour and post –purchase evaluation, rather than virtual communities.

Mangold and Faulds (2009) formulate the new communications paradigm (Figure 1) in which information about products and services derives from the marketplace. This information is based on individual consumers' experiences and is transmitted through the traditional promotion mix. On the other hand, consumers are able to communicate with others through various social media platforms which do not totally depend on the sponsoring/producing organization or its agents. Thus, this has influenced enormously all aspects of consumer behaviour (Li and Bernhoff, 2008), from information acquisition to post-purchase expressions (Mangold and Faulds, 2009). The power of discussions via the social media has been magnified. In contrast, the reduction of consumers' reliance on advertising as a source of information leading to purchase decision –making has been emerged. (Mangold and Faulds, 2009.). In other words, consumers nowadays seem not to rely on information flow originating from organization but also acquire information and reviews from different mediums including social media channels, reflecting the importance of social media in marketing field.

Figure 1: The new communications paradigm (Mangold and Faulds, 2009)
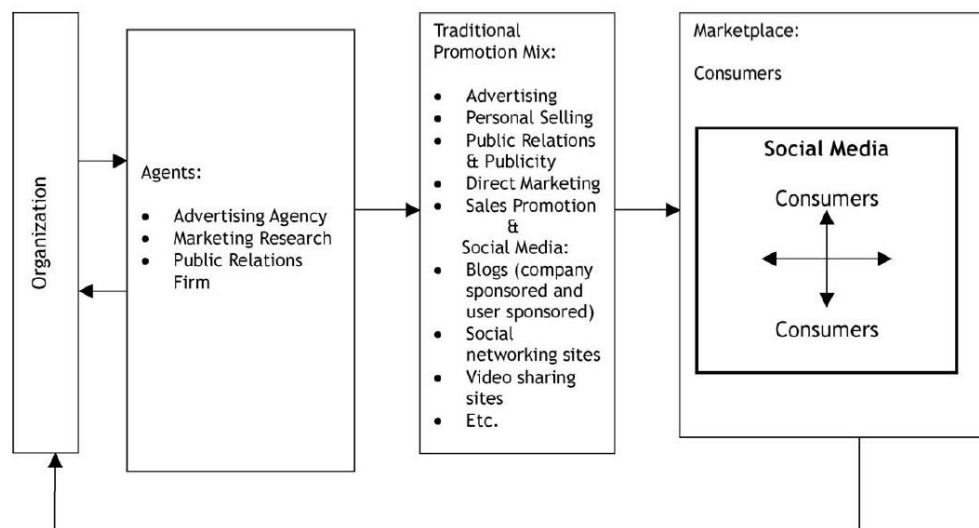
2.3 Traditional marketing vs. social media marketing

Weinberg and Pehlivan (2011) demonstrated the discrepancy of major process elements between traditional marketing and social media marketing (Table 2). Marketing channels in traditional way include television, radio print, billboard, etc., while social networks, blogs, microblogs, communities are medium of social media marketing. In terms of delivery, marketers are sending a message via traditional media channels by their own, unedited voice. In contrast, on social media, message can be delivered by other sources and probably not perceived as direct from marketers but a non –marketer source (e.g. customer) in an authentic manner (in the words/voice as desired by source). In addition, as opposed to traditional marketing, social media objectives are about engagement with customers and consumer evangelism such as optimizing positive word of mouth and engaging conversations about a brand. (Weinberg and Pehlivan, 2011.)

Table 2. Media process elements (Weiberg and Pehlivan, 2011)

	Traditional	Social
Media	Television, radio, print, billboard, etc.	Social networks, blogs, microblogs, communities, etc.
Spend	Cash, cost	Social currency, trustworthiness, authenticity, transparency, investment
Delivery	Direct from marketer, unedited	From source, delivered by volition of, and in words selected by, source
Objectives	Awareness, knowledge, recall, purchase, etc.	Conversation, sharing, collaboration, engagement, evangelism, etc.

As mentioned above, table 2 indicates a difference between traditional and social media in terms of spending. Whereas within traditional marketing, the spend on broadcasting the message has been with cash and seen as a cost/expense, the investing in social media marketing involves a social currency, a relationship –based currency and a spending process.. Consequently, compared with traditional marketing, the social media sites have a huge advantage in reducing marketing costs in terms of monetary and personnel. Through social media platforms, organizations seize opportunities to communicate directly, quickly and consistently with millions of individual customers (Palmer and Koenig –Lewis, 2009).

In traditional marketing, in order to achieve marketing objectives, organizations set a budget for spending on media in broadcasting messages (Figure 2). The evaluation of media spend

is based on a combination of metrics and the objectives; and it also involves Return –On - Investment (ROI) estimation (Weinberg and Pehlivan, 2011.)

In contrast, in social media environment, marketers emphasize on mechanism, leading to customers, acting as a marketers, carrying their own message and action which is related to organization/brand/product with different motivation. Although such traditional objectives as sales still continue to be aimed, the spending in social media focuses more on achieving social objectives – being evangelism (Weinberg and Pehlivan, 2011.). Figure 3 below demonstrates social process for media spending in which marketers firstly manage all vehicles for content of interest (e.g. mentions of a brand or product). After measuring customers' satisfaction and dissatisfaction to that content, managers will decide whether they should focus on those audiences and define further actions such as engaging in conversation, offering appreciation etc. The audiences ultimately funnelled toward evangelism. (Weinberg and Pehlivan, 2011.)
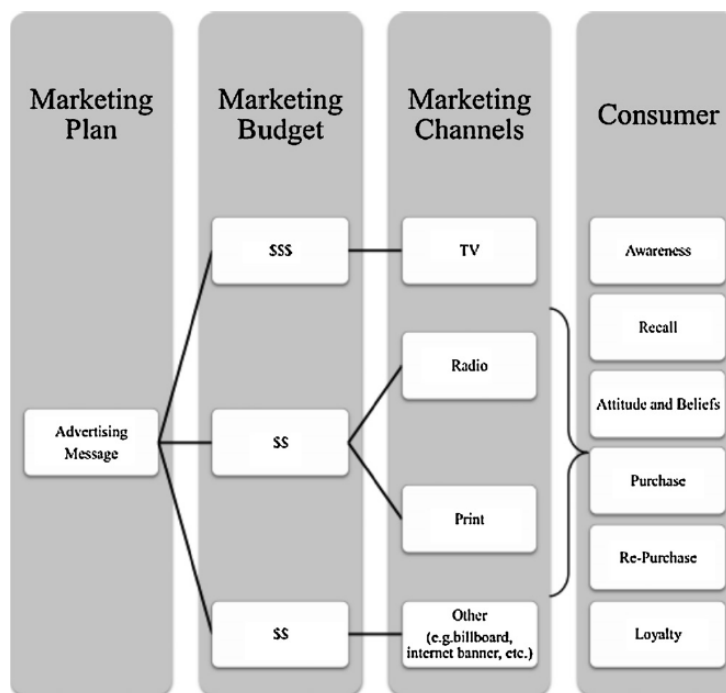
Figure 2. Traditional process for media spending (Weiberg and Pehlivan, 2011)
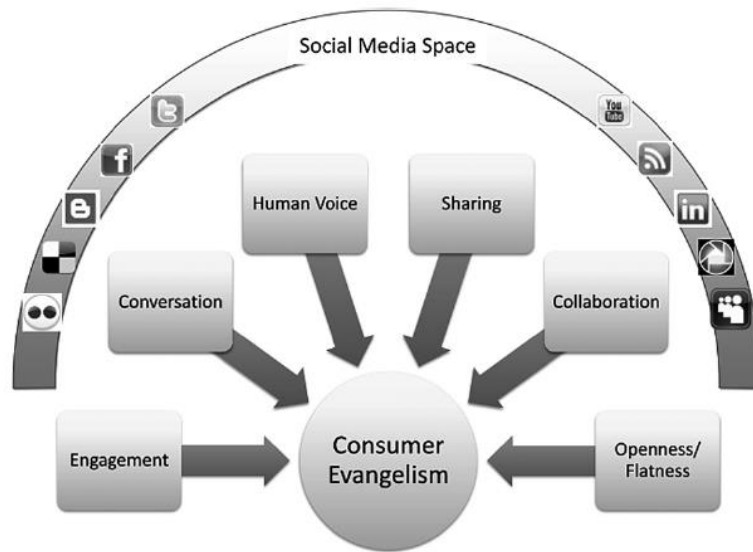
Figure 3. Social process for media spending (Weiberg and Pehlivan, 2011)

In addition, Eldelman (2007) also realized a shift in increasing usage of social networks and customers are nowadays spending more time with online marketing than with other marketing channels. With social media sites, companies are able to reach and connect with a large number of customers than other traditional marketing channels such as phone call, meetings or emails (Luke, 2009).

2.4 Promotion methods on social media channels

Promotion is one of four essential elements called 4Ps in marketing strategies. Promotion plays an integral role in creating and maintaining communication with large market segments (Jain, 2009, 385). According to Kotler et.al (1999, 756-757), promotion mix comprises five essential tools mentioning below:

-   Advertising: paid form of non –personal presentation and promotion of products and services by an identified sponsor
-   Personal selling: oral presentation in a conversation with potential buyers for making sales and developing customer relationship
-   Sales promotion: short –term incentives to foster purchases of products and service
-   Public relation: building good relations with company's publics by building favourable publicity, enhancing positive company's image, handling bad rumours and stories.

- Direct marketing: Using different medium such as mail, telephone to communicate directly with specific customers.

Among those elements, several methods have been adapted in social media marketing in order to reach end-customers and influence a large market segments . Those are advertising, sales promotion and public relation. Further discussion of these promotional methods will be presented below.

2.4.1 Online advertising on social media

Online advertising is presenting in different forms. However, there are currently some popular advertising methods utilized in social media environment, including search engine, banners, pop –ups and video advertising. The description of each method will be demonstrated below.

Search engine marketing

Search engine marketing can defined as the process of acquiring traffic and visibility from search engines through both paid and "organic" unpaid effort (SearchEngineLand). With paid search engine, it normally appears as a link on the top of searching lists when users seek certain search words. This type of ads tends to gain a large online reach and viewers are able to self -selecting (Kotler et al., 2006).

A huge number of enterprises has optimized this advertising method not only on search engine tools such as Google but also on social media environment. YouTube, for instance, is by far a popular video -sharing site that allows marketers to locate their advetisement on the top of search results (YouTube, 2014). Another typical example is Twitter, a well-known microblogging site nowadays where users can communicate and share short 140 –character text messages. Moreover, this is also a site where companies promote their Tweets as well as their own business. Those promoted Tweets can be appeared at the top of relevant search results, and the search results of Promoted Trends area (Twitter, 2014.).

Display advertising

Display advertising apparently is the most popular online advertising, which involves launching web banners or banner advertising on third -party sites to drive traffic to a company website and enhance brand awareness. The third –party sites can be e-magazines, e –press and social media sites. Display advertising generally comprises texts, logos, images, location maps and similar items. With this type of advertising, marketers are able to custom setting of demography and geography which was captured on users' browser history, to determine demographics, location as well as interest and target to appropriate users (Boundless.)

With social media sites, it is obvious that users can find a number of banner advertisings on many blogs or discussion forums. Additionally, for example, on Facebook -a social networking site, display advertising is presented in News Feed and the right side of Facebook on mobile and desktop devices. Marketers, therefore, can promote their company's Facebook page, posts, or company website on Facebook. Moreover, to reach right people, marketers are able to custom target audience receiving advertising in terms of location, age, gender, interests and so on (Facebook, 2014). On the other hand, banner advertising on YouTube can show in the bottom of video and the right top of YouTube (YouTube, 2014).

Pop -ups

Pop –up advertisements or pop-ups refers to online advertising method which jumps out of the screen. Sometimes separate browser windows open automatically once users click to open particular browser. Despite of a high attention –getting potential, it is likely that this type of advertisement tend to lead to an interruption of users' navigation and even result in users' annoyance. Furthermore, consequently, it is merged a phenomenon called 'pop –up blindness' which is a corresponding one to 'banner blindness', meaning that users tend to ignore advertisement (Janoschka, 2004, 63).

Pop –up advertisings sometimes are found in several social media such as blogs or discussion forums. However, many browsers including Chrome, Safari, Firefox etc. allow users to block those pop –ups by changing settings of those browsers. In conclusion, due to

its' annoyance, pop –ups blindness and browsers' restraint, this advertising type is not recommended.

Video advertisings

Online video advertising can be defined as an online broadband video commercial appearing before, during and after a diverse range of content consisting of streaming video, animation, gaming and music video content in a player environment (Lee, 2008, 5). Hallerman (2005) reported that there was a growth of internet video advertising spending in the USA from 2000 till 2004. It was also predicted that this advertising method would significantly increase by 2009. Generally, this reflects the explosion of video advertising usage.

Video advertisings appear in social media platforms such as YouTube. Users might easily notice its appearance in the beginning of video and sometimes also in the middle (YouTube, 2014). Those video advertisings need to be paid for launching on YouTube, whereas in Instagram, another photo and video –sharing platform, marketers are able to promote their 'organic' video.

2.4.2 Other methods of promotion on social media

Besides of online advertising, other promotional methods have also been adapted into social media sites. One of those tools is sales promotions, which comprise short –term incentives. To foster customers in purchasing action, organizations can offer various promotion tools, targeting towards certain groups and target, including consumers, business customers, trade or retailers and company's sales force. Consumer promotions consist of money –off, coupons, premium, contests, etc., and sales force promotion include bonuses, free gifts, commission and competitions. On the other hand, sales promotions should be emphasized on developing long –term relationship with customers and reinforcing product's position. (Kotler et al., 2005, 785-787.) With respect to social media, many sales promotion campaigns such as money –off, discount season or giveaway have been broadcasted through these channels and attract huge numbers of customers.

Moreover, while advertising can not be seen as brand –building tool, public relation does. With the aim of acquiring a favourable image and positive influence publicly, companies

usually exploit this mass-promotion technique. Within this promotional method, there are a range of crucial tools that marketers are using to build their brand, including news, special events, sponsorship etc. (Kotler et al., 2005, 793 -795) Those tools tend not only to be applied in traditional marketing but also be transmitted and adapted to social media environment. Special events, for instance, might be created in Facebook and be visible in public so that people are able to invite their friends to join and the information can be scattered widely.

Ultimately, another marketing trend nowadays that many markerters strive utilizing is viral marketing, a version of word –of –mouth marketing via Internet. The message or marketing event is created which is so infectious that viewers are willing to share with their friends and within their relationship network. Those people receiving the message are much more likely to open and read it due to the highly -source trustworthy. This method generally is inexpensive and highly efficient (Koteler et al., 2005, 149.). Especially, those messages can be scattered as a virus on social media channels. An outstanding example of this is T-mobile's commercial creating by a surprise flashmob dance in Liverpool Station in 2009. To spreading their message - 'Life is for sharing', 400 people dressing in casual clothes suddenly were dancing in the station hall when music was played. The flashmob dance not only made a huge surprise for passengers attending in the station but also became a viral phenomenon that millions of viewers watching and sharing on YouTube once a video was published. (YouTube, 2009.)

2.5 Measuring social media marketing

To measure the effectiveness of online advertising on social media environment or Return – On - Investment, many channels such as Facebook, YouTube, for example, provide analytic tool which enables to summarize and analyse data involved launched advertisings. The analytic includes the total cost of advertisings, the number of reached people as well as the click –through rate (CTR) of online advertisings with a direct link to business website. The definition of CTR is an average number of click-through on advertisings per hundred advertising views, which can help determine the number of sales company achieve. Furthermore, payment per click-through (PPC) and cost per click –through (CPC) should also take into account. These terms sometimes can be interchangeable. However, PPC is

payment based on click-throughs thus every received click-through need to be paid. In contrast, CPC refers to measurement of the cost on a per-click basis when marketers pay per impression (Michie, 2006, 32 .)

However, on the other side, measuring social media marketing is not only about measuring online advertising. Fisher (2009) cited that social media marketing requires qualitative measurement rather than quantitative measurement. The new definition of ROI in social media marketing apparently is Return on Influence, or Return on Engagement. IAB (2009) also distinguished three essential types of social media and demonstrated different metrics in every type which include following:

Table 3. Metrics of different social media classifications (IAB, 2009).

Social media Classification	Metrics
Social media sites	Unique visitors, cost per unique visitor, page views, visits, return visits, interaction rate, time spent, video installs, relevant actions taken
Blogs	Conversation size (number of sites, links and reach of a conversation phrases relevant to client), site relevance (conversation density), author credibility, content freshness and relevance)
Widgets and social media applications	Installs (number of applications), active users, audience profile, unique user reach, growth, influence, installs (number of installed per user)

Nevertheless, according to Owyang J. (2007), it is immensely important to set a particular goal before identifying the measurement. Hoffman and Fodor (2010) also agreed and suggested that with an advantage of distinctive characteristics of social media, there are unique opportunities to acquire brand awareness, engagement and word –of –mouth objectives. Owyang (2007) also pointed out a list of attributes to measure, consisting of activity (web analytics), tone (sentiment), velocity (spread over time, URLs, trackbacks), attention (duration on site), participation (comments, trackbacks), and many qualitative attributes (comments). Hoffman and Fodor (2010), in contrast, generated various social metrics for social media by categorizing them based on objectives and social media types (Appendix 2).

3 CASE STUDY: VIOPE SOLUTIONS LTD.

In this chapter, brief description of Viope Solutions Ltd. will be mentioned. Furthermore, author will present a closer view of company's social media utilization in order to comprehend current situation of social media marketing in Viope.

Established in 2001, Viope Solutions Ltd. is a Finnish software company in form of partnership, providing e-learning software products and service for educational institutions and individuals. Company is a small –sized enterprise with approximately 10 employees including full –time and part –time staff and trainees. The head-quarter is located in Helsinki, Finland.

Viope offers e-learning tools and platform in the fields of computer programming and mathematics as well as a game development online course for educational institutions such as high schools, colleges and universities. Besides, online courses about game development and computer programming are also available for individuals.

Since 2011, company has been expanding their business internationally to some European countries (i.e. Norway, Sweden, Netherlands, Austria etc.), Nigeria, Ghana and Saudi Arabia.

Since 2013, in order to raise brand awareness globally and build up a favorable image, Viope Solutions Ltd. arranges a worldwide contest namely "Game Development World Championship" (GDWC). The contest is organized annually for all game developers or hobbies, from students, freelancers to professionals all over the world. It starts from October and end in February of the following year.

3.1 Sales process

Viope has offered online courses for individual learners in the field of game development and computer programming. Before purchasing the full course, learners without registration have an opportunity to study a demo of the course including several first chapters. Every chapter consists of theory, exercises and multiple choice questions. Furthermore, if learners

sign up to study the course, more chapters will be activated and accessible. After finishing the demo, learners then can decide whether they would like to purchase and complete the whole course. Once learners are willing to buy the course, they can access to online payment system to give purchase. The whole course can be accessible as soon as the payment is completed. Although company's target customers are not only in Finnish market but also international market, the payment options are still limited to the majority of Finnish bank systems and credit cards. Therefore, the company should apply more common payment methods, for example Paypal, for the sake of customers' convenience.

3.2 Current social media situation

3.2.1 Facebook

Facebook is apparently the most active channel that Viope is utilizing as social media medium to interact with audience. Company is currently managing two Facebook pages: company's Facebook page and contest Facebook page.

Having implemented advertising campaigns to promote the page, company's Facebook page has achieved approximately 11 000 Page likes in total (Figure 4). The page is a channel where Viope can update company's news, product's release and sales promotions as well as interact with their current and potential customers. The most popular age group of people following the page is between 18 to 24 years old that is also company's target customers' age segmentation. The frequency of posts in company's Facebook is about three times every month, depending on information availability.

However, on the other hand, the Facebook analytics below (Figure 4) indicates the low engagement of audience to company's Facebook page. The engagement measurement is based on the number of people who liked, commented, shared or clicked on company's posts. Apparently, company's posts and updates are not attractive enough to their fan and audience.

The same situation has been merged in contest Facebook page (Figure 5). Facebook page for GDWC contest was launched in 2013. Currently there are almost 5 500 fan following the page. In spite of that, the page has also confronted with the low engagement of audience. During the contest period which is from October till February of the following year, the posts has been updated almost once every week. Several marketing campaigns such as giveaways, free workshops were arranged in order to appeal Facebookers to follow contest page as well as participate the contest. However, once the contest was ended, the post frequency has declined, leading to the low engagement of audience.
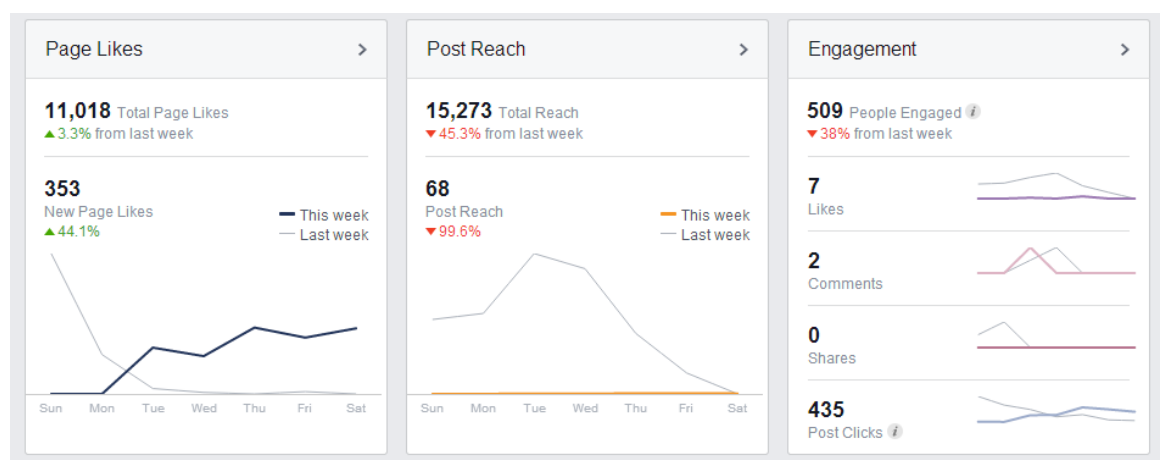
Figure 4. Overview of Viope's Facebook page (22.03.2014)
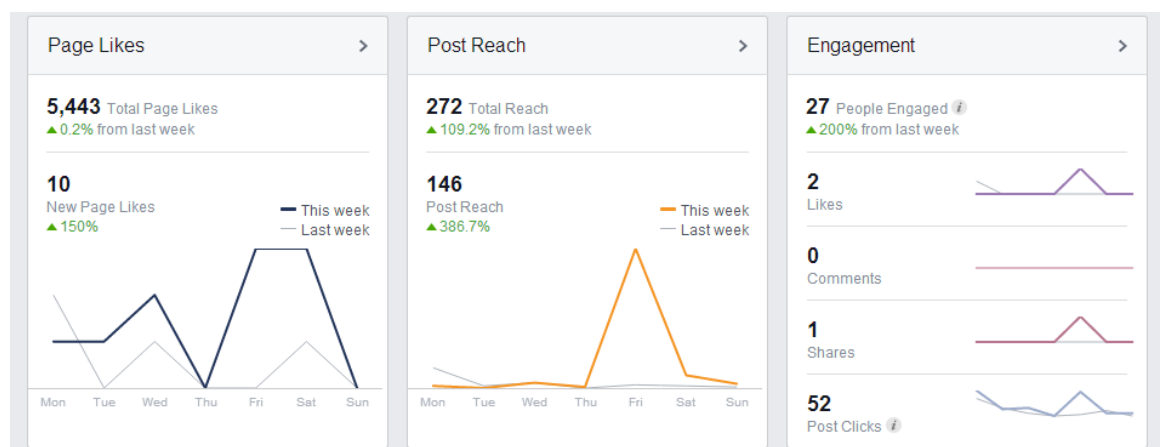
Figure 5. Overview of "Game Development World Championship" contest Facebook page (23.03.2014)

3.2.2 Twitter

Viope's Twitter has been activated since September 2009 and until now, they has gained 319 followers and has posted 222 tweets. Company's tweets are mainly about news related to programming and game development, company's products release and promotion campaigns etc. Company's twitter is also a channel where contest information has been shared. Due to the small amount of followers in Twitter, a giveaway campaign was arranged less than in Facebook page (Figure 6).
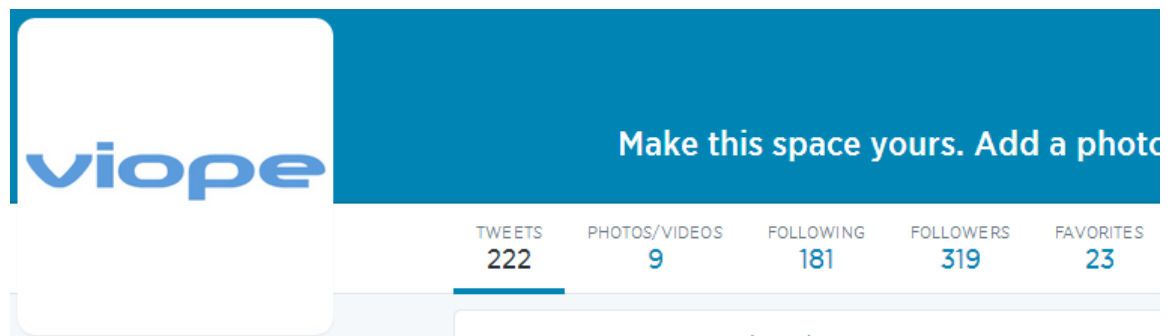
Figure 6. Viope's Twitter (Access 03.06.2014)

3.2.3 Linkedin

Viope also owns a LinkedIn page where they update important information and news concerning company and contest as well as product's release and upgrade. As LinkedIn is a social media networking sites for business professionals, it is likely that Viope's LinkedIn page is utilized to reach their second customer group that is educational institutions, including colleges, universities and high schools. In other words, a business –oriented social networking as LinkedIn is a medium targeting mainly at headmasters of academic institutions and professionals rather than individual learners. However, it is still considered as an integral channel that Viope needs to maintain and develop in the long –term.

3.2.4 Youtube

YouTube is a popular video-sharing sites; thus, Viope has utilized this channel to publish videos regarding GDWC and contest events as well as products' instruction and reviews.

Company's YouTube channel has gained by far 22 subscribers and more than 11 600 views in total. The number of views in each video is generally less than 1 000 whereas viewers' engagement showing in every video is remarkably low. While YouTube nowadays becomes more and more popular channel worldwide, it is necessary for Viope to exploit this channel to approach and appeal their customers.

3.2.5 Blogs

Although Viope's blog has been in use since 2009, blog posts are not composed and published frequently, about four to five posts every year. Nevertheless, only few posts were commented by viewers and audiences. As other social media channels, Viope is utilizing this channel to publish news and blog posts concerning GDWC, product's release and its new features as well as other interesting news and articles about game development and programming.

3.2.6 Other social media sites

Apart from above social networking sites, Viope also signed up accounts on other sites such as Google Plus, Weibo (Chinese social media site). However, the updates on those channels are not frequent while there are few people subscribing those sites.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Quantitative research

As a definition, Muijs (2011, 1) cited that quantitative research refers to the empirical investigation of social phenomena by collecting statistical or numerical data which are analysed using mathematically based methods. The research can involve in quantifying attitudes, opinions, behaviors and other defined variables in a large sample population. In quantitative research, measurable data is used to formulate facts. Compared to qualitative research, the quantitative one is more structured (Wyse, 2011.)

The reason to choose quantitative research over qualitative research is to examine a huge population and find out the most common social media channel that target group is using to communicate and acquire information as well as other related matters. In order to get the result, the focus group of the qualitative research is not able to represent entirely the total population being research (Sellers, 1998). Questionnaires, on the other hand, enable to gather a huge database and wide research materials.

The aim of a survey is to complement an analysis of case company and approach from users' viewpoint, specifically, in this case, company's target customers' viewpoint. From the survey, author will understand more clearly about game development or programming audiences' attitudes and behavior towards social media marketing. Consequently, the database of the quantitative research can contribute to conclude proper marketing plan for case company.

The respondents of the survey are mainly game development degree and exchange students and graduates in Kajaani University of Applied Sciences. The sample group's average age estimates approximately from 18 to 30 years old. The survey opens online by using Google Forms tool. An online questionnaire was sent via school email and the hardcopy one was scattered in the whole classes. The survey was also been posted in a Facebook group specializing for game development students in Finland. To encourage people to participate in the survey, there were small gifts given randomly to some respondents as an incentive. Period of time that survey was available to submit is one week, starting from 07.05.2014 till

14.05.2014. All the questionnaires were collected in Excel form and inputted in SPSS program for analysis purpose later.

Based on the theoretical part, 22 questions were generated in the questionnaire (Appendix 1). In the beginning of the questionnaire, a brief description of survey including the purpose and case company is mentioned. The survey consists of open questions, multiple choices and scale questions. It is formulated in English. The questionnaire includes four major parts. Firstly, the general background of respondents will be asked, including age, gender, nationality and studying field. After that, respondents will answer questions about their utilization of social media: which channels they are using and active in, how much time per week they use social media. Their engagement on social media channels then will be queried. In this part, their attitudes and behavior towards company's social media, advertising as well as sales promotions will be indicated. Ultimately, the last part is few questions related to case company –Viope Solutions Ltd.

4.2 Benchmarking method

Besides, benchmarking analysis is conducted as a second method of research. Motwani and Sower (2006, 229) cited that benchmarking is described as an improvement method in which a company measures its performance against that of best –in –class companies in order to examine how those companies obtain their levels of performance and apply the information into their own circumstance.

The aim of this method is to study the interacting ways with customers on social media sites from other companies. Moreover, a benchmarking analysis might accomplish the quantitative survey and concrete conclusions as well as development plan. In details, two companies in the sector of gaming industry and e-learning programming software industry with successful interactive social media channels will be chosen to investigate and analyze.

The method using in benchmarking analysis is observation. By observing those companies' social media channels, author will analyze how social media channel is utilized and optimized within these firms and bring those techniques to apply on the case company then.

The researcher will observe those social media channels within few days and examine all activities that companies posted and communicated with audiences in last few months. An investigation involves in the post content, the frequency of posts, positioning of suggested social media link on companies' page etc. This method possibly is an additional necessary information to supplement an analysis of quantitative research and complement final operational guidelines.

The general background of two selected companies will be described in detail below:

Studio OnMars

Published in 2012, Studio OnMars is a game development studio located in Kajaani, Finland. It is a small –sized enterprise with less than 10 employees in total. Company has launched their first game called Critical Strike Portable that has successfully gained over 3 million downloads from Google Play store. Due to the similarity in the size of enterprise and the industrial sector, Studio OnMars is selected as one of companies observing in benchmarking method.

To communicate with their game players, Studio OnMars is running several social media sites including Facebook page called "Critical Missions". There are by far over 14 000 fans following their page and 920 people talking about this. In addition, company and their game are also available on Twitter and YouTube channels. In particular, their Twitter account has obtained over 800 followers and almost 1 600 subscribers following their YouTube account. Especially, some videos on YouTube have achieved more than 2 million views. Moreover, company also creates a forum that displays on their official website, where game players can discuss any subject concerning 'Critical Strike Portable'. In general, company has utilized their social media sites effectively and successfully interact with their game players. Studio OnMars, therefore, could be a good illustration for Viope Solution in social media usage.

Codecademy

Founded in 2011, Codecademy is an e-learning interactive platform which provides free coding classes in seven programming languages comprising Javascript, jQuery, Python, Ruby, PHP, APIs as well as HTML & CSS. Company's headquarter is situated in New York, USA. The site achieved more than 24 million learners from over the world who had completed more than 100 million exercises by January 2014.

Since Codecademy is in similar industrial sector to case company, it is necessary to examine their social media sites and observe their content of posts. Codecademy has managed different sites, consisting of Facebook, Twitter, Google Plus, YouTube, blog and forum. The success in managing their social media platforms was demonstrated by an enormous number of followers and subscribers in those sites. Specifically, company has acquired over 251 000 people liking their Facebook page, over 162 000 followers on Twitter, more than 1 000 followers on Google Plus and approximately 350 subscribers on YouTube. Codecademy also has a blog and a forum that integrate into their website. The forum is provided for any enthusiasts, beginners and advanced coders to gather and help each other.

5 EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

5.1 Quantitative research

After one week since the survey was launched, there were totally 105 respondents submitting their questionnaires. Among those respondents, 2 people are neither studying nor working in game development and programming fields. Those questionnaires, therefore, are disqualified data and excluded in analysis since they do not meet survey conditions. Overall, the analysis of quantitative research will be implemented through results of 103 questionnaires. The questionnaire and SPSS outputs are mentioned in detail in Appendix 1 and 3 respectively.

The result of research shows that a number of Finnish respondents are 82 people, accounting for 79.6% of total, as opposed to 21 non –Finnish people, which is equal to 20.4% (Figure 7). Non –Finnish respondents in this survey come from variable countries such as Brazilian, Canadian, Singaporean, Portuguese etc. In addition, 79% of total respondents are male, compared to 21% female respondents (Figure 8).
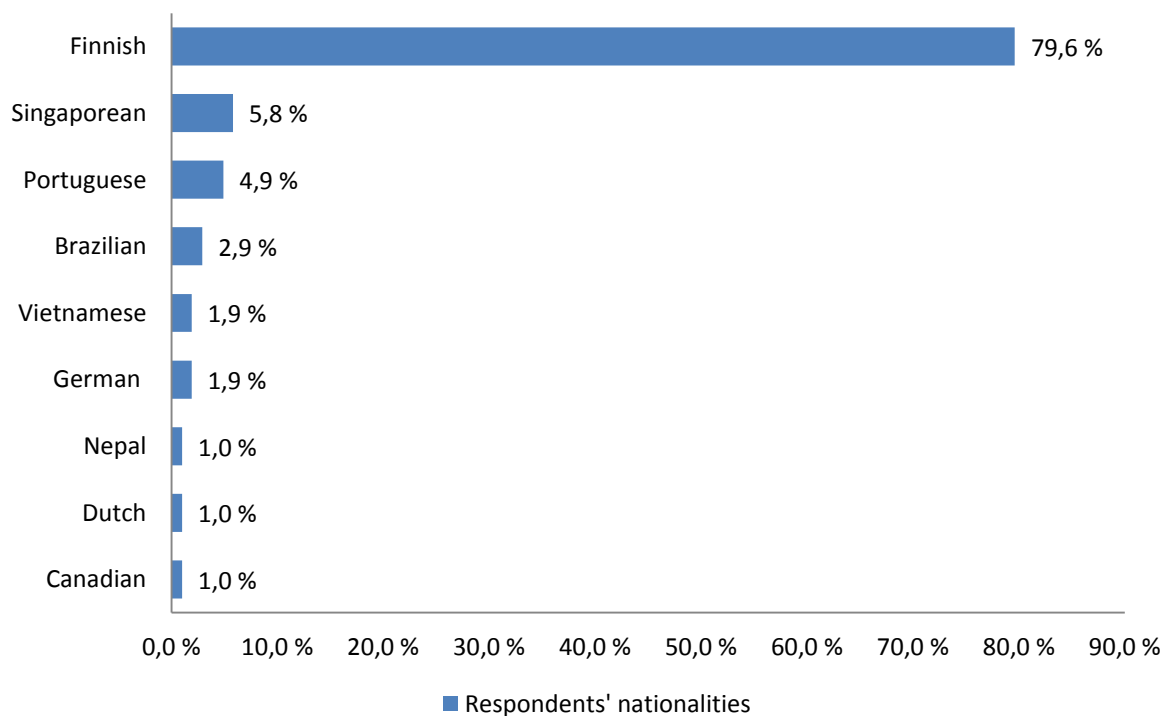
Figure 7. The percentage of respondents' nationality (n=103)
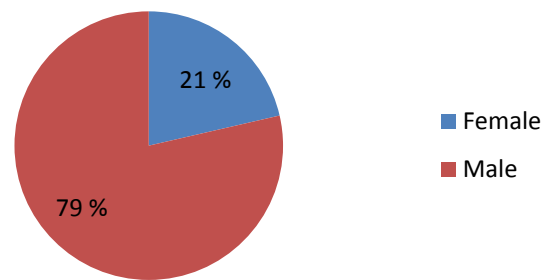
Figure 8. The percentage of respondents' gender (n=103)

As a target group of the survey is students in universities and colleges, the result illustrated in Figure 9 indicates the majority of respondents are quite young. In particular, the percentage of people who are younger than 22 years old was 59.2% and respondents' age ranging from 23 to 28 years old accounted for 33% of total. In contrast, the proportion of respondents in age group of 29-34 and more than 35 were almost 5% and 3% respectively.
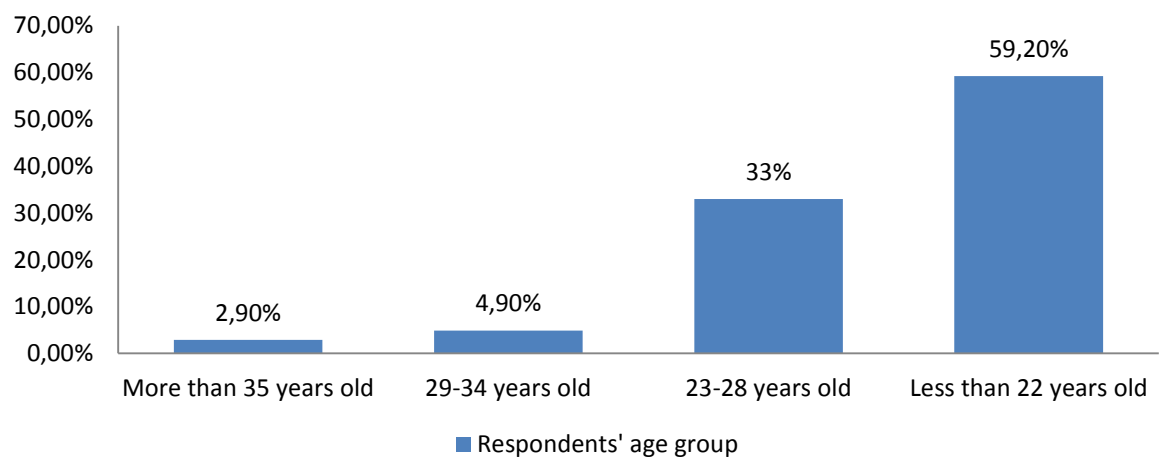
Figure 9. Respondents' age group (n=103)

In terms of social media usage, only a respondent is not using social media channels (1%) whereas the rest of people are, making up 99% of total. This reflects the popularity of social media usage nowadays.

In question 6, respondents specified social media channels that they are currently using (Figure 10). Some popular channels such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube etc. were mentioned in answer choices. Respondents were able to choose more than one choice. The

result presented that YouTube is the most common social media channel that respondents are using (93,2% of total respondents), following by Facebook (89,3%). The proportion of utilization of Twitter, discussion forum and LinkedIn are relatively similar, 48,5%, 44,7% and 39,8% respectively. In contrast, 32% of total are using Reddit, compared to blogs with 8,2%.
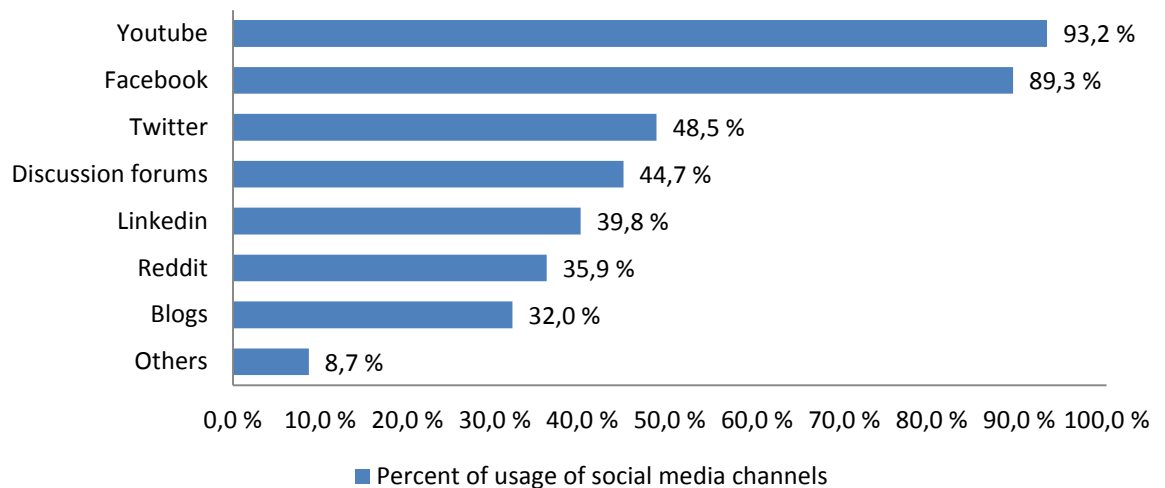
Figure 10. Which social media below do you use? (n=103)

Even though in question 6 respondents chose social media channels that they are using, it is likely that the frequency that people access to each channel seems not to be equal. In other words, some channel might be utilized more actively than others. Question 7 therefore was generated to examine this matter. In this question, respondents needed to scale the social media channels that they are active in. Figure 11 demonstrates the numbers of respondents' choices and the mean of activeness of the social media utilization (on the 1-5 likert scale). The higher the mean is, the more actively the channel is used.

As discussed above in question 6, YouTube is the most popular channel, behind by Facebook. However, question 7 indicates that Facebook is by far the most active social media channel. Particularly, the percentage of respondents choosing 'Active' and 'Very active' is 31,1% and 19,4% respectively. On the other hand, 41,2% of total respondents is active and extremely active in YouTube, leading to the second most active channel. With the respect to Twitter and discussion forums, the proportion of respondents using those channels actively and enormously actively is 12,9% and 11,1% respectively. Additionally, question 6 shows that the usage of LinkedIn is more popular than Reddit and blogs.

However, only 2,1% are active and immensely active in LinkedIn, as opposed to 9,3% in Reddit and 8% in blogs. Finally, the activeness of other channels usage is also relatively high, making up 9,5%.
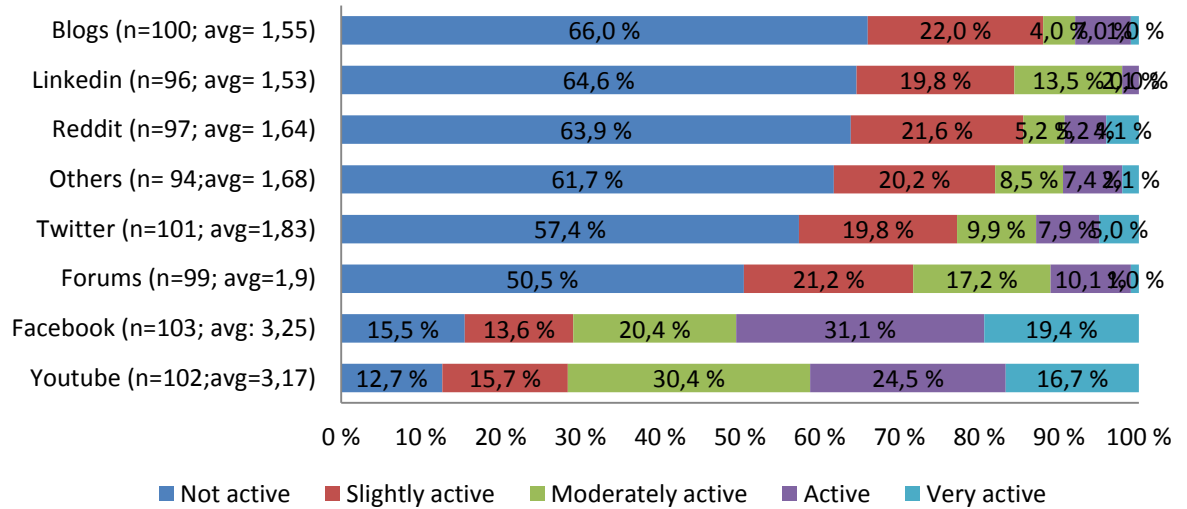
Figure 11. Scale the following social media channels that you are active in

Question 8 is about the amount of time that respondents spend using social media channels every week. Firstly, figure 12 points out that 30,1% of total respondents spends 2 -4,5 hours every week. Secondly, the percentage of people spending 5-7,5 hours accounted for 23,3 %, which is slightly higher than the proportion of respondents spending more than 10 hours (22,3%). Finally, 14,6 % utilize social media channels less than 1,5 hours every week and 9,7% with respect to 8- 10 hours. Generally, the mean of time consumption in social media is 2,95, which is equal to 5-7,5 hours.
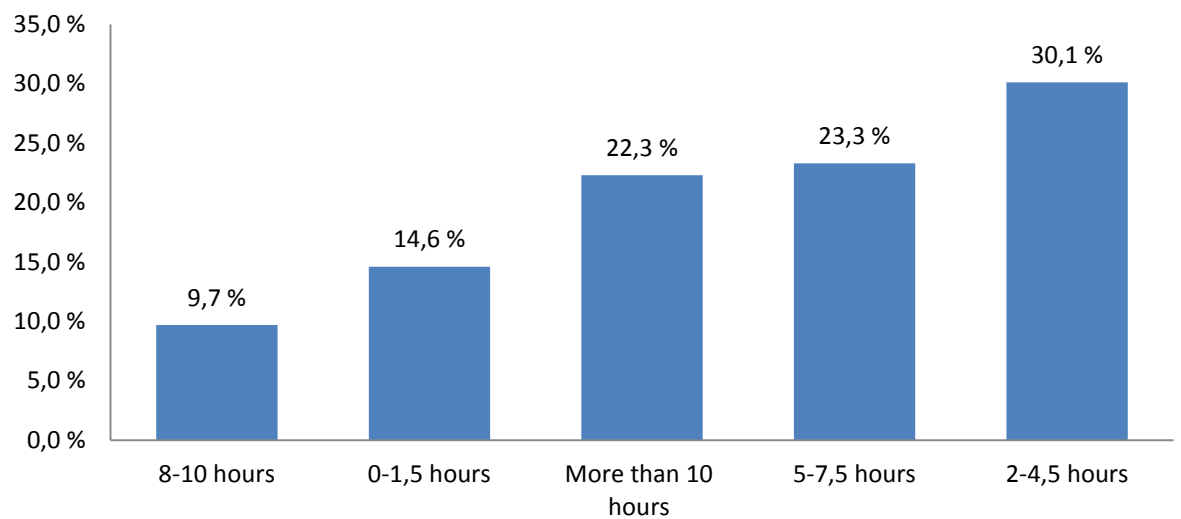
Figure 12. How much time per week do you spend using social media channels? (n=103)

In terms of question 9, the majority of respondents follow or subscribe business/brand related to game development or programming on social media channels (81%); whereas only 18% of total do not (Figure 13).
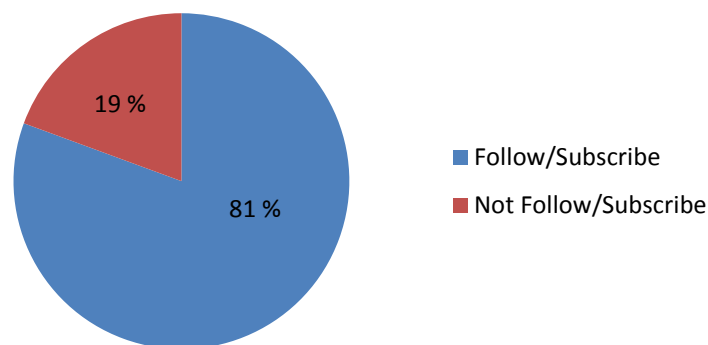
Figure 13. Do you follow/subscribe any business/brand related to game development/programming on social media? (n=103)

Figure 14 represents several reasons following business/brand related to game development and programming on social media channels. The respondent were asked to rank on the 1-5 Likert scale from 'Strongly disagree' to 'Strongly agree' on each of 5 suggested reasons. The mean of each statement illustrates the level of agreement. The higher the mean is, the stronger the agreement expression is.

The majorities of respondents agree (33%) and strongly agree (33%) that they follow brand's social media in order to updates products' release and upgrades as well as company's news. In contrast, 20,2% disagree and strongly disagree with this statement.

With the statement that 'Because this brand/business is related to my concern subjects', the percentage of respondents agree and extremely agree on this is 33% and 14,9% respectively, compared by 27,6% choosing disagree and strongly disagree.

Furthermore, 40,5% of total neither agree nor strongly agree the reason is that they are currently using that product or brand. 14,9% strongly disagree with this reason, while 19,1% disagree.

The number of respondents who agree with the statement 'To get sales promotion (reduction, coupon), benefits' is not high (12,8% agree and 9,6% strongly agree), while 39,4% strongly disagree and 18,1% disagree with this reason.

Finally, the majority of respondents (60,5%) neither disagree nor strongly disagree with the reason of friend's recommendation. Only 8,5% totally have positive expression on this reason (6,4% agree and 2,1% strongly agree).
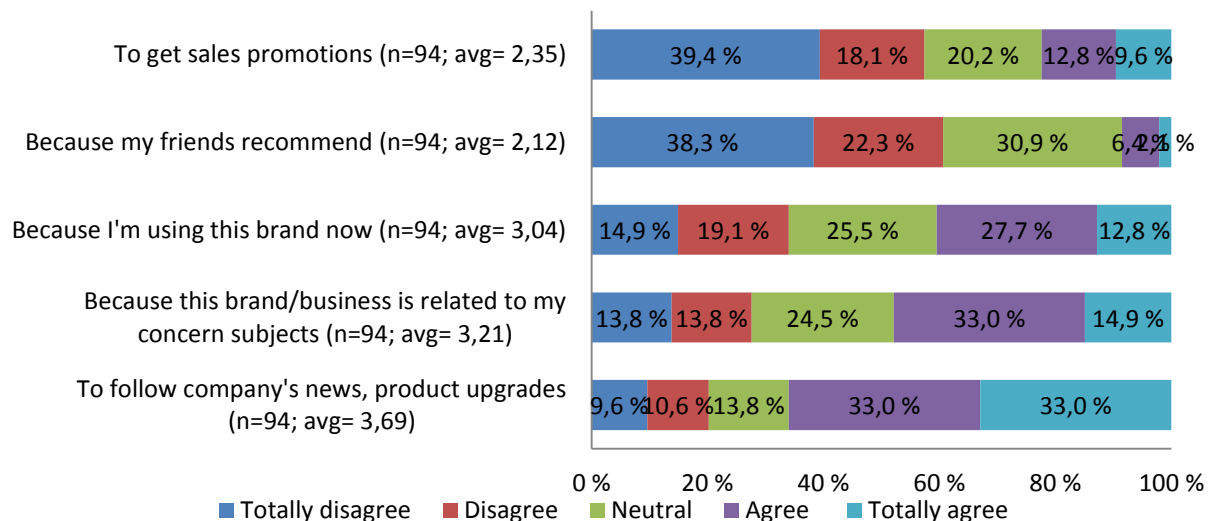
Figure 14. What are the reasons that you subscribe/follow that business/brand on social media?

Figure 15 demonstrates the frequency of posts and updates on social media channels that respondents expect to receive. As above chart, it is shown that 30% of total would like to get updates twice per month, whereas 26% agreed that once a week is appropriate time frequency. The percentage of respondents desiring to receive updates on social media 2-3 times every week is 19%. Only 7% agree with 4-5 times per week and 8% desire that companies update their social media more than 5 times per week. The mean of those choices is 3,49, which is equal to 'once a week' option.
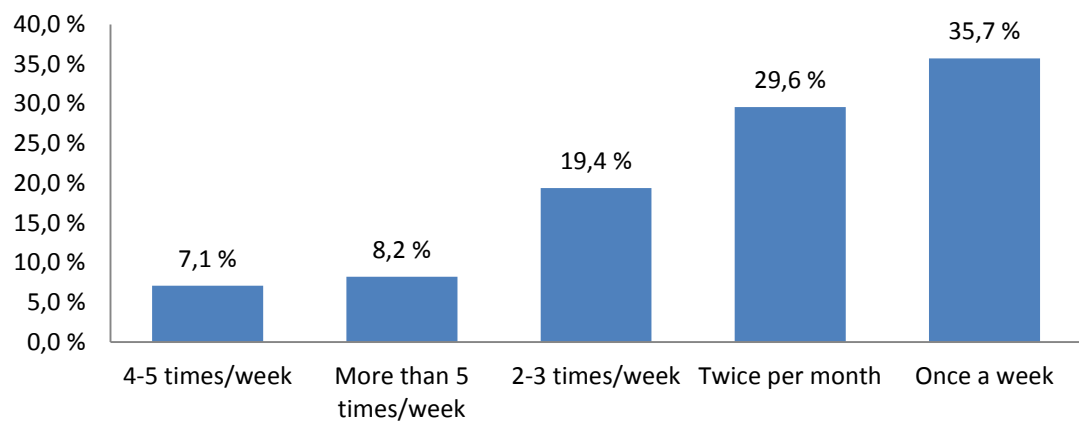
Figure 15. How often would you like to receive updates/posts from those social media channels? (n=98)

In question 12, respondents needed to answer whether they search for products' information or reviews on social media channels before purchasing decision (Figure 16). The question is created based on diagram of Mangold and Faulds (2009) mentioning that consumers communicate via different social media platforms and products' information originates from consumers' experiences.

It is shown that the great number of respondents confirmed that information and reviews of products are checked on social media before purchasing decision is made, making up 60% of total respondents. However, the rest of them (40%) do not.
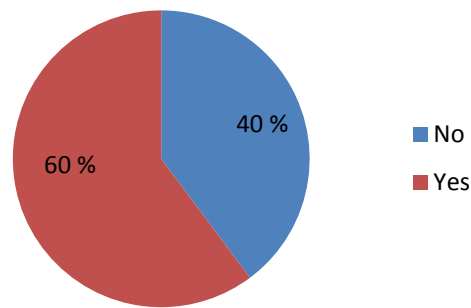
Figure 16. Do you search for product's information/reviews on social media before making purchase decision? (n=103)

With those respondents who answered 'Yes' in question 12, author also suggested them to write down specific social media channels that they utilize to check reviews and products' information. The question is in form of open-ended question and not mandatory one, therefore, all answers were collected, classified and coded into SPSS to analyze. Several common answers are chosen to be coded, including YouTube, Facebook, Reddit, Forums, Blogs and Others. Even though, several respondents mentioned about Google, this answer does not take into account since Google is not considered as a social media. Overall, figure 17 represents the social media channels that respondents access to check products' reviews and information. The statistics concluded that YouTube, with 29,3%, becomes the most common channel used to search for products' reviews, following by Discussion forums with 25%. Blogs, interestingly, stand at third position, accounting for 15,2%. Others consisting of some review websites and store webpage also present at almost 11%. Finally, the proportion of Reddit and Facebook is equal, with 9,8% respectively.
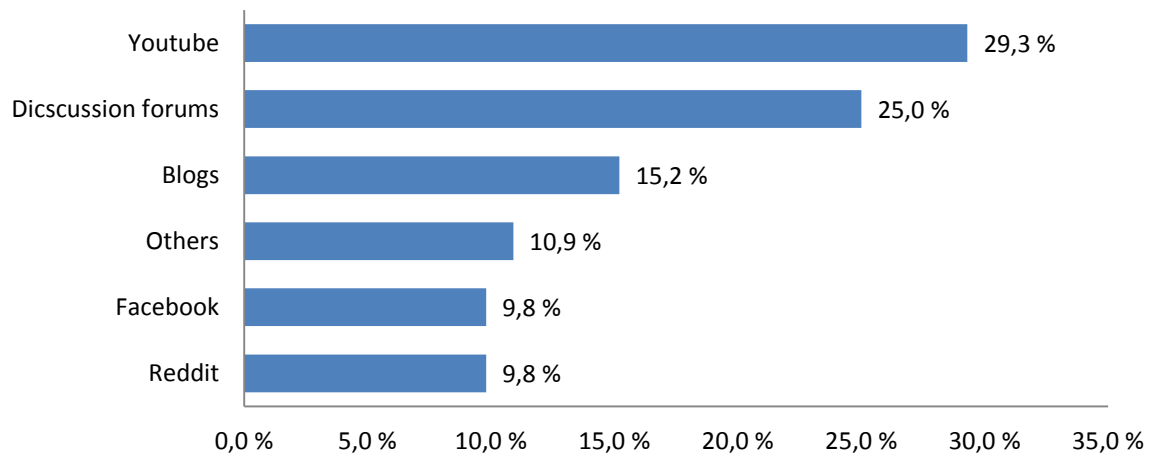
Figure 17. If yes, on which social media channels? (n=92)

In terms of question 13, the respondents expressed their opinions about users' reviews, recommendation and blog posts on social media. Two statement is pointed out and people were asked to scale them from 'Strongly disagree' to 'Strongly agree' on the 1-5 Likert scale (Figure 18). The first statement concerned the influence of users' reviews or recommendation, blog posts in purchasing decision. The great number of respondents showed positive expression on this with 53,4% in which 10,7% strongly agree and 42,7% agree. There are only few respondents disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with that (19,5%). Regarding second statement, it is suggested that the recommendation and reviews on social media have higher credibility than advertising. Interestingly, the majority of respondents, counting for 70,8% agree with the statement (29,1% strongly agree and 41,7% agree). In contrast, the percentage of respondents showing their disagreement is less than 10% (2,9% strongly disagree and 6,8% disagree).
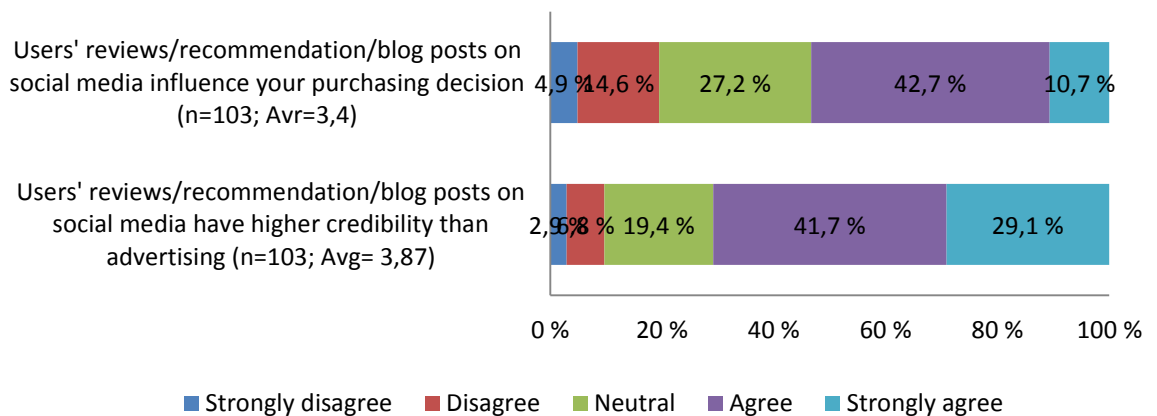
Figure 18. Do you agree with the statement below

In theoretical part, 'banner blindness' and 'pop –ups blindness' phenomenon was mentioned; hence question 14 is generated to investigate whether respondents notice advertisings. Consequently, there are 67% of total respondents noticed advertising on social media channels, while 33% did not. In addition, the frequency of clicking on advertising on social media was asked in question 15 (Figure 19). Three options were mentioned, which are 'Never', 'Sometimes' and 'Usually'. As a result, among total respondents, 72% sometimes click on advertising on social media, compared with 28% never click. Especially, there is no respondent choosing 'Usually'.
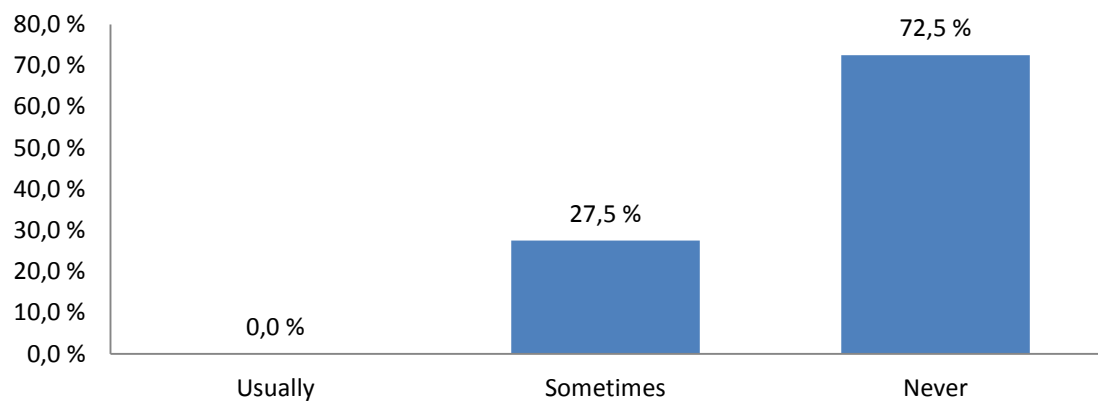
Figure 19. How often do you click on advertising on social media? (n=102)

Furthermore, question 16 involves the irritation of some suggested advertising methods and respondents needed to scale those methods with different level of irritation (Figure 20). The majority of respondents stated that pop –ups is strongly irritated (84,5%) and irritated (10,7%), leading to the most irritated advertising method. Hence, this advertising type is not recommended. Moreover, half of the respondents also feel extremely irritated by video advertising, and 23,3% feel irritated. Regarding advertising method as banners, there are 14,6% selecting 'Strongly irritated' and 25,2% selecting 'Irritated'. The percentage of respondents feeling 'Not irritated' and 'Slightly irritated' with banners is 9,7% and 27,2% respectively. Ultimately, search engine is by far the least irritated method among four advertising types since 16,5% of total feel strongly irritated and only 9,7% choosing 'Irritated'. There are a majority of respondents (58,2%) feel neither 'slightly irritated' nor 'not irritated' at all.
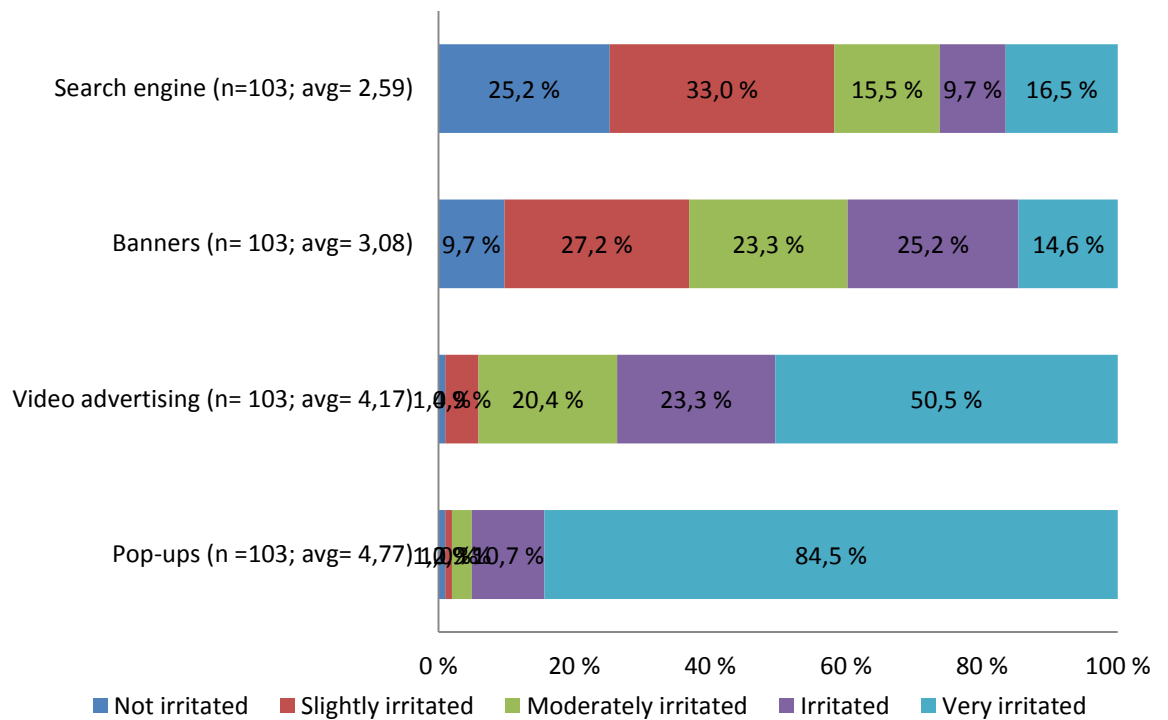
Figure 20. Scale the following advertising methods that you feel irritated with

Moreover, the level of possibility that respondents click on advertisements consisting of sales promotion is measured in question 17. Figure 21 summarized the result of Likert scale from 1 to 5 measuring possibility level. It is presented that more than half of respondents (63,3%) are 'Not likely' or 'Slightly likely' to click on these advertisements. However, only the few respondents, counted for 17,5%, selecting 'Very likely' and 'Likely'. Overall, the majority of respondents do not intend to click on advertisements even though they offers interesting sales promotion. Some respondents gave an explanation of this phenomenon that is to avoid fraud advertisings and viruses.
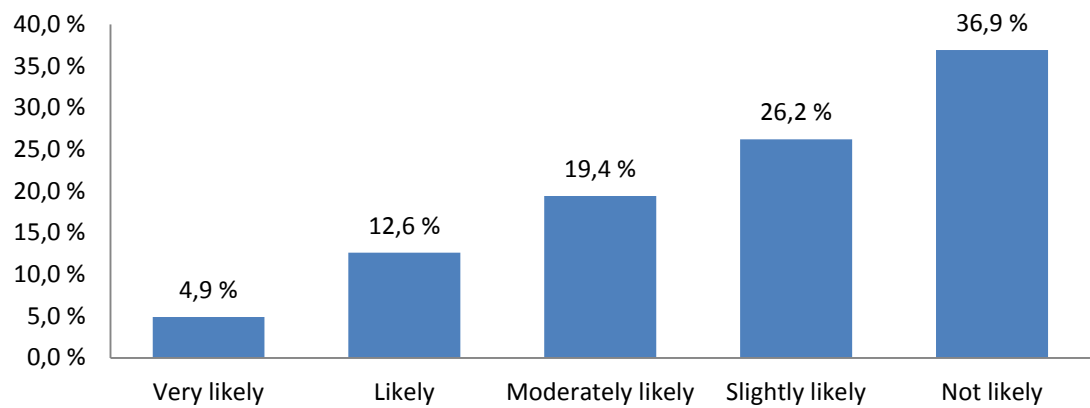
Figure 21. How likely would you click on advertisements if they offer you sales promotion (Coupons, discounts, free trials etc.)? (n=103)

In question 18, respondents were asked to scale some sales promotion methods in Likert scale with respect to their preference. The scale ranks from 'Very dislike' to 'Very like'. Among four methods, giveaways is the most favorable sales promotion method that respondents would like to received (33% 'Very like' and 26,2% 'Like'). The number of respondents neither like nor very like price reduction is slightly fewer than giveaway, with 30,2% and 23,3% respectively. In addition, the proportion of respondents having positive preference to free trials is 35%, as opposed of 44,6% showing downward. Finally, only 22,3% prefers coupons while about half of respondents do not get interested in that (52,4%) (Figure 22).
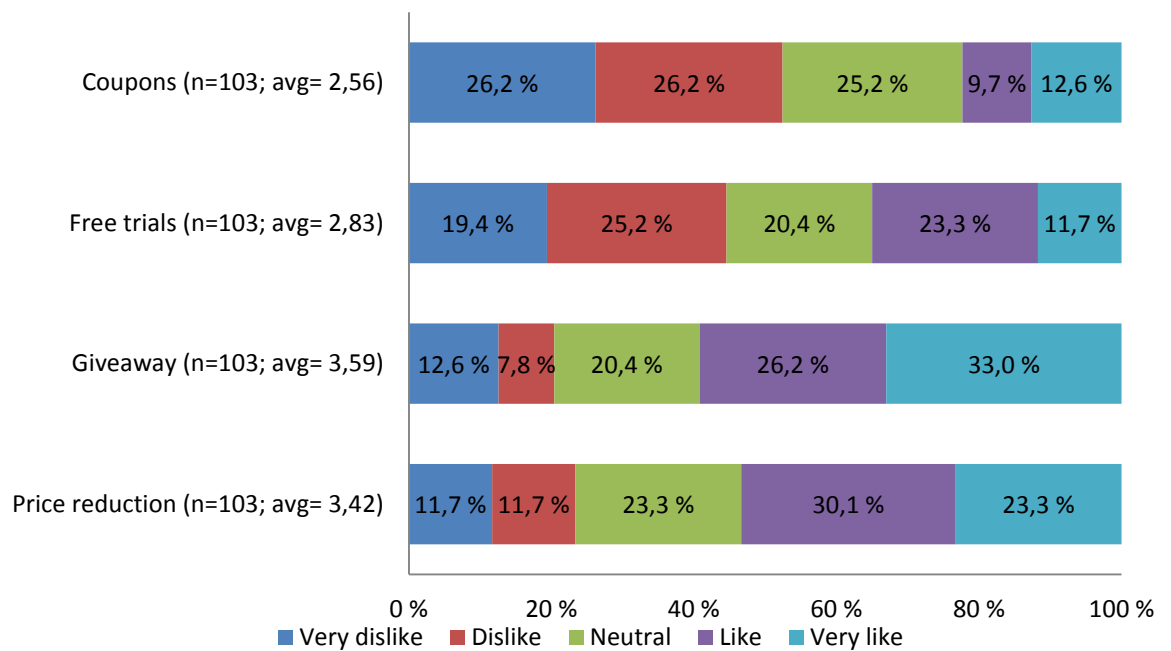
Figure 22. Scale the following sales promotions methods that you would like receive

In next section, respondents were answered some questions concerning case company – Viope Solutions Ltd. and Game Development World Championship (GDWC) contest that company organizes. To measure the popularity of event promotion, Question 19 concerned whether respondents know about GDWC. The result shows that 31,1% do notice the competition. To those respondents knowing about GDWC, author suggested them to specify sources and channels where they get information about the contest from in open-ended questions. Several sources is classified into five main groups, including Friends, Social media, Posters, School's email and Others. Figure 23 demonstrates the frequencies of those classified groups. As shown in the figure, social media is a channel that the biggest number of respondents get information from, with 33,3%. The social media includes Facebook groups, discussion forums, Reddit etc. Schools emails stand in second position, accounting for 19,4% and 19,4% get know about the contest through other channels such as IGDA meeting, magazines, game news sites etc. Almost 14% respondents know about contest via their friends and word –of –mouth and 5,6% with posters.
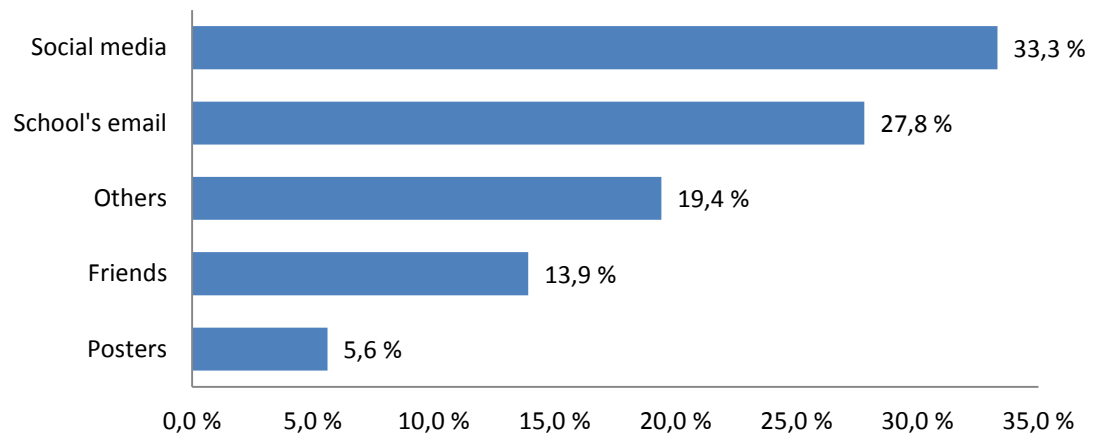
Figure 23. If yes, which sources/channels do you get information from? (n=36)

Respondents getting information about GDWC also pointed out whether they notice the contest organized by Viope Solutions Ltd. The purpose of this question is to examine company's brand awareness when company sponsors for the contest. Surprisingly, as a result, only 11,7% notice Viope as a sponsor while the majority do not. This also means that brand awareness or company's image seems not to be identified through the contest GDWC.

5.2 Benchmarking analysis

In this section, two selected companies will be analysed by observing their current utilized social media sites. The analysis will be depicted and explained clearly below. Every channel will be investigated based on several elements such as the content and frequencies of posts, the display of social media link on the company website, as well as the interaction between company and their followers.

Studio OnMars

As mentioned above, Studio OnMars are currently using four main social media channels. Those are Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and forum. Apparently, among those sites, Facebook page is by far the most active channel that has also obtained the huge number of fans following. Since Twitter allows users to update message in a maximum of 140 characters, the messages that company posted in Twitter are usually much more concise and

shorter than in Facebook. However, the content of posts in both Facebook and Twitter is relatively similar. Hence, the number of posts updated in Facebook during July 2013 is almost same as the number of tweets in Twitter. When observing their post in the last recent three months, from May till July 2014, it is shown that the number of posts in Facebook and Twitter is approximately 6 posts every month and between 1 to 3 times per week. Sometimes, more than one post was shared on a day. While Facebook and Twitter were updated almost every week, the last video uploaded on their YouTube channel was 7 months ago. In spite of that, the majority of videos attracted thousands of viewers; some even gained over 2 million views. Ultimately, forum is open for every game player to post topics involving company's game and share their experiences rather than company's posts.

Apart from the frequency of updates, the content of every post needs to take into consideration. Since a forum is a social media channel on which posts uploaded by game players and users rather than company's posts, the content on this channel will not take into consideration. On the other hand, regarding Facebook page and Twitter, the majority of posts involves updates and news regarding company and their product. In particular, the latest posts updated in their Facebook and Twitter are about to announce upgrades and new features in their game 'Critical Strike' and introduce the improvements in the company website. A photo of new website uploaded in Facebook channel get a number of people liking, sharing, and giving feedback as well as comment for improvement. Furthermore, company's news including new Creative Director introduced on Facebook page. Studio OnMars also promoted their tournament called "Critical Strike Portable Kick up Cup" on their Facebook and Twitter. News and information such as postponing the contest, suggesting participants to look for a team on company's forum, reminding for registration etc., were mentioned frequently, at least once a week. Information of the contest was broadcasted 2 months before it started. Moreover, company also marked on their lifetime and sent appreciation to their fan when their Facebook page gained 6 000 and 7 000 followers. It is also believed that the message coupled with photos apparently easily get more attention and eye –catching rather than the post including only long messages. Hence, more than half of the posts on Facebook page included photos and pictures, which can possibly depict precisely attached message. In particular, many photos such as new maps of their game, front page of a new website, poster and logo of tournament etc. were uploaded.

With the respect to Twitter account, since the length of message is restricted, marketers are not able to post such long messages. Thus, posted messages on Twitter have similar content

to one on Facebook but much more concise and shorter post. For further details of every message, the shortcut of link was provided. It is noticeable that they made a huge effort to share different photos and pictures regarding their games, the contest, and company's event on Twitter account.

Although the frequency of uploaded posts is less than Facebook and Twitter, YouTube still plays a crucial role as a channel specializing in sharing videos. This channel is not only a site where Studio OnMars broadcasted their official game trailer or any video related to their game but also shared fan's review on their game. There are 12 videos uploaded in total and other videos coming from different accounts but involving company's products attached into playlists. It is noticed that there are nine users on YouTube giving reviews on their products that all are added into a playlist.

Apart from the frequency and content of posts on social media, other factors such as the display of social media button, the conversion between company and users, etc. are also observed and analyzed. When observing their official website, it is easily pointed out that their social media channel has been linked and attached on their websites. In particular, two main channels, Facebook and Twitter, appear on front-page. Users visiting their website and playing their game can immediately click on 'like' button of Facebook. As a result, the convenience of that can easily appeal huge number of players to follow and subscribe their Facebook page. Moreover, users can conveniently check their Tweet directly from front-page of websites. For those who are willing to surf in details in every channel, buttons of each social media sites are also displayed in the bottom of front-page and on website's page called 'Community'. Furthermore, marketers also strive attaching review videos from game players on their page, which can hugely encourage and convince potential customers to try their game. Ultimately, forum is created as a part of the company website, thus game players can easily log in to discuss further about the game. In general, the link of social media channel is positioned in easily eye –catching area and occupied a huge part of the website, leading to the great number of current customers following and subscribing their channels.

On the other hand, researcher also realized that marketers of company responded every comment, feedback or post from users and fan. No matter positive or negative the feedback is, they answered to all and took into consideration. For instance, some users encountered difficulties when playing their game and gave queries on company's social media channels,

marketers responded fast and helped users to solve the problems then. This reaction would not only fill their customers' pleasure but also build up a positive image to their product.

Codecademy

In benchmarking analysis, several important elements will be considered such as the frequency of posts in each social media, the content of posts, the display of social media sites on the company website and conversion between company and followers. Codecademy has owned different social media sites, which are Facebook, Twitter, Google Plus, blog and forum. In general, Twitter seems to be more active channel than Facebook as the number of monthly posts in the former is more than the latter channel. However, both Facebook and Twitter has been operated effectively as the posts in both platforms earn a lot of like, share, retweet, favorite and comments. There were 11 Tweets posted in May, 7 in June and 4 in July on Twitter. In contrast, 4 posts in May and June respectively and 2 posts in July were shared in Facebook. Perhaps the company is located in USA and Twitter seems to be used more popularly in USA than Facebook. Consequently, marketers probably put more effort on nurture their Twitter than Facebook. Furthermore, even though there are more than 1 000 people following Google Plus and approximately 35 000 views, marketers submitted totally 6 posts in this channel and the last post was in June 2013. In contrast, on their YouTube account, over 350 people have subscribed and the number of views in each video is more than 20 000. There are totally two videos uploaded on this channel but those were shared 3 months ago, which points out that their YouTube account was just created. Blog, on the other hand, was composed regularly once every month. Nevertheless, the blog that they uploaded seems to be as a news area of company since people are not able to leave comment on their blog.

In terms of the content of posts, due to the less quantity, the posts on Facebook apparently are important news and announcement such as backing up the server and any articles on press about their company etc. Basically, almost all posts in Facebook were also posted in Twitter as well. However, the content of tweets on Twitter are more relatively various. In particular, some posts from other Twitter users that were involved in coding such as kids learning code, were retweeted and shown on their Twitter wall. Moreover, important news regarding company and products were also shared in Twitter. Specifically, new course created and released by Codecademy that was also introduced to their followers on Twitter. Another example is that marketers kept posting tweets to announce their site was backed up

for maintenance. The announcement is considered as informative and helpful news for their subscribers who cannot visit their website on those days. Furthermore, another posted tweet is about the co –operation between Codecademy, Google and DonorsChoose in the purpose of increasing girls' interest in Computer Sciences. In order to encourage people to follow the project, a small contest was organized on Twitter. In details, $100 gift card will be given to five lucky girls who tweet their photo of coding. Such a small contest as they arranged can attract many users to participate in their project as well as potentially turn them to become 'loyal' fan of company. With Google Plus, since the site was not in use for approximately one year, the content of posts will not be examined. In addition, the content of YouTube videos takes into account. Even though it seems to be a new channel, the amount of views in two videos is remarkable. One of those videos was telling an inspiration story about one Codecademy learner and describing how his programming study in Codecademy supports his career. The second video is a talk by a founder of Codecademy discussing how their business grows. Ultimately, the content of posts on blog is concerned new features of platform, new courses in different languages as well as any discussion and opinions in programming and coding areas.

Regarding the display of social media button on the company website, it is shown that their link of those channels was positioned in the end of the page. Nevertheless, when learners signing up to study their courses, they are able to log in with their social media sites including Facebook and Google Plus. As a result, this feature possibly motivates the learners liking and following those social media sites. Besides, a video uploaded on YouTube was also attached on the company website, leading to the huge amount of views. Their blog is also attached as a part of their website. Generally, the link of their social media displays in easily eye-catching area in Codecademy's official website and the feature that learners can sign up to study by using their Facebook or Google Plus can motivate them to subscribe the channel.

Finally, even though almost all social media channels received immense number of responses from subscribers in different forms, such as like, comments, share, retweet etc., researcher found out a shortage in the interaction between company and their fan. In other words, company hardly response to any comment, feedback or complaint from followers on social media. For instance, some learners found several problems when studying a new released course and asked for help on Facebook. However, company did not answer those complaints and feedback.

6 OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

Based on the result and analysis of both quantitative research and benchmarking analysis, operational guidelines are conducted in order to gain the research objectives.

Firstly, the result of survey pointed out that the majority of respondents are not only utilizing social media sites but also following businesses and brands on those channels. This is a good evident to prove that it is worth joining social media since customers are engaging in those sites.

6.1 Selecting social media sites

It is noticeable that currently Viope is operating more than five social media sites whereas some channels are not utilized and updated frequently. On the other hand, the survey also reflected that potential customers are currently using actively in certain channels, which are Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and Forum. Hence, company should put more effort and pay attention on those sites since the bigger number of potential customers is engaging in those channels. Other sites such as Google Plus or Weibo can be eliminated due to the low distribution of customers. Another reason is that Weibo tends to specialize on Chinese users while targeted customers that company aims at are not only in Chinese market.

6.2 Bringing current customers to engage in social media

When observing other companies' websites, researcher can easily found the link of their social media channels in front-page of the websites. In Studio OnMars' case, social media channels are even occupied almost half of the website content and positioned in easily eye-catching area. Furthermore, each company's site has different features, which can help to bring website visitors or their current customers to engage in their social media channels. Applied to Viope's case, it is recommended that company should adjust their website in which social media sites can be gathered and displayed not only on front-page but also on their products. Moreover, the feature that learners are able to sign up to study their course

by logging in with their social media can be supplemented for the sake of convenience and intention of subscription. The subscription of social media channels deriving from company's current customers can bring many benefits. In particular, their engagement will make company's social media sites more actively and even drive them to be loyalty customers as long as company interacts effectively with their customers or fan.

At the moment Viope is striving to raise their awareness and appealing Facebookers from different countries in Asia, South America, Africa etc. to follow company's page by creating many promotion campaigns on Facebook. Their objective, as expected, has gained. However, the backward of these campaigns is that those followers probably have not experienced company's products. The action of subscription could originate from their interest in company's product or business related to their concerned subjects. In other words, they intend to be interested in products and likely to seek for further information as well as reviews from current customers on social media channel. However, in fact, the majority of subscribers on Viope's Facebook page apparently is not current customers but potential one who has not experienced the products. As a result, the engagement of followers on those channels is relatively low. Therefore, to persuade potential customers, it is enormously important to bring current customers to engage in company's social media sites. The leverage from active social media channels can possibly turn those followers to real customers.

6.3 Updating posts and interacting with subscribers

The frequency of posts

In terms of frequency of posts on social media channel, the preference of respondents from the survey is relatively different. However, after collecting all the results, it concluded that one time per week is an average frequency that subscribers would like to see the posts or updates on company's social media sites. Another argument that one respondent wrote in open comment in the questionnaire also suggested that the frequency of posts can be different in each channel. For instance, users can feel irritated when company updates many posts on Facebook per week while on Twitter, it would be acceptable. On the other hand, observation method in benchmarking analysis also indicated that social media channels of both companies are not updated regularly, depending on the amount of available

information. In general, there is no certain number of posts that manager can post on their channels every week due to the information availability and different channel. Nevertheless, it is recommended that company should regularly update their sites at least once a week.

The content of posts

In addition, not only the frequency of posts but also the content of every post should be paid attention. The analysis of the survey reported that the majority of users subscribe business or product's social media sites in order to follow company's news, new products' release or new updated features. A great number of people also follow since they are current customers or those products are related to their concerned subjects. To conclude, the information that those fans expect to receive is mainly about company's news and products or any information involved in that field.

With Viope's case, marketer can share information about new features of their products, and information related to programming or game development sector. For instance, company can share some small tricks or a small programming exercise every week on their channels to attract interaction of users. Although it is seen that such content as products' news is currently applied on their social media channels, the engagement of followers is still low. It can be explained by the origin of those followers who mainly are not current customers but potential one. It is supposed that current customers intend to be more interested in any company's news or product's updates as they are currently using the products. Moreover, in certain channels such as Facebook, the posts can also include illustrated photos, which might easily attract viewers' attention. For more interaction with followers, the posted messages can also be in informal manner as if company has friendly conversation with their fans. Questions can also be used in the messages to motivate fan to engage in the posts. For example, when company share information involved in new products or new features, marketers can ask their fan's opinion by raising the question: "What do you think?". Consequently, company can received feedback to improve their products while their customers or followers would feel the power of their voice. Their messages can include photos or pictures in order to get more attraction. Furthermore, marketer also sometimes can motivate followers to purchase their products by offering some sales promotion on their channels. Some other activities such as gift or giveaway can be organized to increase followers' preference to the channel as well as favorable company's image. The gift can be even company's product- a free online course.

The interaction between company and followers

The interaction between company and subscribers plays an essential role in company's image. Company, therefore, should give comments or response to their customers as soon as they receive any question or feedback on social media channels. Even negative feedback should be taken and solved. As a result, this action eventually can build up company's friendly image to their followers. With those subscribers who are also company's current customers, the effective interaction can drive them to become loyal customers. On the other hand, it can also foster potential customers to purchase products eventually due to company's favorable image.

6.4 Benefiting through customers' reviews

One essential function that users tend to use social media nowadays is for getting review of products. The survey also proved that more than half of respondents search information and reviews from social media sites such as YouTube, Forum and Blog. It is reported that those reviews can influence on their purchasing decision and have more credibility than advertising. Hence, it is immensely necessary for company to utilize this factor as an advantage to support company's sales. Especially, some channels such as YouTube that people commonly visit to search for reviews should be concentrated. A review of products from customers can be posted by company as Codecademy's video. Studio OnMars, on the other hand, have other review videos uploaded from YouTubers who are well –known in that game –playing field in a YouTube community. Therefore, with respect to Viope's case, company should upload more video concerning customers' reviews on their YouTube. They can also contact with some YouTubers and Bloggers who are famous in this field, offering free product so that they can try and share reviews on their own channels. Sales promotion can even be advertised and broadcasted on those Youtubers and Bloggers' channels.

6.5 Utilizing promotional methods on social media

Even though in theory part, advertising is considered as promotional method to help company increase their sales, the result of survey pointed out the majority of respondents

tend to not click on advertisings, even when those offering interesting sales promotion. In open comment of questionnaire, a respondent mentioned the reason that is to avoid a fraud or virus website. Another also installed ad-block programming to minimize the appearance of advertising. The irritation of some advertising types such as pop-ups can negatively affect to customers' attitude towards company's products. However, such advertising types as banners and search engine can still be applied since a minority of people still intends to click on them. To increase the reliability of advertising, the design as well as color of banners should be expressed professional characteristics.

Another promotional method that can help to boost company's purchases is sales promotion. This method can be announced not only on advertisement such as banners, search engines, video advertising etc. but also directly on social media channels. From the result of questionnaire, it is likely that people would be interested in giveaway, price reduction and free trials. At the moment Viope has applied free trial for their online course and also offer one free game development course to learners. However, the advertisement of these offerings still focuses on users in small developing countries where English is still not been used fluently. In contrast, the online courses that company provides are either in English or in Finnish. Therefore, target group of advertisement should be adjusted and concentrated on some more potential areas where either English or Finnish has commonly used.

The effectiveness of sponsorship in GDWC contest was also examined through the questionnaires. The contest has been broadcasted and announced through different means of communication. The most common source from which people found information about the competition is social media channels. Thus, company should continue paying attention on promoting the contest via this channel. However, based on the result, surprisingly, only few people recognized Viope as a main sponsor of the contest. To improve this situation, it is suggested that the logo of Viope should appear more frequently in every contest video, as well as competition's website. During the period of competition, company can offer sales promotion such as giveaways, or price reduction (30% discount, etc.) on social media channels, which, on the other hand, can help to encourage the sales as well.

Summary of operational guidelines

To summarize operational guidelines part, all recommendations and findings that can help case company to operate their social media channels effectively are listed in Table 4 below:

Table 4. Summary of recommendations and findings for operating social media channels

Subheadings	Factors	Recommendations and Findings
Selecting social media sites	The selection of certain social media channels	Focus on certain social media sites such as Youtube, Facebook, Twitter, where a majority of potential and current customers is using actively
Bringing current customers to social media	The display of social media channels on the company website and product	- The link of social media should be positioned in easily eye-catching area on company's frontpage and product. - Company can add feature in which users are able to sign up to the course by logging in their social media.
Updating posts and interacting with subscribers	The frequency of posts	At least once a week. However, depending on information availability and certain social media, the number of posts can be more than once per week.
	The content of posts	- Company's news, new released products, or new features and upgrade of current products - Company can share tricks and a programming exercise every week to attract customers' engagement - Messages should be in informal manner

		and be attached with photos and pictures - Sales promotions such as price reduction and giveaway sometimes can be shared on social media
	The interaction between company and customers	- Company should respond to every feedback, comments and questions on social media, even negative one.
Benefiting from customers review	Customers' reviews	- A video regarding customers' reviews can be created and shared on company's Youtube channel and even attached on the company website - Marketers can contact with Youtubers and Bloggers who are well-known in company's fields, offering free product so that they can try and share reviews on their own channels. Sales promotions can be announced on their channels as well.
Utilizing promotional methods on social media	Promotional methods on social media channels	- Pop –ups is not recommended to be used due to high level of irritation. - Even though people do not intend to click on advertisings, banners and search engine should still be used. In addition, the design of banners should be paid in attention to raise customers' reliability. - Advertisement of sales promotion should be concentrated on more potential areas where either English or Finnish are commonly used.

		- Sponsorship of GDWC: the logo of Viope should appear more frequently in every contest video, as well as contest website

7 CONCLUSION

To review, the objective of this thesis is to develop a marketing plan on social media channels to raise Viope's purchases. The research theory therefore is built on the theory of social media marketing, including classification of social media and different benefits of social media marketing as opposed to traditional marketing. To foster company's sales, some promotional methods that are compatible with social media environment such as online advertising, sales promotions, viral marketing also took into consideration. Finally, author discussed about the measurement of social media marketing.

In the methodology part, the quantitative research and benchmarking analysis were conducted. With the former research, based on theoretical part, the questionnaire was generated and sent in the form of hardcopy and online survey. The purpose of survey is to understand Viope's potential customers' attitudes and behaviors towards social media marketing. The survey respondents are mainly game development students in Kajaani University of Applied Sciences (Kamk), from the age of 18 to 27 years old. During the survey, researcher encountered some difficulties. Specifically, in the beginning, the online survey was planned to be sent via school email. However, there were only few students responding to the online questionnaire. Thus, to improve the situation, the researcher decided to prepare questionnaires in the form of hardcopy and spread them manually to each game development student in Kamk. Fortunately, the number of respondents eventually are relatively sufficient to utilize and analyse the data.

The benchmarking analysis, on the other hand, was implemented by observing two selected companies' social media channels. The author strongly believed that this method would supplement an analysis of quantitative research and contribute to final conclusion. While the quantitative research involves potential customers' viewpoints, benchmarking method, in contrast, approached on the aspect of companies in the same industry. Hence, it is immensely necessary to implement benchmarking method. By observing some company's channels, author could obtain some techniques which are utilized on those sites to exert on case company.

Based on the analysis of two research methods, marketing plan and operational guidelines were developed. To conclude, it is recommended that Viope should focus on some certain

social media sites on which a huge number of potential and current customers cluster. In addition, it is important to display social media links in an easily eye-catching area on the company website and their product in order to bring visitors and current customers to engage in company's social media. A feature that learners enable to register to the course by logging in with their own social media should be supplemented in order to increase the intention of subscription. Moreover, it is recommended to share the post on social media at least once a week, depending on information availability and certain social media site; whereas the content should be more diverse and attractive. Company also needs to emphasize on appealing their current customers to engage in their social media sites for the improvement of the activeness of those channels. On the other hand, the review of current customers hugely impacts on potential customers' purchasing decisions. Hence, Viope should turn them as their advantages and utilize them effectively to boost their purchases. Ultimately, some promotional methods such as sales promotions, banners, search engines etc. can utilized to foster customers purchasing the product.

All in all, the research outcomes bring some useful suggestions to improve the operation of company's social media sites. However, as limitation of the study, the research was conducted and focused mainly on customers and users' point of views as well as author's observation and self –investigation via few companies' social media sites. Especially, the observation was restrained to some posts which was posted in the last several months. Consequently, the content of posts on social media as well as techniques that the author have obtained are apparently still limited. Therefore, for further research, it is suggested that a qualitative research could be implemented so that researcher is able to obtain more in – depth information as well as techniques from companies.

SOURCE

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LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Questionnaire of quantitative research in English

Appendix 2. Relevant metrics for social media applications organized by key social media objectives (Hoffman and Fodor, 2010)

Appendix 3. Contents generated from SPSS

Customers' attitude toward social media marketing   * Required

The survey is targeted to game development/programming students and graduates. The aim of survey is to comprehend their behavior to marketing on social media channels. The research is implemented for Viope Solutions Ltd - an e-learning software company.

It will takes just about 5 minutes to complete the survey and your response will be so much appreciated.

LET'S GET STARTED!

1. Your nationality * A. Finnish   B. Others: _____

2. Your gender *   A. Male   B. Female

3. Your age *   _____

4. Do you study/work in game development or programming area? * A. Yes   B. No

5. Do you use social media (YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Forums etc.)? *

 A. Yes   B. No, why?

6. Which social media channels below do you use? *

(You can choose more than one answer)

A. Facebook   B. Twitter   C. YouTube   D. Blogs   E. Reddit   F. Discussion forums   G. LinkedIn   H. Others

If you use any discussion forums/blogs which is related to game development/programming, please specify:

_____

7. Scale the following social media channels that you are active in: *

(1 = Not active; 5 = Extremely active)

	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Facebook					
Twitter					
YouTube					
Blogs					
Reddit					
Discussion forums					
LinkedIn					

Others					

8. How much time per week do you spend using social media? *

A. 0 - 1,5 hour   B. 2 - 4,5 hours   C. 5 - 7,5 hours   D. 8 - 10 hours

E. More than 10 hours

9. Do you follow/subscribe any business/brand related to game development/programming on social media? *

A. Yes   B. No, why? _____

10. What are the reasons that you subscribe/follow those business/brand on social media? *(1 = Totally disagree; 5 = Totally agree)

	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
To get sales promotions (reduction, coupon), benefits					
To follow company's news, products' upgrade and release					
Because I'm using this brand/product now					
Because my friends recommend it to me					
Because this brand/business/product is related to my concern subjects					

11. How often would you like to receive updates/posts from those social media channels *

A. Twice a month   B. Once a week   C. 2-3 times/week   D. 4-5 times/week

E. More than 5 times/week

12a. Do you search for product's information/reviews on social media before making purchase decision? *

A. Yes   B. No

12b. If yes, on which social media channels?

_____

13. Do you agree with statement below * (1 = Strongly disagree; 5 = Strongly agree)

	1	2	3	4	5
User's reviews/recommendation/blog posts on social media influence your purchasing decision					
User's reviews/recommendation/blog posts on social media have higher credibility than advertising *					

14. Do you notice advertising displayed on social media channels? *

A. Yes   B. No

15. How often do you click on advertising on social media? *

A. Usually   B. Sometimes   C. Never

16. Scale the following advertising methods that you feel irritated with *

(1 = Not irritated; 5 = Very irritated)

	1	2	3	4	5
Search engine					
Banners					
Pop-ups					
Video advertisings					

17. How likely would you click on advertisements if they offer you sales promotion (Coupons, discounts, free trials etc.)? * (1 = Not likely; 5 = Most Likely)

1	2	3	4	5

18. Scale the following sales promotions methods that you would like receive *

(1 =Very dislike; 5 = Very like)

	1	2	3	4	5
Price reductions					
Free trials					
Coupons					
Giveaway					

19a. Do you know about a competition Game Development World Championship (GDWC)? *

   A. Yes   B. No

19b. If yes, which sources/channels do you get information from?

_____

20. Do you notice GDWC organized by Viope? *

A. Yes   B. No (Move to questions 22)

21. Do you search further information about the competition and Viope?

A. Yes   B. No

If yes, which channels do you use to search for more information?

_____

22. Are you willing to get more information about Viope Solutions Ltd.? *

A. Yes   B. No

If you would like to get a chance for FREE gift (coffee or Fox meal), please leave your email below:

_____

If you have any further comment, please write it below:

_____

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

Table 5. Relevant metrics for social media applications organized by key social media objectives (Hoffman and Fodor, 2010)

SOCIAL MEDIA APPLICATION	BRAND AWARENESS	BRAND ENGAGEMENT	WORD OF MOUTH
Blogs	•number of unique visits •number of return visits •number of times bookmarked •search ranking	•number of members •number of RSS feed subscribers •number of comments •amount of user-generated content •average length of time on site •number of responses to polls, contests, surveys	•number of references to blog in other media (online/offline) •number of reblogs •number of times badge displayed on other sites •number of "likes"
Microblogging (e.g., Twitter)	•number of tweets about the brand •valence of tweets +/– •number of followers	•number of followers •number of @replies	•number of retweets
Cocreation (e.g., NIKEiD)	•number of visits	•number of creation attempts	•number of references to project in other media (online/offline)
Social Bookmarking (e.g., StumbleUpon)	•number of tags	•number of followers	•number of additional taggers
Forums and Discussion Boards (e.g., Google Groups)	•number of page views •number of visits •valence of posted content +/-	•number of relevant topics/threads •number of individual replies •number of sign-ups	•incoming links •citations in other sites •tagging in social bookmarking •offline references to the forum or its members •in private communities: number of pieces of content (photos, discussions, videos); chatter pointing to the community outside of its gates •number of "likes"
Product Reviews (e.g., Amazon)	•number of reviews posted •valence of reviews •number and valence of other users' responses to reviews (+/–) •number of wish list adds •number of times product included in users' lists (i.e., Listmania! on Amazon.com)	•length of reviews •relevance of reviews •valence of other users' ratings of reviews (i.e., how many found particular review helpful) •number of wish list adds •overall number of reviewer rating scores entered •average reviewer rating score	•number of reviews posted •valence of reviews •number and valence of other users' responses to reviews (+/–) •number of references to reviews in other sites •number of visits to review site page •number of times product included in users' lists (i.e., Listmania! on Amazon.com)
Social Networks (e.g., Bebo, Facebook, LinkedIn)	•number of members/fans •number of installs of applications •number of impressions •number of bookmarks •number of reviews/ratings and valence +/–	•number of comments •number of active users •number of "likes" on friends' feeds •number of user-generated items (photos, threads, replies) •usage metrics of applications/widgets •impressions-to-interactions ratio •rate of activity (how often members personalize profiles, bios, links, etc.)	•frequency of appearances in timeline of friends •number of posts on wall •number of reposts/shares •number of responses to friend referral invites
Video and Photosharing (e.g., Flickr, YouTube)	•number of views of video/photo •valence of video/photo ratings +/–	•number of replies •number of page views •number of comments •number of subscribers	•number of embeddings •number of incoming links •number of references in mock-ups or derived work •number of times republished in other social media and offline •number of "likes"

Question 1: Frequency table

1. Your nationality

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Brazilian	3	2,9	2,9	2,9
	Canadian	1	1,0	1,0	3,9
	Dutch	1	1,0	1,0	4,9
	Finnish	82	79,6	79,6	84,5
	German	2	1,9	1,9	86,4
	Nepal	1	1,0	1,0	87,4
	Portugese	5	4,9	4,9	92,2
	Singaporean	6	5,8	5,8	98,1
	Vietnamese	2	1,9	1,9	100,0
	Total	103	100,0	100,0	

2. Your gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	22	21,4	21,4	21,4
	Male	81	78,6	78,6	100,0
	Total	103	100,0	100,0	

Age group

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Less than 22	61	59,2	59,2	59,2
	23-28	34	33,0	33,0	92,2
	29-34	5	4,9	4,9	97,1
	More than 35	3	2,9	2,9	100,0
	Total	103	100,0	100,0	

5. Do you use social media (YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Forums etc.)?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	1	1,0	1,0	1,0
	Yes	102	99,0	99,0	100,0
	Total	103	100,0	100,0	

$Usagegroup Frequencies

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
Which social media channels do you use?[a]	Facebook	92	22,8%	89,3%
	Twitter	50	12,4%	48,5%
	YouTube	96	23,8%	93,2%
	Blogs	33	8,2%	32,0%
	Reddit	37	9,2%	35,9%
	Discussion forums	46	11,4%	44,7%
	LinkedIn	41	10,1%	39,8%
	Others	9	2,2%	8,7%
Total		404	100,0%	392,2%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 2.

Question 7: Scale the following social media channels that you are active in:

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean
Scale social media channels you're active in (Facebook)	103	3,25
Scale social media channels you're active in (Twitter)	101	1,83
Scale social media channels you're active in (YouTube)	102	3,17
Scale social media channels you're active in (blog)	100	1,55
Scale social media channels you're active in (Reddit)	97	1,64
Scale social media channels you're active in (Discussion forums)	99	1,90
Scale social media channels you're active in (LinkedIn)	96	1,53
Scale social media channels you're active in (Others)	94	1,68
Valid N (listwise)	92	

Scale social media channels you're active in (Facebook)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not active	16	15,5	15,5	15,5
	Slightly active	14	13,6	13,6	29,1
	Moderately active	21	20,4	20,4	49,5
	Active	32	31,1	31,1	80,6
	Very active	20	19,4	19,4	100,0
	Total	103	100,0	100,0	

Scale social media channels you're active in (Twitter)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not active	58	56,3	57,4	57,4
	Slightly active	20	19,4	19,8	77,2
	Moderately active	10	9,7	9,9	87,1
	Active	8	7,8	7,9	95,0
	Very active	5	4,9	5,0	100,0
	Total	101	98,1	100,0	
Missing	99	2	1,9		
Total		103	100,0		

Scale social media channels you're active in (YouTube)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not active	13	12,6	12,7	12,7
	Slightly active	16	15,5	15,7	28,4
	Moderately active	31	30,1	30,4	58,8
	Active	25	24,3	24,5	83,3
	Very active	17	16,5	16,7	100,0
	Total	102	99,0	100,0	
Missing	99	1	1,0		
Total		103	100,0		

Scale social media channels you're active in (blog)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not active	66	64,1	66,0	66,0
	Slightly active	22	21,4	22,0	88,0
	Moderately active	4	3,9	4,0	92,0
	Active	7	6,8	7,0	99,0
	Very active	1	1,0	1,0	100,0
	Total	100	97,1	100,0	
Missing	99	3	2,9		
Total		103	100,0		

Scale social media channels you're active in (Reddit)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not active	62	60,2	63,9	63,9
	Slightly active	21	20,4	21,6	85,6
	Moderately active	5	4,9	5,2	90,7
	Active	5	4,9	5,2	95,9
	Very active	4	3,9	4,1	100,0
	Total	97	94,2	100,0	
Missing	99	6	5,8		
Total		103	100,0		

Scale social media channels you're active in (Discussion forums)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not active	50	48,5	50,5	50,5
	Slightly active	21	20,4	21,2	71,7
	Moderately active	17	16,5	17,2	88,9
	Active	10	9,7	10,1	99,0
	Very active	1	1,0	1,0	100,0
	Total	99	96,1	100,0	
Missing	99	4	3,9		
Total		103	100,0		

Scale social media channels you're active in (LinkedIn)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not active	62	60,2	64,6	64,6
	Slightly active	19	18,4	19,8	84,4
	Moderately active	13	12,6	13,5	97,9
	Active	2	1,9	2,1	100,0
	Total	96	93,2	100,0	
Missing	99	7	6,8		
Total		103	100,0		

Scale social media channels you're active in (Others)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not active	58	56,3	61,7	61,7
	Slightly active	19	18,4	20,2	81,9
	Moderately active	8	7,8	8,5	90,4
	Active	7	6,8	7,4	97,9
	Very active	2	1,9	2,1	100,0
	Total	94	91,3	100,0	
Missing	99	9	8,7		
Total		103	100,0		

Question 8: Frequency and Descriptives

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean
8. How much time per week do you spend using social media?	103	2,95
Valid N (listwise)	103	

8. How much time per week do you spend using social media?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0 - 1,5 hour	15	14,6	14,6	14,6
	2 - 4,5 hours	31	30,1	30,1	44,7
	5 - 7,5 hours	24	23,3	23,3	68,0
	8 - 10 hours	10	9,7	9,7	77,7
	More than 10 hours	23	22,3	22,3	100,0
	Total	103	100,0	100,0	

9. Do you follow/subscribe any business/brand related to game develoment/programming on social media?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	No	20	19,4	19,4	19,4
Valid	Yes	83	80,6	80,6	100,0
	Total	103	100,0	100,0	

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean
10a.To get sales promotions (reduction, coupon), benefits	94	2,35
10b.To follow company's news, products' upgrade and release	94	3,69
10c.Because I'm using this brand/product now	94	3,04
10d.Because my friends recommend it to me	94	2,12
10e. Because this brand/business/product is related to my concern subjects	94	3,21
Valid N (listwise)	94	

10a.To get sales promotions (reduction, coupon), benefits

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Totally disagree	37	35,9	39,4	39,4
	Disagree	17	16,5	18,1	57,4
Valid	Neutral	19	18,4	20,2	77,7
	Agree	12	11,7	12,8	90,4
	Totally agree	9	8,7	9,6	100,0
	Total	94	91,3	100,0	
Missing	99	9	8,7		
Total		103	100,0		

10b.To follow company's news, products' upgrade and release

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Totally disagree	9	8,7	9,6	9,6
	Disagree	10	9,7	10,6	20,2
	Neutral	13	12,6	13,8	34,0
	Agree	31	30,1	33,0	67,0
	Totally agree	31	30,1	33,0	100,0
	Total	94	91,3	100,0	
Missing	99	9	8,7		
Total		103	100,0		

10c.Because I'm using this brand/product now

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Totally disagree	14	13,6	14,9	14,9
	Disagree	18	17,5	19,1	34,0
	Neutral	24	23,3	25,5	59,6
	Agree	26	25,2	27,7	87,2
	Totally agree	12	11,7	12,8	100,0
	Total	94	91,3	100,0	
Missing	99	9	8,7		
Total		103	100,0		

10d.Because my friends recommend it to me

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Totally disagree	36	35,0	38,3	38,3
	Disagree	21	20,4	22,3	60,6
	Neutral	29	28,2	30,9	91,5
	Agree	6	5,8	6,4	97,9
	Totally agree	2	1,9	2,1	100,0
	Total	94	91,3	100,0	
Missing	99	9	8,7		
Total		103	100,0		

10e. Because this brand/business/product is related to my concern subjects

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Totally disagree	13	12,6	13,8	13,8
	Disagree	13	12,6	13,8	27,7
	Neutral	23	22,3	24,5	52,1
	Agree	31	30,1	33,0	85,1
	Totally agree	14	13,6	14,9	100,0
	Total	94	91,3	100,0	
Missing	99	9	8,7		
Total		103	100,0		

11. How often would you like to receive updates/posts from those social media channels

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2 -3 times/week	19	18,4	19,4	19,4
	4 - 5 times/week	7	6,8	7,1	26,5
	More than 5 times/week	8	7,8	8,2	34,7
	Once a week	35	34,0	35,7	70,4
	Twice per month	29	28,2	29,6	100,0
	Total	98	95,1	100,0	
Missing	6	5	4,9		
Total		103	100,0		

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean
11. How often would you like to receive updates/posts from those social media channels	98	3,49
Valid N (listwise)	98	

12. Do you search for product's information/reviews on social media

before making purchase decision?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	No	41	39,8	39,8	39,8
Valid	Yes	62	60,2	60,2	100,0
	Total	103	100,0	100,0	

$SOME Frequencies

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
	12b. YouTube	27	29,3%	52,9%
	12b. Discussion forums	23	25,0%	45,1%
If yes, on which social	12b. Blogs	14	15,2%	27,5%
media channels?[a]	12b. Reddit	9	9,8%	17,6%
	12b. Facebook	9	9,8%	17,6%
	12b. Others	10	10,9%	19,6%
Total		92	100,0%	180,4%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

Question 13: Frequencies and Descriptive table

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean
13a.User's reviews/recommendation/blog posts on social media influence your purchasing decision	103	3,40
13b.User's reviews/recommendation/blog posts on social media have higher credibility than advertising	103	3,87
Valid N (listwise)	103	

13a.User's reviews/recommendation/blog posts on social media influence your purchasing decision

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Totally disagree	5	4,9	4,9	4,9
	Disagree	15	14,6	14,6	19,4
	Neutral	28	27,2	27,2	46,6
	Agree	44	42,7	42,7	89,3
	Totally agree	11	10,7	10,7	100,0
	Total	103	100,0	100,0	

13b.User's reviews/recommendation/blog posts on social media have higher credibility than advertising

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Totally disagree	3	2,9	2,9	2,9
	Disagree	7	6,8	6,8	9,7
	Neutral	20	19,4	19,4	29,1
	Agree	43	41,7	41,7	70,9
	Totally agree	30	29,1	29,1	100,0
	Total	103	100,0	100,0	

14. Do you notice advertising displayed on social media channels?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	34	33,0	33,0	33,0
	Yes	69	67,0	67,0	100,0
	Total	103	100,0	100,0	

15. How often do you click on advertising on social media?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	74	71,8	72,5	72,5
	Sometimes	28	27,2	27,5	100,0
	Total	102	99,0	100,0	

Missing 3	1	1,0	
Total	103	100,0	

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean
16a. advertising methods:searchengine	103	2,59
16b. advertising methods:banners	103	3,08
16c. advertising methods:pop-ups	103	4,77
16d. advertising methods: video ads	103	4,17
Valid N (listwise)	103	

16a. advertising methods:searchengine

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not irritated	26	25,2	25,2	25,2
	Slightly irritated	34	33,0	33,0	58,3
	Moderately irritated	16	15,5	15,5	73,8
	Irritated	10	9,7	9,7	83,5
	Very irritated	17	16,5	16,5	100,0
	Total	103	100,0	100,0	

16b. advertising methods:banners

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not irritated	10	9,7	9,7	9,7
	Slightly irritated	28	27,2	27,2	36,9
	Moderately irritated	24	23,3	23,3	60,2
	Irritated	26	25,2	25,2	85,4
	Very irritated	15	14,6	14,6	100,0
	Total	103	100,0	100,0	

16c. advertising methods:pop-ups

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not irritated	1	1,0	1,0	1,0
	Slightly irritated	1	1,0	1,0	1,9
	Moderately irritated	3	2,9	2,9	4,9
	Irritated	11	10,7	10,7	15,5
	Very irritated	87	84,5	84,5	100,0
	Total	103	100,0	100,0	

16d. advertising methods: video ads

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not irritated	1	1,0	1,0	1,0
	Slightly irritated	5	4,9	4,9	5,8
	Moderately irritated	21	20,4	20,4	26,2
	Irritated	24	23,3	23,3	49,5
	Very irritated	52	50,5	50,5	100,0
	Total	103	100,0	100,0	

17. How likely would you click on advertisments if they offer you sales promotion (Coupons, discounts, freetrials etc.)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Not likely	38	36,9	36,9	36,9
	Slightly likely	27	26,2	26,2	63,1
	Moderately likely	20	19,4	19,4	82,5
	Likely	13	12,6	12,6	95,1
	Very likely	5	4,9	4,9	100,0
	Total	103	100,0	100,0	

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean
18a. Price reduction	103	3,42

18b. Free trials	103	2,83
18c. Coupons	103	2,56
18d. Giveaway	103	3,59
Valid N (listwise)	103	

18a. Price reduction

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very dislike	12	11,7	11,7	11,7
	Dislike	12	11,7	11,7	23,3
	Neutral	24	23,3	23,3	46,6
	Like	31	30,1	30,1	76,7
	Very like	24	23,3	23,3	100,0
	Total	103	100,0	100,0	

18b. Free trials

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very dislike	20	19,4	19,4	19,4
	Dislike	26	25,2	25,2	44,7
	Neutral	21	20,4	20,4	65,0
	Like	24	23,3	23,3	88,3
	Very like	12	11,7	11,7	100,0
	Total	103	100,0	100,0	

18c. Coupons

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very dislike	27	26,2	26,2	26,2
	Dislike	27	26,2	26,2	52,4
	Neutral	26	25,2	25,2	77,7
	Like	10	9,7	9,7	87,4
	Very like	13	12,6	12,6	100,0
	Total	103	100,0	100,0	

18d. Giveaway

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very dislike	13	12,6	12,6	12,6
	Dislike	8	7,8	7,8	20,4
	Neutral	21	20,4	20,4	40,8
	Like	27	26,2	26,2	67,0
	Very like	34	33,0	33,0	100,0
	Total	103	100,0	100,0	

19a. Do you know about a competition Game Development World Championship (GDWC)?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	71	68,9	68,9	68,9
	Yes	32	31,1	31,1	100,0
	Total	103	100,0	100,0	

$sources Frequencies

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
Which sources do you get info from[a]	19b.Friends	5	13,9%	18,5%
	19b.Social media	12	33,3%	44,4%
	19b.posters	2	5,6%	7,4%
	19b. School's email	10	27,8%	37,0%
	19b. Others	7	19,4%	25,9%
Total		36	100,0%	133,3%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

20. Do you notice GDWC organized by Viope?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	No	91	88,3	88,3	88,3
Valid	Yes	12	11,7	11,7	100,0
	Total	103	100,0	100,0	