



Digital marketing and online purchasing decisions

El Marketing digital y las decisiones de compra online

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Abstract

Small and medium-sized companies in today's world require the support of technology to achieve their positioning in customer acquisition, loyalty and purchasing decisions, an aspect that involves overcoming new challenges such as facing a large, globalized and highly competitive market, as well as the incursion into a virtual environment influenced by social networks and digital channels that instantly persuade the buyer with various strategies, a phenomenon more visible in the post pandemic period in which the speed of evolution of the media and forms of marketing is evident.

Keyword: Digital marketing, online purchasing, decisions

Resumen

Las pequeñas y medianas empresas del mundo actual requieren del apoyo de la tecnología para alcanzar su posicionamiento en la captación, fidelización y decisión de compra de clientes, aspecto que supone vencer nuevos retos como enfrentar un mercado grande, globalizado y altamente competitivo, así como la incursión en un ámbito virtual influenciado por redes sociales y canales digitales que persuaden instantáneamente al comprador con variadas estrategias, fenómeno más visible en el período post pandemia en el que la celeridad de evolución de los medios y formas de mercadeo es evidente.

Palabras clave: Marketing digital, decisions, compra online

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Introduction

Marketing is an important tool for companies; however, in recent years, it has become the necessary ally for small and medium enterprises: digital marketing is more accessible thanks to technology, companies have the challenge of operating in a competitive and globalized environment, where communication and the internet have active influence of the people who make use of this tool. Thus, digital marketing works with social networks and the web. When a company starts its commercial activities, through the use of the internet, there are several dilemmas, such as not knowing the acceptance of the products, the scope where the advertising will reach. The companies that offer their products in the online market, the main difficulty is the misuse and misapplication of digital marketing.

A large part of the world's population uses digital marketing tools for online commerce, which allows rapid interaction and direct communication between the company and customers anywhere in the world, anywhere, anytime. This is possible, thanks to the constant advances in technology that has allowed the creation of different tactics and the development of strategies to achieve the outlined objectives. The digital world has evolved to the point that changes the purchasing decisions of consumers, causing an increase in new digital sales channels. For this reason, it can be said that digital marketing is a fundamental tool to reach consumers after having gone through a pandemic. (Alvino, 2021)

In this context, it is evident the importance of this research, which allows to identify the influence that digital marketing has on the purchasing process of customers in the city of Riobamba.

The concept of digital marketing emerged in the mid-nineties, with the emergence of the first electronic stores (Amazon, Dell, others). Marketing in social networks, currently called Social Media, is a part of digital marketing, although it became known as such years later (Llano, 2021). Electronic Marketing, comprises the use of internet, telecommunication networks and digital technologies, related to achieve the marketing objectives of the organization, according to the current approach of the marketing discipline, (Rodriguez, 2014). Digital Marketing or Online Marketing can be said to be all those strategies and promotional and advertising actions that are executed in Internet channels or media. Being a system that allows to promote the advertiser's products or services online, through platforms and tools aligned with the overall marketing strategy of the company. (Sanchez, 2022)

According to the conceptualizations of the aforementioned authors, digital marketing is based on the use of digital tools in order to propose strategies to advertise, promote and publicize a product or brand through the use of online media, providing immediate information to users or customers on the web. Also, they are the creative ideas that the organization develops to publicize their products or services, as well as offers and promotions, being communicated through all digital platforms that the institution has. (Guamán, 2021)

The digital approach allows the following aspects:

Diagnosis: the Internet can be used for marketing research in order to know the needs and desires of customers.

Information: the Internet constitutes an additional channel through which customers can access information and make purchases, which makes it possible to evaluate this primary demand and control the allocation of resources to e-marketing.

Satisfaction: a key factor for success in e-marketing is achieving customer satisfaction through the electronic channel, which raises questions such as: is the site easy to use, does it perform adequately, what is the standard of customer service, how are the physical products shipped? (Chaffey, 2014).

Profitability: by using digital marketing techniques to promote the company, investment costs are significantly minimized, implying savings with benefits for its workers, i.e., with less investment it is possible to obtain greater results. (Casas, 2022).

Direct contact with the audience: the technological era allows a personalized experience, direct and effective treatment becomes an engagement of greater customer satisfaction. Similarly, customers have the power and tools to promote or discredit the brand, so it is essential to offer a better service every day. (Casas, 2022).

Measurable: there are many data that can be obtained and measured in real time, digital marketing measurement tools offer simple and complex statistics that allow to know the evolution of the strategy and manage based on the results. (Casas, 2022)

Therefore, digital marketing is supported by traditional marketing, in the search for customer satisfaction, but first you must analyze what are the needs required by the customer through diagnosis, information, satisfaction, profitability, audience and measurement.

According to Jesús Nieto, professor of the Master in Digital Marketing, the pandemic did not slow down the evolution of Digital Marketing, but has forced many companies to invest more in digital visibility. The pandemic has not changed things, but has accelerated them". (Bello, 2021)

(Kotler, 2016) asserts that: doing business in the digital age requires a new model of marketing strategy and practice. The Internet is revolutionizing the way companies create value for their customers and cultivate relationships with them. The digital age has fundamentally changed customers' views on: convenience, speed, price, product information, and service. Therefore, today's marketing demands new ways of reasoning and acting. Companies must retain the skills and practices that have worked for them in the past, but also add new capabilities and practices if they hope to grow and thrive in today's changing digital environment. (p.437)

Digital Marketing strategies are based on giving added value to companies through information technologies, that is to say, looking for the best way to be superior to the competition, developing different ways and skills for commercial growth.

People use advertising strategies in different networks to advertise, search, rent, share, buy, sell and trade products and services among other users. "At present, the digital economy works because the "trust" that can be checked electronically through social networks, which allow this "digital economy" to function smoothly." (Fernandez, 2021)

According to Dave and Ellis (2014) the main characteristics of strategies in the digital era are; the interaction and integration between internet channels and traditional channels that are an important part of the development of the internet marketing strategy.

The internet marketing strategy is essentially a channel marketing strategy, it is necessary to integrate it with other channels, as part of the multichannel marketing strategy. Therefore, an effective internet marketing strategy must be aligned with the business strategy, with specific business priorities and initiatives, such as:

- Clear objectives for business, brand development, leads and sales for internet and other digital channels.
- Consistency with the types of customers that use the channel and those that can be reached through it.
- Define a different and attractive value proposition for the channel, which must be effectively communicated to customers.
- Specify the combination of online and offline communication tools that are used to attract visitors to the company's website, or interact with the brand through other digital media such as email or mobile devices
- Support the customer journey through the buying process as they purchase products using the digital channel along with other channels.
- Manage the online customer lifecycle through the stages of website visitor attraction, customer conversion, retention and growth.
- Being in permanent contact with new technologies, such as social networks, smartphones, and others.
- Make use of advertising, communication and public relations.
- Personalized information according to customers' interests.
- It is a massive marketing medium, with little money it allows to reach a large number of online users.
- It is based on the 4Fs: flow, functionality, feedback and loyalty.

To talk about digital marketing is to learn about the various ways of doing business online, according to the characteristics can be evidenced integration and interaction between the company and customers is essential to start the buying process, to finally in the life cycle of customers, through the stages generate an attraction of visitors and retain them becoming a customer of the company.

Mejía (2016) states the importance of digital marketing:

Measurement: every digital marketing strategy can be easily measured just like traditional marketing strategies.

Personalization: digital marketing democratizes personalization, i.e. it allows to personalize the treatment with the customer at a very low cost. It is important to note that modern consumers expect a completely personalized treatment from companies.

Brand visibility: if a company is not on the Internet "it does not exist" since it has been proven that most people search on the Internet before buying a product or service in the physical or digital world.

Customer acquisition and loyalty: digital marketing allows to attract, capture potential customers and retain current customers.

Increased sales: digital marketing allows a significant increase in the sales of the company, because the potential customers of most organizations are in the digital world.

Create community: digital marketing and especially social media marketing allows you to create a community that interacts with the brand, creating an emotional link between your customers.

Channel with great reach: digital marketing uses the Internet and social networks as a channel, which allows to achieve a great impact on the reach and positioning of brands.

Experimentation: digital marketing allows you to test tactics and adjust strategies in real time to optimize results.

Low cost: digital marketing strategies are lower cost than most traditional marketing strategies, which is accessible to small and medium-sized companies.

The use of the internet and the web uses solicitation and payment transactions, which consists of digitally enabled commercial transactions and negotiations between organizations and individuals. These transactions involve the exchange of money across organizational or individual boundaries, in exchange for products or services (Trejo, 2017, p. 24).

This term refers to all commercial transactions carried out through digital platforms. This type of purchase and sale transactions can be of physical products or electronic services that can be carried out through websites, social networks or digital systems. (Clavijo, 2022)

E-commerce and digital marketing are essential tools nowadays, because they use the internet as a mechanism to offer and sell a product, instead of using a physical channel to show the products; it also avoids using posters, brochures or billboards that generate environmental pollution.

The website is the fundamental pillar of digital marketing, the purpose of the website is to convince users who are interested in the type of product or service, that the offer is adequate, among other aspects. One of the advantages of having a website is that it opens the possibility of selling products without the need to own a physical store (Mejía, 2016) .

A website is a digital tool that provides information about the company and the products to offer; the design and aesthetics of the website is important for users who use each option of the tool. The objective of creating company profiles on social networks is not to sell but to create a community of users loyal to the brand that share content with their own followers. In this way, a feedback with the followers is maintained and the sensations they have with the brand are checked. It is important to know the most used social networks at the moment and which of them adapts to your offer, it is not necessary to have a profile on all social networks because you would be devoting resources and time to something that would not be effective. (Mejía, 2016)

Digital marketing, especially social media, allows to create a community around the brand. Communication is crucial to understand customers and followers. Social media marketing is a very valuable tool to know what they think about the company and how you can improve the product or service. (Pecanha, 2021)

Social profiles through the use of social networks are the means of promotion, communication and interaction with the company's customers. When using this digital tool, it is important to be clear about which ones are appropriate for the type of business.

"The actual purchase decision is part of a process that begins with the recognition of a need and ends with the feelings they generate after making the purchase" (Kotler, 2016, p. 149).

These are the stages a person goes through from the moment he realizes he has a problem or need until he acquires a specific product or service to solve it. In other words, they are the different phases that a customer goes through until he makes a purchase. (Barrio, 2020)

According to (Kotler, 2016) indicates the stages that consumers go through in each purchase are:

Need recognition: all people have unsatisfied wants and needs that are dissatisfying because some needs can be satisfied simply by purchasing products and services. Thus, the first step is to decide what to buy when the need can be satisfied through consumption.

Information search: immediately the need is recognized, consumers identify the different alternatives that can satisfy it. Normally the products are identified first and immediately the different brands that could satisfy them, the information collected will influence the willingness to buy.

Evaluation of alternatives: once the alternatives have been identified, the products will be evaluated in order to make the right decision by comparing the different alternatives presented in the market.

Purchase decision: after having the necessary information, the customer decides among the various alternatives presented the most desirable and makes the decision to buy or

not, considering the characteristics of the product or service, as well as where to receive the delivery, payment methods and when to carry out the transaction.

He also mentions that: the analysis of this model from a starting point is useful and necessary to examine purchasing decisions. (Kotler, 2016) mentions that: the analysis of this model from a starting point is useful and necessary to examine purchasing decisions, but the process is not always as straight as it may seem. These possible variations should be considered:

- The customer can opt out of the process at any stage prior to the actual purchase if their need diminishes or if there are no other satisfactory alternatives available.
- The stages of the purchasing process are of different lengths, they may intermingle, and some may even be overlooked.
- The customer can often find himself in the situation of making several different purchasing decisions simultaneously, the outcome of one may affect others.

A significant factor influencing the way in which consumption decisions are made is the level of participation, which is reflected in the extent of effort expended to satisfy a need. Some situations are high involvement. That is, when a need arises the customer decides to actively gather and evaluate information about the purchase situation. These purchases involve the stages of the purchase decision process.

Although, it is risky to generalize because consumers are different, participation tends to be higher in any of the following conditions:

- The customer lacks information about alternatives to satisfy his need.
- The customer considers your price to be high.
- The product has considerable social importance.
- The products often have revealing benefits

Customers usually choose relatively low-priced products that in most cases have substitutes that do not meet the conditions specified above, because the customer subtly passes through the stages of decision, identification and evaluation of alternatives.

The buying process are the stages that a customer must go through to obtain a product, "it is clear that the buying process begins long before the purchase itself and continues for a long time after, so you should focus on the entire process, not only in the purchase decision" (Kotler, 2008, p.142); according to this author the buying process has 5 stages such as: recognition of the need, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post-purchase behavior; especially this process is completely fulfilled with new products or markets, in this case it is analyzed how this process is handled in digital marketing.

Therefore, the buying process is the phases that a person goes through from the moment he realizes he has a need until he acquires a product or service to solve it. It is the series of phases a customer goes through before deciding to purchase a product. (Quiroa, 2022) It defines the processes that companies must carry out, the necessary

steps with suppliers of inputs, goods and services in order to provide the company with the necessary elements for its operation. The processes that go in stages in which the purchase process is materialized from the determination of the need to incorporate a good or service to its actual acquisition. In all its stages it requires a thorough analysis to improve the profitability of the company. (Elgen, 2021)

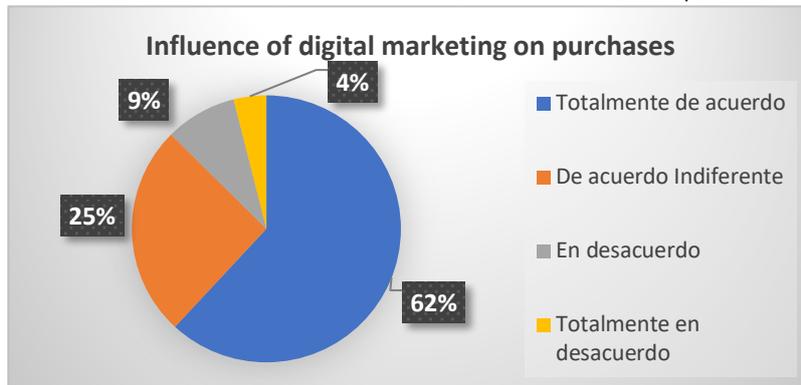
Materials and methods

The research used the qualitative and quantitative approach, based on numerical measurements and statistical data analysis, considering the use of digital marketing in the inhabitants of the city of Riobamba. The descriptive level of research, which allowed to know specific situations, processes, and interaction of people in purchasing decisions , based on a documentary and field exploration identifying the variables of study, in order to link concise opinions that support the research.

For the calculation of the study sample we used the projections of the Economically Active Population (EAP) of the Ecuadorian Institute of Statistics and Census (INEC, Population Projections, 2020)According to the cantons of Ecuador (2010-2020), in the canton of Riobamba the employed EAP is 122,760 inhabitants. For the calculation, the finite sample was considered according to (Diaz, 2019)The sample was 383 respondents, with a standard standard deviation of 0.5 and a confidence level of 95 %, through surveys conducted by Google Forms. (Kotler, 2016) states that Digital Marketing is the fastest growing form of direct marketing. It uses tools such as website, online video, emails, blogs, social media, mobile apps and ads and other digital platforms that directly engage consumers anywhere, anytime through their computers, smartphones, tablets, internet-connected TVs and other digital devices.

Results

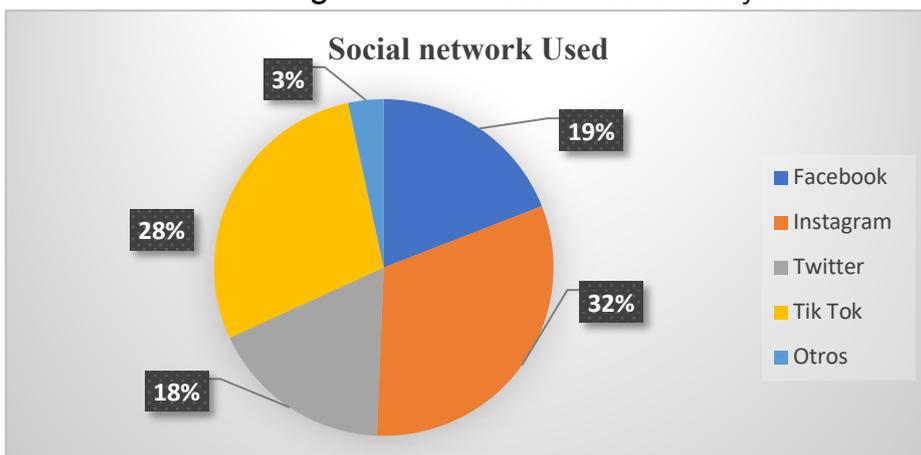
Figure 1. How do you think digital marketing influences your purchase decision?



Source: Authors, 2022

Figure 1 shows the influence of digital marketing on the purchase decision of the respondents. In the results it can be seen that 62% totally agree, 25% agree indifferent and 4% a small percentage disagrees. It can be seen that there is a high acceptance of digital media as a means of communication to reach customers.

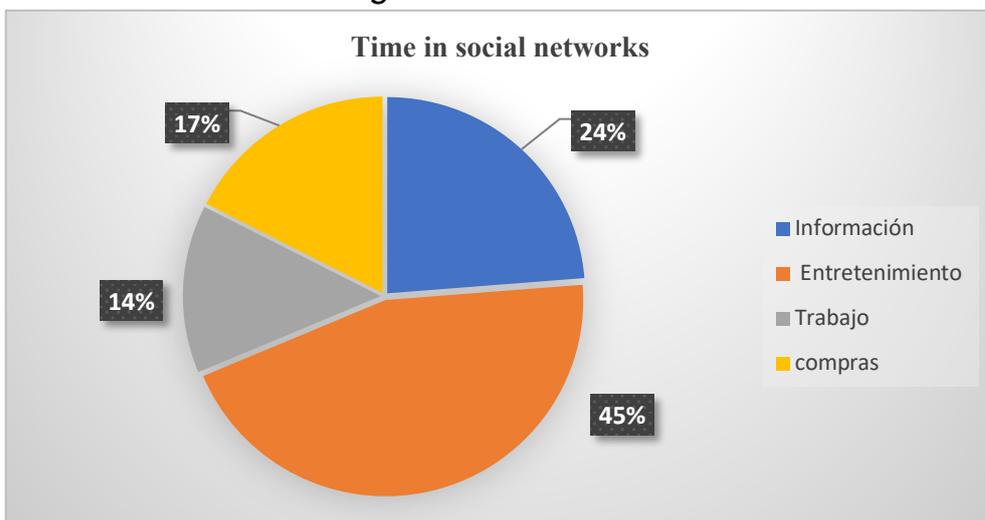
Figure 2. Which social network do you use?



Source: Authors,2022

Figure 2 equates the most used social networks: 32% Instagram, followed by Tik Tok with 28%, and with 19% Facebook, Twitter with 18%, the difference between the latter two is minimal. So it is concluded that the most used social networks at present are Instagram, Tik Tok, Facebook respectively, constituting these social networks as an important source of future customers and an opportunity to use digital marketing.

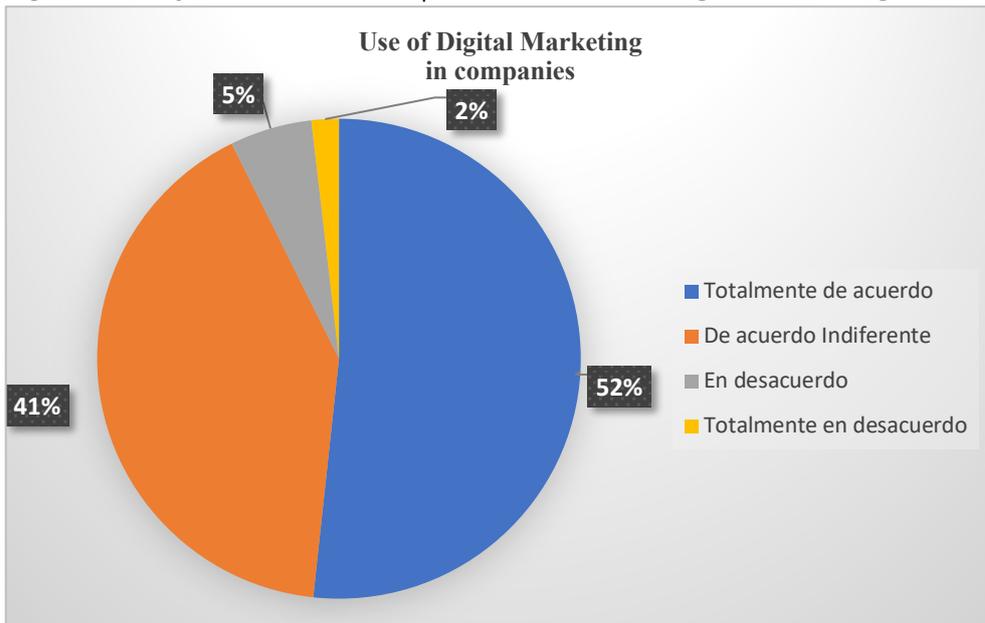
Figure 3. Time on Social Networks



Source: Authors,2022

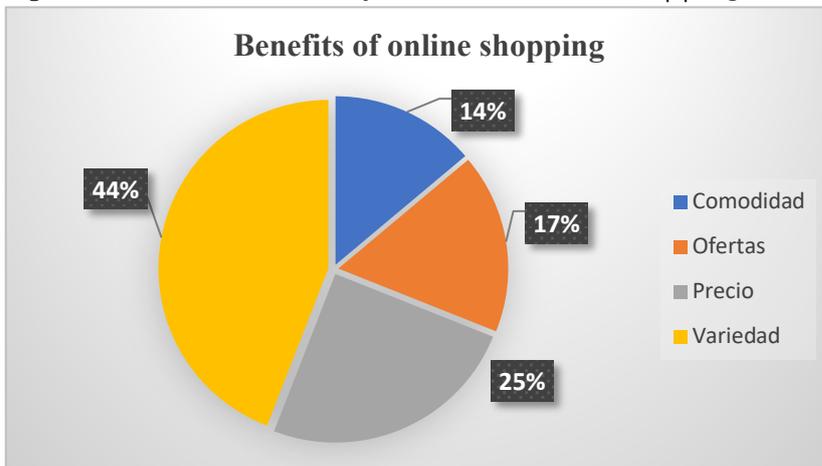
Figure 3 indicates that 45% use their time on social networks for entertainment, 24% for information, 17% for shopping, which is the reason for study, and 14% for work. Therefore, it is evident that most of the respondents use social networks for entertainment and information, but there is a segment that uses social networks to make purchases and in this way the use of digital marketing is evident.

Figure 4. Do you think that companies should use Digital Marketing?



Source: Authors, 2022

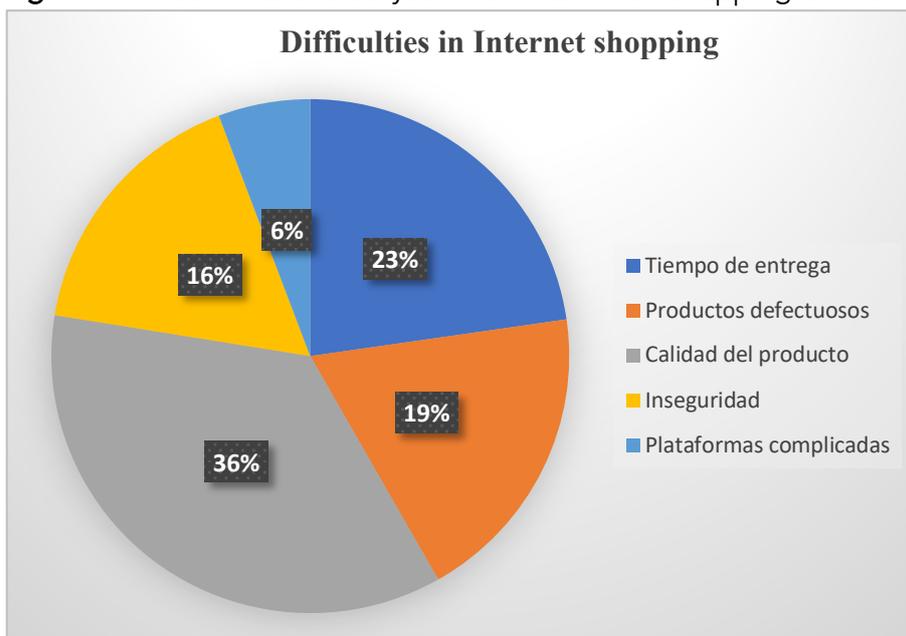
Figure 5. What benefits do you consider when shopping online?



Source: Authors,2022

Figure 5 shows that the main benefits found by the respondents are 44% variety as the predominant factor to make the purchase, followed by 25% price, 17% offers, 14% convenience, so we can gather that the customer seeks in most variety, a good price according to your budget, offers and convenience in their purchases.

Figure 6. What difficulties do you encounter when shopping online?



Source: Authors,2022

Figure 6 shows that the main difficulties encountered by customers when buying online are 36% product quality, 23% delivery time, followed by 19% defective product, 16% insecurity and 6% in the use of digital platforms. This allows us to identify that companies should improve the quality of their products, minimize delivery times, avoid shipments of defective products, or that by handling arrive with defects, the platforms must be very friendly and intuitive for customers to close their purchase.

62% of respondents stated that there is influence of digital marketing in the purchase decision, there is a high acceptance of digital media, which allow communication to reach customers. (Hernandez, 2021) In his research article, of correlational statistical analysis, which was applied to a sample of 417 Ecuadorians belonging to the new generation, where its objective was to determine the relationship between digital marketing and purchase decision process, obtained as results a high correlation and giving as a conclusion that companies should enhance digital marketing and content on their websites.

It could take advantage of these digital marketing strategies, in the last 5 years in the world the use of internet increased 72% in men and 69.5% in women. (INEC, 2021) this information could be used to build digital strategies and achieve the proposed objectives.

Conclusions

The relationship between digital marketing and customers has evolved, which leads us to investigate new digital models considering the vision and behavior of the consumer. It can be concluded that through the analysis of digital advertising in Ecuador-Riobamba, advertisers have taken advantage of the boom of new information and

communication technologies to integrate consumers more and more supports for their media plan. Indeed, the entire advertising process has changed and now, the recipients of the message are fully adapted. The Internet, the smartphone and social networks are and will obviously be the main means of communication between brands and consumers. These digital media give many advantages to companies in terms of improved segmentation, ease of interaction, measurable audience in real time and low-cost ads.

The study found that only 13% of respondents believe that there is little or no influence of digital marketing in purchasing decisions, suggesting an important opportunity to use digital media as persuasive elements to attract and retain new customers.

A total of 97% of those surveyed use one of the social networks as a means of virtual interaction, with an outstanding preference for Instagram, which is used by 32% of those surveyed, followed by Tik-Tok, Facebook and Twitter, with a very small difference between the latter two.

Social networks are used as a means of entertainment by 45% of the people consulted, far surpassing their use as a means of information and shopping, which reached values of 24% and 17%, respectively. The results obtained in this research suggest an important trend in the habits of the population consulted and indicate areas that should be considered in marketing strategy proposals.

In the opinion of the respondents, companies should seriously consider the use of digital marketing among their business strategies, as 93% of the answers obtained suggest so.

The online purchasing process generates benefits and difficulties, with the former being highlighted by 44% of the respondents (44%), good prices (25%) and access to offers (17%). In terms of difficulties, the quality of the product obtained was reported by 36% of respondents, delivery time by 23%, and defects in the products purchased by 19%. Other difficulties reported by the population in this study are the insecurity of these purchasing processes and the difficulty in handling the platforms, with 3% of the responses processed.

Digital Marketing is a tool used today that offers the use of social networks as the main tool for buying and selling products and shows its influence in modern economic development: it generates a large number of commercial transactions that can be accessed easily, comfortably and quickly, outstanding aspects in business management.

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