

Consumers Perspectives on Digital Marketing Features

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Abstract: The aim of this study is to investigate the consumers' perspective on the importance of various digital marketing features, particularly in the pandemic period which boosted e-commerce and digital services. In this sense, this paper addresses at first the digital and social media tools utilization in the framework of the new digital world of communications. Consumer Behavior in the Covid-19 era follows, presenting the impact of covid-19 in consumer's way of living and thinking in respect to their on-line shopping daily habits. In this sense, in view of the company's website importance in their consumers' searching and purchasing process, literature review is completed with the description of the various design principles with special references to the virtual and augmented Reality tools, for which interest in the past few years has risen considerably.

In order to verify the theoretical insights, an empirical research was conducted through a structured questionnaire answered by 328 consumers in Greece. Main results reveal that key features of a site are products' photos and ease of accessibility in information and transactions, while a low proportion of the sample is positive in the potential adoption of VR tools. In addition, delays on deliveries have a negative impact on e-commerce and digital marketing in overall and this becomes even worse as frequency of on-line purchases by the customers increase.

The conclusions and recommendations drawn in the present study are expected to provide some useful insights for the successful digital marketing redesign towards increasing company's products/services attractiveness.

Key words: digital marketing, site attractiveness, virtual reality, digital marketing features, delivery time

JEL code: M31

1. Introduction

Marketing has been and will always be an important element for any business (Kuratko, 2016). The COVID-19 epidemic is a reminder that pandemics, like other rare disasters, have occurred in the past and will continue to occur in the future. Since it is almost inevitable to prevent the appearance of dangerous viruses, we must be prepared to reduce the effects they will have on society. The current pandemic has, among other things, serious economic consequences around the world, as evidenced by the dramatic changes that have taken place both on the part of businesses and on the part of consumers (Donthu & Gustafsson, 2020).

The pandemic can trigger a number of channels, including for example, labor markets, global supply chains,

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consumption behaviors, all of which can affect the global economy. Among these channels, one of the most important components is definitely the stock markets (Topcu & Gulal, 2020). Competition is growing and businesses need to adapt quickly to evolving changes in digital commerce (El Junusi, 2020). Online communication, online psychology and online shopping show groundbreaking growth (Donthu & Gustafsson, 2020).

In this respect, this paper focuses primarily on the sufficient understanding of the changes in consumer behavior in the Covid-19 era, in relation to the use of digital communication channels and the marketing features that influences their markets and decisions. The findings of this research are expected to support marketing managers in their decision-making process by providing useful guidelines towards redesigning their digital communication practices and in turn improving their performance.

2. Digital Marketing and Social Media Marketing

Digital marketing has become a new phenomenon that unites mass adjustment and distribution to achieve marketing goals (El Junusi, 2020). Digital marketing reduces the distance between firms and their employees. Institutions and organizations may usually promote their activities and/or offerings through websites or other digital media including blogs, vlogs, video clips and social media, among others (Camilleri, 2021). Online business does have a medium for selling and promotion that is very diverse, like Facebook, Instagram, Kaskus, Blog, Situs Web (Candrawati et al., 2020).

Research has shown that companies have benefited from digital marketing, such as content search engine optimization (SEO), social media marketing, e-mail marketing, online advertising (Eti & Bari, 2020). Social media marketing refers to the use of tools such as social media, online communities, blogs, for marketing purposes. The most common tools with online social networking are Twitter, blogs, LinkedIn, Instagram, Youtube and Pinterest (Kuratko, 2016). It is important to understand what marketing tools and techniques are used. Then, by understanding these, one can predict how consumers will behave (Yuruk-Kayapinar, 2020). Businesses can use social media to communicate about their corporate social (and environmental) responsibility (CSR), corporate governance, responsible procurement, philanthropic and stewardship practices, etc. in different markets (Camilleri, 2021).

International marketing programs and strategies should be adapted regularly in order to take into account new trends and therefore current developments (Katsikeas et al., 2019). Part of the marketing strategy is to target customer information, developing communication strategies to attract more customers and become loyal to the company's product.

Digital marketing strategies must be redesigned in order to follow the trends in consumer behavior that has been significantly affected in the Covid-19 era. In this respect, companies should sufficiently understand how consumers move through a series of steps or stages when they make purchase decisions, as shown in the popular AIDA model (Figure 1) which focuses on Attention, Interest, Desire and Action for the consumer.



Figure 1 AIDA Model

In the framework of the new digital world of communications, it is no longer a relationship purely between the buyer and the company, since social media has extended it to achieving the different goals of AIDA via information added by other customers with the use of social networks and communities. So, in the case of digital marketing the first stage is digital platforms that draw the attention of the potential buyer. The second stage tries to create interest in the benefits of product or service features. After, it creates an emotional link and the last is that the advertising move to interact with the company and proceed with the order.

Thus, in line with this model, one of the main paper goals is to identify how Covid-19 era have affected consumers in terms of making them aware of products or services, gaining their interest and making products or services desirable, providing useful insights that could help companies to improve their digital strategies and practices performance. The main ones are the following (Eti & Bari, 2020):

- Online advertising
- Email Marketing
- Search Engine Optimization (SEO)
- Social Media Marketing

The potential utilization of social media for promoting products and services is remarkable, as indicated by the figures of Table 1.

Table 1 Number of People Can Be Reached With Adverts on Social Media (Eti & Bari, 2020)

Advertising audience overview	Number of people can be reached with adverts on social media
Facebook	2.09 billion
Instagram	1.08 billion
LinkedIn	702 million
Twitter	326 million
Pinterest	179 million

As technology continues to mature, social media shopping can offer an exciting shopping experience that replaces in-store interactions (Solomon, 2018). Especially for the use of opinion guides and market mavens through social media, special applications have been developed, such as Yahoo! Buzz log and Facebook Daily Buzz Index, which do not concern exclusively products, but any information circulated through the internet (Baltas & Papastathopoulou, 2003).

3. Consumer Behavior in the Covid-19 Era

3.1 Changes in Way of Living and Thinking

In large scale pandemics, effects are felt in wider areas and in the wider economy for two reasons, either because infection is widespread or because it has affected trade and the market as a whole (Jordà et al., 2020). Pandemics, although considered unlikely before COVID-19 broke out, are taken into account to be one of the major threats to business (Kim, 2020). With the pandemic, people suffered not only health problems but also significant job loss and loneliness (Sharma, 2020).

What we know is that the world has changed. As with other global events with an impact on the planet, such as Covid-19, it can potentially change the way we see the world, the way we think and the way we behave (He & Harris, 2020). New habits are likely to emerge due to technological developments that will lead to corresponding changes in standards (Sharma, 2020). Shopping habits are constantly changing and will continue to change after the pandemic period. During the Covid-19 pandemic, most companies turned unavoidably to e-commerce and digital marketing in the midst of this pandemic, this way of doing business has allowed consumers to interact with the product.

Most markets focused on basic needs, such as food. People are now buying more consciously. Markets and consumption vary from country to country, but the common effect of the pandemic is to affect the economy. Consumers in India and China are more optimistic from those in Europe and the US. Due to a complete lockdown in countries such as India, South Korea, China, Italy and other nations, consumers could not even shop in supermarkets and were forced to store their products at home (Sharma, 2020).

Already after a year of pandemic, people all over the world are buying, living and thinking differently. According to Sheth (2020), the immediate impact of Covid-19 on Consumption Behavior (Sheth, 2020) is outlined in the following (Figure 2):

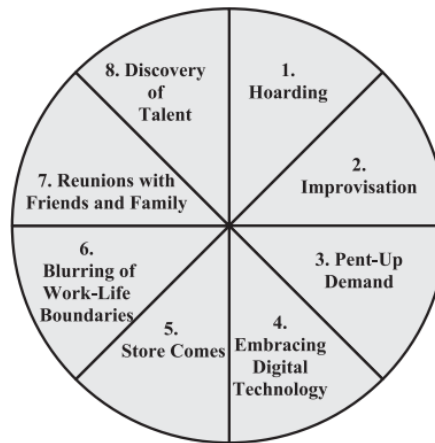


Figure 2 Immediate Impact of Covid-19 on Consumption Behavior (Sheth, 2020)

- 1) **Hoarding:** Consumers are stockpiling essential products for daily consumption resulting in temporary stock outs and shortages.
- 2) **Improvisation:** Consumers learn to improvise when there are constraints. An example is online education.
- 3) **Pent-up Demand:** During times of crisis and uncertainty the general tendency is to postpone purchase and consumption of discretionary products or services.

4) **Embracing Digital Technology:** People were forced to reconcile and learn about technology and new platforms. Most consumers like social media including Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, WeChat, LinkedIn, and others. The impact of digital technology in general and social media in particular on consumer behavior is massive in scale and pervasive in consumer's daily life.

5) **Store Comes Home:** Due to the confinement in homes, as was the case in many countries, such as Greece, India, South Korea, China, Italy, and other nations, consumers "brought" the shops home.

6) **Blurring of Work-Life Boundaries:** It is one of the major disadvantages of working from home, as it is important to set limits on working time apart from the personal life.

7) **Reunions with Friends and Family:** Everyday life, before Covid-19, had reached a point where the person did not have time to socialize with the people who live together, with his family.

8) **Discovery of Talent:** With more flexible time at home, consumers had time to spend with themselves and discover it. Consumer habits changed radically because they were forced to stay in their homes.

3.2 Covid-19 and On-line Shopping

Some studies explore e-commerce in relation to usage behavior, decision making, and relationship building. Studies, as reported by Huang and Benyoucef (2013), have identified three fundamental needs that motivate consumer behavior through Web 2.0 in a business context. These are the need to be an independent person, the need to feel successful and capable and the need to feel that you belong and are connected to others. Another empirical study reports on the effects of online social shopping on user behavioral beliefs (Huang & Benyoucef, 2013).

About a year ago, a study conducted by Rigby (2020) on respondents in America, confirmed that Covid-19 has had a significant impact on consumer behavior. Thus, according to this survey the majority shops online more than thirty times a year (Figure 4).

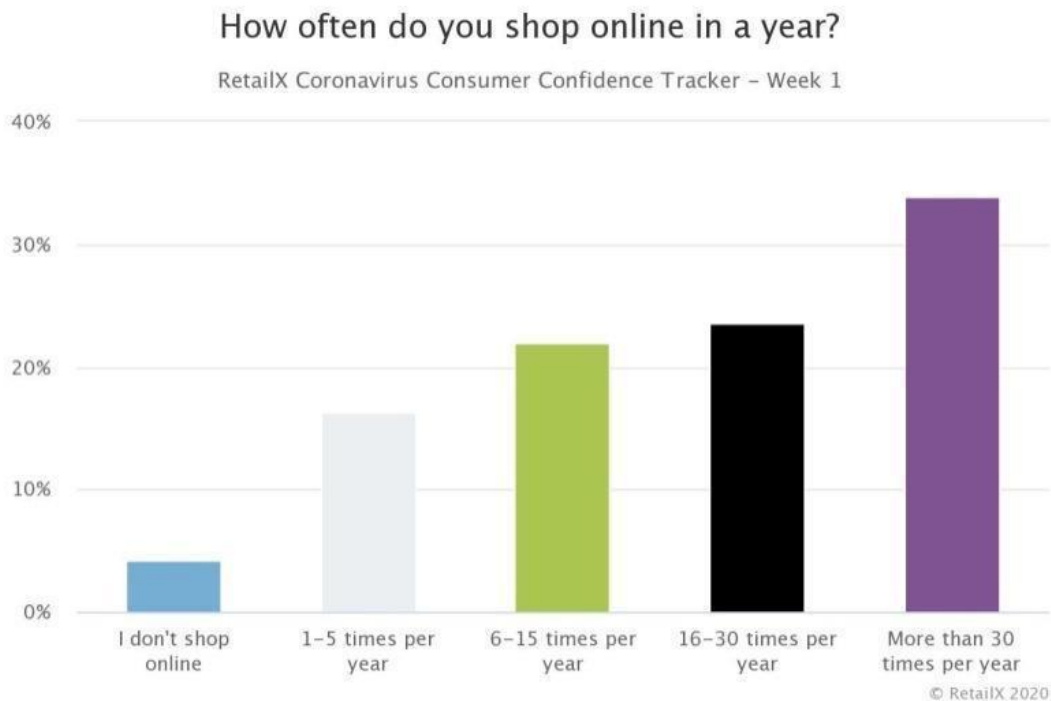


Figure 4 How Often Do You Shop Online in A Year? (Rigby, 2020)

Another important outcome is presented in Figure 5. More specifically, more than three-quarters (78%) said they were shopping online from groceries to the same extent as previously and a quarter (15%) said they increased shopping online from groceries. Some 86% are buying electronics equipment online to the same extent, while 7% are buying more, 5% less. Most (83%) continue to buy clothes online at the same level as previously, while 10% are buying more. Last but not least, almost 73% are buying takeaway food to the same extent, 7% are buying more, 11% less and 7.5% have stopped (Rigby, 2020).

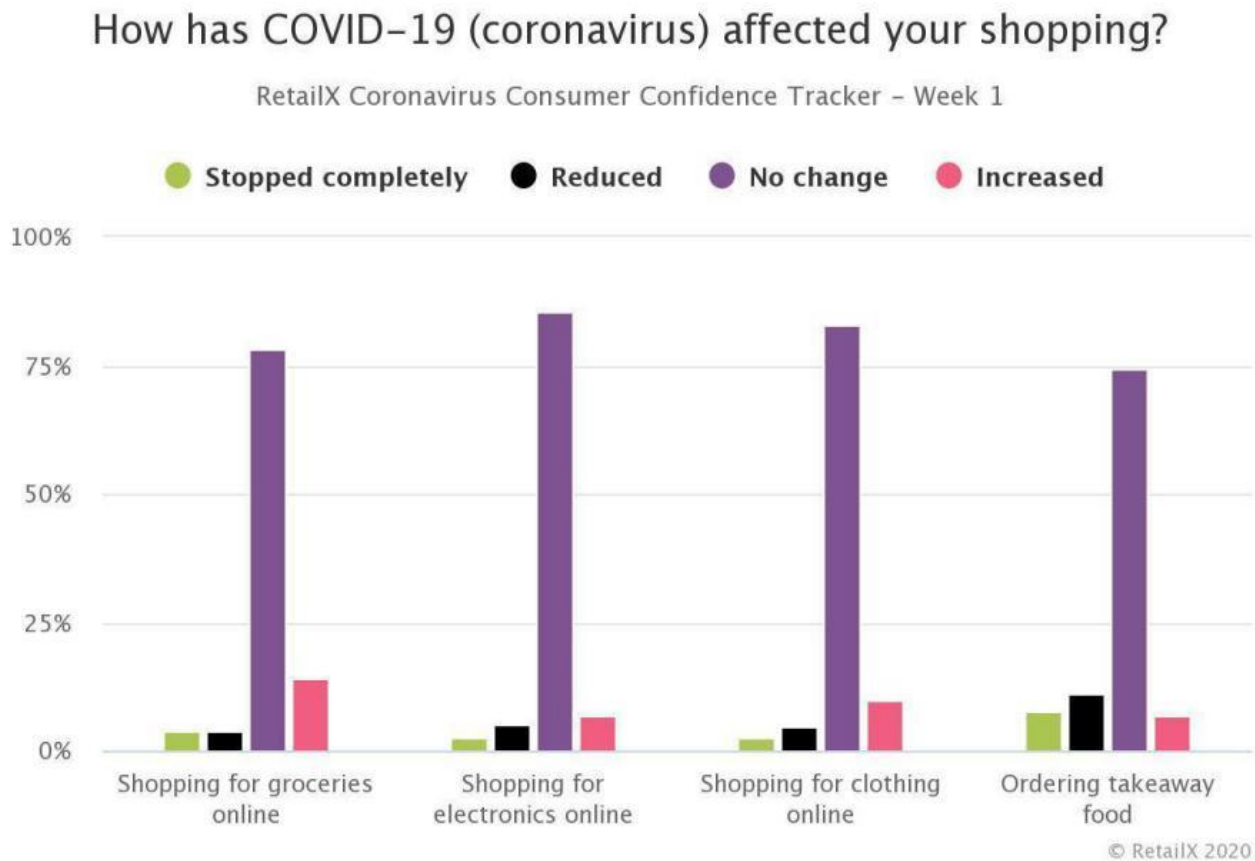


Figure 5 How Has Covid-19 Affected Your Shopping? (Rigby, 2020)

Online shopping is a safe way to shop through a pandemic and is likely to continue after that (Kim, 2020). According to research by Jordà Singh & Taylor (2020), this answered the question if all countries in Europe experienced pandemics in the same manner shown. The results show that countries like France, Italy and Spain, where the effects of pandemics are much larger in contrast to the Anglo-Saxon bloc of the Germany, the Netherlands and the U.K., with far more modest effects on the natural rate.

3.3 Social media & On-line Platforms











The evolution of technology has played a crucial role in the development of digital marketing. In the future, entrepreneurs will be forced to follow technological developments with digital marketing tools to increase their sales (El Junusi, 2020). Research shows that during the pandemic and the lockdown, social media usage rates increased significantly (Kaklauskas, 2020), like Facebook, Instagram, Blogs, Tik Tok and other platforms. This happened because people were escaping their grief and difficulties or even being informed.

Covid-19 has increased the use of social media considerably, resulting in noticeable increase in purchases through internet pages and e-platforms, generating enormous amounts of data from word of mouth. Through the surveys announced by Statista from time to time, the most popular social network worldwide in January 2021 was Facebook with 2.740 millions, followed by Youtube and the WhatsApp.

Another chart that was announced was for global active usage penetration of leading social networks as of February 2020, which again the Facebook was first with 63% of respondents. In contrast to 2016, Facebook active monthly users in the second quarter of 2016 were 1.71 billion, Twitter had 313 million monthly active user and Instagram had 500 million monthly active users, with the whole world logged on social media. So it can be understood that the number of customers on social media is increasing day by day (Kapoor & Kapoor, 2021).

The leading country, according to Statista, on Facebook audience size was India by far, with 320 million Facebook users (January 2021) and the second country was the United States with 190 million users.

Table 2 Top Retailers by Digital Performance in Q4 2020, Worldwide (Zhukova, 2021)

Top Retailers by Digital Performance in Q4 2020, Worldwide		
	Amazon	1.9B
	eBay	464M
	Walmart	419M
	Apple	304M
	Mercado Libre	235M
	AliExpress	233M
	Samsung	207M
	Shopee	196M
	Rakuten	185M
	Etsy	178M

Amazon completely dominated the global online shopping market both on the web and via mobile app. The only single-brand retailers making it to the list are Samsung and Apple — the two unbeatable tech companies whose brand affinity makes up for a lack of product range compared to Amazon and Walmart (Zhukova, 2021).

3.4 Company's Internet Site Features Impact to Consumer Behavior

Marketing strategy can be described as the combination of most suited features of cost, product, distribution and sales, which can attract the customer (Gull & Pervaiz, 2018). Online shopping provides more convenience in terms of time and location of the store; however some consumers prefer their purchases from physical stores because in online shopping product information is limited and often limited to a few pictures or descriptions by the sellers. A key factor in the success of social commerce is customer engagement, that is, the psychological state produced as a result of interactive experiences in specific service relationships (Molinillo, 2020).

There are differences among social commerce and e-commerce. These definitions imply different scopes for

social commerce and e-commerce, they suggest that social commerce is an evolution of e-commerce (Huang & Benyoucef, 2013). The differences between e-commerce and social commerce can be highlighted in terms of business objectives, customer connectivity and system interaction.

The most significant features of a website according to Candrawati et al. (2020) are the following:

- Shopping Convenience
- Site Design
- Informative
- Security
- Communication

Some necessary features for designing effective e-commerce platforms are reviewed and categorized mainly from the field of human computer interaction (HCI). These design features are usability, information quality, website quality, service quality and playfulness (Huang & Benyoucef, 2013). Website download speeds affect usability, as does how information is structured and integrated with the graphic design layout (Candrawati et al., 2020).

User friendliness refers to the concept of aesthetic design regarding the website interface and achieves their performance. Usability reflects many aspects. More specifically, the perceived ease of understanding the structure of a system, the simplicity of using the site, the speed of locating an object, the perceived ease of navigating the site, the consistent design of mats and the ability of users to control their movement within the system (Huang and Benyoucef, 2013).

E-commerce design principles are briefly described in the following (Table 3) by Huang and Benyoucef (2013):

Table 3 Briefly e-commerce Design Principles (Huang & Benyoucef, 2013)

Design principles	Characteristics	Business objectives
Usability	Ease of use	To make site easy to use and operate
	User-friendly	To make a user-friendly website interface
	Simplicity	To provide simple structure and functions
Information quality	Relevance	To provide relevant information
	Accuracy	To provide accurate information
	Update	To provide updated information
System quality	Security	To ensure task performance in a secure manner
	Access	To enable quick access to services
	Payment	To provide secure and easy payment methods
Service quality	Responsiveness	To quickly respond to user requirements
	Following up service	To listen to user feedback
	Reliability	To deliver reliable and trustworthy services
Playfulness	Enjoyment	To provide pleasurable experience
	Attractive appearance	To provide aesthetic website
	Curiosity	To motivate user cognitive curiosity

More specifically:

- Information quality is a fundamental design principle in e-commerce since it is a source of value to

customers. It can significantly influence customer attitude and interaction with e-commerce. Information quality is a key feature that affects in the satisfaction and commitment of users in e-commerce. Thus, it should be given great attention to quality of information, presenting accurate, sufficient and relevant information. Legibility in a website is considered a positive feature, it is related to the structure of the website and the actual text presented (Wimelius, 2004). Important in this feature is the contrast of the text with the background used by the website, because many times customers find it difficult to read and understand the text.

- Website quality is defined as the e-commerce system's performance in delivering information and services. Dissatisfied customers are usually because e-commerce websites display slow access, inefficient error recovery, malfunction and calculation and unsafe services. Instead, a high level of website quality design can be achieved by focusing on appearance, content, functionality, navigation and security.
- Service quality is an equally important feature in e-commerce design. Covers a wide range of help, such as frequently asked questions, order tracking and complaint management. It can lead to loss of customers and sales and the lack of effective support. The security variable has a positive and significant influence on customer satisfaction in online stores (Candrawati et al., 2020).
- Finally, the importance of playfulness as a design feature has been emphasized by a number of designers. In essence, it refers to perceiving enjoyment when customers interact with e-commerce websites. A satisfied customer may obtain pleasure from both material and emotion in e-commerce. In addition to happy customers, you also get their repeat visits. An interesting feature is the "nice appearance" of the website and specifically the use of colors, images and the proportions between the text and the images (Wimelius, 2004).

In addition, in the past few years interest in Virtual and Augmented Reality (VR and AR correspondingly) technologies has risen considerably, since multimedia and animation are very attractive forms of advertising that make people feel like they are participating in the buying process real time. VR is a computer-generated, interactive, 3D environment in which people become immersed (Wexelblat, 2014).

Although they are different, VR and AR share common processes and technologies, such as audio software and data processing, and allow consumers to view three-dimensional images of products from different angles and distances and try different products, places and their features (Suh & Lee, 2005). Thus, for instance Amazon offers virtual clothes fitting experience by utilizing augmented reality (AR) technology. Note that in some products, for example those that require a sense of touch, smell or taste, VR does not have the ability to offer these features to customers (Suh & Lee, 2005).

Generally, virtual reality (VR) techs are expected to open new opportunities for personalized shopping experiences online (Kim, 2020). VR has great potential for promotion due to the exciting senses it can offer and its ability to communicate how a distant place or experience feels (Griffin et al., 2017). Based upon sensory stimuli conveyed by a VR interface, people create a perceptual illusion of being present (Suh & Lee, 2005).

In this sense, many researchers, such as Srinivasan and Srivastava (2010), suggested that the use of VR technology as a marketing tool would help create memorable shopping experiences and generate satisfaction for consumers. Thus, destination marketers should consider using virtual reality to engage and build relationships with potential visitors, but they should pursue more traditional incentive marketing (Griffin et al., 2017).

Griffin, Giberson et al. (2017) found that VR helped people to create more positive emotions towards the

destination, that is, towards the service offered. Indeed, virtual reality seems to have a positive impact on the combinatorial elements of an image compared to other forms of visual promotion.

For all the above-mentioned reasons consumers are increasingly accepting VR & AR technology. Thus, an increasing number of customers are actively requesting VR solutions, whereas others are curious about VR and demand information and trial, according to a survey of more than 100 VR & AR entities in Europe according to Bezegov á et al. (2017), who also highlighted the need of a “killing-app” that would drive mass adoption, as well as access to affordable and comfortable hardware, to start a steep growth.

In this line, another study conducted in 2020 by global law firm Perkins Coie LLP points out that when survey respondents who worked at startups were asked about what factors are limiting venture capital investment for startups in the space, the most common responses were lack of an established market, untested technology, and slow adoption by businesses and consumers. The same survey revealed the biggest obstacles to mass adoption of AR and VR technologies (Figure 6).

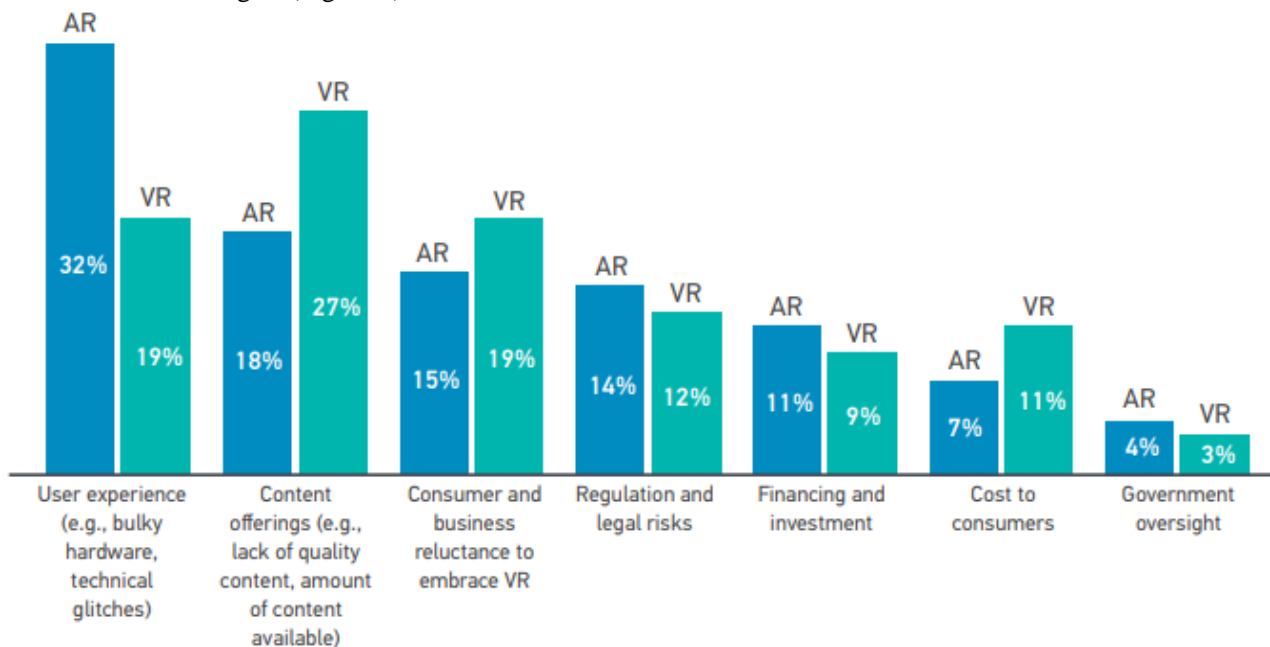


Figure 6 The Biggest Obstacles To Mass Adoption of AR and VR Technologies (Perkins Coie LLP, 2020)

4. Study's Methodological Framework

The methodological groundwork of the empirical study was formed on scientific research studies analysis in digital marketing features and their importance in consumers' decision making process that essentially represents the main purpose of this survey.

The empirical research was carried out by using an anonymous structured questionnaire which was electronically distributed, using the online system of the survey administration software Google forms, because it provided convenience for respondents to answer and clear processing of results.

Statistical and econometric analyses were performed for the analysis of the results. Empirical results were illustrated based on both descriptive analysis and Pearson's correlation coefficient that measures the statistical relationship between two variables.

A random sample of 328 respondents from Greece participated in this survey in April 2021. The majority of

the sample was women (64.94%), while the age of the sample ranged from 18 years to 69 years (Figure 7).

In order to verify the theoretical insights the following research questions were formulated:

- To what degree and how has consumer behavior been affected by the pandemic?
- What is the impact of the company's site features in their purchasing decision process?
- To what degree has VR/3D tools adopted by the companies affect consumers' choices?
- How have consumers considered companies' consistency in respect to delivery of orders on time?

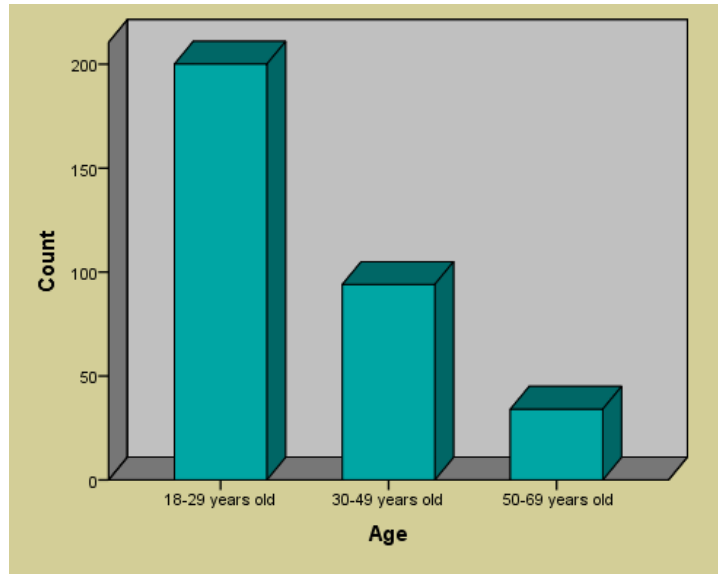


Figure 7 Age of Respondents

5. Main Results

The majority of the sample, almost 45%, has been affected considerably by the pandemic on their psychology (Figure 8), which apparently impacts their way of thinking as far as their purchases are concerned.

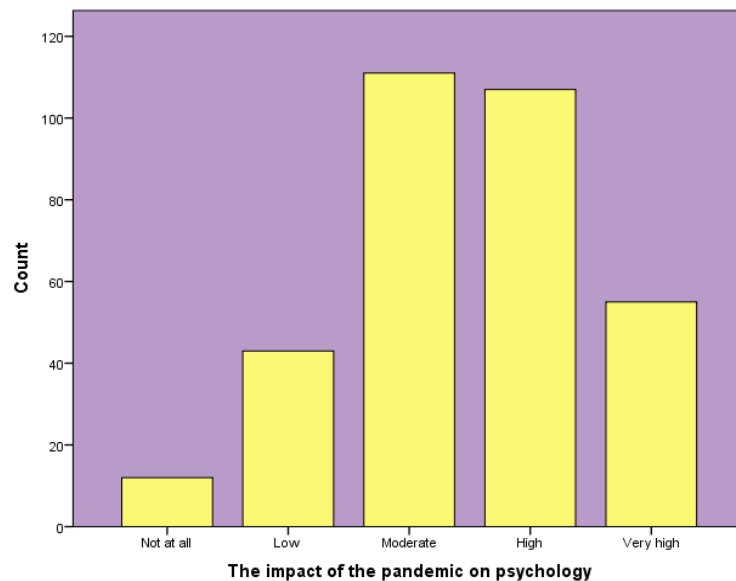


Figure 8 The Impact of the Pandemic on Psychology

From the results, it can be understood that men were influenced to a greater extent by women, as 37% of men (n = 41) were highly satisfied, while 38% of women (n = 80) answered to a neutral degree.

Table 4a Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	10,883 ^a	4	.028
Likelihood Ratio	10,707	4	.030
Linear-by-Linear Association	3,450	1	.063
N of Valid Cases	328		

a. 1 cells (10.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is, 4.21.

Table 4b Degree of Influence of Psychology in Relation to Sex

Level of satisfaction	Sex		Total number of participants
	Men	Women	
Not at all	7	5	12
Low	21	22	43
Neutral	31	80	111
High	41	66	107
Very high	15	40	55
Total number of participants	115	213	328

Regarding the features for visiting and spending time in a company's site, information and product's photos quality and usability (accessible information and transactions) are considered as the most important, while on the contrary the lowest percentage regards playfulness/graphic, as shown in Figure 9.

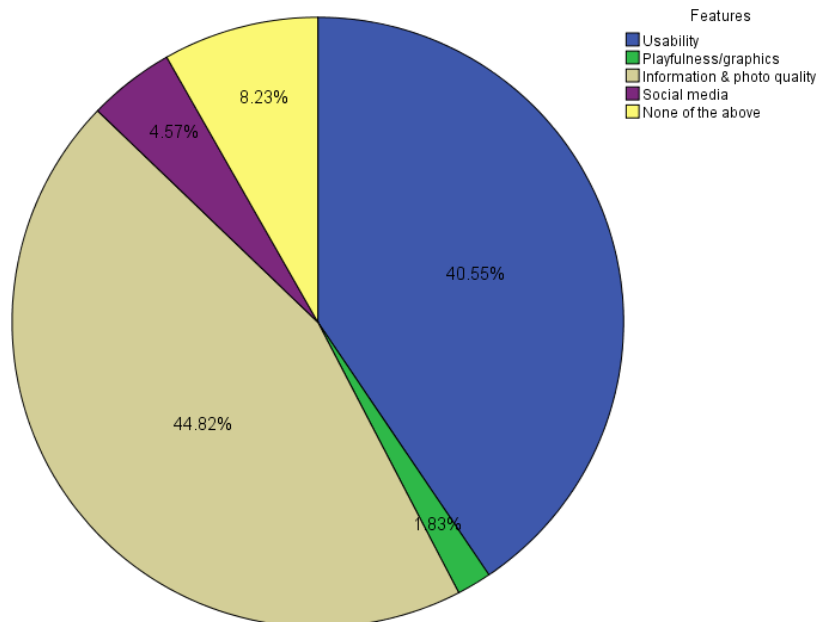


Figure 9 The Most Important Feature For a Site

More specifically, in the question about a VR/3D environment in the searching and purchasing process, the majority of the sample (37.5%) neither agree or disagree with the impact of such tools (Figure 10).

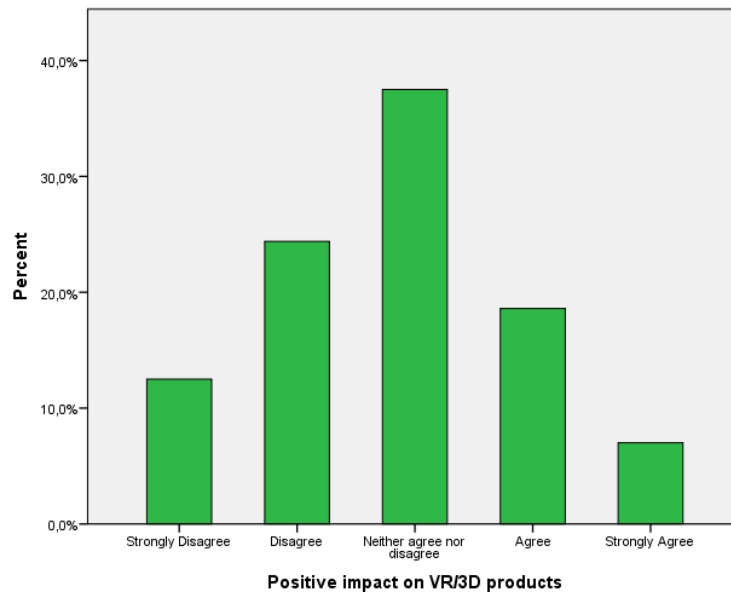


Figure 10 Positive Impact on VR/3D Products

In particular, according to table 5b, unmarried people would be positively affected by the possibility of VR with a percentage of more than 30% ($n = 68$ out of 236), while only 15% ($n = 13$ out of 83) of married people would have the same effect (Table 5b). This may be because the majority of unmarried people are younger and therefore more familiar with the technology. Older people may be skeptical about using technologically advanced tools.

Table 5a Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	9,613 ^a	8	.293
Likelihood Ratio	10,429	8	.236
Linear-by-Linear Association	1,898	1	.168
N of Valid Cases	328		

a. 5 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is, 63.

Table 5b Degree of Positive Impact of (Potential) Use of VR/3D Capability in Relation to Family Status

Degree of positive effect	Family status			Total number of participants
	Unmarried	Married	Divorced	
Not at all	28	11	2	41
Low	57	20	3	80
Neutral	83	39	1	123
High	50	9	2	61
Very high	18	4	1	23
Total number of participants	236	83	9	328

From Table 6b, it is observed that most of the people whose psychology was less affected by the pandemic ($n = 30$ out of 55, namely 55%), consider as positive the potential use of VR for the products presentation in a company's site. This proportion is even higher — reaching 65% ($n = 177$ out of 273) — in the case of people whose psychology was moderately or significantly affected by the pandemic.

Table 6a Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	30,784 ^a	16	.014
Likelihood Ratio	29,788	16	.019
Linear-by-Linear Association	7,341	1	.007
N of Valid Cases	328		

a. 7 cells (28.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is, 84.

Table 6b The Impact of the Pandemic on Psychology in Relation to the Positive Effect of (Potential) Use of VR/3D on Products

Degree of impact	Not positive impact from the potential use of VR	Neutral or positive impact from the potential use of VR	Total number of participants
Low impact of the pandemic on psychology	25	30	55
Moderate or high impact of the pandemic on psychology	96	177	273
Total number of participants	121	207	328

In respect to the companies deliveries consistency, another important outcome of this paper's study is that a great proportion of the consumers, reaching 67%, stated that only sometimes the delivery has been on time, while only 12.8% answered that it has been always on time (Figure 11).

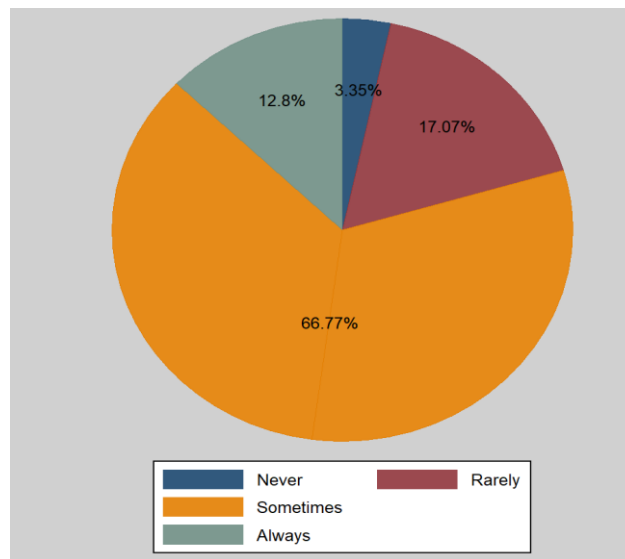


Figure 11 Delivery on Time in Online Shopping

The following table shows that men are less satisfied with their online purchases and their delivery time, compared to women who expressed sufficient satisfaction with their delivery time. Specifically, 51% of men (n = 59 out of 115) stated that they are almost not at all satisfied with the delivery time of their online shopping in the midst of a pandemic. On the contrary, women with a percentage of 58% (n = 125 out of 213) answered that they were quite or very satisfied with the delivery time of their purchases.

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Table 7a Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	12,022 ^a	4	.017
Likelihood Ratio	12,252	4	.016
Linear-by-Linear Association	.091	1	.762
N of Valid Cases	328		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is, 5.96.

Table 7b Degree of Satisfaction in the Midst of a Pandemic for Online Shopping in Relation to Delivery Time and Sex

Level of satisfaction	Sex		Total number of participants
	Men	Women	
Not at all	20	25	45
Low	39	63	102
Neutral	28	90	118
High	19	27	46
Very high	9	8	17
Total number of participants	115	213	328

As shown in Table 8b, most of consumers that were slightly satisfied with the expected delivery time (n = 51 out of 67) experienced also a low degree of satisfaction as far as real delivery time concerns. Correspondingly, more than 63% of consumers that were moderately or highly satisfied with the expected delivery time were accordingly satisfied with the real delivery time.

Table 8a Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	110,124 ^a	16	,000
Likelihood Ratio	102,353	16	,000
Linear-by-Linear Association	47,294	1	,000
N of Valid Cases	328		

a. 7 cells (28,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is, 57.

Table 8b The Degree of Satisfaction for Expected and Real Delivery Time

Degree of satisfaction	Low regarding expected delivery time *	Moderate or high regarding expected delivery time*	Total number of participants
Low, regarding real delivery time	51	96	147
Moderate or high, regarding real delivery time	16	165	181
Total number of participants	67	261	328

* mentioned on the site.

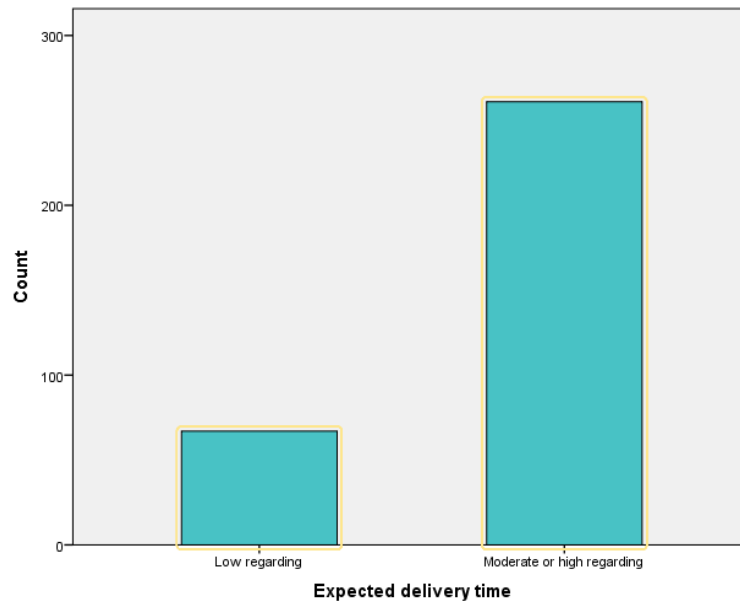


Figure 12 Expected Delivery Time

5. Discussion

According to this survey's results, products' photos and ease of accessibility in information and transactions are considered as the most important features of a company's site, while on the contrary the lowest percentage regards graphics (designs, color, etc), while other studies argue the opposite (Widanapathirana, 2010), as shown in Figure 13.

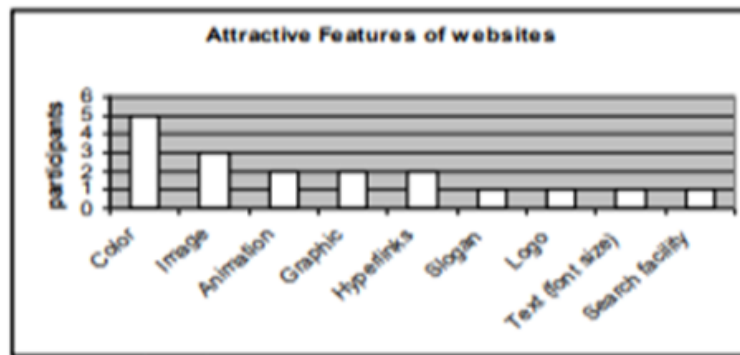


Figure 13 Features & Information for a Site (Widanapathirana, 2010)

Many surveys have shown that technologically advanced tools positively affect consumers' choices. However, as far as the use of VR/AR in the searching and purchasing process, most of the respondents in this paper's survey neither agree or disagree with the impact of such tools, while less than 30% are positive in the potential adoption of such tools.

In this sense, Meißner et al. (2020) maintain that the degree of use VR environments for shopping in the future is hard to answer; since although companies are becoming increasingly interested in using VR technology, on the other hand many consumers are unfamiliar with the technology and need more time to adjust and get used to it. The slow adoption of VR & AR technologies by consumers have been pointed out as one of the most significant factors that limit venture capital investment when it comes to investing in immersive technology

startups (Perkins Coie, 2020).

In the past few years, interest in distribution channels deliveries' consistency has risen considerably, mainly because of the fierce impacts of COVID-19 on every sector of business, the strict lockdown and the fact that manufacturing and logistics activities have been restricted or even suspended completely. This has affected the demand and supply of various products as a result of restrictions imposed on shopkeepers and retailers (Singh et al, 2020). Thus, the issue of delivery times has invited increasing work by many academics and is extensively discussed in supply chain and logistics literature, since it directly affects service quality, customer satisfaction and in turn the overall buying experience and on-line purchasing behavior (Choi et al., 2019). This is also confirmed by this study results which show that delays on deliveries have a negative impact on e-commerce and digital marketing in overall. This becomes even worse as frequency of on-line purchases by the customers increase. In this line, the result of the study by Koyuncu and Bhattacharya (2004), found that people who buy online once a week or make several online purchases in a month had negative impact of product delivery risk, in contrast to those who do online shopping less than once a month, who had a positive impact of product delivery.

In particular, Adamkolo and others (2018), states that the age and gender of consumers play an important role in shaping their perception of the quality of online services in the context of gaining access to the online market, ease of use (of online shopping applications, e.g., features and websites) as well as secure online shopping milieu and credible products information and reliable services. In this respect, this paper's survey revealed that men are less satisfied with their online purchases and delivery times, compared to women who expressed sufficient satisfaction with the last. In contrast, other surveys point out that women are more stressed than men as they have to respond to their distance between work and home as well as to child care (Yan et al., 2021), while also male customers tend to be less affected by whether they shop online or in-store, in terms of their loyalty to the store (Hult et al., 2019).

The issue of consumers' emotions and how these impact their behavior and customer service perception and appraisal has invited increasing work by many academics. Since emotion constitutes a primary source of human motivation and exerts substantial influence on the thought processes (Westbrook & Oliver, 1991), a positive emotion is likely to lead to a positive reaction and less critical thinking when making judgments (Barger & Grandey, 2006). This increases service performance appraisals, such as satisfaction (Mattila & Enz, 2002). In this line, this study results showed that positive or negative emotions derived from the expected delivery times mentioned on the websites impact accordingly their appraisal for real delivery times. Furthermore, some researchers argue that web designers should additionally implement personalization tools (e.g., product recommendations, social login, behavioral targeting) on their websites in order to evoke positive emotions (Pappas et al., 2014).

6. Conclusion and Future Research Directions

In retrospect, this paper investigates the consumers' perspective on the importance of various digital marketing features, particularly in the pandemic period which boosted e-commerce and digital services.

The empirical research revealed that the most important features in a company's site are products' photos and convenience (accessible information and transactions). In addition, consumers do not consider that AR and VR technologies contribute to the attractiveness of the companies' websites. As far as delivery times concern, this study showed that positive or negative emotions derived from the expected time of delivery of goods mentioned

on the website impact accordingly their appraisal for real delivery times. Finally, a great portion of consumers are not satisfied with delivery times and in particular men are less satisfied with their online shopping consistency.

The conclusions drawn in the present study are expected to provide useful insights for the successful digital marketing redesign towards increasing company's products/services attractiveness.

This empirical study has the limitation of the sample that includes Greek online shopping customers. Thus, future studies need to address similar research questions in other countries and also to shed light to consumers' perspectives on digital marketing features in relation to different product categories.

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