FEMINISM AS A BUSINESS STRATEGY: THE CASE OF THE PEITA BRAND AND THE RISE OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN E-COMMERCE

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ABSTRACT

This academic work aims to investigate how feminism can be integrated as an innovative business strategy, focusing on the digital marketing campaigns of brands that adopt social causes, such as the Peita brand. The study explores the historical evolution of feminism, from the nineteenth century to its contemporary manifestations on social networks, and discusses how the movement has been incorporated into marketing strategies. The research adopts a quantitative and qualitative methodological approach, including case study and content analysis, with the use of questionnaires to assess consumers' perception of social campaigns. The work intends to analyze the impact of these campaigns on purchase behavior, highlighting the differences between brands that adopt social causes and those that do not.

Keywords: Feminism, Digital marketing, Social causes, Business strategies, Breastfeeding, Consumer behavior.

INTRODUCTION

Feminism, since its first manifestations in the nineteenth century, has played a crucial role in the struggle for gender equality and women's rights. This social movement has undergone several transformations throughout history, adapting to the needs and challenges of each era. Currently, feminism finds a new form of expression on social networks, in which movements and campaigns gain visibility and mobilize people on a global scale.

Dutra (2018) states that, with the use of the Internet, women's groups began to act both in the concrete and virtual environments, making it impossible to dissociate feminism from cyberspace. So, with the growing influence of social media, women's voices have found a new space to make themselves heard and reach wider audiences than ever before. This academic work proposes to present a study on how feminism or other social causes can be incorporated as an innovative business strategy, which seeks to transform society through products that disseminate its messages.

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This work was based on the following research problem: how can feminism be incorporated as an innovative business strategy? The general objective of this study is to analyze the digital marketing strategies that are part of the business model of companies that use feminism as a strategy. The specific objectives are:

- Identify the Peita brand's digital marketing strategies that incorporate feminist messages and values;
- Describe the impact of social campaigns, such as Peita's, on consumer behavior
- Analyze Peita's approach with other brands that do not adopt social causes in their marketing strategies, highlighting their differences and similarities.

In the first chapter, a historical context is presented about the evolution of the feminist movement and its achievements over the years. The relationship between marketing and social causes is also discussed, as well as exploring whether these causes can influence consumers' purchasing decisions. The growth of e-commerce is also addressed, highlighting how this modality is promising for new business models. In the second chapter, Peita, a feminist brand, will be the object of study. The objective is to identify and analyze digital marketing strategies that are part of the business model of companies that use social causes as a strategy. To carry out this study, a methodological approach was adopted that includes a bibliographic review of relevant works and articles, content analysis and application of qualitative research. In the third chapter, the results of the analyses carried out based on the case study of the Peita brand will be presented. This study is justified by demonstrating how the Peita brand exemplifies the effective integration of feminism into marketing strategies, creating an emotional bond that engages consumers. Although there is a growing presence of feminist movements and agendas in the digital environment, there is still a gap in the literature regarding the detailed analysis of specific cases that demonstrate this successful integration of feminism as a business strategy. The expectation is that, at the end of this reading, the reader will understand how feminimos, and social causes can be integrated as a business model that, in addition to being promising, can generate a positive impact on society. In addition, the study is expected to highlight the growing importance of Digital Marketing as an essential tool for the success of companies.

METHODOLOGY

In relation to nature, research is applied. According to Thiollent (2009), applied research focuses on problems that arise in the activities of organizations, institutions, groups or social actors. It is dedicated to the elaboration of diagnoses, identification of

problems and search for solutions, meeting the demands formulated by clients, social actors or institutions. As for the objectives, the research is exploratory, which aims to provide greater familiarity with the problem, make it clearer or build hypotheses. As for the approach to the problem, the research is quantitative. According to Knechtel (2014), quantitative research seeks to measure opinions and information using statistical tools, such as percentages, means, and standard deviation.

This data is often displayed through tables, graphs, or texts. In this context, Marconi and Lakatos (2003) highlight that the role of statistics is to provide a quantitative description of society, specifying its characteristics. The relevance of quantifiable attributes lies in contributing to a deeper understanding and analysis of reality. Cardoso, Oliveira, and Gheli (2021) state that Content Analysis is an excellent choice when the objective is to examine data from communications, in order to understand the meanings and senses of messages, which go beyond a superficial reading. As for the technical procedures adopted, they include bibliographic research, a case study of the feminist brand Peita and empirical research with consumers.

The case study was carried out through the analysis of Peita's Instagram profile (@putapeita), guided by the following question: how can feminism be incorporated as an innovative business strategy? The main objective is to identify the digital marketing strategies used by the brand. As a secondary focus, the study investigates, through empirical research, the influence of social causes on consumers' purchasing decisions as a secondary focus. The study of the Peita brand's Instagram profile was categorized as follows:

1. Pre-analysis: consists of gathering a significant sample of posts (images)
2. Categorization of posts: consists of classifying whether the content is informative (with a social nature) or promotional (focused on sales);
3. Analysis of the posts: consists of examining the discourse used in the captions and images, verifying how feminism is portrayed and what messages are transmitted.

To conduct the empirical research with consumers, a questionnaire with closed multiple-choice questions was used and developed in Google Forms, aimed at an audience composed of men and women aged between 18 and 65 years, ranging from elementary to higher education. The answers were collected through the Google Forms platform, where the questionnaire was hosted, and the results were automatically presented in graphic format by the tool itself.

The technique used was a quantitative survey with multiple-choice questions about people's opinions about brands that adopt social causes in their strategies and how these messages impact them. The structured questionnaire aimed to assess consumers' perception of social campaigns, exploring aspects such as emotional impact, alignment with personal values, and influence on purchase decisions. It was made available to the general public during the period of 5 days, from September 13 to 17, 2024. The dissemination was carried out through the author's social networks (Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn), seeking to ensure broad participation and reach people of different ages, genders and occupations. The link to the form was shared in publications and stories on these platforms, making it easier for followers to access. After the collection period, the data were analyzed in order to identify patterns, trends, and insights relevant to the study. The research project was approved by the Ethics Committee of Must University on July 26, 2024.

FEMINISM AND ITS HISTORICAL EVOLUTION

Simone de Beauvoir, in her fundamental work "The Second Sex", originally published in 1949, deeply questions the secondary role that women occupy in society. She argues that this subordinate position is a social and cultural construct, perpetuated by centuries of patriarchy domination. Ribeiro (2020) explains that patriarchy is an androcentric view of the world, that is, a male-centered perspective that symbolically institutes the phallus (male sexual organ) as a symbol of superiority. The androcentric view shapes society in a way that privileges the experiences, values, and perspectives of men, while inferiorizing women. This system creates a hierarchy where the masculine is seen as the universal standard of humanity, while the feminine is devalued and often made invisible. According to Garcia (2015, p. 12) "androcentrism has distorted reality, distorted science and has serious consequences in everyday life".

According to Bourdieu (2003), inequalities between men and women do not have a directly biological origin. This suggests that there are no characteristics in male or female bodies that, by themselves, result in disparities. The author argues that these biological differences are actually social constructs that have been naturalized over time. In Bourdieu's point of view, pregnancy and the responsibilities of taking care of children made it natural for women to be dedicated to domestic chores while men took care of public spaces, thus keeping women away from other areas of society. According to Beauvoir (1949) women have always been placed in a position of inferiority in relation to men, not necessarily as a slave, but certainly as a vassal. This concept of vassalage suggests that,

despite not being formally enslaved, women were subject to a male authority that controlled many aspects of their lives.

Nearly two hundred years before feminism became a concept, some women were already beginning to challenge the society's view that subordinated them. In the eighteenth century, figures such as Mary Wollstonecraft began to openly question the social norms that relegated women to a position of dependence and inferiority. Her work "Vindication of the Rights of Woman" (1792) was a milestone in arguing that women should have access to education and autonomy, paving the way for future generations of feminists. Feminism has become a social and political movement that seeks to achieve gender equality and eliminate discrimination against women.

According to Garcia (2015), the term "feminism" began to be used in the United States around 1911. Prior to this, the movements and issues we associate with feminism were often referred to as the "women's movement" and "women's issues." The transition to the use of the term "feminism" marked an evolution in the way the movement was perceived and described. The adoption of the term "feminism" represented a broader and more organized recognition of women's struggles for equal rights. Writers and activists, both men and women, began to use this new terminology to describe demands for gender equality and efforts to combat sex-based discrimination. This reflected a change not only in vocabulary, but also in the way the movement was structured and presented its demands to society. By adopting a new term, activists were able to create a cohesive identity for the movement, making it easier to communicate its goals and mobilize support.

Over the years, the feminist movement has undergone several transformations, which have been described as "waves". Each wave of feminism has specific characteristics and focuses. Ribeiro (2020) clarifies that the history of feminism does not follow a linear line, it is composed of multiple thematic axes and protagonists. The metaphor of the waves of the movement is used to highlight periods of great social transformations that directly impacted feminism, working as a method to better analyze and understand it.

FIRST WAVE

The first feminist wave was quite long, and because it challenged the historical standards of societies, it took longer to achieve its achievements. This movement was led by women who claimed the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity of the French Revolution, which until then had been exclusive to men. According to Zirbel (2021), this first major feminist wave, seen from a more global perspective, is characterized by the mass

movements of women who emerged on the public scene in several countries, fighting for isonomy (legal equality) and suffrage (the right to vote).

In the struggle for equal rights, two important intellectuals stood out: the French Olympe de Gouges and the British Mary Wollstonecraft. According to Garcia (2015), one of the most enlightening moments in feminist awareness in the eighteenth century can be found in Olympe de Gouges' "The Declaration of the Rights of Woman and of the Citizen", written in 1791, and in Mary Wollstonecraft's "Vindication of the Rights of Woman", published in 1792. Although Olympe de Gouges, Mary Wollstonecraft, and other activists of the time did not achieve their goals immediately, their actions paved the way for future achievements. Over the next century in the United States, the suffrage movement gained momentum, with leaders such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucretia Mott, and Carrie Catt, who were committed abolitionists and played a crucial role in the beginning of the Women's Rights Movement.

According to Alves (2019), the liberation of blacks came to be associated with the liberation of women, and abolitionist women's associations became fundamental essays for future organization in favor of women's rights. In 1848, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott convened a public meeting in a chapel in the town of Seneca Falls. The event was a success, bringing together about 300 people. At this meeting, without great pretensions, the struggle began. Alves (2019) highlights that, since the Seneca Falls event, the idea of female emancipation has evolved from a desire of a few isolated voices to a collective goal shared by thousands of women, crossing generations and expanding to several countries.

In Brazil, it is essential to highlight Nísia Floresta Brasileira Augusta, widely recognized as the pioneer of Brazilian feminism. In 1842, Nísia Floresta promoted debates and conferences on topics such as abolitionism and the republic, a remarkable and advanced achievement, even for the men of the time. In addition, in 1832, she translated Mary Wollstonecraft's book A Vindication of the Rights of Woman, a reference work of modern feminism, under the title Women's Rights and Men's Injustices.

According to Santos (2017), in the second half of the nineteenth century, several women showed dissatisfaction with the norms of social and political life in Brazil, which excluded them from public discussions. They expressed this discontent mainly through newspapers they edited, seeking to reach out to other women in society and encourage them to expand their aspirations and desires. In 1919, biologist Bertha Lutz founded the Brazilian Federation for Women's Progress (FBPF), which became an important center for mobilization for gender equality. The FBPF pressured the Brazilian government for legal

changes, and in 1932, Brazilian women won the right to vote with the enactment of the Electoral Code by President Getúlio Vargas.

This milestone was an important achievement for the Brazilian feminist movement. Initially, the right to vote was restricted to women who were literate and engaged in paid activities. It was only in 1934 that the Brazilian Constitution expanded the right to vote to all women, without restrictions. According to Alves (2019), the battle to win the vote lasted for seventy years in the United States, sixty in England and forty in Brazil, always dealing with an opposition composed of legal sophistry, moralism, ridicule and police violence. These efforts aimed to obstruct or postpone the exercise of this fundamental right of democratic and citizen participation: the right to vote and be voted for.

The history of suffragism is a testament to women's resilience and determination in the pursuit of equality and social justice. This movement was not limited to the fight for the right to vote, but also challenged established social norms and structures, paving the way for significant changes in various spheres of public and private life. According to Ribeiro (2020), the suffrage movement has evolved over the years: initially centered on the achievement of civil rights, it gradually began to connect more with the union movement and the struggle for social rights.

SECOND WAVE

After the conquest of the right to vote, the feminist movement, which had previously been strongly united around this cause, began to fragment and disperse. Without such a clear and unifying goal, different currents emerged within the movement, each with its own priorities and visions on the next steps to be taken. Ribeiro (2020, p.71) observes that "after the suffrage, there were few occasions for meetings for political mobilization or collective demonstrations."

With the end of the world wars, men returned to their positions in the industrial market, and women, who had gained more space in the labor market during the absence of men, were pressured to return to the domestic environment. Alves and Pitanguy (1985, p. 50) state that "the role of the state and the media had a fundamental influence on the return of women to the domestic and domesticated space," exalting the figure of the housewife servile to her husband and encouraging the traditional role of wife and mother.

The patriarchal model of the time insisted on keeping women confined to the domestic environment, taking care of children and household chores, limiting their access to paid work and higher education. With men dominating politics, society, and property, public relations was marked by the subordination of women. In the 1960s and 1980s, the so-called

second wave of feminism began to form. During this period, the feminist movement broadened its fronts of struggle, denouncing patriarchy as a form of political power expressed by the masculine and the subjugation of women. Feminists of this phase demanded more job opportunities, equal rights, and less submission to men, refusing to live only to take care of the house and raise children.

Simone de Beauvoir, in her work "The Second Sex", was a central figure in the new stage of feminism, providing the theoretical foundations that drove the movement. Other influential voices of this era include Betty Friedan and Kate Millett, who also contributed to the critique of patriarchy and the fight for a more equal society for women. Betty Friedan, an American feminist, activist, and author, is widely recognized for her book "The Feminine Mystique" (1963). Friedan criticized the dominant idea that women could only find fulfillment in the roles of housewife and mother. She called this widespread dissatisfaction "the problem without a name," referring to the discontent that many women felt but could not express. According to Garcia (2015), Friedan founded the National Organization for Women (NOW) in 1966, which became one of the most powerful feminist organizations in the United States and the main representative of liberal feminism.

Kate Millett was an American feminist, writer, and activist who inspired radical feminism in the United States through her book "Sexual Politics" (1970), a work considered one of the theoretical foundations of second-wave feminism. According to Garcia (2015), radical feminists, in addition to revolutionizing political and feminist theory, made three major contributions: they organized large public protests, developed self-awareness groups, and created help and self-help groups.

THIRD WAVE

The third wave of feminism, which emerged from 1990 onwards, is marked by the appreciation of the differences between women and their goals. This phase of the feminist movement focuses on the fight against class prejudices, the promotion of the black movement, and the fight against sexism in various contexts. Ribeiro (2020) points out that the third wave emerged as a reaction to the feminist agendas of the 1960s and 1970s. Also known as post-feminism, this critical phase focuses on aspects of traditional feminism, such as the centrality of women as a single category, the idea of universal female oppression, and the presence of a colonial gender perspective.

Third-wave feminists contest the view that female oppression is universal and manifests itself identically for all women, regardless of their social and cultural backgrounds. They also criticize the "colonial gender perspective," highlighting the tendency to impose a

standard of Western feminism as universal, ignoring the cultural specificities and experiences of women around the world. In this sense, the third wave seeks to include a greater diversity of voices and experiences, recognizing that issues such as racism, homophobia, and imperialism also influence feminist struggles and need to be addressed in order to achieve true equality.

Bitencourt (2015) observes that, in this panorama, some advances from the second to the third wave seem to have been forgotten, such as the perception of class and race cutouts and the expansion of feminism beyond white and middle-class women. This wave is crucial, as it highlights how many women failed to engage in previous feminist movements, which were predominantly led by middle-class women. Davis (2013) reinforces that the experiences of black women, white proletarian women, and white bourgeois women were marked differently. The situations of oppression and the interests of these women were also quite different. The very meaning of suffrage, for example, varied according to the subject's social position. In this way, the third wave challenges the idea that women form a homogeneous group, fighting against the same injustices and starting from the same reality. With a special focus on groups such as black and lesbian women, the third wave of feminism highlights female diversity and was fundamental for the development of new feminist strands, expanding and refining the standards of struggle for equality.

FOURTH WAVE

The fourth wave of feminism, which began to gain strength in the late 2000s and early 2010s, is characterized by the intense use of social networks for mobilization, awareness, and activism. In Brazil, this wave is referred to as "cyberfeminism" by Felgueiras (2017, p. 119), due to the predominant presence of young activists who grew up in the digital age and understand the effectiveness of online communication tools. The internet has enabled the formation of a community of women cyberactivists, and this wave stands out for a more comprehensive intersectionality than previous ones, addressing not only gender issues, but also the intersections with race, class, sexuality, gender identity, and other forms of oppression.

According to Boix and Miguel (2013), although the concept is still debated in feminist theory, from the 2000s onwards cyberfeminism began to adopt a more social approach, focusing on the interaction between feminism and digital technologies. This new bias includes varied theoretical and practical interests, such as the role of women in the history of science and informatics, digital inclusion and its influence on gender socialization, as well as the use of social networks in the feminist movement. The fourth wave stands out for its

focus on topics such as social justice, diversity, and inclusion, and for its intersectional approach. The concept of intersectionality, introduced by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989, is crucial to this wave. Pereira (2021) observes that intersectionality arose from the need to include invisible and excluded groups, elevating the diversity of subjects (race, class, gender, sexuality) as a central aspect of contemporary feminism.

Martinez (2021) states that, although the concept was originally developed to describe the intersection of oppressions, in cyberspace it has been used as a heuristic tool or a theory. Thus, Intersectional Feminism in cyberspace functions as an umbrella that encompasses other categories (such as Black and LGBT populations) and specific feminisms (such as Black Feminism and "Queer" and "Transfeminism" feminisms). Ribeiro (2020) highlights that the connection between the formation of collective identities and the preservation of individualities helps to understand the frequency with which the concept of intersectionality appears in contemporary feminist discourses. In addition, the fourth wave combats online misogyny, cyberbullying, and rape culture, with feminists using the internet to expose abusers and create supportive communities.

The internet and social networks amplify women's voices and connect them, uniting them in the fight for gender equality. In 2017, the #MeToo movement gained worldwide visibility, and women from all over the world began sharing their experiences of sexual harassment and abuse on platforms such as Twitter and Facebook, using the hashtag #MeToo. The movement aims to create a network of support and visibility for victims of harassment and abuse, highlighting that these experiences are not isolated, but rather a systemic problem.

According to Luppi (2021), these complaints have connected women around the world, promoting sisterhood on social networks and giving voice to many other victims of sexual assault, abuse, and harassment, demanding justice and more safety for women. Ribeiro (2020, p. 231) notes that the #MeToo quickly created an intimate connection between the experiences of abuse and harassment among the participants. By sharing their experiences, it was possible to elaborate a common identity, without, however, losing the specificities and particular contexts. Fourth-wave feminism is inclusive, intersectional, and deeply connected to digital reality, reflecting the complexities of the contemporary world and new forms of struggle for equality and social justice.

DIGITAL MARKETING AND SOCIAL CAUSES

Marketing is present in practically all organizations, and the search for understanding and meeting the needs of customers is a fundamental activity in any institution, even if not

all of them know the term. Kotler and Keller (2006) define marketing as a social process through which people and groups obtain what they need and desire through the creation, offer and free negotiation of valuable products and services. This definition highlights marketing as a central activity in human and commercial relationships, where the focus goes beyond simple sales, seeking to deeply understand the needs, desires, and behaviors of consumers to create offers that not only satisfy these demands, but also generate value for both sides. With the advancement of the digital age, the internet has profoundly transformed the way companies relate to their customers, creating new forms of interaction and communication with the target audience. According to Silva (2019), innovating has become essential to keep up with the demands of a constantly evolving market and meet the expectations of consumers, who are increasingly connected, demanding, and well-informed.

Thus, marketing has undergone a significant evolution, adapting to new technologies, consumer behaviors and communication channels, giving rise to the so-called Digital Marketing. Limeira (2010, p. 10) describes digital marketing or e-marketing as "the set of marketing actions intermediated by electronic channels, such as the internet, where the customer controls the amount and type of information received." In this context, social networks have begun to play a crucial role, revolutionizing communication strategies between companies, their brands, and consumers, bringing them closer together in an unprecedented way.

Adolpho (2011) observes that today there are social networks for practically all interests, and for each group or segment there is a network that facilitates greater engagement. The rise of social media has significantly transformed the way people connect, share information, and engage on social issues. These platforms have democratized access to information and expanded the reach of voices that were previously often silenced or ignored by traditional media outlets. In addition, social networks have allowed social causes to connect directly with people, generating empathy, engagement, and even concrete actions, such as donations and protests.

Companies have also begun to recognize the importance of these causes to the public and to incorporate social values into their marketing strategies, seeking to align with the interests and concerns of their consumers. Kotler (2003) stated that success in business occurs when one is prepared to identify and take advantage of opportunities. According to him, companies have two options: write their own story or become part of the story written by others. In this scenario, companies can work on the concept of social

causes in line with their marketing strategies or in the creation of products that disseminate an ideology or cause that promotes a positive impact on society.

According to Pringle and Thompson (2000, p.3), "marketing for social causes can be defined as a strategic marketing and positioning tool that associates a company or brand with a relevant social issue or cause, for mutual benefit". Vaz (2003) points out that the main objective of companies that practice social marketing is to eliminate deficiencies in society, addressing issues such as hygiene, health, education and transportation. According to him, social marketing actions aim to solve social problems in four main areas: quality of life, personal training, social coexistence and survival. Among these areas, survival is considered the most crucial due to its risky nature and the need for prevention, correction and recovery of essential factors for life. Marketing for social causes, also known as social marketing, is deeply connected to the causes promoted by social movements, as it uses marketing strategies to support and disseminate these social goals. Rather than focusing solely on promoting products or services, social marketing aims to advance issues that are important to society. Gohn (1995) defines a social movement as the union of a group of people with a common goal, based on the political and cultural values of its participants, which allows the formation of an identity shared by the movement.

According to Fancchini, Carmo and Lima (2020), in the last 40 years, Brazil has experienced a series of classified as "new social movements" or "alternative", as opposed to the "more traditional" formats of political participation. The theory of "new social movements" questions the possibility of a revolution based on Marxism, seeking cultural changes rather than a revolutionary change that would give rise to a society without class division. Gohn (1995, p. 44) states that "the term was created in Europe in the analyses of Clauss Offe, Touraine and Melucci and refers to ecological, feminist, pacifist social movements, among others."

These new movements differ from the traditional ones in their practices and objectives, contrasting with the worker-union movements that are organized from the world of work. Thus, the discussion linked to the "new social movements" is justified as movements that go beyond class conflict, involving cultural issues. We can cite as an example the social movements that represent black, LGBTQ+, environmentalist, feminist, vegan, indigenous and landless people.

Marketing for social causes, when aligned with digital marketing strategies, has become a powerful tool for engaging and mobilizing audiences around important issues. Using digital tactics, brands and organizations can promote values of inclusion and social justice, creating campaigns, products, or services that not only highlight relevant issues but

also reaffirm brands' commitment to social responsibility. This type of marketing demands sensitivity and authenticity, and must genuinely reflect the values and mission of social movements. It is crucial to prevent misappropriation and to ensure that the proposed actions have a real and positive impact on society

IMPACT OF SOCIAL CAUSES ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

In recent decades, consumer behavior has undergone a significant evolution, reflecting changes in consumption patterns and the way they interact with brands and products. According to Dearo (2019), in an article published in Exame magazine, a survey conducted by Accenture Strategy revealed that, in Brazil, 79% of consumers say they want companies and brands to take a stand on important issues in the areas of society, culture, environment, and politics. This global trend is confirmed by the Edelman Earned Brand study (2018), which showed that 69% of Brazilians buy or boycott brands based on their stance on social or political issues, and this trend is growing globally.

With the increase in consumers' social awareness, brands with clear social purposes have emerged, developing their products and services based on values and causes. Additionally, many brands have struggled to align their marketing strategies with the values of their target audience. Kotler and Keller (2012) define cause marketing as an approach where companies and consumers share responsibilities with the aim of building a more just and egalitarian society. This model involves a cycle of mutual contributions between companies, consumers, society and the environment. When promoting an image, the brand must ensure that its identity and values are aligned with the beliefs and needs of its customers, making it evident what the brand's positioning is. Kotler and Keller (2012) explain that positioning involves the creation of a distinct image and identity for the product and the company in the minds of the target audience. Thus, brand positioning is no longer defined only by the company's mission and values, but also by consumer expectations and demands.

As Raslan (2014, p.145) states, "the brand image is the form of communication and representation of the companies that offer their services or products: it is an appeal to the consumer". A well-constructed brand image not only reflects the company's identity and values, but also creates an emotional connection with the target audience, setting the company apart from the competition and establishing a relationship of trust and loyalty. Therefore, when a brand takes a clear and authentic stand on important causes, such as gender equality, social justice, or environmental sustainability, it demonstrates a real commitment to these values. This type of positioning can create a positive and

differentiated image, helping to establish a relationship of trust and loyalty with consumers who share these beliefs.

FEMINISM AS A BUSINESS STRATEGY

Historically, the representation of the female figure in advertising has been largely sexist, based on simplistic generalizations and the reassertion of stereotypical social roles. Women are often portrayed in a way that reinforces the dichotomy between the feminine and the masculine, where the feminine is associated with fragility, sensuality, submission, and care for the home, while the masculine is represented as strong, assertive, and dominant.

This type of representation not only perpetuates outdated ideas about the role of women in society, but also contributes to the maintenance of a patriarchal system that values the masculine over the feminine. According to Barreto Januário (2021), advertising reflects the transformations in various aspects of society. It is evident that the discussion on feminist themes has gained prominence, especially in products and messages aimed at the female audience To fully understand how women are represented in advertising, it is essential to first consider the space they occupy in a patriarchal society. In a patriarchal system, the female figure is often seen as secondary to the male, confined to domestic and support functions. This view is reinforced by centuries of social, cultural, and legal norms that have relegated women to subordinate roles.

According to Tiburi (2018, p.109) "machismo is a belief system in which it accepts the superiority of men comes from its masculinity." By exalting qualities traditionally associated with the masculine, such as strength and rationality, machismo devalues characteristics linked to the feminine, keeping women in positions of subordination and limiting their freedom and opportunities. Advertising not only reflects, but also reinforces social inequalities, using images and narratives that often not only mirror the reality of female oppression, but also contribute to perpetuating it.

When advertisements adopt limited and stereotyped representations of women, they end up collaborating to create a culture that considers these representations as normal and acceptable, erasing the diversity and complexity of women's experiences. In recent years, however, there has been a growing movement to challenge these representations. Campaigns aimed at promoting diversity and inclusion have become more frequent, reflecting a greater social awareness of the importance of portraying women in ways that value their agency, skills, and multiple facets.

While this change is still ongoing, it represents a significant step towards advertising that not only reflects but also inspires a more just and equal society. According to Polga (2016, p.13), the term "femvertising" arose from the need for brands to adapt to a new profile of contemporary consumers, who are increasingly aware of and concerned with social common sense and equal rights. This concept is based on the idea that advertising can simultaneously empower female audiences and sell products.

Femvertising, or feminist advertising, seeks to challenge gender stereotypes, promote equality, and encourage women's self-esteem and empowerment. Campaigns often include messages that encourage female independence, strength, and diversity, often questioning the social norms that have traditionally limited women's role in society. As a result, brands have to adapt to a new context of marketing and communication, where a new type of consumer emerges: much more informed, aware of social issues, participative and demanding.

According to Kotler, Kartajaya and Setiawan (2010), a retrograde position no longer connects with current consumers. In addition, the emergence of independent feminist brands demonstrates how small businesses can be particularly effective in promoting feminist ideals. Unlike large corporations, which can be accused of using feminism only as a commercial strategy without genuine commitment, these independent brands are often founded and led by women who have a true commitment to the cause. They use their platforms not only to sell products, but also to educate and inspire their communities on topics such as gender equality, combating harassment, and wage inequality.

Therefore, the evolution of the incorporation of feminism in advertisements and in the market represents an important advance in the dissemination of feminist ideas, transforming the act of consumption into a form of activism and expanding the reach of the movement beyond the traditional political and social arenas.

PEITA BRAND CASE STUDY

The Peita brand was selected as an object of study for its strong connection to feminism and its activism through fashion. Founded on March 8, 2017, Peita came up with the phrase "Fight like a girl" during the International Women's Day demonstrations, at the 8M march in Curitiba. Since its creation, the protest brand has aimed to provide coping tools so that women can fight against daily oppression, promoting a more inclusive and just society for all. Peita clearly positions itself as an extension of the feminist movement, going beyond selling t-shirts, by creating a powerful visual identity that communicates its causes in a clear and direct way. Its alltype T-shirts — which in the traditional market consist only of

written phrases, without illustrations — were reinvented by Peita to become "traveling posters", occupying the streets and taking feminism to different contexts. This approach not only promotes identification and representativeness, but also strengthens the bonds between women and the community around the brand.

Created by designer Karina Gallon Basso, Peita stands out for its partnerships with movements, institutions, social projects and companies committed to the fight against oppression. Of the 59 phrases printed on her T-shirts, 27 were developed in collaboration with women activists and other groups engaged in the struggle for rights. This is evidence of Peita's commitment to its causes, consolidating its image as a brand that not only sells products but also promotes a genuine and engaged feminist discourse. Thus, the choice of Peita as a case study is based on its role as an example of how activism can be integrated into a brand's DNA and transformed into a successful business strategy. The brand represents a "scream stamped on the chest of those who wear it", resignifying phrases and ideals in the context of each individual struggle.

METHOD OF SALE OF THE PEITA BRAND

Peita has a physical store in Curitiba, but focuses on online platforms and social networks, reflecting its Direct To Consumer (D2C) business model. This model is based on direct sales from the industry to end consumers, without intermediaries such as retail stores or marketplaces. In other words, the product goes directly from the brand to the consumer, and D2C can be applied in both online and offline strategies. According to Santos (2024), the internet has driven the growth of this model by facilitating greater interaction between the industry and the end consumer, which can represent a paradigm shift in the sales sector.

This approach allows Peita to control its own narrative and maintain a close and authentic relationship with its customers. Sales take place mainly through the official website, peita.me, and social networks, such as Instagram (@putapeita). On these platforms, the brand goes beyond the simple promotion of products; It uses the digital environment to educate, engage, and inspire its followers with content ranging from informative posts to social mobilization campaigns. Its vibrant digital presence enables Peita to reach a wide and diverse audience, aligning its messages of female empowerment and gender equality with the expectations and values of its audience. Thus, Peita positions itself as more than a clothing brand; It is an activism platform that uses fashion as a tool to promote social and cultural change. The brand integrates harmonious arketing and

activism, Peita demonstrates how a brand can not only sell products, but also foster conscious and engaged consumption, generating a positive impact on society.

CONTENT ANALYSIS OF THE BRAND'S INSTAGRAM PROFILE

Within the Instagram environment, discursiveness about feminism and other social issues gains strength and visibility, creating a democratic and accessible space for the manifestation of different voices. The Peita brand, which uses the platform as one of its main communication tools, exemplifies how virtual activism can be converted into effective marketing strategies, engaging an audience interested in social causes.

The brand's profile, which in September 2024 goes by the name @putapeita, has 92,200 followers. Peita presents itself as a coping tool, using its presence on Instagram to mobilize and amplify voices around social issues, especially related to feminism. Through its posts, the brand seeks not only to sell products, but also to promote a space of resistance and awareness, consolidating itself as an active agent in the debate on gender equality and other social causes.

Figure 1 - Instagram profile bio @putapeita

Source: Instagram.

Instagram, as a visual and high-interaction social network, allows brands like Peita's identity to develop a marketing strategy that goes beyond a simple sale of products. Through messages that combine aesthetic elements with impactful messages, the brand positions itself in the feminist debate, addressing issues ranging from gender equality to the fight against sexual violence. This digital activism not only reinforces the brand's values but

also engages its followers in important dialogues, creating a community around these causes.

Peita uses the dissemination of content as a central strategy in its marketing, reinforcing its positioning as a brand that goes beyond the commercialization of products. By adopting content marketing, Peita seeks to create a continuous dialogue with its target audience, offering information and reflections that engage its followers in a meaningful way. The brand uses its digital platforms, especially Instagram, to promote themes that resonate with its identity, such as feminism, gender equity, and women's rights. Rez (2016) describes the sales process in companies that adopt the content marketing strategy. In this context, sales must "occur in a natural way".

There is a defined sequence, known as the buying journey or sales funnel, which represents the customer's journey until they achieve full trust in the brand. The editorial line should help the content throughout this journey, making it attractive and engaging for the consumer (Rez, 2016, p. 135). Thus, Peita's digital activism strengthens the ties between the brand and its community of followers, who see themselves not only as consumers, but as part of a larger movement. Kotler (2017, p. 105) points out that "it is important for the brand to have an authentic differentiation that makes it strongly attractive. The bolder, more audacious and unusual the differentiation, the greater the attractiveness of the brand" Thus, by turning customers into activists, Peita creates a loyal and engaged support base that shares its values and often becomes an extension of the causes that the brand defends.

In this way, Instagram becomes a strategic platform for the dissemination of feminist messages, providing Peita not only with a growth in the recognition of its brand identity, but also a real impact on the public debate about the causes they support. This combination of aesthetics, message and engagement is a differential that transforms the simple act of consuming into a political action, aligning the brand with the fight for a fairer and more egalitarian world. Every brand needs to have a deep understanding of its identity, appearance, and what it conveys to the public. This clarity is not just about what the brand sells, but about the set of values and principles it represents. Brand identity is what creates an emotional connection with the consumer and is the main differentiator in a saturated market. And when it's a brand that represents a cause, that's even more important. Barger (2013) complements this view by emphasizing the importance of creating content that truly resonates with the target audience. When developing content with the expectation that it will go viral, it's crucial to think like the customer. That means offering something that has real value to them – whether it's through quality entertainment or through unique and useful information that isn't available elsewhere. To illustrate this analysis, posts made by Peita on

its Instagram profile were selected, from May 29, 2024 to September 14, 2024. As Figure 2 illustrates, Peita is not limited to publishing only posts with product advertising; The brand also uses content marketing strategies to share information aligned with feminism and reinforce its ideology. This approach allows the brand to inform and engage its audience with content that promotes gender equality, as well as promote its products in a way that resonates with its values.

Thus, based on this set of Peita posts on Instagram, it is observed that they are carefully aligned with themes that reflect the brand's social activism, such as abortion, protest politics, and other contemporary issues in constant debate in society. These subjects, often controversial and polarizing, are addressed in a direct way, reaffirming the brand's commitment to feminist and social causes. Peita does not avoid complex and urgent issues, such as the legalization of abortion and women's reproductive rights; on the contrary, these issues are treated as an essential part of her narrative and identity In Figure 2, there is a montage with posts from Peita's profile, where it is possible to observe that the publications alternate between informative messages, aligned with feminism, and others aimed at promoting the brand's products (mainly t-shirts). Thus, the content of the posts is interspersed between social and promotional approaches, focusing sometimes on information, sometimes on sales.

Figure 1 - Montage with post on the brand profile
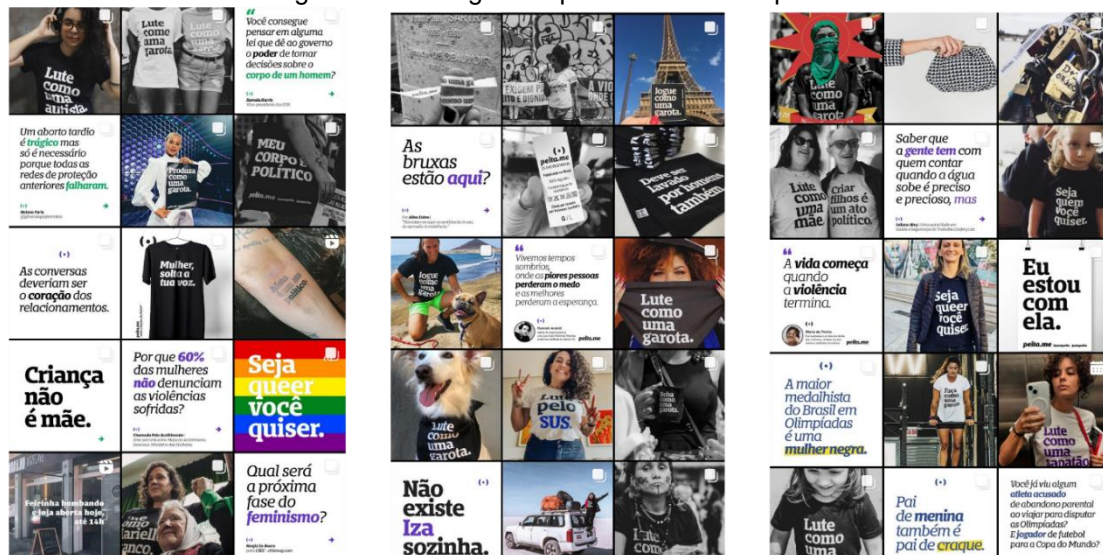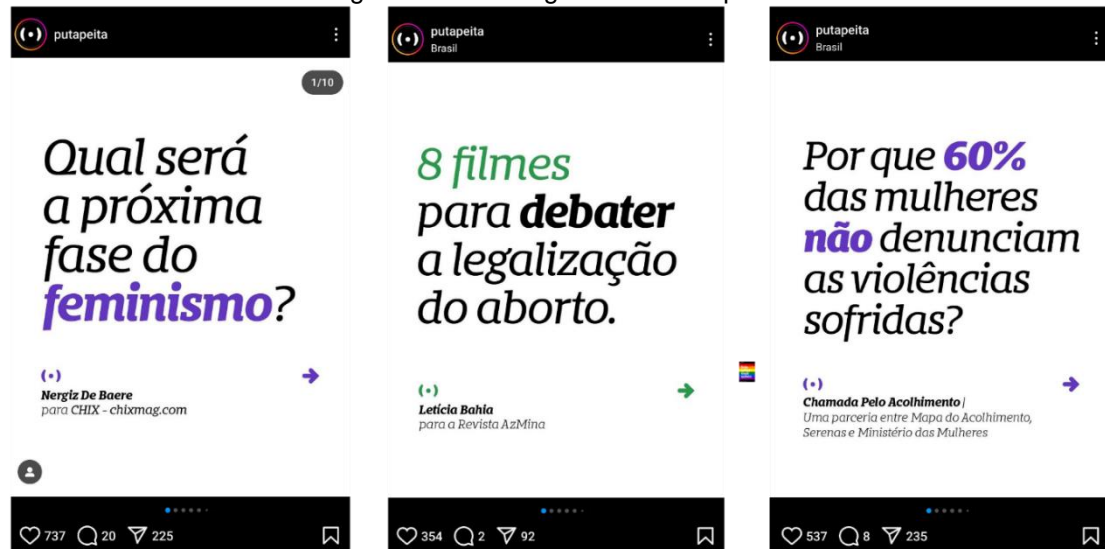

Source: Instagram.

In this Figure 3, an example of posts with content whose objective is to disseminate information aligned with feminist agendas is presented. According to Kotler (2017), the current scenario demands a more horizontal, inclusive and social approach to marketing. Instead of focusing solely on promoting products and maximizing sales, marketers should

embrace more collaborative and engaged communication. The market is becoming increasingly inclusive, and consumers expect brands to engage authentically and responsibly with social and cultural issues.

Figure 2 - Mounting on the brand profile
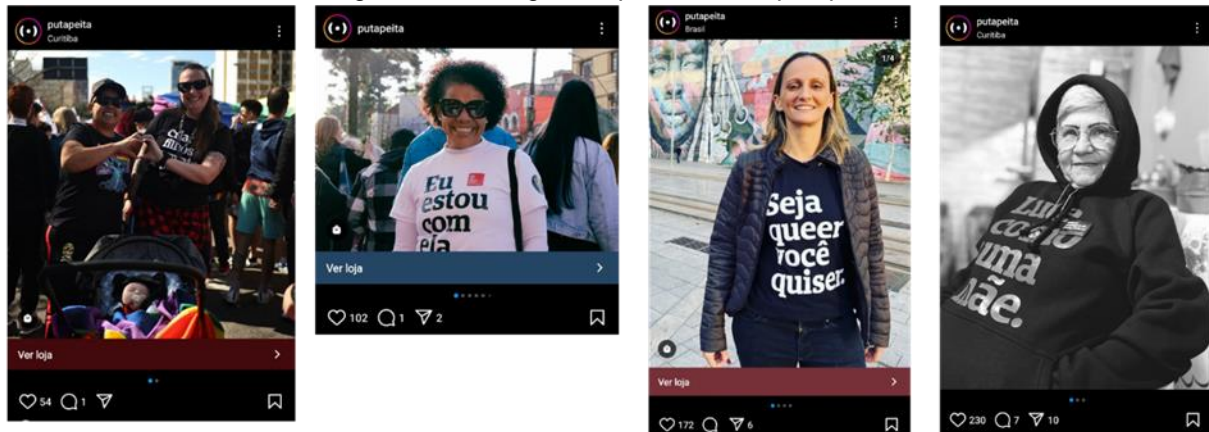

Source: Instagram.

In Figure 4, it is possible to see that diversity goes beyond aesthetics and reinforces that the brand's feminism is intersectional, encompassing different realities and experiences. Unlike many brands that use people with certain aesthetic standards in their campaigns, Peita includes people of all ages, races, genders, and backgrounds. These ordinary people are often portrayed in everyday situations, which helps to demonstrate how the brand positions itself in relation to plurality and inclusion.

The presence of diverse faces in the posts humanizes the brand, bringing it closer to its audience and highlighting that feminism and social activism are universal and relevant issues for everyone, regardless of their individual characteristics. This approach reflects an inclusive vision, in which everyone can and should participate in social discussions and struggles. Thus, Peita consolidates itself not only as a clothing brand, but as a symbol of resistance and diversity, creating a community that identifies with its values and the fight for social justice.

Figure 3 - Montage with posts from @putapeita

In Figure 5, it is possible to observe that the captions used by the brand follow an editorial line clearly aligned with the feminist context. This alignment is notable both in posts aimed at selling products and in those whose focus is on informative content. The brand adopts a language that reinforces feminist values, using terms and expressions that dialogue directly with issues of gender equality, female empowerment and activism. Thus, even in commercial posts, the brand's discourse remains consistent with the cause it defends, creating an authentic connection with its audience and promoting engagement.

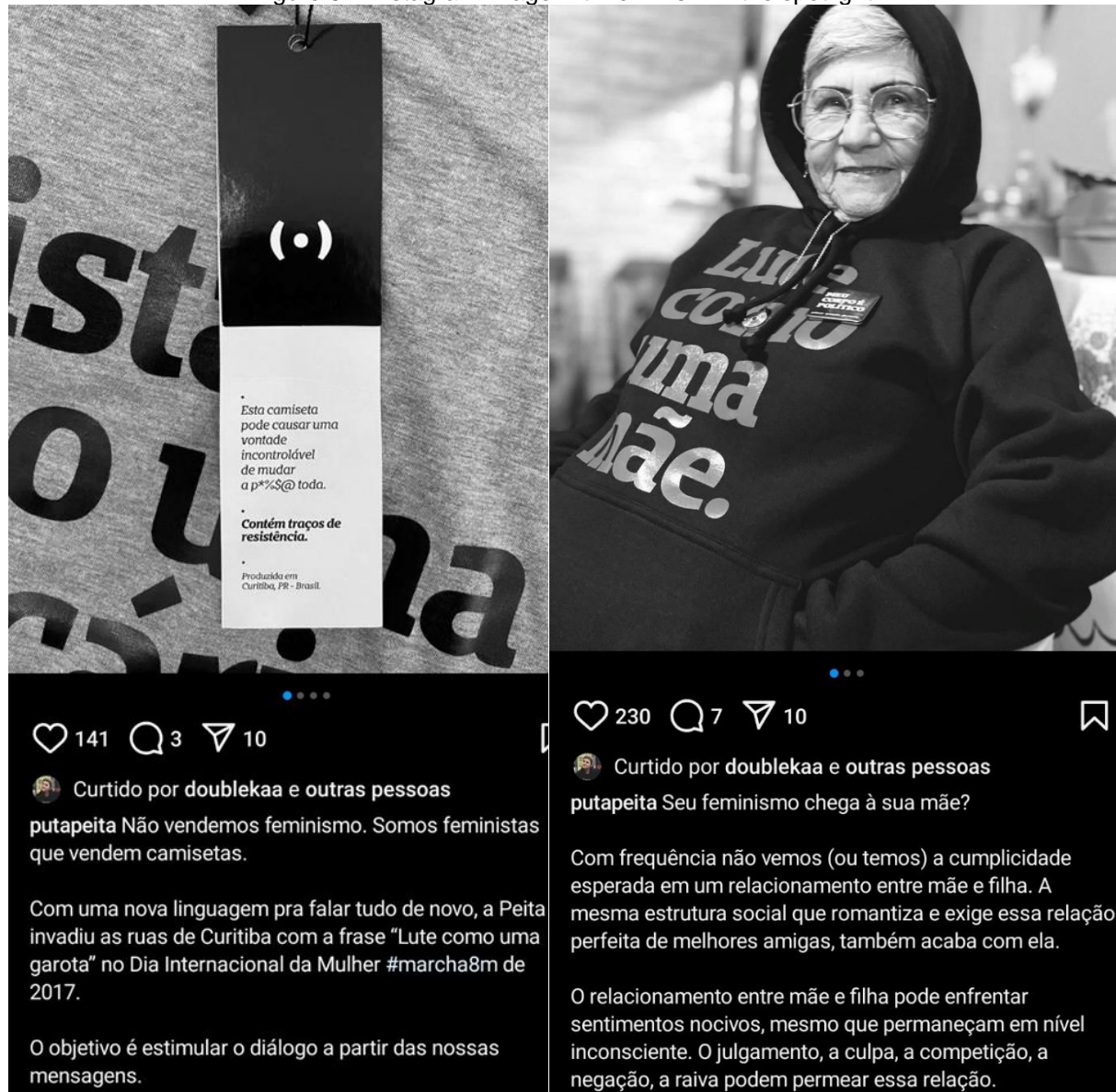Figure 4 - Image with brand post on your Instagram profile
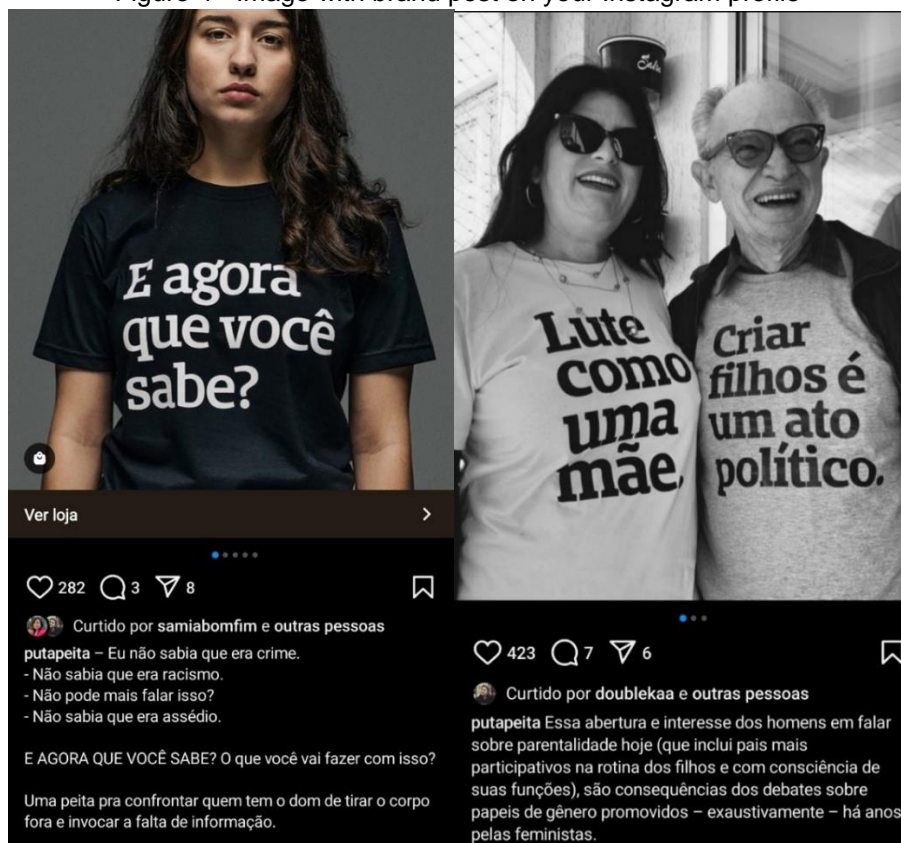
In figure 6, two new images are displayed with captions that connect feminism to the brand's products, without directly promoting the sale, keeping the products in the background.

Figure 5 – Instagram image with feminism in the spotlight

putapeita Não vendemos feminismo. Somos feministas que vendem camisetas.

Com uma nova linguagem pra falar tudo de novo, a Peita invadiu as ruas de Curitiba com a frase "Lute como uma garota" no Dia Internacional da Mulher #marcha8m de 2017.

O objetivo é estimular o diálogo a partir das nossas mensagens.

putapeita Seu feminismo chega à sua mãe?

Com frequência não vemos (ou temos) a cumplicidade esperada em um relacionamento entre mãe e filha. A mesma estrutura social que romantiza e exige essa relação perfeita de melhores amigas, também acaba com ela.

O relacionamento entre mãe e filha pode enfrentar sentimentos nocivos, mesmo que permaneçam em nível inconsciente. O julgamento, a culpa, a competição, a negação, a raiva podem permear essa relação.

Source: Instagram.

Brand Marketing Strategies

Content marketing has established itself as an effective strategy for brands that want to not only attract consumers but also establish long-lasting, trust-based relationships. The Peita brand demonstrates how content marketing can be used efficiently to engage a target audience around social causes. By incorporating feminism as a pillar of its marketing strategy, Peita goes beyond simply promoting products, offering discussions and reflections on issues relevant to its audience. This approach not only attracts consumers but also strengthens brand loyalty and engagement, creating a community based on shared values.

In addition, content marketing contributes to strengthening Peita's identity, positioning it as a company engaged with social and sustainable causes.

According to the Content Marketing Institute (2021), content marketing can be defined as a strategic approach that aims to create and distribute relevant and valuable content to a specific target audience. Such content is disseminated through various channels, including the digital environment, in order to attract, conquer and engage the public, establishing a long-term relationship that can generate economic return. The focus is on providing information that helps solve problems, educate or entertain consumers, as opposed to invasive and purely promotional forms of advertising.

Covaleski (2015) uses the concept of Branded Content to refer to the interaction between the brand and the content. He points out that one of the main characteristics of Branded Content is to avoid the direct sale of a product. Instead, the focus is on building a unique brand personality that can be relevantly inserted into entertainment narratives, reinforcing differentiation. In this way, content marketing is a possibility to deliver free content to add value to the brand and provide a relationship with the consumer. By identifying with the brand, this can contribute to the purchase decision, because the purchase decision does not occur only at the time of the transaction.

According to Assis (2011), it is a continuous process, which encompasses the reflections and considerations made before, during and after the purchase. This insight broadens the scope of content marketing's influence, which can impact all phases of the buying process. Carvalho (2011) argues that consumer behavior in the digital age is marked by the integration between the traditional and the cyberspace, the rational and the emotional, virtual communication and physical presence. Given this reality, content marketing emerges as a tool that meets the new demands of consumers, who are not only looking for products and services, but also engagement with brands that represent values compatible with theirs. Thus, content marketing allows brands to create personalized messages, capable of dialoguing with the particularities of different groups of consumers.

Content marketing, as demonstrated, has a direct impact on consumer behavior by influencing their perceptions and attitudes towards the brand. According to Georgieva and Djoukanova (2014), Peita, by using feminism as a central strategy, manages to connect with consumers who share these values, creating an emotional relationship that goes beyond the product. The application of relevant content aligned with consumers' values allows the brand to build a relationship of trust and loyalty.

In this way, content marketing proves to be a fundamental strategy for brands that want to establish a solid bond with their consumers. Peita exemplifies how the alignment

between content creation and product promotion can strengthen brand image, promote loyalty and provide a competitive advantage. Content marketing stands out as an effective tool for meeting new market demands and building lasting value.

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS: QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH ON THE IMPACT OF A SOCIAL CAUSE AS A BUSINESS STRATEGY

The quantitative research on the impact of a social cause as a business strategy was carried out between September 13 and 17, 2024, using the author's social networks (Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn) for dissemination. The questionnaire, applied via Google Forms link, had the participation of 106 people, aged between 18 and 65 years, 57.5% women and 42.5% men. Among the participants, 34% have an undergraduate degree, 43.3% are postgraduates, 15% have high school, 0.9% have elementary school and 5.7% did not specify their level of education. The main objective of the study was to analyze how the adoption of social causes can impact the performance of companies and brands, offering insights into the public's perception and the effects of these initiatives on the market.

In Graph 1, it is possible to observe that 57.5% of the survey participants answered that they were frequently exposed to marketing campaigns with a social nature. This data reveals that marketing actions based on social causes have become increasingly present in people's daily lives, whether through advertising campaigns or brand initiatives on their social networks. The constant exposure to this type of content reflects the growing adoption of strategies that seek to align business values with social issues, reinforcing the relevance of these actions for building a positive and engaged image of brands before the public.

How often are you exposed to marketing campaigns? with a social aspect (e.g.: equality gender, sustainability, human rights, racism)?

106 answers

- () Very often
- () Often
- () Occasionally
- () Rarely
- () Never

17.9% · 18.9% · 33% · 24.5%
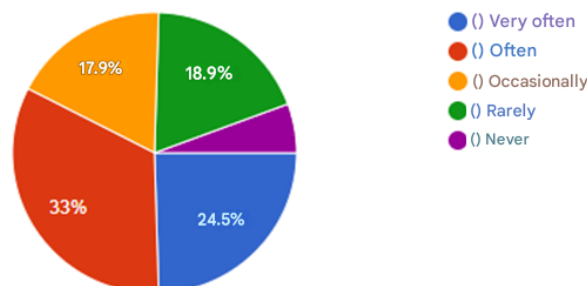
Source: Developed by the author.

Graph 2 shows that 83.9% of the participants believe that marketing campaigns with a social focus cause a positive emotional impact, showing that these actions not only promote causes, but also generate emotional connection with the public.

Graph 1 - Emotional impact of campaigns

What is the emotional impact of these campaigns on you?

106 answers
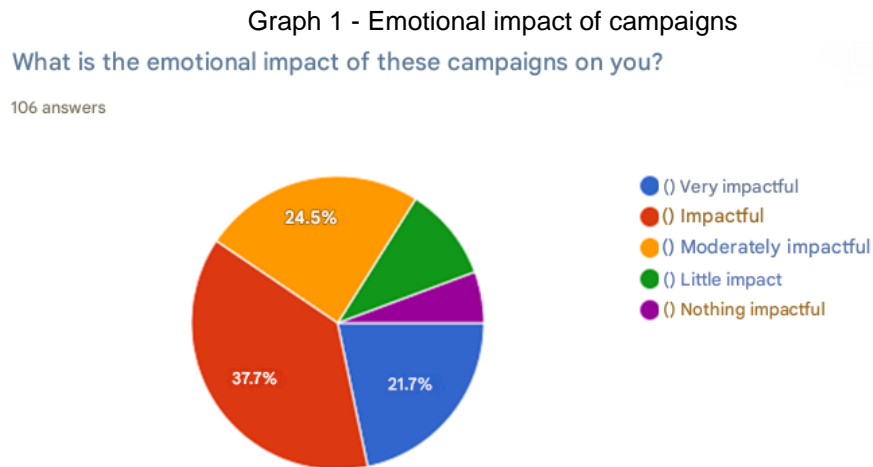
Source: Developed by the author.

Graph 3 shows that 69.8% of the participants perceive a significant alignment between social campaigns and their values, either frequently or constantly. This indicates that brands that use social strategies are effectively connecting with their audiences, reinforcing the importance of shared values. Graph 3 - Alignment of marketing campaigns with personal values

Graph 2 - Alignment of marketing campaigns with personal values

Are socially-driven campaigns generally aligned with your personal values?

106 answers

Source: Developed by the author.

Graph 4 shows that 81.1% of participants have a positive attitude towards brands that promote social causes. This data reflects the growing appreciation of corporate social responsibility, where association with social causes not only strengthens the brand image, but also creates a deeper emotional connection with consumers

Graph 3 - Sentiment towards brands that promote social causes

How do you feel about brands that promote social causes?

106 answers

- () Very favorable
- () Favorable
- () Neutral
- () Unfavorable
- () Very unfavorable

28.3%
14.2%
52.8%
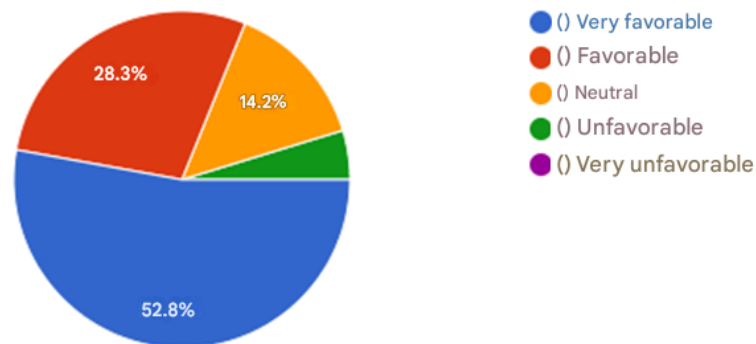
Source: Developed by the author.

Graph 5 shows that 52.8% of consumers are influenced by social campaigns in their purchasing decisions. This reveals that a significant portion of the market takes social responsibility and the impact of campaigns into account when deciding where to spend their money.

Graph 4 - Influence of social campaigns on the purchase decision

Do social campaigns influence your purchasing decisions?

106 answers

- () Very
- () Considerably
- () Moderately
- () Little
- () Nothing

17%
19.8%
10.4%
30.2%
22.6%
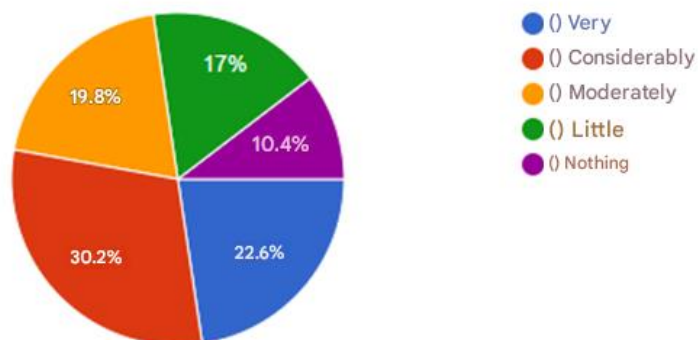
Source: Developed by the author.

Graph 6 highlights the growing influence of personal convictions on purchasing decisions. For 75.5% of consumers, the choice goes beyond quality and price, being strongly linked to ethics and the principles that the brand represents. Graph 6 - Influence of personal convictions on purchase dropouts
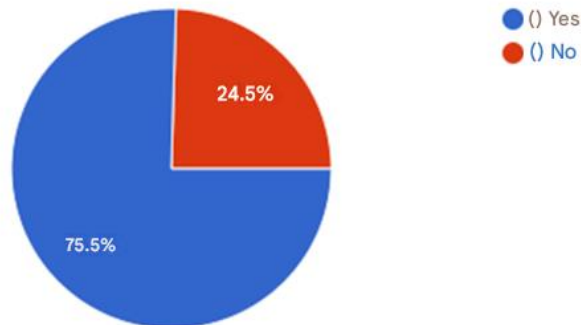
Graph 5 - Influence of personal convictions on purchase dropouts

Have you ever stopped buying a product or service because you didn't care?

align with your beliefs or

social values?

106 answers

Source: Developed by the author.

Graph 7 shows that 76.4% of participants are willing to pay more for brands committed to relevant social causes. This attitude reflects a greater social awareness and a shift in the buying paradigm, where social impact and brand ethics become as important as price.

Graph 7 - Financial valuation of brands and products linked to social causes

Would you be willing to pay more for a product or service?

a brand that supports a

social cause you identify with?

106 answers
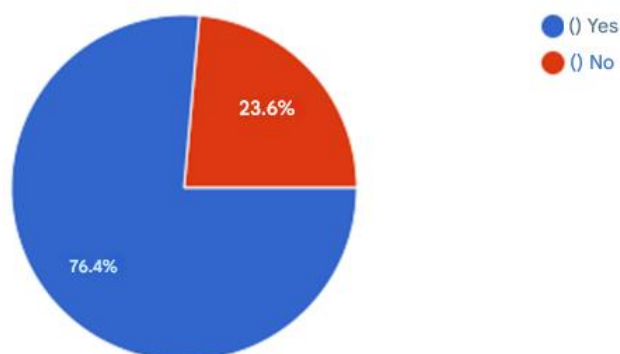
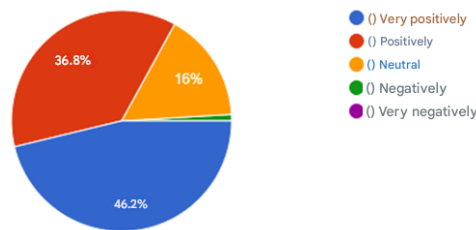

Source: Developed by the author.

Graph 8 shows that campaigns with social messages positively influence the consumer's perception of the brand, with 83% of participants impacted favorably.

Graph 8 - Influence of social campaigns on brand perception.

Does a campaign with a social message influence your perception of the brand? If so, how?

106 answers

- () Very positively
- () Positively
- () Neutral
- () Negatively
- () Very negatively

36.8%
16%
46.2%

Source: Developed by the author.

Based on the results presented, it is possible to perceive a significant impact of supporting social causes as a business strategy. The majority of consumers demonstrate a clear preference for brands that promote these causes, with 81.1% supporting brands aligned with social issues, 75% choosing not to consume products from companies that do not share their values, and 52.8% stating that their purchasing decisions are directly influenced by social campaigns. In addition, 76% of consumers are willing to pay more for products and services that align with these causes.

According to Nikels and Wood (1999), marketing aimed at social causes has become a popular strategy for companies, allowing them to link certain products to specific causes, while providing consumers with the satisfaction of supporting a socially responsible company. The research shows that incorporating social causes into business strategy can be a decisive factor for companies not only in attracting, but also in maintaining the loyalty of their consumers. Social awareness and personal values have become key components of buying behavior, and brands that fail to align with these expectations risk losing relevance in the marketplace. Pringle and Thompson (2000) state that this approach is effective in improving corporate image, increasing sales, and strengthening customer loyalty. Given the diversity and multiplicity of causes available, marketing for social causes can add significant value to the brand. Thus, adopting a socially responsible posture not only strengthens brand positioning, but also generates an emotional connection with the consumer, who values companies with purpose.

However, for this strategy to be effective, it is essential that the social actions of companies are authentic and supported by concrete practices, not just superficial marketing. As in the case of Peita, where aligning with feminism is not just a marketing strategy, but a genuine commitment to values that matter to its consumers. The brand benefits from this loyalty, as its consumers perceive its practices as authentic and aligned with their personal values.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The research sought to answer the following question: how can feminism be incorporated as an innovative business strategy? The results of the study indicated that this integration, in the case of feminism, proves to be an effective strategy, as demonstrated by the literature review and research carried out. The survey showed that people are influenced and impacted by social campaigns and tend to have a positive perception of brands that align with social causes. To deepen this issue, an analysis of the digital marketing strategies of the Peita brand was carried out, in order to understand how the incorporation of social causes can shape the brand's identity and influence consumer behavior.

The general objective was to identify and analyze digital marketing strategies that integrate social causes, in this case feminism, into the business model of companies. This analysis was based on Peita's practices, evaluating its impact on public engagement. The specific objectives were to analyze Peita's digital marketing strategies, which incorporate feminist messages and values, highlighting its main campaigns and strategies; evaluate the impact of Peita's feminist campaigns on consumer behavior and compare Peita's approach with other brands that do not adopt social causes in their marketing strategies, highlighting differences and similarities. The analysis revealed that Peita adopts content marketing strategies, publishing informative posts related to feminism on Instagram, contrasting with other brands that focus exclusively on promoting products and services. In addition, the data showed that consumers value brands that align with social causes, which is reflected in greater engagement and loyalty. Peita, present in the market since 2017, currently has 97.2 thousand followers.

The analysis showed that Peita stands out in a saturated market by focusing not only on the sale of products, but on the promotion of values. The most important contribution of this study is the empirical evidence that the integration of feminism into marketing strategies not only strengthens brand identity, but also positively influences consumer behavior in e-commerce. In addition, the analysis of Peita brand strategies offers a practical model of how to communicate feminist values in digital campaigns, serving as a reference for other brands. This combination of theory and practice provides valuable insights for future research and practice in marketing and corporate social responsibility. The study also highlights that feminism, since its origins in the nineteenth century, has become an expressive force on social networks, influencing not only the public debate, but also the way brands position themselves in the market.

The growth of social causes in e-commerce demonstrates the potential of the digital environment to promote more authentic connections between companies and the public. One limitation of the survey was the exclusive focus on the Peita brand, which may restrict the generalization of the results to other companies in the sector. Future studies could include a broader comparative analysis, covering various brands and industries that embrace social causes as part of their marketing strategies, in order to better understand the effectiveness of this approach. In addition, future studies could explore the impact of social campaigns on different demographic profiles, as well as reactions to these campaigns in varied cultural contexts. This would allow for a deeper understanding of how social causes resonate with different audiences and how brands can adjust their strategies to maximize impact.

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