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DIGITAL CONSUMER PREFERENCES FOR SUCCESSFUL TRANSACTIONS IN COLOMBIA

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ABSTRACT

Digital transactions require taking into account aspects that are based on consumer preferences, which are key to improving digital marketing processes. However, organizations are oriented to set marketing strategies based only on promotion on social networks, neglecting other elements that are important. This research is quantitative and non-experimental and presents the key aspects for the success of digital transactions in Colombia, considering consumer preferences. The sample is made up of 519 consumers, who answered the online questionnaire validated with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.955. The statistical techniques were descriptive to contextualize the sample and multivariate to analyze the relationships between variables. The results show that the digital product is preferred for quality (92.5%) and price (90.4%), promotion strategies are oriented to the use of social networks (83.0%) and contact with communities (82.3%) in the media of WhatsApp (80.2%), Facebook (77.1%) and Instagram (76.3%), and the reliability in the payment process is carried out by mobile apps (84.6%) and banking operations (80.2%). Therefore, the key aspects preferred by the digital consumer are the characteristics of the online product, reliability in social networks and trust in payment methods. Finally, it is necessary for companies to analyze the preferences of the digital consumer to increase the success of the transaction.

Keywords: Digital product. Marketing strategies. Promotion strategies. Social media trustworthiness. Trust in payment methods.

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INTRODUCTION

Marketing is related to the ability of companies to meet the needs of consumers through an exchange of benefits, where digital marketing has grown rapidly to reach the target (Kotler, 2022). This modality allows consumers to know the characteristics of products or services clearly, quickly and truthfully, and favors the creation of digital platforms to facilitate the transaction (Varadarajan, 2022). However, given the rapid growth of digital environments as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic (Ryan & Daly, 2019), companies neglected some key aspects by focusing only on marketing through the internet (Karagür *et al*., 2022), and ignoring important aspects of effective digital transactions, as indicated by some authors. Ng and Law (2020) assert that pricing and advertising influence the marketing process because effective customer-oriented strategies can be created. Najafi-Ghobadi *et al*. (2021) indicate that people, evidence, and process influence effective transactions, and Mintz *et al*. (2021) mention that digital transactions are based on the knowledge and willingness of the consumer when recommending sites.

Precisely, the digital consumer needs to maintain relationships of trust in order to feel satisfaction when making a transaction (Karagür *et al*., 2022). In this sense, the support of digital platforms allows the market spectrum to be broadened because they are based on your purchasing preferences (Cuesta-Valino *et al*. 2023) and because of the ease offered by digital systems to keep you informed (Reuschke & Mason, 2020).

In figures, digital marketing has impacted society through sales channels and social networks. The Global Consumer Insights survey (2023) conducted with 8,975 consumers from 25 countries, indicates that 56% carry out previous research to consume, 63% have purchased products from the website, 55% state that search engines provide relevant information for the purchase, 54% review other customers' publications, 50% of consumers want to buy online without intermediaries, 37% prefer products that are recognized and show attractive promotions for consumption, 34% want to receive alerts on delivery times and availability of products and 31% like personalized communications. As for Gen Z, it is reported that 55% search through search engines, 34% directly visit retailer websites, 32% check customer reviews, 31% use Facebook and TikTok social networks, and 29% check websites to compare prices.

It is evident that the use of social networks for consumption is increasing every day (Nguyen *et al*., 2018) because they are a channel that facilitates the company's communication with consumers and facilitates personalization and added value due to trust, identity, and recognition (Najafi-Ghobadi *et al*., 2021). The study by Lai *et al*. (2023) shows consumer behavior on social networks in the year 2022, where 84% before making a

purchase decision verify the qualities of the product through interaction with others, 57% use them and prefer a response time of less than 2 hours to close a transaction, only 23% want *face-to-face* contact in the purchase process, and 83% of companies use them as sales channels for marketing. In this sense, companies need to prioritize these strategies because these tools favor the communication of organizations with their target directly to capture the attention of customers (Reuschke & Mason, 2020). Digital marketing requires considering the target and their ages, Generation Z, Generation Y, Generation X, and Baby Boom, in order to advertise according to their segment on the most relevant social network (Laor & Galily, 2022).

All of the above allows us to assert that it is necessary for organizations to adapt to change and react quickly to unforeseen events in digital marketing to offer the consumer what they want and thus increase transactions (Del Moral *et al*., 2021). For this reason, companies need to migrate their business processes from the traditional to the digital market because they attract the consumer and promote recognition in the digital sphere (Rangaswamy *et al*., 2020), without ignoring face-to-face, because studies show that the consumer wants to maintain physical sales channels (Bartschat *et al*., 2022; Global Consumer Insights, 2023). In this way, companies achieve competitiveness in the market because they enhance their brand through the acceptance of new products in the market and improve their positioning (Najafi-Ghobadi *et al*., 2021).

This research presents the key aspects that must be taken into account in marketing through the internet to satisfy the consumer and carry out effective transactions, through aspects related to the digital product, marketing strategies that address promotion, social networks and trust in online means of payment and that contribute to economic dynamics. At the end, important recommendations for organizations related to digital consumer preferences are presented.

DIGITAL PRODUCT FEATURES

The growth of marketing channels influences consumer behavior, who purchases according to their convenience (Kotler, 2022). The digital product provides the company with recognition and access to the largest number of consumers in the world (Varadarajan, 2020). Among its characteristics are:

- Nature from its essence where it can be processed or artisanal that favors the preferences of the client, and flexible due to the diversity of services offered (Dolega *et al*., 2021). This aspect contributes to brand recognition through its logo (Dens *et al*., 2019).

- Innovation considered for the added value that attracts the customer by differentiation from the competition (Vithayathil *et al.*, 2020).
- Creativity shows product qualities with novel ideas and diversity (Lai *et al.*, 2023).
- The quality that is based on the acceptance of the price according to the characteristics of the product (Lai *et al.*, 2023)
- The price that allows the acceptance of the delivery time (Fraccastoro *et al.*, 2021), where the relevant aspects are the perception of payment versus the characteristics of the product, and its relationship according to the cost versus the benefit obtained (Ryan & Daly, 2019).
- The deliverability of the product is also important to the consumer. Some customers prefer traditional mechanisms to go in person for their acquisition (Bartschat *et al.*, 2022), others virtual delivery to consume avoiding travel because they are connected to the network (Varadarajan, 2020) and some opt for purchases abroad through international transactions (Fraccastoro *et al.*, 2021).
- Finally, the service provided for the product maintains consumer loyalty through satisfaction with the service (Kim & Kim, 2021).

DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGIES

Digital marketing explores different aspects that allow us to know the consumer, detail their behavior, and predict their purchase intention for their loyalty (Zhu *et al.*, 2022). Marketing strategies are oriented towards actions to reach the target market segment (Najafi-Ghobadi *et al.*, 2021), where digital promotion strategies are required to reach the target, and reliability in marketing channels, social networks, and payment methods, to carry out an effective transaction.

Digital promotion strategies

The perception of the purchasing process implies the need to generate environments of trust for the consumer and the company (Pittman & Abell, 2021), in delivery (Kapoor *et al.*, 2022) and availability 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (24/7) (Dolega *et al.*, 2021). In this sense, the experience to share the perception of the brand in the consumer's mind and its relevance is established as the *top of mind* (Kim & Kim, 2021), with the honesty and experience that is evidenced on the web, which are fundamental aspects of reliability to close the transaction (Guiñez-Cabrera *et al.*, 2020). These influence the level of satisfaction with the marketing process (Del Moral *et al.*, 2021) and the ability of companies

to respond to the consumer by considering social networks to satisfy their desires (Ryan & Daly, 2019).

Promotion strategies are oriented towards the use of media to reach the target (Karagür *et al*., 2022). In this sense, there are traditional ones such as radio or television advertising (Keke, 2022), which impact certain types of customers (Karagür *et al*., 2022); contact through visits or calls to the customer (Bartschat *et al*., 2022) and complete availability to provide convenience to the consumer (Dolega *et al*., 2021). There are also marketing channels such as Alixexpress, Alipay, Amazon, Ebay, Mercado Libre, Oxl (Bai *et al*., 2020; Sunkari, 2020;), Taobao, and Tik-Tok (Liu, 2022), which encourage decision-making and online shopping due to offers (Sunkari, 2020). And, digital media visible through the website or social media profile (Keke, 2022), which offer greater access to brand awareness through the publication of customer feedback (Lal *et al*., 2019), communities to make quality adjustments (Ren, Zhu, & Xu, 2021), and improve consumer communication because they share experiences that encourage decision-making and online shopping (Nagpal & Petersen, 2020).

Trustworthiness in marketing channels and social media

Marketing strategies through channels and social networks generate interaction between the company and consumers to carry out the transaction (Vithayathil *et al*., 2020). The use of digital media for consumption has increased in recent years, which requires trusting the process to carry out efficient transactions (Del Moral *et al*., 2021). When the user experience is positive, recommending the sites, this influences the consumption of the product or service and strengthens the company's image because it supports transactions (De Portu, 2022), where the comments and ratings of consumers according to their experience offer important information to calculate brand attributes and make the prediction of their tastes (Zhu *et al*. (2022).

The most important aspect for this environment is generated by the ratings that users publish on social networks because they show their preferences through the publication of content, where personalization becomes a joint work of the communities (Ng & Law, 2020). Precisely, companies must guarantee a successful experience on the networks that generates trust in the digital customer who, through *reviews*, promote a dialogue that serves as a reference for new potential consumers (Zhu *et al*., 2022). In this sense, credibility is an essential element of the organization's image because it influences those who are following an account (Kim & Kim, 2021). In fact, these social media leaders and *influencers* support brands, because they promote the generation of new ideas through

their opinions and trust through forum posts, group opinions, and comments (Guiñez-Cabrera *et al*., 2020; Ng & Law, 2020). Consumer behavior in terms of trust and positive attitude in the transaction is highlighted through the metrics of likes, the number of followers and popularity of influencers (Pittman & Abell, 2021), fan pages, and comments made on sites about quality and features (Kim & Kim, 2021; Najafi-Ghobadi *et al*., 2021), and the *views* or views that impact the number of users who interact and remain followers of social networks (Liu, 2022).

Reliability in payment methods

The consumer of the twenty-first century is connected to the internet, where they have the opportunity to choose based on published information but need to feel confident in the process (Varadarajan, 2022). The closing of the transaction requires reliability in the means of payment and in the process. Traditionally, face-to-face payments such as bank transfer and face-to-face payment are considered (Chang *et al*., 2019; Lai *et al*., 2023); as well as the credit/debit card that obliges companies to use platforms that contain user authentication (De Portu, 2022; Fraccastoro *et al*., 2021). Likewise, virtual payments generate the perception of trust for the consumer according to the experience and support of the communities (Navarro *et al*., 2019; Ren *et al*., 2021) through the company's website and mobile apps or *mobile wallets* (Lai *et al*., 2023); payment platforms that involve the need to create systems that support digital transactions (Wu *et al*., 2022), such as Amazon Payments, Google Wallet, PayPal, Ebay, Amazon, Mercado Libre (Sunkari, 2020), Alixexpress (Bai *et al*., 2020), among others. According to Statista (2022), the most used platforms to make purchases in Latin America are Alipay, Apple-pay, Google-pay, PayPal, Amazon-pay, and Samsung-pay, and the countries with the highest volume of sales through these platforms in person are China, India, Brazil, Spain, the United States, Mexico, Germany, and France, and virtually Germany, India, Spain, China, the United States, Chile, Mexico and Brazil. In addition, to carry out these digital transactions, the social networks that generate the greatest trust are Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, YouTube.

Ease of use and payment in the application implies investment in technological infrastructure so that the process is efficient and secure for the consumer (Darehshiri *et al*., 2022), through the authentication of the parties in reliable information systems (De Portu, 2022), which allow responding with digital financial services that avoid the risk of payment loss (Lai *et al*., 2023) and that guarantee consumers the obtaining of promotional benefits that they give them to keep them connected (Kapoor *et al*., 2022).

MATERIALS AND METHOD

The research is quantitative because it encompasses the analysis of consumer responses on the most relevant aspects in digital transactions. The type of research is non-experimental, descriptive because it contextualizes the sample, exploratory because it investigates the possible relevant aspects for the consumer at the time of making virtual transactions, which had been briefly addressed by the literature, transversal because the data are analyzed over a period of time and correlational because it relates the variables studied from the theory (Hernández-Sampieri *et al.*, 2018). This research aims to solve the following questions: What are the characteristics of the digital product?, What are the preferences of the digital consumer considering their digital age? and What are the fundamental aspects to propose marketing strategies considering the digital product, promotion strategies, the use of social networks and trust in the payment process?

POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The population was made up of 1,739,355 inhabitants of Santander-Colombia, of which 74.5% are over 18 years of age, or 1,295,820 people (DANE, 2022). López and Peñalosa (2021) showed that the consumer is the person over this age with the availability to purchase a product or service, as evidenced in their research carried out in the country. To determine the value of the sample, the finite sampling formula was applied, which is used when the number of the population to be studied is known, in this way the result was 519 subjects with a confidence level of 95% and a sampling error of 4.30%.

The subjects responded voluntarily to the measuring instrument. The ages of the participants are distributed according to their technological generation (Laor & Galily, 2022): Generation Z 60.1%, Generation Y 24.3%, Generation X 11.9% and Baby Boom 3.7%. 66.9% are single, 30.2% with a permanent partner and the rest are divorced and widowed. 81.5% live in the Metropolitan Area of Bucaramanga and 18.5% in municipalities in Colombia. The gender of the subjects was 57.2% women and 42.8% men, with 57.6% graduates, 26.4% university graduates, and 16% have postgraduate degrees.

INSTRUMENT

The instrument was validated by 10 experts in the area who contributed to refine the form, which was sent via email to people of legal age registered in a database provided by a Higher Education Institution in Santander (Colombia) to more than 2 thousand people as students, professors, administrative and graduates, of which 26% of them responded randomly. Cronbach's Alpha statistic determined its reliability with a value of 0.955, being

above 0.9 confirms that it is explained and understood excellently (Del Moral *et al*., 2021). The instrument is composed of the descriptive data of the subjects, where age by generations (Z, Y, X and Baby Boom), marital status, gender, city of residence and educational level were considered; and by indicators that measure the composition of the relevant aspects of the product and marketing strategies divided between promotion, reliability in payment methods and social networks, the variables were measured with the Likert scale from 1 to 4 (1=Very low; ...; 4=Very high).

The factor analysis technique was used to determine that the proposed indicators measured what was sought to be measured, taking into account the factor loads above 0.600 (Hair *et al*., 2019) to detect four dimensions: digital product characteristics (KMO=0.906, Explained Variance 71.57%, Bartlett's sphericity test ($p < .000$), Chi-square=2159.414 and 15 degrees of freedom); digital marketing strategies through three components -promotion, reliability in means of payment and reliability in social networks- (KMO=0.883, Explained Variance 72.29%, Bartlett's sphericity test ($p < .000$), Chi-square=9596.150 and 465 degrees of freedom).

The product considered the following characteristics: Traditional (product that is marketed in person and on the internet is the same and without changes), Processed, Artisanal, Flexible, Innovative, Creative, Ideal Price, Quality, Ability to deliver abroad and Service.

The components of digital marketing strategies were:

- Promotional strategies measured through: Radio or television advertising, Flyers, Customer calls, 24/7 availability, Web or profile updates, Social media and/or community contacts, Social media advertising, Google advertising, SEO strategies and Word-of-mouth.
- Reliability in social media and marketing channels: Alixexpress, Alipay, Amazon, Ebay, Mercado Libre, Oxl, Taobao, Facebook, Instagram, Tik-Tok, X (formerly Twitter), WhatsApp and YouTube.
- Reliability in the means of payment by: Bank transfer or consignment, Payment on delivery, Credit/debit card, Direct website of the company, Mobile App (Nequi, Daviplata, etc.), Company App, International Platforms (Amazon Payments, Google Wallet, PayPal, etc.), National Platforms (Epayco, PayU, Pse, Mercado Pago, etc.).

PROCEDURE

Initially, the literature review made it possible to detect trends in terms of marketing strategies in digital entrepreneurship and from there the key aspects for successful digital transactions were established. In this way, the price and its characteristics, the promotion according to brand positioning and branding, as well as the consumer's perception of the digital purchasing process, based on marketing through social networks, considering the technological generations and their motivations to be consumers, were taken into account.

STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES USED

The techniques used in the research were descriptive and multivariate. With the descriptive ones, the sample was contextualized and the perception of the subjects according to the aspects related to the digital purchase process was evidenced. The multivariate techniques for data processing were factor analysis for the calculation of the dimensions and ANOVA to determine if there are significant differences with the gender and digital age variables. These techniques favor the use of several variables, observe the interaction between them and explain the dependence or not of one on the other (Hair *et al*. (2019). SPSS v.23 software was used.

RESULTS

Table 1 shows the characteristics of the digital product, where the quality of the product (92.5%), the ideal price (90.4%), the creativity of the product (89.4%), innovation (87.7%), after-sales service (86.7%) and the fact that the product is flexible (84.8%) stand out at the levels that are moderately in agreement and in total agreement.

Table 1. Digital Product Features

Product Preferences	Not at all agreed	Little agreement	Moderately agree	Totally agree	Stocking	SD
Traditional	9.2	21.4	37.6	31.8	2.83	1.156
Accused	7.5	21.6	33.5	37.4	2.93	1.124
Handcrafted	10.0	20.4	29.9	39.7	2.89	1.222
Flexible	4.0	11.2	28.9	55.9	3.33	0.965
Innovative	3.7	8.7	20.8	**66.9**	3.47	0.929
Creative	3.9	6.7	20.6	**68.8**	3.50	0.921
Quality	3.3	4.2	15.2	**77.3**	3.63	0.844
Ideal price	3.7	6.0	26.0	**64.4**	3.47	0.900

Ability to deliver abroad	13.7	17.9	20.6	47.8	2.89	1.371
Service	4.4	8.9	22.4	**64.4**	3.42	0.977

Meanwhile, 13.7% indicate that they do not agree that the product should be delivered abroad, 10% that the product is artisanal and 9.2% that it is a traditional product.

Companies should assess the promotion strategies used for the digital marketing of products or services, as shown in Table 2. Continuing with the description in the levels of average agreement and agreement, it is shown that the main means are advertising on social networks and/or communities (83.0%), contact through social networks and/or communities (82.3%) and the website (72.1%), as well as word-of-mouth (67.8%), advertising on Google (55.9%) and the need that consumers require to be available 24/7 (53.9%). However, the use of traditional channels such as customer calls (53.8%) and radio or television advertising (53.8%) stands out.

Table 2. Promotion strategies for digital marketing

Strategy	Not at all agreed	Little agreement	Moderately agree	Totally agree	Stocking	SD
Radio or television advertising	26.0	20.2	26.4	27.4	2.29	1.523
Ruffles	29.3	33.5	24.5	12.7	1.91	1.386
Customer Calls	21.0	25.2	29.1	24.7	2.36	1.410
24/7 availability	21.2	24.9	27.2	26.8	2.38	1.431
Web or profile update	12.7	15.2	28.3	43.7	2.90	1.315
Contact through social networks and/or communities	8.1	9.6	27.7	54.5	3.21	1.153
Social Media Advertising	7.9	9.1	22.5	60.5	3.36	0.941
Google Advertising	23.5	20.6	26.2	29.7	2.62	1.141
SEO Strategies	31.4	26.2	26.2	16.2	2.27	1.073
Speech-to-Voice	12.9	19.3	28.5	39.3	2.94	1.049

At the level of no agreement, there is apathy towards SEO strategies (31.4%) and advertising on Google (23.5%).

Table 3 shows consumers' reliance on social media for digital transactions. It is observed that in the levels of average agreement and agreement the most reliable social media is WhatsApp with 80.2%, followed by Facebook with 77.1%, Instagram with 76.3% and 49.5% by YouTube.

Table 3. Social Media Reliability for Digital Transactions

Marketing channels and Social Media	Not at all agreed	Little agreement	Moderately agree	Totally agree	Stocking	SD
Alixexpress	54.7	19.5	17.0	8.9	1.80	1.016
Facebook	12.5	10.4	28.5	48.6	3.13	1.037
Instagram	13.3	10.4	20.8	55.5	3.18	1.076
Tik-Tok	48.2	16.8	15.8	19.3	2.06	1.187
Twitter	49.9	19.8	13.9	16.4	1.97	1.138
WhatsApp	10.0	9.8	17.7	62.4	3.33	1.010
YouTube	34.7	15.8	18.9	30.6	2.45	1.248

On the other hand, in the marketing channels, 51.1% carry out transactions through Mercado Libre, as can be seen in Table 4. Marketing channels like Alipay, Alixexpress, Ebay, and Amazon don't offer as much trust as the ones mentioned above.

Table 4. Reliability in marketing channels for digital transactions

Marketing channels and Social Media	Not at all agreed	Little agreement	Moderately agree	Totally agree	Stocking	SD
Alixexpress	54.7	19.5	17.0	8.9	1.80	1.016
Alipay	66.3	21.6	8.5	3.7	1.50	0.800
Amazon	48.2	18.5	19.3	14.1	1.99	1.113
Ebay	61.8	21.0	12.1	5.0	1.60	0.886
Mercado Libre	30.1	18.9	20.4	30.6	2.52	1.211
Oxl	43.0	21.6	20.0	15.4	2.08	1.115
Taobao	69.2	18.5	8.9	3.5	1.47	0.797

Table 5 presents the reliability of consumers in digital means of payment. 84.6% evidence the use of mobile apps such as Nequi, Daviplata, etc., and 80.2% bank operations (transfer or consignment). Likewise, 71.1% indicate that cash on delivery payment, 62.4% the use of credit/debit card and 52.4% the use of national platforms, 42.8% international platforms, 44.5% the company's website and 41.4% the company's app.

Table 5. Reliability in means of payment in digital transactions

Payment methods	Not at all agreed	Little agreement	Moderately agree	Totally agree	Stocking	SD

Bank transfer or consignment	7.9	11.9	22.4	57.8	3.22	1.167
Payment on delivery	10.6	18.3	28.3	42.8	2.93	1.250
Credit/debit card	18.7	18.9	21.4	41.0	2.66	1.473
Direct company website	29.9	25.6	22.0	22.5	2.07	1.522
Mobile apps	7.7	7.7	21.4	63.2	3.32	1.140
Company App	33.5	25.0	21.4	20.0	1.94	1.536
International Platforms	29.9	27.4	23.9	18.9	2.02	1.481
National Platforms	23.9	23.7	24.3	28.1	2.33	1.490

At the no-agree level, higher values are also seen in the company's app, on its website and on national and international platforms.

With the ANOVA analysis, significant differences were detected in terms of gender and digital age. In the digital product, women prefer traditional ($p < .002$), service ($p < .002$), price ($p < .000$) and quality ($p < .003$) features, while men are guided by innovative ($p < .000$), creative ($p < .012$) and flexible ($p < .000$) products. There are no significant differences with the indicators of trust in means of payment with gender. In promotional strategies, they opt for channels to be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week ($p < .054$) and those related to updated information on the web ($p < .053$); while men opt for strategies published on social networks ($p < .006$) and with the opinion of the communities ($p < .007$). And, in sales channels, women prefer Instagram ($p < .000$) and WhatsApp ($p < .003$), while men opt for e-bay ($p < .006$) and TikTok ($p < .012$)

With the digital age variable and the characteristics of the digital product, there are no significant differences. In terms of trust in payment methods, Generation Z remains in payment platforms ($p < .030$), Generation Y in digital transactions ($p < .054$) and Generation X likes transfers to accounts ($p < .010$) and POS terminals ($p < .002$). In digital strategies, generation Z opts for information on social networks ($p < .002$) and contributions from communities ($p < .017$), while generation Y prefers word of mouth ($p < .010$) and generation X trusts more in direct calls from companies ($p < .019$). And, in marketing channels, generation Z opts for Alipay ($p < .021$) and Instagram ($p < .000$), generation Y for TikTok ($p < .003$) and WhatsApp ($p < .027$) and generation X for Facebook ($p < .050$).

A closer look at Gen Z consumer behavior in terms of gender shows that trends are the same as consumer trends. In terms of product, women are guided by traditional ($p < .002$), service ($p < .001$), price ($p < .001$) and quality ($p < .001$), while men are guided by innovative ($p < .001$), creative ($p < .015$) and flexible ($p < .000$) products. There are no significant differences with the indicators of trust in means of payment with gender. In

promotional strategies, they prefer that the channels are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week ($p < .031$) and those related to updated information on the web ($p < .021$); while men opt for strategies published on social networks ($p < .002$) and with the opinion of the communities ($p < .004$). And, in sales channels, women opt for Instagram ($p < .000$) and WhatsApp ($p < .001$), while men opt for Amazon ($p < .052$), e-bay ($p < .012$) and TikTok ($p < .006$).

DISCUSSION

CONTEXT OF THE DIGITAL CONSUMER IN COLOMBIA

The consumer is the key when it comes to proposing commercial strategies in organizations, despite the fact that they are undervalued in digital consumption, as their preferences go beyond the taste for social networks and online shopping. In this sense, there are four fundamental aspects to propose marketing strategies and determine the target segment with greater certainty: the digital product, promotion strategies, the use of social networks and trust in the payment process.

As for the product, consumers say that it must be of quality, innovative, creative and flexible, as well as that it has a price according to its characteristics and an after-sales service. The above summarizes the appraisals of Dens *et al*. (2019), Dolega *et al*. (2021), Fraccastoro *et al*. (2021), Lai *et al*. (2023), Ryan and Daly (2019) and Vithayathil *et al*. (2020). The research detected that traditional and artisanal products are not valued in digital marketing, confirming that they are considered in face-to-face marketing.

Online promotion strategies are fundamental in digital consumption, as they shape visibility and attraction for the consumer, where targeted advertising, content marketing and social networks are essential tools to reach specific audiences through personalization as Bai *et al assure*. (2020), Liu (2022), Nagpal and Ng and Law (2020), Petersen (2020), Sunkari (2020), Vithayathil *et al*. (2020) and Zhu *et al*. (2022). In addition, communities offer more reliability to these transactions, despite the fact that traditional means are still used to reach the target, according to Bartschat *et al*. (2022), Dolega *et al*. (2021), Karagür *et al*. (2022) and Keke (2022).

Trust in social media is placed in transactions on WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram. This is supported by the opinion of users and ratings on each social network, as well as the support of communities with their opinions, as indicated by Guiñez-Cabrera *et al*. (2020), Kim and Kim (2021), Najafi-Ghobadi *et al*. (2021), Ng & Law (2020) and Pittman & Abell (2021). In addition, it shows that the transactions carried out in Colombia by digital means are national and shows the apathy to use international marketing channels, which

although they are used, do not generate confidence to carry out transactions, becoming an opportunity for national enterprises and their expansion in digital marketing. The trust required in digital processes is connected to the postulates of Bai *et al*. (2020), Fraccastoro *et al*. (2021), Lai *et al*. (2023), Navarro *et al*. (2019), Ren *et al*. (2021), Sunkari (2020) and Wu *et al*. (2022).

KEY ASPECTS OF DIGITAL CONSUMPTION IN COLOMBIA

Digital consumption has undergone a significant transformation in the contemporary era, shaping the way people interact with information, entertainment, and products. Among the key aspects of this phenomenon are the personalization of the product, the reliability of social networks due to the accessibility and speed with which the transaction is made, and the trust in the means of payment.

First, the consideration of the digital product makes it easier for companies to adopt platforms with advanced algorithms to analyze user behavior and offer content tailored to their individual preferences with the products they want to consume. This approach improves the user experience and contributes to retention and loyalty.

In second place are social networks, which, due to their accessibility and the proliferation of devices connected to the Internet, allow consumers to access digital content at any time and place, encouraging the participation of diverse audiences in the consumption of information. In addition, speed, immediacy, speed of connection, instant delivery of content and electronic transactions have become distinctive characteristics of digital consumption which have redefined consumer expectations. In addition, interactivity and user engagement foster emotional connection with the audience anytime, anywhere. Therefore, the reliability of social networks plays a crucial role in digital consumption, since these platforms are fundamental for interaction, communication and decision-making of users, which are supported by the authenticity of the information shared, since consumers trust these platforms to obtain recommendations, opinions and details about digital products. But you have to be careful, because the presence of fake news and misinformation can hinder trust, affecting consumer perception.

The third aspect is trust in the means of payment for digital transactions, which are based on price and ease of the process. Price as a crucial aspect in digital consumption directly impacts consumer decisions, considering the availability of economic options, online discounts and subscription models, and price comparison between platforms is more accessible, influencing purchasing decisions. Likewise, transparency in costs, payment flexibility and value proposition are key elements that affect the perception of the digital

consumer to facilitate the transaction, allowing loyalty to be created towards digital brands. This aspect is decisive in online consumption and requires offering security and data protection, identity verification strategies, the fight against fake profiles and the implementation of algorithms to reduce the dissemination of misleading content, with security protocols such as data encryption and authentication, to strengthen trust in electronic transactions. Likewise, transparency in payment processes, together with clarity in return and refund policies, are essential to build trust, and positive feedback from other users and the presence of security certifications reinforce the credibility of digital means of payment.

CONCLUSIONS

The outlook for digital consumption is marked by an intersection of key factors: price, digital promotion on social networks and trust in payment methods. In terms of price, online competitiveness remains a key driver for consumers, who are looking for deals, discounts, and affordable options. Digital promotion strategies, such as targeted advertising and creative campaigns on online platforms, have become essential to stand out in a saturated market to effectively connect with consumers. Social media plays a crucial role, as trustworthiness and authenticity on these platforms influence purchasing decisions, where direct interaction with consumers creates an emotional connection that facilitates digital transaction. Likewise, digital means of payment need to generate trust and security so that the adoption of technologies reinforces consumer confidence.

It would be interesting if future research analyzes the aspects why digital channels are not interesting for traditional and artisanal products, and whether in this case traditional media represent a more appropriate marketing channel. In addition, a next focus of research is aimed at the creation of digital marketing models that promote trust based on the product, price and marketing channel or medium with efficient processes in online payment and based on communities.

It is for this reason that companies need to propose strategies for the precise segmentation of the market through analytical tools that adapt promotions to different audience segments, as well as constantly innovate with creative products and services adapted to the preferences of the digital consumer. In this way, companies that prioritize customer integrity and protection build a strong reputation, fostering consumer loyalty in an environment where the reliability of digital transactions is key to the continued success of e-commerce.

Together, these perspectives propose to companies a dynamic scenario for price competitiveness, creative digital promotion, authenticity in social networks and security in digital payments, which become interconnected elements that define the future of digital consumption.

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