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INTRODUCTION

Technologies have changed everything and simplified our lives. There are new innovations every day and it seems that this phase of evolution will not have a conclusion soon. However, it would be a mistake to think that the evolution is bringing only advantages because it is also highlighting the rise of new problems. Pollution, global warming, and hacking are an example. Nevertheless, the pros of the technologies are much higher than the cons so we can't waive to them. Indeed, nowadays the goal is not only to make new innovations but also find solutions to the new problems before mentioned. To fulfil and understand this we need to start from the origins. Innovations changed the world, in particularly Internet. Internet has created a split between nowadays and the past. It has changed the way of living, expanding our options and tools. So, the ways of everyday actions like communicating, moving, eating has been completely modified. Nowadays we can choose how, when, and where to do something without any problem. Clearly the revolution of the digitalization has influenced not just our daily lives but everything. The range of subjects available for an analysis is almost unlimited. Consequently, it is practically impossible to study all, so it's better to choose one. Therefore, we will focus on only one subject: services marketing. The motivation behind this choice is that the services are part of our lives. We will consider for the analysis only the developed countries. This because the Third World countries have a low level of resources on terms of technologies. This situation limits their opportunities like the access to many types of services. Clarified this point we can affirm that an average person everyday benefits of services at least once. It is enough to you to think about one of your normal days. You will discover with surprise how many services you encounter every day. Each time you chat, call, buy something, watch tv, take a public transport, attend a show etc. you benefit of a service. Nevertheless, in most of the cases we forget about the services. Indeed, we think about them only when they are the core part and so good that we can't not recognize them or when they ruin our experiences because bad. In the other cases, when the services are good enough the focus is transferred to another thing. Services are an intermediate tool to obtain and improve a result therefore in most of the cases the focus is on this one. They are important also because they can influence the results. This is possible because they affect our emotions and feelings. We enter thus in a complicated area that can be at the same time a problem or an opportunity. We don't have truths and full knowledge of emotions and feelings and at the same time they are influenced by a lot of variables. In addition, everyone has different ways and inputs to perceive them: a same situation can be interpretated differently by people. These can have totally different feelings and emotions on it. Furthermore, when we request a service, we have some expectations about it. Because we sacrifice something to have it, we demand that it is efficient, good, that it shortens the time or does better than us if we would do it by ourselves. Even in this case the expectations for every person change. Imagine now how many variables exist if we put together all the things we said. The result is infinite. So, services influence the perceptions of the results, but these depend also by the singular customer, his/her conditions, and other variables. Let's do an example with a singular event to understand better. Imagine yourselves in a situation

that you make an order in a fast food, and you receive the food with a delay of 5 minutes from your expectations and your recent experiences. Now we will create 2 scenarios. First one: You just left work after you had an argument with your boss that have made you angry and nervous. You put effort and spent the last two weeks working on an assignment given by your boss and today he just said that it was not anymore necessary. So now you are going to have diner on a Mc Donald, and you have a train that departs on 45 minutes. You do the queue and finally make the order. Now you are waiting the order all alone. 5 minutes pass. Then 10. Now 15 and you start to feel that delay is becoming too much and testing your patience. How would you feel? You would rate the service good? Second scenario: Think about yourselves that have just confess your love to your crush and she reciprocate it. You feel like the happiest person in the world and now you are returning home with her. You must take the train that departs on 45 minutes. And now you start to be hungry, so you decide to stop in a Mc Donald to eat. You make the order and then you wait. Meanwhile you are spending time with your crush talking, kissing, joking. Every time you observe her face, she's beautiful and just the sight of her in front of you make you relax and feel good. Now you can't stop to repeat to yourself how lucky you are. The situation of the service is the same: 15 minutes are already passed, and you still haven't your food. How would you feel? Do you care or not of the delay? Did you notice it? Every individual can have different answers for both scenarios. But in the worst case where the customer gets frustrated and angry probably the intensity of his frustration and anger will be higher on the first scenario. This simple example helps us to understand that the services providers can't control everything, but they must adapt and understand different situations to satisfy customers. The problem is that even if the service is good not always is enough. For this reason, employees' skills are fundamental because with the interaction with the customers they can change the perceptions of these ones and transform them on better. Services surely affect the results, but how and with what intensity depends by more factors that can be the singular customer, the employees, or the behaviour of other customers. But it's true also the opposite: results can affect the perceptions of the services of customers. Is it ever happened to you that you notice some defects that before you never considered on a service only when the experience was bad? If yes, don't worry is normal. Our mind tends to remember more the start and the end of an experience. The start of an experience influences all the following processes, this is also known as the anchoring effect. However also the end of an experience could modify the perceptions of the previous processes. For example, if you go to the hairstylist and the service is not outstanding but the haircut is awesome and perfect you will probably justify the services giving it at better rating than its true value. The music is totally different if the haircut is terrible. This time your rating can be too severe compared to reality. We saw how services are complicated and how psychology, emotions and feelings play a crucial role on them. Furthermore, we will also evidence the evolution of the world thanks innovations and technologies that allowed the progress of services. So, the purpose of this thesis is to analyse the evolution of services during history and to analyse the new ones that are more complicated to understand their key factors and potential. The goal is to find new strategies and

tools of services marketing and demonstrate the relevance of studying the virtual world and explain why this field can be the future. To do this we will analyse these themes thanks the study of services' history and the digitalization. We will use some research that together our knowledge will help us to have a better vision and a deeper inspection. Then to give a sense to our ideas and theories the use of cases studios will be necessary. Indeed, without numbers and facts it's impossible to give relevance on the use of digital platforms for services marketing. The data will be collected thanks many sources and often will be the digital platform itself that we will analyse that will give us the most interesting information. This possibility will allow to also create graphics by ourselves. Because the analysis is about the potential and the evolution of services marketing, we will make some confronts between the best agents that are present on this field. On the first chapter we will distinguish traditional services and new services made available by the digitalization. We will analyse the characteristics of the new services their complexity and their potential and their eventual evolution in the future. In the second chapter we will focus on digital platforms that are right now ruling the world. The study of these is obligatory because they are changing the idea of services linking the real world with the virtual one. In addition, we almost always use them, and they influence our emotions and feelings in a way that never happened before making us sometimes discover new needs. We will do a case studio of Tik Tok, Instagram and Twitch to analyse the reasons of their success, their numbers, and their effects on services marketing. In the last chapter we will analyse a consequence of the evolution of services and digital platforms that have created new figures: the content creators. We will analyse the opportunities that they are creating not just for themselves but for all the actors that they involve with their activity. We will figure it out why they can do it and how this can happen. Then we will concentrate especially on streamers and tiktokers the maximum figures of success on digital platforms nowadays.

The main objective of the thesis is to demonstrate that services marketing sector is changing and evolving, and that virtual relationships are its new key of success. Internet allows connections of every type and content creators are the main example of the virtual relationships' potential. They are even bigger, more relevant, and powerful, in the virtual environment, than the most successful firms of the world.

CHAPTER 1:SERVICES EVOLUTION

1.1 TRADITIONAL SERVICES

Before we start our journey, we must know what a service is. The definition of a service is not easy. Think about it. You will discover that you will need a little bit of time to figure it out the answer. Probably your answer will be generic and not specific and clear. In addition, you will neither could be sure if your answer is right! According to different dictionaries and books we can say that a service is an activity that someone execute for others to satisfy their needs with his labour and skills or giving away his/her rights on goods, facilities, networks temporary or permanently. So, for a service are necessary two parts: one that perform it (service providers) and one that receive it (customers). However, behind every action there is always a reason and a purpose because otherwise nobody would do it. Do you know a person that does something without a reason or a purpose? You can also just think about yourselves. Probably your answer is no. Therefore, advantages for both parts are essential ingredients in order that services can take place. The advantages are: 1) for service providers, a prize that often correspond on money but can be also another type of value like fame, reputation, loyalty... 2) for customers, the benefits of the services obtained. These could vary based on the type of the performances. Examples are the access to shared facilities, to information or just a work.

The definition of service that we give is so general and not specific. The reason behind this choice is that services are a difficult and wide subject: there are so many types of services, and each has its characteristics. It would be a mistake to give only a specific definition because doing this we could see only a minimal part of a bigger picture. In addition, services probably will evolve and consequentially there will be new ones in the future. Hence the definition and the perception of services in the future could change. The forecast that it's been done is not hard to make. This phenomenon is already happened in the past! The advent of technologies, in particularly Internet, changed drastically the services. Just think about social media or services like Uber or Google Maps. Even if we use them every day, we remain amazed when we think about all the processes and works behind them. We are familiar only with their outputs and not with what make them possible. Indeed, we chat, call, look movies, play videogames like it is normal, but it is not. How are these actions made possible? Most of us just have just some awareness about them but can't give a proper answer to this question. Only a few and experts of the field taken in consideration can. We could instead give responses to how services like food services, entertainment, transport, rentals, or insurances work. This demonstrate that technologies and innovations surely increased the complexity of services. They also intensified the four characteristics of services. These form the IHIP framework, and they are: intangibility, heterogeneity, inseparability, and perishability. Intangibility of services refers to the impossibility to use the five senses before you experience them. You can't touch physically, see, hear, or feel a theatre show or the restaurant service before you try them. You can only imagine how it could be. For heterogeneity we intend the standardization of the services that always more are becoming similar. Nowadays when there is an

innovation that brings advantages this is immediately copied. Inseparability means that the production and the consumption of a service cannot be separated. In a concert, a singer performs a show(production) and if customers want to attend it(consumption) they must be present at the same time and place of the singer otherwise they will lose the show(service). Obviously if there aren't customers that ask services these can't take place. Perishability is the characteristic of storing some services thanks the digitalization. Ahead of analysing the services and their future we need to start from their origins. Services exist from the antiquity, probably some form of services was present even in the prehistory. If there was the bartering of products is likely that was the same with some works and performances like cooking, making a clothing or a weapon. To talk about services in the past with certainty we must move a little forward. Indeed, services surely were present in the early civilizations like Sumerians, Assyrians, Greeks, Romans, Persians, and Egyptians. Figures like merchants, doctors, smiths, craftsmen, lawyers, and soldiers already existed in these societies. However, even if there were services most of them had not the characteristics that we assign to them nowadays. We talked before of the advantages for both parts of the services but in most of the cases in this period they are missing for the services providers. This because the services providers most of the time were the slaves. So, these ones were obliged and thus there was not an exchange of value between the parts. If we want to be ingenious, we can say that the value gained from the slaves was their life and their physical safety. But this interpretation seems a little be forced and cannot be accepted from an ethical point of view. Furthermore, unlike intangibility and inseparability we find that heterogeneity and perishability are not core elements of the services of this time. To sum up these services cannot be considered like the today services. They were still incomplete. Indeed, evolution and discoveries are the factors that lead us to the current meaning of services. Although it could be that also our era is just another transition period. Before we talk about nowadays services, we must acknowledge two events that changed services radically: the industrial revolution and Internet. We can say that there are two worlds: one before Internet and the other after Internet. The world before Internet contains what we will call the traditional services. Most of these ones were made possible thanks the Industrial revolution that had two phases. The first occurred between 1760 and 1850, the second one instead between the 1870 and 1914. Both changed completely the quality-of-life thanks new innovations that allowed to reach unimaginable milestones. The firs Industrial revolution was based on the modern steam engine created by James Watt. A steam engine is a machine that converts the heat energy of steam into mechanical energy. The burning of coal creates heat that allow to have steam. The steam is passed in a cylinder where it creates pressure and push a piston forth. After water is sprayed into the cylinder to lower the temperature and the pressure, this has the effect of pushing back the piston restarting the cycle of the piston. This piston movement allow the engine to do a mechanical work. James Watt improved the power and the efficiency of the engine avoiding at the same time the waste of energy. The inefficiency was due to the use of a singular cylinder where the steam was injected and condensed simultaneously so it was heated and cooled at every stroke of the piston. So, Watt separated the cooling

process from the cylinder with a condenser allowing the cylinder to remain hot all the time. This innovation reduced the amount of coal consumed to obtain the steam and improved the power of the engine and consequentially its costs. In addition, James Watt converted the linear motion to rotational motion so this engine could be used to more applications. This innovation opened the streets for the factories, the railways, and the manufacturing sector. The modern steam engine allowed to produce more in less time, create more routes of communication and to change the transport of people and goods. In addition, it substituted man with machines that were more efficient, faster and didn't get tired. However, is the second industrial revolution that brought big changes for services. this is characterised from big steps on science, technology, and industry. These were possible by the discoveries of new sources of energy like electricity and petroleum that are more efficient than coal. Electricity was revolutionary because thanks the new discoveries of Michael Faraday and James Clerk Maxwell people were able to store it, transmit it over long distances, distribute it and use it for light up. The most revolutionary innovations that were made possible by electricity are the light bulb, telephone, television, and radio. Another big innovation of the time was the internal combustion engine that converts energy from combustion to work. It has four phases. Intake, compression, combustion, and exhaust. Fuel and air mixed through a valve are released on a cylinder where inside there is a piston. Then the air fuel mixture is compressed thanks the piston that moves upwards. Then when the mixture is compressed, an electrical spark ignites the mixture. The hot gases from the explosion push down the piston. In the final phase the burned gases inside the cylinder are now pushed out through an exhaust valve thanks the rise of the piston. Then the cycle restart. The piston is connected to a crankshaft that which convert the up and down motion into rotary motion. To improve power there are often more cylinders driving one crankshaft. This engine allowed the invention of automobiles, planes and still nowadays is used even if with some upgrades in every type of vehicles. Furthermore, new chemicals and pharmaceuticals like plastics, synthetic dyes, aspirin, and vaccines were created. All these innovations are still nowadays used and present. The industrial revolution changed the communication and interaction between people, the transport, the productivity, and the public health. For this reason, most of the services that today we encounter are born thanks of it. Some services received improvements thanks the new technologies and discoveries other like the illumination, the cinema, the photography, the radio, or the transport by air instead were created. The transport before were possible only thanks animals but these couldn't cover long distances and the time and the people or goods that they can carry were limited. Nowadays with trains, cars, plans the situation is totally different. Long distances can be covered, the number of people and goods that can be transported is largely increased and the times are reduced. For the communications the telephone replaced letters and messengers. The second industrial revolution with these new innovations made easier the way of living thanks the birth of automation. This changed radically also the services. Indeed, is the automation the reason why the services are increased. The machines outperform the humans in terms of efficiency: they are faster, they don't get tired, they are cheaper and rarely commit errors. For these reasons, the machines easily replaced

humans on most of the jobs especially on production and agriculture sectors. Therefore, the humans shifted to service jobs. This transition can be seen clearly nowadays in fact according to Statista from 2010 to 2020 service jobs formed between 62-65% of the global gross domestic product. Another consequence of automation that influences a lot the services is the mass production. A first example of mass production is the Ford model T released in 1908 by Henry Ford. The car was affordable differently from the other cars of the time that were expensive and available only for an elite. This changed the industry of automobiles because hence many people could buy a car. Indeed by the early 1920s more than 15 million Model T's were built and sold. But how Ford was able to produce so many cars? The answer is the assembly line. The assembly line consists of the organization and division of labour. The production is divided on different processes each with their own division of workers that perform a simple repetitive, unskilled, standardized task. So, every division work on only a part of the product and then all the parts are assembled to obtain the product. This allows to produce a part of the product even if another is still not ready. With this method more products can be made simultaneously, much more quickly, efficiently and at a lower cost. This explains how the price of the Model T from the 850$ dropped to 260$ and its large number of production. The assembly line involves more workers that share a project and everyone with is simple task allow to produce better results than working alone. This method is still nowadays used in all the production sectors. Services also use it, indeed most of them offered by more employees with their own task that putting together their work produce better results. An example are the airlines companies. There are employees that occupy of the booking, others of the check-in and still others of the security control. When you are onboard the plane there will be the pilots that will fly the plane and the cabin crew that is on charge of the safety and comfort of passengers. Only the synergy of all the employees makes this service simple and fast. A simple man or just 3 could not do all this stuff. Can you imagine how problematic this service could be without collaboration and organization? The service would be inefficient, too long and probably plenty of errors. The magic of a good collaboration and organization on services is that it defies mathematics. In fact, mathematics says that if one man can produce 1 then two men can produce 2 but if they cooperate and they are well organized they could produce more than 2. Therefore 1+1 is not always equal to 2. This also explains how some services could offer simultaneously a service to a huge number of people with just few employees. Some examples are the transports services, the entertainment services like stadium, theatres, the cinema but also restaurant, universities etc. Naturally some services conversely require that the ratio between customer and employee is 1:1. So what we call traditional services are the services that are born thanks the industrial revolution, that have the characteristics of the mass production and apply the method of the assembly line. These services take place mostly on the real world, so they are those that existed before Internet. The main protagonist of these services are the people that perform them. Their skills are important because on most of the cases they could influence the success or the failure of the services. Inseparability, intangibility, and heterogeneity are the main characteristics of traditional services. Indeed, with the mass

production culture the standardization of services is a consequence because it gives the advantage of reaching more people and has low costs and low times. So, for service providers differentiate the services and offer better quality is hard. The competition is high, and to not lose the advantage of standardization they must introduce efficient innovations on the processes and revolutionary ideas. But those ones are rare so there is a convergence towards the standardization. For what concerns inseparability of services, this is natural because services are offered to people only when they want to consume them. A product instead can be produced even if there aren't consumers that want to buy it at the time of the production. The product could be stored and sold after because it's an object. Services instead need people that execute a performance. The problem is that a performance takes place only when is asked and can't be conserved easily. Especially when we talk about humans, these ones cannot preserve their performance. The performance that a person would do in the present will never be the same of that one that is postponed in the future. People differently by the machines are not automatic: just a little change like the emotions or the weather modifies their performance in better or worse. The entity of the alteration it's not relevant even if minimal the performance is not the same. So, for these reason traditional services are not likely to be much perishable. However, with Internet services are changing. Indeed, some new services are losing the inseparability characteristic of the traditional services because of their perishability that can transform them on goods. An example are the movie or CDs that immortalize the action of acting and singing. In addition, people are not the only subjects that perform services nowadays. There are machines, software, algorithms that are replacing people and modifying the IHIP framework of the traditional services. Another effect of Internet is the developing of the non-ownership on services that reached unexpected levels thanks the new tools and the sharing culture. This lacked on the traditional services but nowadays it dominates the market, and it occurs even between privates. We will discuss these themes on the next paragraph.

1.2 DIGITALIZATION

Everyone nowadays knows about Internet. When we think about Internet the first thing that come to our minds probably is the Internet connection. Internet connection is what allows us to do actions of everyday like chatting, sending an email, using social media, looking videos etc. Here we will analyse the birth of Internet and how it works. Internet is a whole infrastructure of computer networks connected to each other. Internet hasn't been created by just one person. In 1960 there weren't networks, but big machines called mainframes that process computing tasks one at time. People so tried to optimize them and with-time sharing they discovered that these could process several tasks at once. So, people try to make communicate networks of computers to each other. There were at the time different networks as ARPANET (Advanced Research Project Agency) CYCLADE and NPL (National Physical Laboratory). To make communicate computers was essential the invention of the packet switching: different computers send messages along the same set of wires instead of each getting one. To communicate with each other they just send messages along the wires. The messages are broken into small segments called packets. Every packet has an address label, so

computers know where it is headed. The first computer sends the packet toward whatever nearby computer was closest to the destination. The second computer that receive the packet does the same until the packet reach the destination. Every packet travels over phone lines and could take different routes to reach the same destination. Once all the packets arrive to the destination they are pieced back together. However, there was still the problem that computers of different networks couldn't talk to each to other. They had different languages. Therefore, packets couldn't travel if computers couldn't communicate and so they couldn't send the packets to their destination. TCP (transmission control protocol) and the IP (Internal Protocol) solved this problem. TCP is a standard way of formatting packets so that every computer speaks the same language. IP instead is a standard way of assigning addresses. Every device connected to the internet has unique IP number, known as an IP address, that is a string of number. So, when different networks use TCP combined with IP they can communicate easily. Another great invention is the DNS (Domain name system) that has a function of a phone book. Instead of using IP address that are complicated to remember is better use actual names. To understand how it works is better to do an example. If we search a website like YouTube on our computer, this searches the IP address of YouTube on its cache memory. If it can't find it this will send the query to the resolver server. The resolver server receives the query and searches it on its cache memory. If even it can't find it will send the query to the Root server. This doesn't know the IP address but where to find it, so it will direct the query to the Top-level domain (TLD)servers. Top level domain server stores addresses information for top level domains as .com, .net or .org. These change based on their type, for example .com if for commercial sites and .net for networks. TLD server will direct the request to the Authoritative name server that knows everything of the domain requested. Here there are the all the second level domains of the correspondent top level domain. These second level domains are the names of the websites. The authoritative tell the IP address to the resolver server and this to our computer. So now we can have access to the website, on our case to You Tube. Once the Resolver receive the IP address it will store in its cache memory for the next and same query to avoid of doing all the process again. So much easier than remember its IP address. Another big invention was made by Timothy Berners-Lee in the 1989. He invented the World Wide Web (WWW) an entire network of information accessible to anyone with Internet connection. This was possible thanks the inventions of HTTP, HTML AND URLs. The WWW relies on 'hyperlinks' to connect documents together. A hyperlink is written in HTML (Hypertext Markup Language) and can point to any other HTML page or file over the internet. HTML language is used to tell the browser how websites must be so their font, images 'position and size, links etc. However, there are separate files like images and videos that HTML doesn't include. These files have their own URL (Uniform Resource Locators). URL provides a unique addresses to locate resources like images and videos on the Web. So, the servers or browsers must request them to make them display on the websites (HTML documents). To do this they must communicate. HTTP (Hypertext Transfer Protocol) is the language used by servers and browsers. So, browsers like Google Chrome Firefox and Safari can give us information like websites through their

communication with servers and other browsers.

So how Internet works today? The answer is that data centres and devices are connected through a network of optical fibre cables. A data centre has different servers. A server is powerful computer that provide the contents that it has stored inside its SSD. An SSD acts like the internal memory of a server. A server of the data centre has an IP address. It stores a website so anyone can access knowing the server IP address. However, a server can contain more than one websites, so with the server's Ip address people cannot access to them all. Thanks, of DNS people use domain names instead of IP addresses. So, using these is possible to identify the right website to access. So, the process is: searching a domain name, the browser sends a request to the DNS server to get the corresponding Ip address. Once received the IP address the browser sends the request to the respective server of the data centre. Once the server receives the request to access to a particular websites the data are transferred in digital forms in the form of light pulses to our device via the optical fibre cables. The method used for the transfer is the packet switching. These arrive to your router that converts these light signal to electrical signals if you use an Ethernet cable. If instead you use Internet cellular data, the signals are sent to a near cell tower. Then the signals from the cell tower reach our devices as electromagnetic waves.

Now we must talk about why the Internet became so successful. Internet broke the distances between people on terms of communication. Indeed, it has a global reach. It allows to interact with people from every part of the planet. What is needed is just have an Internet connection. So, the potential for every human to reach others are extremely increased. Nowadays we could get in contact not with just people of our city or country but also with people from another continent. So, an enhancement of live is just a consequence of a society that can communicate and exchange information to help each other, to solve problem and to discover new things. However, like said in the previous paragraph when there is an interaction between more parts there are always advantages that benefit both. What is exchanged must have value to both parts, so Internet does not permit to exchange just information but also good, services and currency. For this last one we don't mean only the monetary side but likes, fame, reputation, influence, views too. The power of connecting people is extremely powerful. We, like human beings, are different and haven't the same skills. You can be good on some areas, but not in everything. For example, you could not be capable of piloting a plane. You could maybe learn but at the same time not good enough. This explains why in the world exist sundry types of jobs. We all have different sets of skills. This is true also for our tastes. Consequently, we could find valuable things that for others are insignificant. It all depends by the interpretations that we give to something that change our perceptions about it. Think about an object that is valuable for you. It could be just a photo, an accessory, a collection card, or a cloth. Why is it so important for you? Probably it is important to you because you put some of your values or emotions on it or you link it with some good memories. Nevertheless, is just an object therefore for others that do not have the same bonds with that object it could be meaning nothing to them. Because Internet through its connections make able the

possibility of exchanging things between us, the perfect scenario would be to trade what is not valuable for us to for what instead is valuable to us. However often we don't exchange what is not valuable to us but what we retain that is right to sacrifice to obtain what we want. But one thing is sure: no one will ever buy more than few times a thing what has a leaser worth for him/her than the thing sacrificed to obtain it. Internet has opened the doors to a world where we can make exchanges of information, good, services and currency anytime we want. For this reason, everyone can benefit from it. Therefore, people can't not becoming users of Internet. Indeed in 2021 it was estimated by Statista that 90 percent of people living in the developed countries used Internet. To use Internet is needed to create an account so that everyone can interact with us. When we make an account, we can choose to identify ourselves with who we are or a figure that we want to interpret or just remain anonymous. So, Internet is accessible to all. It does not make no distinctions on race, gender, and personalities. Internet doesn't create iniquities, people do. Internet is a place where everyone can be and do what they want as long they don't break the law. It's when people feel good and free with no fears or restrictions that they become creative and give their best. Consequently, is born the participatory culture online that is what makes the users of Internet believe that their contribution matters. This allowed the wisdom of crowds that is the phenomenon where nonexpert outsiders have a chance to provide solutions to organizational challenges, sometimes outperforming experts, and insiders of firms on problem solving or on other tasks. The wisdom of crowds is one of the main reasons why crowdsourcing exists. Crowdsourcing is a type of participative online activity in which an individual, an institution, a non-profit organization, or company proposes to a group of individuals of varying knowledge, heterogeneity, and number the voluntary undertaking of a task. Mutual benefits for organizations and individuals are the fuel of this mechanism. So, these days everyone thanks the online world has the possibility of giving a contribution offering a service, a task or whatever. Another cause of the success crowdsourcing is the collective intelligence so the process by which a large group of individuals gather and share their knowledge, data, and skills for the purpose of solving societal issues. The sharing culture nowadays is a key of success for many businesses. It could not be otherwise. The exponential growth of sharing is explained by the capacity of Internet to connect and easily match people with different needs that have or offer what the other part searches. This like said before brings advantages for both parts. In addition, sharing goods allows others to use them when we don't. So, this means that people can make profit sharing or using goods for others offering a service rather than possess them only. What stopped mankind in the past to take advantages of this situation was the difficulty and the absence of the possibility of matching offer and demand of this sector quickly and easily. Although Internet changed this situation. Some firms understood the potential of sharing and facilitated the connection between people. In fact, nowadays they offer the service of matching the right people with compatible needs through a digital platform. The incredible fact is that these companies must only match people and doing this they can offer services without owning any possessions. For example, Uber doesn't own a single vehicle, but it is one of the biggest taxi companies in the world. Amazing! Therefore, how digitalization has affected the

service sector? With the new possibilities services multiplied quickly, indeed not only firms offer services but also privates and digital platforms. New services focus their key of success on sharing. We explained the reasons of its success before. Everyone can bring value to the real or the virtual world sharing his/her skills, creativity, knowledge, or goods. A meme, a joke, an information, a picture, a car, a house, everything can be shared. The challenge is to understand how these things can bring more value than their normal use. Often people must perform some action associated with them or transform them completely in something new and beneficial. The consequence of these actions when they are successful is the creation of new services. Another big factor is that the services today are surely faster and more efficient. Just think about Amazon that delivers objects from every part of the world to another on just one day. Furthermore, most of the services are also losing the material and physical things due to online world. As time goes by CDs, DVDs, letters, tickets are always more disappearing. Digital platforms like Spotify, Netflix are substituting these with files that are immaterial, and take places on their servers. A singular digital platform can have tons of files, so you can choose between plenty of films or CDs. With the material things to have the same situation you should buy all these movies or CDs that are offered by the platform and it's not sure that you will use them all. Some of them maybe aren't your type or you just dislike them. Furthermore, on terms of costs the services offered by these type of digital platforms are cheaper than buying the material objects every time. They also allow to save physical space for having material things and time because you can benefit of these with just a few click on your phone. For example, it's not anymore necessary to take the DVD, put it on the DVD player, turn on the TV, go to DVD input and finally play the DVD. Moreover, another big advantage of the digitalization is the freedom of choosing. Nowadays with a phone we can decide whenever we want and everywhere to utilize the services if material objects aren't needed or just to ask them on the other cases. With the rise of customization and the high number of providers we can decide not just what we want but also how we want it. To sum up nowadays on some sectors having physical objects it makes no sense unless you like to have them maybe because you are a collector. Although on services not only physical objects are being substituted but also humans. Indeed, on some services most of the employees have been replaced by computers, machines, or algorithms. The best examples for this are the self-service machines that we can encounter at the fast foods, the train stations, the supermarkets or at the gas station. The personnel are not needed anymore, it is enough that the consumer interact with these machines and benefits of the service by him/herself. The possibilities of replacing employees developed also on the online world. To book an hotel or tickets for some event or transport, to buy something or ask a refund is not required no longer the direct interaction with employees. The websites or the platforms offer tools to consumers so they can profit of the services by themselves easily and quickly. The client doesn't have to call or go to the required place but can do everything through a computer or a phone. However, is clear that at least one or more employees are still necessary so that these services work. They can't be erased completely. It is required for example that employees proceed to deliver the service itself and there must be someone that controls the good working of

algorithms, software, machines, websites and maintains them. With Internet in most of the service the customers play an important role due to their contribution. Parts of the process of the service is done entirely by them. The synergy between clients and employees allow to these last ones to have less works so that they can concentrate better on other aspects. Therefore, the collaboration of customers makes the services faster and efficient. Another consequence is that the number of employees required for most of the services is drastically shortened. The two main effects of the customers collaboration are the better use of human resources on other fields than those ones where they can be replaced and the creation of new types of services. Indeed, like the automation moved people towards the service, the virtual world is shifting the people to new and bizarre services. These new services have the particularity that because they cover new hidden needs are complicated to understand for those that are not used to the virtual era.

1.3 COMPLEXITY OF NEW SERVICES

In the last years new services are always more taking place. The reason behind their growth is the virtual world. Indeed, most of these new services take place online. Covid-19 illustrate us the power of online services. When the real world was frozen during the pandemic people tasted and saw all the potential and benefits of the virtual world. This is easily demonstrable with the peaks reached from smart working, figures like streamers, tiktokers and platforms like Netflix. Two big advantages of the online for what concerns services are the possibility of storing everything and offering live performances. Storing services like music, films, video, art, photography means that everyone can benefit of them every time and how many times that he/she want if they have access for those ones. Instead, the opportunity of doing services live allows to the providers and the consumers to interact with each other during the service itself. Of course, different types of services require and have different types of interactions. Some will be easy for the service providers others harder. For example, doing online a university lesson or a course of something doesn't require too many difficult interactions. There is on one side a professor or an expert that teaches and on the other side students or people that listen and sometimes do questions. The method used by the teacher it is important for the students but is not very relevant to the good working of the service. Of course, he/she must be comprehensible and have the right skills. However, if the method used to teach not perfectly match some students, they must adapt. Most of the times they don't have the choice of changing the professor. In addition, the number of the students in these services is limited so are the interactions that can be possible as well. Instead for a streamer that offer a gaming service the situation is totally different. He/she could be a professional player and do doing things that others aren't able to do. Nevertheless, what makes really the difference is how he/she entertain the audience. The audience in this case is not passive but instead a lot active. It reacts to everything that happen in the game and to the streamer sending messages, emoticons, and asking questions constantly. Therefore, the streamer doesn't just play the game but must entertain and amaze the viewers somehow otherwise they will lose interest and change the streamer to watch. The hard part of this service is that the number of the audience can be very high. We talk about thousands of people and

sometimes even millions of people. In addition, because machines, algorithms, software are replacing people on the traditional services, there is a continuous research on discovering new services. This combined with the online world that allow to transform every performance on a service if it brings some value to people, is a perfect mix. Indeed, these days people try everything and sometimes succeed with particular and imaginable combinations. This led us to talk about the new services. These because are not the traditional ones have some complexities. There are two types of complexity for these new services. One is about the comprehension of how they really work so all the mechanism behind that make them possible. This aspect regards the algorithms, the platforms, the software. Only a few people can have the knowledge about them. When we explained how Internet works, we noticed how difficult was to just understand its processes. Imagine understanding all the aspect and the laws behind them. Internet was constructed by genius with the knowledge of math and physic laws that have been passed on through hundreds of years. So, understanding exactly how all the things of the digital world work and make us able to use them easily is not possible for normal people. Most of the people nowadays in every sector knows that with an input we have an output. If a person puts the foot on the accelerator the car speeds up. However, probably he/she doesn't know all the processes that allows it. This happens in every service that need some knowledge, so the same is for a complicated topic like the virtual world. The other type is the complexity of understanding why some of these new services are successful and if they can be considered services. This one instead is focused more on the human psychology and needs. The big problem/opportunity of the virtual world is that this brings new needs that humans don't imagine they have. Just think about the gaming sector that these days is always more growing. What makes this growth possible is the audience behind. It's not anymore, the videogame itself the point of focus but the person that plays it. Indeed, with youtubers and streamers beyond playing the game is born the new need of watching others play. The question that most do is: Why would you watch others play when you could directly play the videogame? Most can't find a sense. But we try to give some answers. One could be that like in the sports we love we aren't good enough, so we watch professional that do things that we are not able to do. For example, you could probably practice a sport and you like supporting a team. However, it's true that not all these services providers are pros. In this case we must see the service not just a simple gameplaying but something that teach us something about the game or like a show where who plays entertains us with jokes, reactions or somehow. Maybe these two are not the right answers but the only certainty is that these new services bring on us some emotions that make us enjoy them. At the end people are free to benefit them or not, so if they are so successful there must be a reason. ASMR is another relevant topic to explain the complexity of new services. ASMR stands for stands for autonomous sensory meridian response. ASMR is a tingling, static-like, or goosebumps sensation in response to specific auditory or visual stimuli. For example, people with a microphone make these auditory stimuli whispering, chewing food, scratching, blowing, humming, using objects etc. These stimuli have some psychological effects touching some areas of the brain. So, they produce on us some feelings and sensations. The problem

is that not everyone is affected by these and by the same stimuli. There are people that for them an ASMR experience is useless and ineffective. So, they could not understand its value. Furthermore, is difficult also to think about how someone could have created ASMR. Indeed, it was not created but discovered. ASMR is a name coined in 2010 by the Jennifer Allen to explain some feelings like the tingling sensation that she had while watching some videos. She invented the term to explain a phenomenon that at the time doesn't exist and was still not discovered. After studies and research nowadays ASMR is become a service offered on the Internet. This confirms our idea that the virtual world can make us discover new needs because it affects us and our senses on new ways. Most of these ways are still unknown to us. Another service that has a lot of controversy is OnlyFans where people pay for hot pics and video. There are services and sites that offer these services free. But the principal theme is that especially on sex people have strange fantasies and needs. It's enough to realize that the pics of feet have become one of the themes of major success. The common question would be: Just why? Instead for service providers the better question should be: Even if we still don't understand it. How can we learn and create value from this? These examples demonstrate that humans' needs are strange, different and a lot of them probably are still to discover. The online world is facilitating the mental stimulus processing services. These are those that touch people's minds and influence consequently their attitudes, behaviours, and feelings. The services before mentioned on the examples are part of this category. Services of this type surely will continue to grow in the future. Indeed, with Internet every action that we do daily like reading, drawing, talking, cooking and etc can be shared and if implemented with the right combinations it can become a service. The characteristic that distinguishes some of the new services is that those affect our minds, emotions, feelings even if we don't experience them directly. We experience them through screens and not in real life. This changes the experience completely giving us different options and emotions. Often services bring us results that help us to achieve something like eating, repairing a car, learning a subject or invest money. These results remain in the real world, and we can use them or feel them. Although with most of the new services there is nothing of tangible because what they give to the customers are just emotions and feelings. they make us feel better. The problem is that when we talk about feelings and emotions we talk about irrationality and intangibility a world to us still mostly unknown. These are themes where we haven't certainties and don't know how they work. There is no explanation to the reason because people have different tastes and inputs that awake the emotions. You could try to give a logical reason to why you prefer a colour, a food, a sound or certain type of touch than another one but you don't know really the why. Maybe one day we will find the answer. But for now, what it sure is that humans search things that bring pleasure to them and those that erase or limit their pains. Therefore, like everything on this planet services are instruments with the function of achieving one of these two goals. The virtual world is showing us that there are new ways to feel pleasure and erase the pains thanks its possibility of influence our moods, emotions, minds, and feelings. Currently we only know a limited number of things that can bring us pleasure and is hard to find new ones. For this reason, providers of these new services that

find some of these ones often make more money than normal and prestigious jobs. What they do is bringing value in the form of emotions and feelings. However even if they affect positively enough people, they don't reach all. Everyone has different inputs for his/her emotions. Consequently, some enjoy and understand the new services while others not because these ones don't give to them any emotions or feelings. These people could not easily understand and accept these new services like services and their success. But it's not their fault because it would be like to trying to explain why people fall in love with some and not with others. You probably have feelings for some unknowns and be attracted by them while for others it's not the same. People justify this concept with love. However, the same thing happens for the new services. People could like them or not. The only problem is that they are new theme. Therefore, the idea that they can bring some emotions and feelings to some people like films, songs and love do is still not established. There are some things that if you don't experience you can't understand. So, with time people will acknowledge these new services. We are still in the phase of discovering this new virtual world.

1.4 THE ROAD TO…

We saw in the previous paragraphs how services changed, now it's time to discuss how services marketing can be affected by this evolution. The virtual world changed crucially also the marketing sector. There are new methods and techniques used by firms to do marketing. Indeed, people nowadays are most of the time in front of a screen. It's not relevant if it is a tv, a computer or a phone. The reason is simple: with these objects we have the power of doing almost everything. In addition, apps give us services, the opportunity of working and also to enjoying ourselves with whatever. For example, with games, music, films, books, news, chatting etc. Because with a phone or a computer we can do what we must, we need, and we like the focus of the people is almost always on a screen. Marketing could not ignore this aspect and therefore it just evolved and entered on the online world. Indeed, the online world has enhanced the power of marketing with the introduction of new tools. The advantages of Internet have amplified the effects of marketing. The reach of an online marketing message is much wider than a traditional message through a radio, a television, or a sign. Moreover, the main power of Internet for service marketing is the possibility of catching attention and make awake needs in the consumers. When someone has some needs this one will probably search providers that can satisfy him/her. So, one of the goals of marketing is to awake needs. Internet has the power to do this anytime we are using an app. This for the firms is extremely powerful. While in the real-world marketing techniques that awake a need can be not seen, reach a limited number of people and be cancelled with the online world is all the opposite. Often the advertising on the Internet like banners or videos can't be cancelled or skipped before you see it, then everyone that enter on a site, an app or watch a certain video will see it. In addition, reviews on Internet are a sort of type of evolution of the word-of-mouth that happens in real life. More reviews there are and more probably the one who reads them acknowledge about how actually the services are. If the ratings of firm are high the consumers will be attracted more by this compared to others with lower ratings. Reviews help customers to eliminate the uncertainty of a service, so

the perceived risks about it. So, this is another novelty because before the reviews of people happened only vocally. People gave reviews to others only when someone ask them advice or information about a service. But hence these cannot reach too many people and with time they disappear. Instead, now reviews are written or explained in a video on the websites, so they will remain always if not removed and reach anyone that is interested. Although because every person has different perceptions about a service the reviews help the new consumers to understand the real value of a service. Indeed if 90 out 100 reviews are positive that means that probably those 10 people have difficult and special needs to be satisfied or they unluckily encountered some inefficiencies of the service. The sharing of own experience allows people to help each other and partly solves the problems of intangibility of services. The important factor that makes people trust the reviews of others is that who does them is just another consumer that shares is own experience. Reviews aren't done by people or firms that want just make profit and try to trick us.

Another big topic is that people on Internet have different types of influence. The influence depends by the people a person can reach and how these ones perceive him/her. Celebrities of course have the highest numbers of fans and they have always been used on some marketing campaigns. However, in this new era influencers, streamers and tiktokers are the main protagonist of marketing. These are new figures that are born due to the evolution of the online services. This are so important for many reasons. First, they interact with the followers, so potential customers, frequently and sometimes even more than once in a day. This with celebrities doesn't happen. We can see celebrities only when they offer their services like films, concerts, sport games etc. In addition, we can rarely interact with them. So, there isn't a deep relationship with them. We can like, support and be inspired from them but at the end they are just unknows to us. Instead, streamers and tiktokers interact constantly a lot with the followers so the relationship between them is deep. They are familiar to us that we could consider them like friends, and we could care about them. This for marketing is essential and it's not a case that a lot of firms sign contracts with them.

The future about service marketing and services is uncertain. It can go on every direction because there is the universe of the virtual to discover. Virtual world doesn't seem to have bonds and limits. It is challenging the world that we know bringing us towards an abstract dimension. It is giving us the possibility to live not just on the planet where we born but simultaneously also on another one that we are creating. The main example is the metaverse project. A virtual world where we can have access thanks virtual reality headsets that give the physical sensation of being there. The fact that new technologies could even recreate some sensations of the real world is astonishing. Some of the biggest and most famous firms already entered on this dimension and offer some services. We can do virtually on the metaverse do some activities of the real world like attending events, concerts, playing games, do some sports and meet other people. The big thing is that virtual world and the real can influence each other. There is a bridge that links the real world to the virtual one. Indeed, are the people from the real world that connect to the metaverse. In addition, some of them is buying with real money assets of the virtual world like houses or Nfts. So, this led us to ask us: If the metaverse can

offer services can it also provide paid virtual jobs for the real people? Even if in the virtual world the services are offered by robots, software, and artificial intelligence there could be an opportunity. However, there are still lots of challenges to be faced before the metaverse becomes a reality to everybody.

The issue is that it's not sure if this transition to the virtual is good or bad. Like everything there are always two sides of the same coin. So, this situation could bring advantages but also some problems. The future of the virtual world is unknow, but it seems that it can bring a lot not just for the service marketing but for everything. However, we need is to give some proofs and not just theories for explain the importance of studying this sector. The easiest way because we are in a capitalist world is talking about the value that it can bring on the economy. So, we will analyse some of the most successful service providers of this new era and bring their numbers in the next chapters.

CHAPTER 2: VIRTUAL SERVICES MARKETING

In chapter one we analysed all the evolution of the service sector through the years to get to the virtual world. This chapter will be concentrated on it, more precisely to the tools to access it, what make it possible, its environment and the reasons of its success.

2.1 DIGITAL PLATFORMS

To understand the services of the virtual world, we must first understand digital platforms. Digital platforms are new business models that use technology to connect people, organizations, and resources in an interactive ecosystem in which amazing amounts of value can be created and exchanged. The success of the these is made possible by the Internet. Indeed, it allowed the passage from the closed innovation to the open innovation. The closed innovation has the focus on the internal knowledge. It illustrates that the main advantage for a company is its knowledge about the sector where it operates. A firm with its knowledge can offer products or services on certain way and of a certain type. So, if other companies don't have the same knowledge, they can't replicate the supply of the firm taken on consideration. Therefore, if the supply is successful trough the consumers the firm will get the market and will make higher profits. A firm to not lose the advantages of its internal knowledge can protect it for example with intellectual property and copyright. But can also selling it to others completely or partially. This explains why organizations do lots of internal research to find new successful inventions and ideas. Internal knowledge is one of the most valuable resources for a company. However, Internet and technologies changed the world. So nowadays the closed innovation is losing its strength due to the lowering of barriers, the sharing of the knowledge and the connections between people. Knowledge is not anymore possessed by only a few like in the past. Everybody has the access to knowledge. Consequently, everyone can make change and developments on every field constantly. Therefore, nowadays exist also the inbound process. This recognizes that ideas, inventions, and innovations can be made by people outside the firms as well. The wisdom of crowds that we already mentioned before can be used by the firms. They can bring ideas and innovations inside their businesses and then commercialize them. So, these days the open innovation vision dominates predominantly the businesses. In the open innovation everyone gives a contribution and collaborates with others. The focus is not anymore only on the firms and their employees but also to all the people external to them. This is the reason why pipeline businesses are being replaced by the platforms. Pipeline business are the traditional organizations with a linear value chain where the goods before reaching the final consumers must go in a series of various stages trough a linear process. The reason because platforms have more success is that they enjoy two significant economic advantage over pipelines: 1) superior marginal economics of production and distribution thanks their access to more resources and the possibility of generating more value. 2) the ability to scale rapidly and be larger. Platforms allows connections between their users, and this may create, change, exchange and consume value in a variety of ways and places. So, the community of users are those that create value on the platforms and for this they can be considered the bulk of this system. Nevertheless, a firm

must not make the mistake of thinking that they can completely replace the internal resources. They are just another type of resource that the firm can use, maybe the most important, but not the only one. Connections mean interactions so there are needed two or more parts to make them possible. Platforms offer services to the users and allow to them to create other services inside of them. To create value users must do something therefore they play two roles in platforms: producers or consumers. There is also the possibility that they change their side so from producers to consumers or vice versa. This phenomenon is called side switching. Furthermore, it's possible to have people that play both the roles and sometimes even concurrently. The resources of the platforms are their users and the more value generated comes from the users' activity. So, the first advantage is explained. For what concerns the second one the answer is: network effects. These are far better than the traditional price effects and brand effects used by firms. However, network effects are not always good indeed they can be positive or negative. Positive network effects refer to the abilities of a large, well-managed platform community to produce significant value for each user of the platform. The protagonists that cause them are the new users because with them the platform becomes faster, easier, and more efficient so that every user benefit from this enhancement. Instead, the products and services of the platform remain the same, so they don't bring new value. However, the growth of the users can also lower the quality of the platform make it slower, complicated, and inefficient. In this other case the value for each user is reduced and so we have the negative network effects. Both network effects can take place between users of the same side or different sides. Negative network effects are a big problem for platforms so they must be eliminated and avoided. Because a platform has both producers and consumers, the law of demand and supply is valid. An equilibrium is needed. When the platform become larger both sides must grow proportionally. Having only producers or consumers is useless because there would not be the possibility of selling or buying. The same problem even if with less intensity is encountered if the platform has too many or too few people on one side than the other side needs. More the ratio between the two sides is disproportioned more the platform is inefficient. To reduce negative network effects, platforms often use the curation activity. Curation is the process by which a platform filters, controls, and limits the access of users to the platform, the activities they participate in, and the connection they form with other users. By doing this they could control the ratio of consumers and producers. Platforms like said before offer services too. The services that they offer are those one that allow the users to create value. Indeed, their task is making the interactions possible. What type of interactions depend by the type of platform. Therefore, firstly they must attract users of both sides and then keep them on the platform. To make successful the platform is necessary to facilitate interactions reducing barriers and frictions and match the right users. We already saw that the users are the heart of the platforms. If they can't interact efficiently, easily, and quickly these are destined to fail. So, to facilitate interactions and matching right user's platform utilizes algorithms, software, interfaces, and data. For example, they use a single-user feedback loop, an algorithm that analyses user activity, interests, preferences and needs to recommend new value units and connections that the user is likely to find

valuable. You would have noticed that when you search or like something in a platform, after it recommends or offers you similar contents. For feedback loop we mean any pattern of interactions that serves to create a constant stream of self-reinforcing activity. So, if the platform understands our tastes and continues to send us contents that we enjoy we will have the tendency of use it always more. Beyond these services of facilitating and matching the platform offer the main important service that is the access to the platform itself.

The platforms have had big effects on business. The three principal effects are De-linking assets from value, Re-intermediation, and Market aggregation. These are themes that we already discussed with other words when we faced the topic of Internet. Indeed, platforms are just a part of the Internet world and instruments that allow to express its magnificence. De-linking assets from value consist in de-linking ownership of the physical object from the value it creates. When we talked about the sharing culture, we saw how an asset is more valuable if can used by others when the owner doesn't. Just possessing an asset and not use it is a waste. Re-intermediation is the process of replacing traditional agent intermediaries with online, automated tools, systems like algorithms and social feedbacks that are quicker and more efficient. Market aggregation instead is the possibility through interactions to provide services and products to anyone around the world. For what concern the services. Platforms offer the possibilities to find new ways for the task of facilitating and matching. Most of these services often are offered by third providers rather than the platforms themselves. However, the game changer of the service sector is another. The interactions inside the platforms help users to create new services. In fact, value created by users often is offered through services. The concept of value is evolving and like said before also touches the intangibility and the abstract. Therefore, the platforms are a laboratory where users like scientists do experiments to create value expressing their fantasy. Sometime the experiments are successful other times not. For this reason, is important to understand how this laboratory is made. This laboratory it is nothing else that virtual environment where interactions take place. So, in the next paragraph, we will see the virtual environment and how the interactions and value are created.

2.2 VIRTUAL SERVICE ENVIRONMENT

With virtual environment we mean what we see inside the screen of a phone, computer or a tv. It's an abstract and intangible environment. We can't enter in it physically. It's totally different from the real world. So, the services marketing methods on it as well. The service environment in virtual world changes drastically. Before talking about the virtual service environment, we must divide the services offered to customers where they can only consume them by themselves and the services online where customer can share their works, pictures, and videos. The first ones are online self-services. Employees are almost absent in this place. Only when there are important problems people has the chance of contacting these for assistance. These are websites where customers can buy products and services. The total focus is on the customer and his/her freedom of choosing. However, this is alone and don't interact with other customers

and employees. Then there are environments where the interactions are possible. Between employees, between customers and between both customers and employees. These environment are the digital platforms where people create services and not just consume them. Before talking about the online environment and its effects on services marketing we must understand how services marketing works on the real environment. Traditional services marketing methods on the real service environment are based on the servicescape model. On the servicescape model are present the environment and both employees and customers. The environment has three dimension that are the ambient conditions, the space/function and the signs, symbols, and artifacts. The combination of these three element produce a certain type of environment that influence both customers and employees giving them certain perceptions of the servicescape. The influence happens on three areas that are cognitive (beliefs and perceptions), emotional (feelings and moods) and physiological (pain and comfort). The internal responses of the customers on these three areas determine their behaviour. The same is for the employees. The problem/opportunity is that the interactions between customers and employees could influence and change all the internal response that they both had. So, the perception of the servicescape can be a lot influenced by these interactions. A good perception for the environment of a customer can be ruined by a bad interaction with an employee. Also, the opposite can happen. With the virtual all changes. Firstly, employees could disappear. Secondly the five senses are perceived differently. For example, the physiological part almost disappears. The touch changes completely. Some feelings perceived by external factors and objects are erased. So, elements of ambient conditions like temperature, odour, touching, physical buildings, feeling the comfort are useless on the virtual world. Service providers can't use them anymore to influence customers. The senses that are most used in the virtual environment services are the sight and the hearing and the touch.

What makes possible the virtual world mainly is the sight. It is the principal sense that we use when we are on the virtual world. The virtual world is behind a screen. So, to enter in it the sight is necessary. On the internet the environment is totally different. This is an environment that we can't touch directly. So, an image, a websites a videos or whatever inside the screen can't be touched with our bare hands. We can touch the screen but not what it is inside. However, we have the power to do some actions on these things of the virtual world. For example, we can delete photos, modify them, choose a video like it or not. Furthermore, the online service environment doesn't have the physical part of the real world. Websites don't have real equipment, furnishings or a physical ambient but just their photos. What we see on screen are app and websites. So now what is important is the design of these. The using of colours, drawings, images, signs, videos, messages are elements of the real-world marketing that can be used even on the virtual one. For what concerns the firms their online environment should match the identity that it has with their consumers. Luxury brands could not have a website that is not elegant and professional. The virtual world because it's a creation of humans has connection with reality. The online environment must be easy because there is almost an absence of employees. So, the customers should understand easily and quickly how they can use

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it. Spatial layout and functionality are essential. Size, shape, of photos, text, messages, and the way they are arranged determines the quality of a website and on its ease of use. If these elements are mistakenly mixed, they could stress and irritate the consumers. These could be a too little picture of an item that they wanted to purchase so they can't see it clearly, an ugly character of texts that made difficult the lecture, an image that cover almost all the screen etc. After satisfied this aspect the online environment must guide so teach the rules and give directions to find what people search. This works is made on real world with signs, symbols, and artifacts. In the online this is done world with key words that divide the website in categories. So, if we want to purchase some clothing there are key words of categories like t-shirt, sleeves, jackets etc that are displayed so that we can see them and by click the website will redirect us to all the items of that category. If we enter on a website where we don't understand nothing, where to search, what to do and how we will abandon it. However, all the design is useless if then inside the online environment we can't makes things that it is supposed to offer. This happens when that websites or platforms don't work well because they are inefficient, slow, their links don't work, and they block frequently. These factor could make us change the service provider even if it's our favourite. They would just make us lose time and stress us.

Another sense that is important but not used by all is the hearing. On some online services is not necessary but in others is the core element. For example, on most websites of companies is totally absent. There are no sounds when we visit a site to purchase an item. We have sounds only when we play some music, videos or we receive calls and notifications. Some platforms make some sounds when we do some actions as reacting with an emoji to a post or put a like on it. However, the sounds effect or also registered messages could be developed more. Websites could play some music when you are surfing on them, if you purchase something send you a vocal human message where they thank you or make you a compliment. Using a human voice or a robot voice depend by the context. The effects of music, sounds are a lot used also on the virtual world. So even on the online service marketing could, by the way they are already used on the real world. The issue is to find how they can be used on the virtual. Music is used on marketing because its effects on people to change their behaviour. It can be used to relax people, reduce perceived waiting time, or adjust their pace. However, the virtual world is different, and it doesn't need some of these effects. But at the same time, it offers a better supply than just music. All type of sounds can be used and in addition like images also sounds on the virtual world can be created. The power of some sounds is that they can be associated with something, so they awaken some emotions and reactions on people. For example, some memes are sounds and these make us laugh because they are associated to funny events or meanings that we remember just hearing them. So, online services marketing can use all types of sounds. And if it can create some positive associations to them can affect people's minds and behaviours. Online service marketing could also offer to customers a multitude of sounds that they can choose to use as default when they do some activities on the websites or apps. This could enhance their experience of using a service. For example, Twitch a live streaming platform allows to users to send sounds of alerts or messages to the streamers. Sounds are great weapon of marketing

so if the online world enlarges its power, it's better to use it.

Sight, hearing, and touch are the senses that are always stimulated when we are connected to the virtual world. However, the touch is a sense that in the virtual world has totally another meaning. We must use a phone, a computer or a tv to access on the virtual world. These objects require the use of at least one the hand so that they can be used. So, the touch of a phone, a textboard, a mouse, a tv controller is necessary. It is not anymore, the touch of the objects or people that we encounter on the real-world services. The service providers don't have the total control of it. Nevertheless, they could still influence on the touch sense. Service providers could influence on the touch on some service through the means that people use to ask or utilize them. Indeed, there are the possibility of using vibrations for phones or some object like console controllers when we receive a notification or when playing a videogame or a certain event happens. Another instrument that could be used when we are connected to the virtual world are headphones. They are a product that are used for a better experience of sounds. So online services can't offer touch of the service experience but can maintain active the touch of the users. They could use vibrations, interesting systems, and ways to use objects. We always in contact with phone and computers. So, when we use a service website this could be designed to make us text more or touching the screen. If the screen is touch with one finger we can press, text, draw, scroll down, or up and swipe left or right. By doing these actions, we can sometimes modify what is inside the screen. Therefore, in the virtual world there is an intangible touch that it is caused by tangible touch of real objects. So online services marketing techniques should combinate the sight, the hearing, and the touch so that customers are active when they come across them.

For what concern taste it could be stimulated indirectly with the sight and hearing. How it happens in real life symbols, sings and video sometimes make us hungry or thirsty the same can happen in the virtual world. The difference is that in the virtual world people are looking on a screen so if the ad or video catch their attention, they will be focused on it. This situation raises the chances of awakening the need of eating/drinking that food/beverage. Nowadays there are videos. These are better than simply imagines. We are taking on considerations videos that we come across on digital platform made by normal people that want share their experiences, give advice and their review. In these videos the food could be cooked or eaten. An imagine could be tricky because not real and they are limited to the sight. Instead, a video is a recording of the real world. So, the videos as well as can show us the good characteristics of the food like its gluttony or freshness they can make us heard the food's sounds. Indeed, in the videos can be heard sounds of the food's crunchiness or those that ingredients make when they are cooked. In addition, music or vocally reviews can be added to the original sound to make the videos more interesting. Consequently, these videos if well done affect the taste especially when we are hungry awakening the need of eating that food. How this is possible? Foods that we like bring us pleasure and we are used to their flavour because eating is a daily activity to survive. So, remembering or imagine how a food could be it's not difficult. In addition, just the imagination of eating specific foods not only its odour, its sight, its sounds, its touch can produce a raise of

salivation that leads people to the action of eating. Therefore, videos that can merge imagination, sight and sounds of a food together amplify this effect of salivation. This could have an immediate response of choosing to consume that food soon or maybe on the later days.

The topic of the smell instead is complicated. Scent and bad smell can't be felt online. This is a disgrace because scents are in important tool of marketing on the real world. They have the power of influencing people's behaviour, moods, and emotions. Like we said before for the food with the salivation they have also a lot of other effects. Most of them are nowadays still unknow. Indeed, there are much research with the purpose of understanding how they work. The most common and easiest to understand is that people are attracted by good smell while they walk away from the bad ones. You probably experienced one of these two situations on your life. You would remember a scenario where you couldn't stay near a person or an object that stank. Unfortunately, the scents on the virtual world can't be used for now. Imagines and videos can't produce them but evoke memories about them. Furthermore, smelling odours is not necessary to survive like eating. Maybe because of this our brain doesn't give us some signal to fulfil this need. When we just see something that can remember us an odour, there are no effects on our body. With food we saw that it's different. Odours can't be touched, heard, seen, and tasted. They can be perceived only with smell and affect us only when they are smelled. So, they can't be used on online service marketing yet. Maybe one day there will be find a solution.

In this paragraph we saw how online service environment is different from the real one especially on our perceptions about the five senses. We have suggested and understood that marketing activities in the online environment can be done mixing the senses in ingenious ways. In the next one we will see what actions that can be done inside the virtual world analysing some of the most successful digital platforms.

2.3 THE BIG THREE: TIK TOK, INSTAGRAM AND TWITCH

It' time now to analyse three big digital platforms. We will analyse Tik Tok, Instagram and Twitch. These are three digital platforms that allow interactions between users. The interactions take place thanks the users that produce contents and others that consume them.

Instagram is a platform where are shared pics and video trough posts that allow users to describe these. Users can have their own account or create a page. A page differently by the normal user account has a topic to follow so the post will be focused on it. Often the pages are managed by more than one user. This permits a better supply of content on terms of quantity, variety, and quality. A user can choose to follow other people or pages he/she likes. The follow permit to see all the post of the people or pages followed. The posts appear on chronological order from the most recent to the oldest. Post can be liked, commented, or shared. In addition, every user can talk with another one through messages and vocals. All these type of tools allow every type of interactions. Private interactions when people want to talk and know a person through direct messages or also public commenting a post and discuss with others about it. The interactions can be also just the like that people put on a post. Of course, there also options to restrict interactions: a user can block other

users and decide if they can see or comment his/her posts. The account could also be private so that the users can decide who can follow they and who can't. The posts that people can see are not just of the users followed. Indeed, we can search pages and users and decide to see posts of some topics searching them through hashtags. When users upload a post, they can use a hashtag on their description so that it can reach every user that searches that hashtag. Other than searching hashtags or pages users can go in a page where there are random posts that they can choose to see. Of course, the posts are recommended by algorithms based on pages and users followed, and post liked, commented, and shared. A novelty are the stories that differently from the post they can be seen only for a restricted time that is a day from their publications. These are on the top of the screen so easily to notice. When people want to see them, they must click on them. These differently by post are shorts video that can last maximum 60 seconds. When they end the Instagram pass to the next story of the same user and if he/she hasn't to the stories of the next users. Like for the posts people can see the stories of people followed. To watch stories of people not followed users must search their accounts and click on their stories. Users can follow other users, so if some of these offer post that are appreciated from many people, they will reach high number of followers. Even normal people can reach millions of followers not only celebrities or famous firms. The success of Instagram is made by its ease of use, the different interactions that people can have and the posts that can entertain, teach, or inform the users. Because of the interactions there are also possibilities of selling activities. There is a shop dedicated on the platform, but otherwise firms or users on their posts and account can make links that bring followers to their online website. Indeed, Instagram offer a business profile for the firms to help them on their activity. These advantage are the planification and monitoring of posts so their reach, the interactions, and impressions of people on them, the possibility of advertising on the platforms with ads, put links and products tags, information about the firm emails and telephone numbers. In Instagram marketing activities are made through posts and stories that can be images or videos.

Tik Tok is not too different from Instagram. The account, the follow, the post, the likes, the comments, the messages, the shares systems, and everything else works like in Instagram. The only difference is that Tik Tok focuses only on short videos. So, when people use it encounter videos that they can scroll up or down. These videos are often recorded by just a phone. Because they are short people doesn't spend a lot of time doing them. The only difficulty could be the editing part that some users do. But even this is easy because of the tools the platform offers. So, there are not require too many skills. Just trying these tools, a person can learn easily how to use them. Once people understand how the tools of Tik Tok, they can make and upload a video in less than 5 minutes. On the video people can put, thanks the tools sounds, music, pics, videos, insertion of some texts etc. Due to this opportunity people sometimes don't need record a video, they can just use pics or just some video that they find online like parts of films. With all these tools users create videos. The goal is to share experiences and create something of valuable that people enjoy watching while having fun on doing them. Everybody can create every type of videos with their fantasy. Tik Tok is an

environment where people laugh, have fun, learn, remember things based on the types of videos they choose to watch. Users can also do lives also offering a streaming service. Viewers can donate money to the users that are live through gifts that can be bought and each of them has a singular value of money. We will see better this aspect when we will analyse Twitch. Like in Instagram users of Tik Tok that create videos better known as tiktokers can reach millions of followers. Of course, they can do marketing activities in their videos sponsoring firms directly talking about the products or the services or just indirectly simply showing something of the firms on the videos.

Twitch is different from the other two because is streaming platform. Streaming is the continual transmission of audio and video files from a server to a client thanks the Internet. Like an email can be sent and read instantly the same happens with videos. What is needed is an Internet connection, a device that has a camera and an audio. So just a phone is enough. People could connect to the Twitch platform and start the stream recording themselves. The potentiality is huge because we can record everything about our daily lives. In addition, we can share the screen of our computers and tv so everything that we do inside them can be recorded and viewed by the audience. There are different categories that these days dominates the platform: Gaming, Esports, IRL (in real life), music and art. Twitch is born like a gaming category but like we can see with the categories offered it evolved. For the gaming category we find streams of streamers that play videogames. Esports instead is the category where there are streams of competitive gaming events. These are like the sports events we see on tv. There are commentators, gamers, and the gameplay. For music and art category, the streamers produce them on real world or on the virtual world. For example, in art category there are streams of people that teach how to program software and develop game sharing their computer screen or construct some real objects. However, is the IRL category is the most important because here there are streams of everything that can be done in real life. So, streams of travels, ASMR, cooking, chats with the viewers, podcasts, fitness activities etc. Almost everything can be recorded and be offered as streams. Of course, illegal things and some other contents are not possible. There indeed some rules that streamers must respect otherwise they are banned from the platform. An example is the music copyright. Sometimes on the streams are not even needed humans because exist streams of zoo and aquariums too, so of the environments. The potential of Twitch is that when there is a person that streams, he/she can always interact with the viewers. Streamers indeed if they want, they have the possibility of sharing more than one screen. So, if they are playing a game, they share the screen of the gameplay and then a screen where they are recorded using another camera. The viewers will see both screens. The streamer of course will put the screen that is recording him/her in a smaller size or remove it completely. He/she could always interact with the viewers just using the voice remaining, if he/she want, even anonymous. Platform provides to the viewers instruments with which can interact with the streamer. Viewers can text messages, emoji, memes, send vocal messages through an artificial voice or sounds. Viewers can also subscribe to the streamer channel. There are different types of subscriptions. Based on the type chosen viewers can have different contents offered by

the streamer as emoticon, views without ads, memes, badges, VOD (video on demand), and other advantages. You can subscribe to the channel paying money or freely using the account of Amazon Prime. Sometimes some viewers can gift the subscription to other viewers too. People don't subscribe only to have some advantages but also only to support the streamers. People can support them also doing donations of money. This can be done through money and bits. Bits are a virtual good you can buy on Twitch. They are used to get attention in chat through animated emoticons, vote in polls, get recognition through badges, and acknowledgement from the streamer. For every bit received the streamer receive an amount of money. This can be used other to support the streamer, to celebrate some events and to gamble with the streamer on what will happen next or if he/she will be able to achieve a result in a game. Twitch with its supply of streaming create relationships between streamers and viewers. Indeed, streamers stream a lot of time almost every day. So, the viewers that interact with them spend a lot of time with them. In addition of the interaction between them make both grow fond to the other side. If the viewers follow the stream means that they enjoy it and they have fun. The same is for the streamers that interact with people that support them and recognize their work. Streamers while streaming do a performance. This performance is offered to the viewers that can pay trough money or watching the lives. So, we can say that they are service providers. The same happens with tik tokers because they create videos by using with their fantasy, intellect and often even recording themselves doing some actions like acting or dancing.

We see why people use these three digital platforms and what makes them successful. So, for services marketing is important to study them because they can give important information about the potential reach of online marketing activities inside their platform. Furthermore, they give information about their users so on the potential market of the firms. The collected data help the firms on their segmentation, targeting and positioning activities.

2.3.1 REACH AND CONNECTIONS

To understand better their potential, we will do a case studio of these three of digital platforms. So, we can comprehend better why services marketing should focus and take advantage of them. The case studio will be a short case because the hearth of the platforms are the users. So, on the next chapter we will focus on them with a more detailed case studio of content creators. Those users that become very successful on the digital platforms. Now we will be focus on the reach of Instagram, Tik Tok and Twitch. So, we will see how many and what type of people online service marketing affects.

| MONTHLY ACTIVE USERS NUMBER 2021 | US USERS IN 2021 |

The two graphics above are built thanks according to the data of Statista. We separated Twitch from the other two because of his lower numbers justified by its principal core supply that is streaming. Twitch had on 2021 31,4 million of users on US. Several sources like Business of Apps, Twitch Tracker and Games Industry affirm that Twitch has on 2022 140 million of monthly active users. However, Instagram and Tik Tok have some impressive and higher numbers. Indeed, Tik Tok registered by the end of the 2021 1 billion of monthly active users while Instagram even the double so 2 billion. The big difference on numbers between Twitch and the other two is that Twitch focuses only the streaming sector. The other two are wider on contents and they also include the opportunities of streaming. However, Twitch is growing exponentially and because it is specified on the streaming offer better tools for the streamers and viewers than Instagram and Tik Tok. In addition, we saw its possibilities of creating new services so we could not choose of not analyse it. The numbers of the reach above listed are only potential indeed marketing activities could not reach these ones. However, the virtual world reach numbers higher than the real world. Like information can be spread quickly online also everything else can, so the marketing activities as well. If they are inside a video or post that goes viral and shared by the users of the digital platforms, they could reach millions of people. Another big advantage of the digital platforms is that they could be also connected through pages or links. Contents of different platforms can be found in one and just a click allows users to pass on the other platforms. So, the people reached are not just the users of a singular platform but also users of other platforms too.

Furthermore, is important to know what type of people we reach on these social. So, we create graphics that help us to understand the gender of the users. For what concerns Tik Tok and Instagram we took data registered from Statista in January 2022 instead for Twitch the stats are of July 2022.

Twitch	TIK TOK	Instagram
Male / Female	Male ■ Female ■	Male / Female
20% / 80%	43% / 57%	49% / 51%
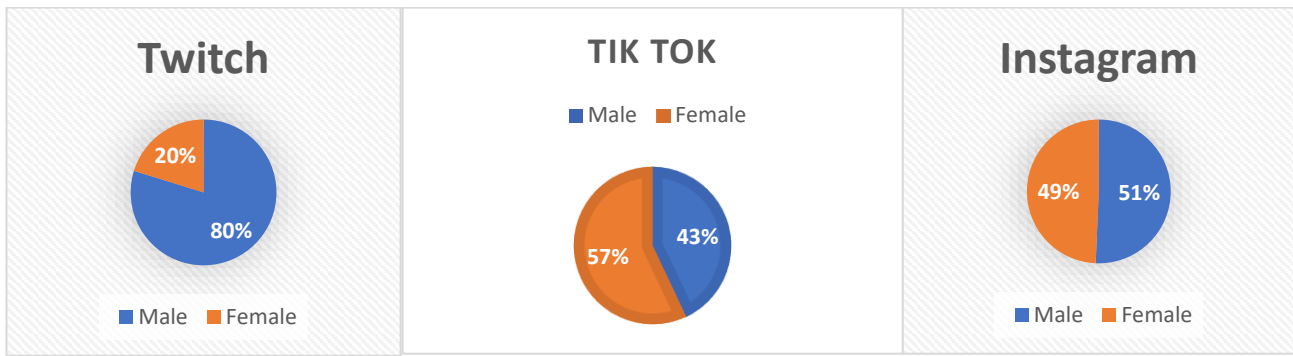
We discovered that ratio of male and female is balanced on Instagram with 49,30% of males versus the 51,30% of females. Instead, the situation is different on Tik Tok and Twitch. Tik Tok has more females' users with a percentage of 57%. Instead, Twitch surprisingly has a bigger gap between females and males. The 79,79% of users are males. These ratios indicate that males and females are different on taste and needs. Twitch is evolving but its best category is gaming. This explains the prevalence of male users. The contents of the platforms are different, so the type of users that enter on them also. These data also indicate the needs and what search males and females. Therefore, contents and how they are offered by the platforms are another topic that should be analysed. These can also tell us about the new needs and how they can be awakened. Before we make some conclusions beyond the gender of the users is useful to understand their age as well.
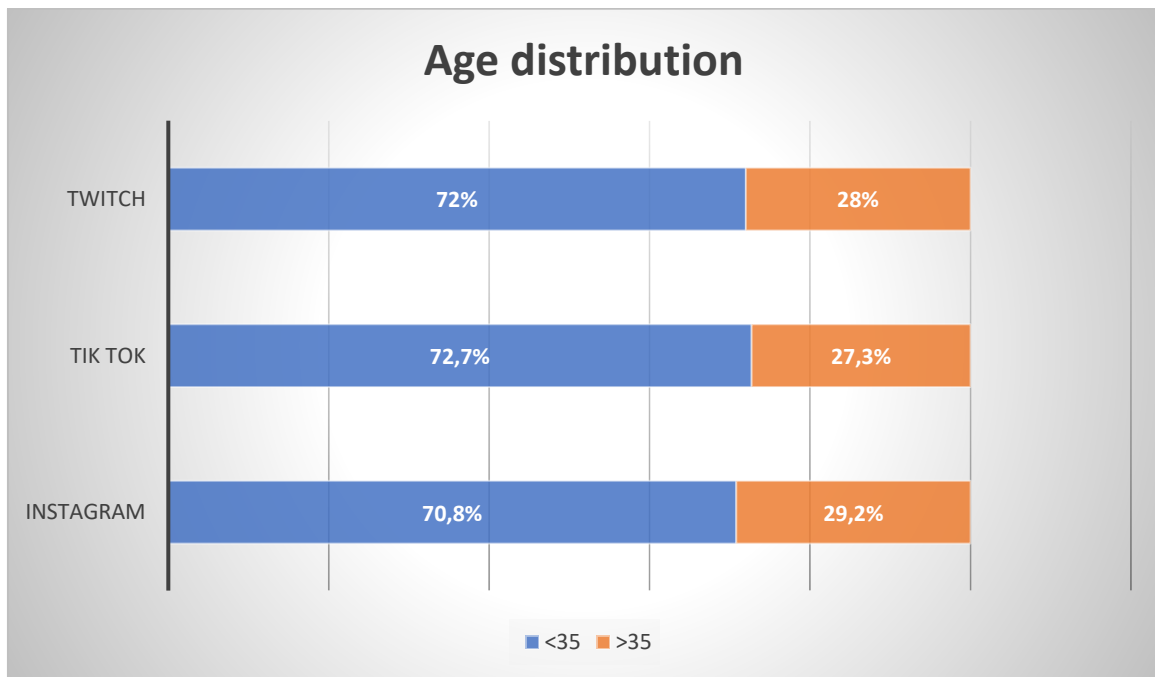
The graphic is constructed merging stats about age taken from Statista in April 2022 for Instagram and Tik Tok while in May 2022 for Twitch. The graphics evidence the new generation dominates the digital platform sector. On every digital platform analysed at least 70% of users have less than 35 years. So, the firms should focus on the digital platforms because is there where they can find more and easily new customers. The

potential of customers that firms could reach are extremely high. In addition, data of the digital platforms are fundamental. The age distribution evidences that on the virtual world are present predominantly young people. So, the customers of the present but also customers of the future. Merging age and gender data we segmented the market of these three digital platforms for the firms. These data could be also used by firms to target the market for and how to do marketing activities to position their brands. In fact, marketing methods for young people are different than those for adults. So how to position a brands as clear, unique, and attractive in their mind is a challenge. Because of their high presence on digital platforms, marketing should be done online and differently. Instead for adults that are less than 30% of users of the platforms analysed, should be used mainly the traditional marketing methods. Then if the online marketing methods used work on them as well, is not a problem but an advantage. Online marketing should focus on the young also because there will be a generational change soon. So, it's better to make them customer now having the possibility of construct a loyalty relationship with them. The young because are used to the virtual world need different inputs to awake needs than the adults. So, the firms must discover new online marketing techniques studying why and what young do on the platforms. Virtual world evolves and it changes people's perceptions, habits, and psychology. Consequently, marketing as well must evolve otherwise it will not work on the future because it would speak a different language than the future generation. We said before that online marketing must adapt is methods to the young people. Furthermore, with digital platforms can be collected lots of data. So, putting together data of age, gender, activity on the platforms, of contents liked or searched services marketing can be specific and customized. Content creators could help to find new online marketing methods for young people. They are important figures for marketing because they are near to the young and they have with them strong relationships. These figures often they have a singular identity and a sector where they are exceptional. So, firms should also analyse these figures and find those that fit perfectly with their supply. The followers of a content creator follow him/her probably like the sector where he/she shines. This can be one of the many reasons because they follow him/her. Firms' trough the content creators can have the access to a potential market formed by the content creators' followers. The content creators will be discussed on the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3: ONE FOR ALL

In chapter two we discussed about the virtual world in general about its characteristics. Now in this chapter we will focus on the inhabitants of the virtual world so its users. We will understand their actions, habits, interactions, and powers.

3.1 CONTENT CREATORS

Content creator are people who create entertaining or educational material to be expressed through any medium or channel. Among these figures stand out influencers, tiktokers and streamers. These are born thanks digital platforms like Instagram, Tik Tok and Twitch that we cited before. They have the power of connecting millions of people to just one person. These connections are made possible with the follow system. This allows to the content creators to offer their services to every follower. Indeed, uploading their contents on the digital platforms these will reach their followers immediately. Content creators are just users of the platform. However, they offer contents that other users appreciate and so they start to follow them. The followers because they enjoy the contents of their content creators like, comment and share them. Sharing them make able to other users to see these contents and even these last ones can do the same and become followers. This process can become a loop. More the contents are good, more users could be reached and transformed on followers. We already see the potential numbers of users that can be reached on these platforms. So should not be a surprise that some content creators have millions of followers. Furthermore, the opportunity of interactions given by the platforms make easier their success possible. Interactions between content creators and followers create relationships and communities. These factor combined open the root for content creators as brands and firms. This because content creators are service providers. They do performance that they share to their audience. They create value for them. The followers with likes, comments and shares can support them. So, these pay content creators with recognition, appreciation, fame or with money using different tools. Even if they are humans content creators can become firms themselves. They have all the potentials of doing it. They have already both the services and the customers and the employees that are themselves. In addition, they could become a product too. It's not just the content that make followers follow the content creators but also the person. So, most of the time what is searched is not the contents but the content creators as human beings. Content creators are just persons, so everyone is different. Every content creator has his/her personalities, behaviours, and tastes. Consequently, they can be offered like products by other firms, or they can make their own products effectively becoming a firm. Indeed, some streamers sell some products like clothing and other objects. Their name, their face, their memes, and everything of their content can be commercialized. Indeed, all these things that we listed can have value for the followers. These can make remember to the followers the content creators with which they have fun, they consider friends and sometimes they are inspired from. All of these are positive effects that drive followers to buy the content creators' items. For example, the followers can remember with memes, stickers, or emoticons a funny content or event of the content creators. Often these are created from the followers. So, some of these can be understood only by the

community that invented them. Buying items of a content creator is also a way for the followers to identify themselves with that content creator's community like happens with professional sports teams. Because a stream is a live video that can be stopped and registered, every part of it can be transformed in something. These part can be transformed in videos cutting those parts and editing them or simply in pictures making some screens. The pictures of course can be printed. So, they can be transformed on physical stickers or put on t-shirts or on some objects like cups, bowls, backpacks etc. Content creators can easily produce beyond their services also their own products easily. All what they must do is using their figure as a brand. To become successful firms, however they need a market. But they already have it, this is their fanbase. Therefore, what make successful them as firms depends by their relationship with fans. More these ones are loyal more there is the chance that these will become their customers. Content creators communicate with followers every time they offer them contents like streams or posts. The followers then can response to them with like and comments. Content creators also sometimes reply to their followers. So, the interactions between the two sides build their relationships. The figure that can become more easily a firm among the content creators is the streamer. This because he/she interact directly with the viewers. Indeed, he/she try to delight their viewers during the stream, so he/she listens to them, reads their messages, and talks with them. As we saw Twitch for example offer different tools to allow streamers and viewers to communicate to each other. Consequently because of the interactions and the time spent together they both grow fond. They become virtual friends with which stay together on the virtual world. If a person feels alone or bored, he/she can connect to a stream, having fun with the streamer and interact with him/her and with the community of that streamer too. The strength of their relationships is demonstrated on different ways: followers can watch the streams every day, support streamer with money, send them real gifts and even create something like videos, songs, objects for them. These actions can happen also when the streamers don't put their best contents or offer a high number of streams. The relationship between streamers and viewers is strong because of the social and customization bonds they have. Indeed, their relationship is personal and furthermore because streamers interact with their viewers they can listen and offer to them the contents and services that these last ones ask. So customized services can be offered even to a singular viewer otherwise to the majority trough some surveys. Furthermore, they can engage with their followers. A simple example is a streamer that plays a game with their viewers. So, he/she can interact not just trough messages but talking directly using the chat of a game, Discord, or another app. Streamers have also the possibility of meeting fans on the real world. Indeed, streamers or followers sometimes organize events where they can meet each other in real life. Streamers can also educate their viewers teaching them behaviours to have in the community, some methods, or techniques to do somethings and creating on them some habits. Indeed, they can decide that some days of the week they do certain contents or there will be a special event. So, every follower knows already the schedule of the week and he/she doesn't disturb requiring to the streamers some content that he/she want. Streamers can also reward the viewers. Indeed, most of the platform allows to tier the followers based on their involvement and support. Streamers

could see the followers' interactions like the comments, reactions, messages on the chat and the donations. So, they can reward followers, especially the most active and supportive, with recognition and appreciation through personalised messages, gifts or involving them on their activities. For all these reasons streamers can have so many followers in what in marketing is called the zone of affection. This is an area where the customers are highly satisfied and loyal. The loyalty of their followers could be transformed in customers loyalty if the streamers start selling their activities and products like firms. To sum up, more the streamers have a strong relationship with their community and more followers they have more chances they have of becoming firms. This is valid also for the other content creators. The advantage for the firms is the possibility of use them to sell their own services and products. They will surely find some new customers among the followers of the streamers especially on the most loyal ones. So now it's time to analyse the numbers that content creators register with their followers. This will help to understand how convenient is for the firms to make marketing activities with the content creators and if these decide to become firms what market they have. To do this we will do a case studio where we will see the number of the followers and their interaction with content creators to also discover their relationship and their potential loyalty.

3.2 A NEW CASE: STEAMERS AND TIKTOKERS

The people with most followers on Instagram according to Statista in June 2022 were Cristiano Ronaldo (520 million), Kylie Jenner (455 million) and Lionel Messi (349 million). The top 3 position are occupied by celebrities. They could be considered influencers for their possibility to affect large number of people. But this assumption is wrong. The high number of followers are just a consequence of their fame. So, they are not influencers. Indeed, they don't play the role of influencers. They have other jobs. Consequently, they don't do the activities of the influencers. Since the top 100 users of Instagram are celebrities or pages of firms on our case studio, we will analyse only tiktokers and streamers. Those are real content creators. Let's start with tiktokers.


Most-followed creators on TikTok worldwide as of August 2022
(in millions)

khaby.lame	148.4
charlie d'amelio	145.4
bellapoarch	91.1
addisonre	88.6
willsmith	72.2
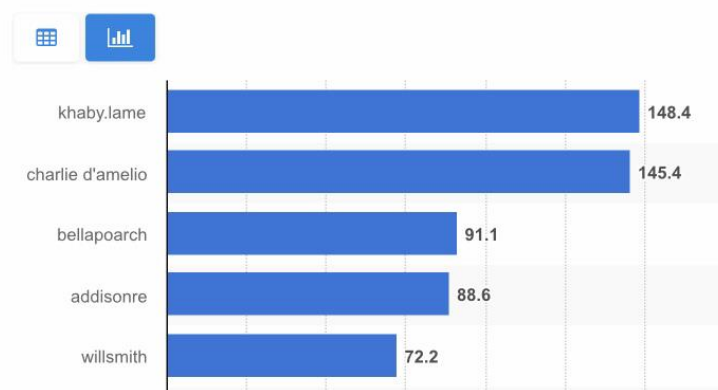
On the graphic above are reported the tiktokers with most followers on august 2022 according to Statista. The first place is placed Khaby Lame (148,4 million) followed by Charlie D'Amelio (145,4 million), Bellapoarch (91,1 million) and Addisonre (88,6 million). From the first two place there is a big difference with the third, indeed is more than 50 million of followers. We took the top four tiktokers and confront their stats based on the last 15 post they made from the end of august 2022.The choice of choosing only the top four is based to demonstrate the real potential of tiktokers. The firms probably use the best tiktokers for their marketing but also, tiktokers with less followers. Reaching 100 thousands of followers is great achievement for a tiktokers. However, TikTok evolved exponentially the last years so we will probably see always more people that reach millions of followers. For now, the last of the top 100 users of Tik Tok with most followers has 27,6 million of followers. Some are celebrities but this is superficial. There is a tons of people with at least one million of followers. We will see that the number of followers is important but not the main factor to focus on it. There are also other variables as views, likes, comments, sharing and favourites. These don't depend only by the followers. Indeed, we can find that the tiktokers placed on 70 place or in a lower position on the top 100 tiktokers with most followers can outperform the top 3 on likes, comments, or views. Indeed, on terms of the number of likes of all time on some of the first positions we find tiktokers with just thousands of followers and not millions. So, the analysis of the top four with most followers is valid also for the others tiktokers on top 100 because all have at least 25 million of followers. The followers help to reach some numbers, but these depend by a lot of factor that can be trends, the type of followers, the quality of the posts, the virality etc.

The stats used on building the graphics are taken directly from the posts of the tiktokers on their channels on TikTok. We added the numbers of the singular post to find their total and their arithmetic average. The two first stats considered are the views and the likes.
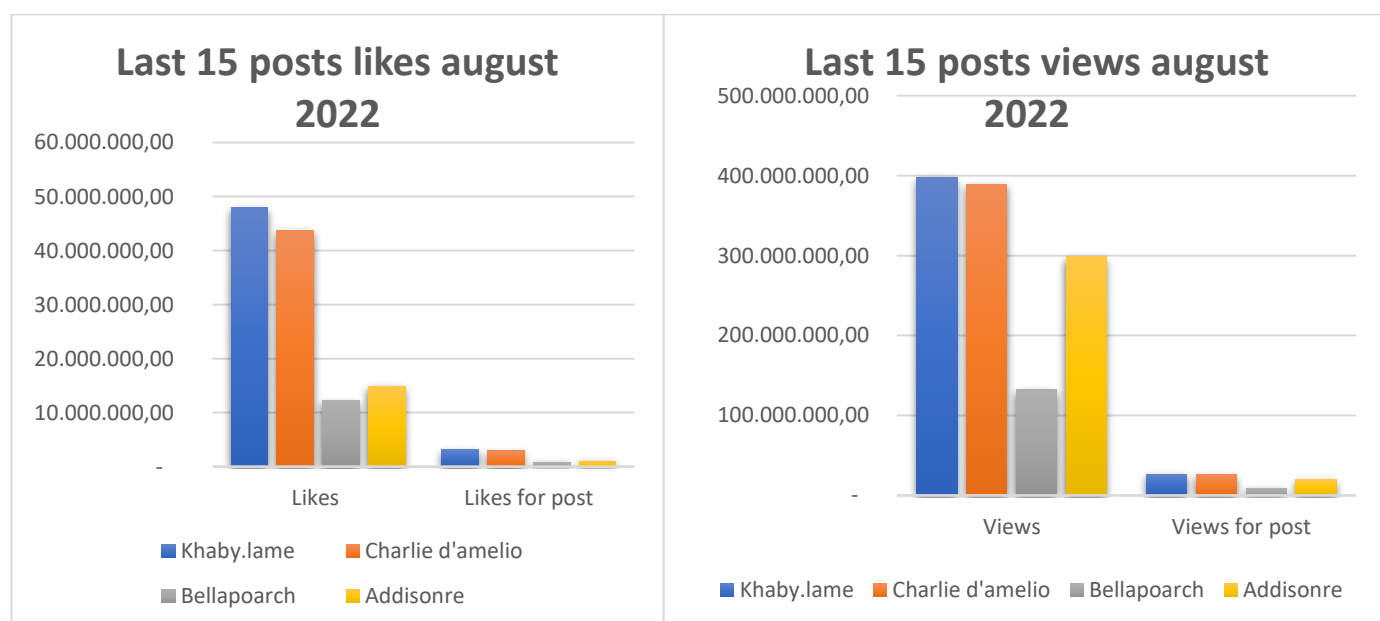

What we can observe immediately is that followers are important, but this doesn't mean that because of them we will have consequently most views. Indeed, if the two first positions that have a total number of

views that are respectively 397,4 million and 388,8 million follow the idea that more followers mean more views the third and fourth position demonstrate that this is not true. Indeed, Bellapoarch should have more views than Addisonre but in this case is the opposite. Addisonre with less followers registered 298,8 millions of views that are more than the double of Bellapoarch (132,3 million). However, because the views considered are the total of the last 15 posts, we do their averages. The averages are: Khaby Lame 26,493 million of views for post, Charlie D'Amelio 25,92 million of views for post, Bellapoarch 8,82 million of views for post and Addisonre 19,93 million of views for post. These numbers are incredible. The potential of tiktokers on reaching people is just impressive. Nevertheless, the views are not so accurate because a user could review the posts more than once. These counts like new views. Of course, the views of the tiktokers that watch his/her video don't count. In addition, users could come across these posts accidently or skipped them without watching them entirely. So, we took likes as a better reference. Likes if removed aren't counted anymore and a user cannot put more than one like. So, the likes surely express the number of users reached. Then if users give likes for the posts this means that they enjoy those contents. Furthermore, to put likes probably the users watched the post entirely. The stats registered are that the total likes were for Khaby Lame 48 million, for Charlie D'Amelio 43,665 million, for Bellapoarch 12,168 million and for Addisonre 14,911million. The averages that are a better instead are: Khaby Lame 3,2 million of likes for post, Charlie D'Amelio 2,911 million of likes for post, Bellapoarch 811 thousand of likes for post and Addisonre 994 thousand of likes for post. This last numbers show how many people a singular post not only reach but how many are delighted with it. For the services marketing these are the number to focus in particularly. Surely the actions of marketing on a post will affect more users than only these. But users that like the post are those one satisfied. Therefore, the marketing activities could have more probability of success on them. The likes for a post tell us also about the quality of the post so the content/service offered. More likes mean more quality and more value for the audience.

Comments are another valuable stat. They are powerful because they express a reaction and an interaction with the tiktokers. Nevertheless, there could be present haters, but their number should be very low. When something is done there will be always people that they dislike it or are opposite to it. However, comments are not as likes because they must be written. To do this a user spends time because must think about it and then text it. For likes instead is just required a click with a mouse, a textboard or with a finger. So, if people disliked a post because they are not forced, they probably don't watch the post and scroll down to the next one. And even if they watch the post entirely, they should spend time on commenting. So bad comments are rare. Only if the person is envious, hate that tiktoker, or he/she felt offended will make a bad comment. However, a problem of Internet is that often the effects of bad comments even if they are offensive on the real-world are not punished. Consequently, people on Internet do whatever they want. So doing the hater for some is a way of having fun. So, we can say that haters and people that want create problems trying to argue are the principal jaycustomers of the virtual world. Fortunately, most of the comments are positive, A

positive comment represent a positive reaction stronger than a simple like. This means that the interactions that a tiktokers created with the user that comment is very strong. The power of content creators like tiktokers and streamers is that they create relationship with the followers. So here the stats.
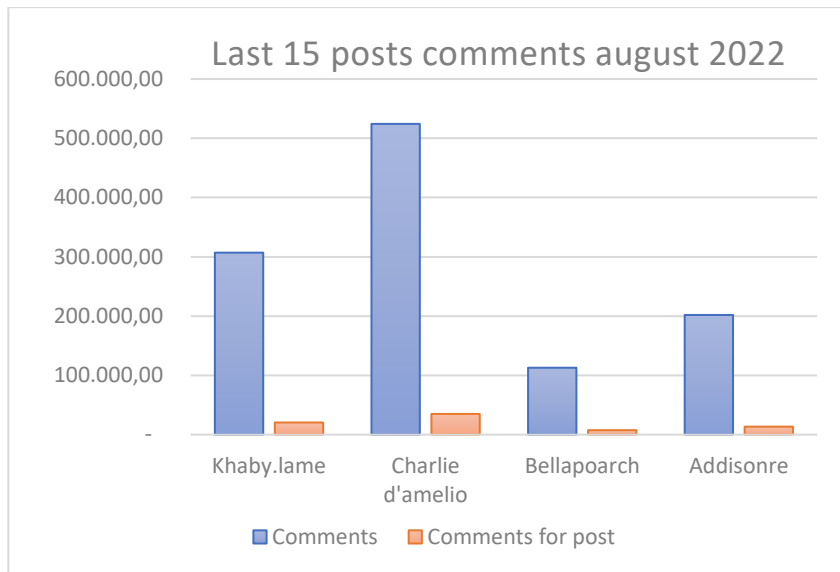
For the reason before mentioned the numbers of the comments are much lower than the likes. From millions of before we pass to thousands. Indeed, the total comments for each tiktokers are for Khaby Lame 307 thousand, for Charlie D'Amelio 524 thousand, for Bellapoarch 112 thousand and for Addisonre 201 thousand. The averages are for Khaby Lame 20468 comments for post, for Charlie D'Amelio 34950 comments for post, for Bellapoarch 7523 comments for post and Addisonre 13457 comments for post. You would noticed immediately that Charlie D'Amelio has more comments than Khaby Lame despite less likes and followers. Likes and comments express the relationships between tiktokers and followers. So, they express if the followers are active and on terms of marketing if the customers are satisfied and loyal. To understand better the relationship between tik tokers and users it will be useful using the percentage rather than just numbers.
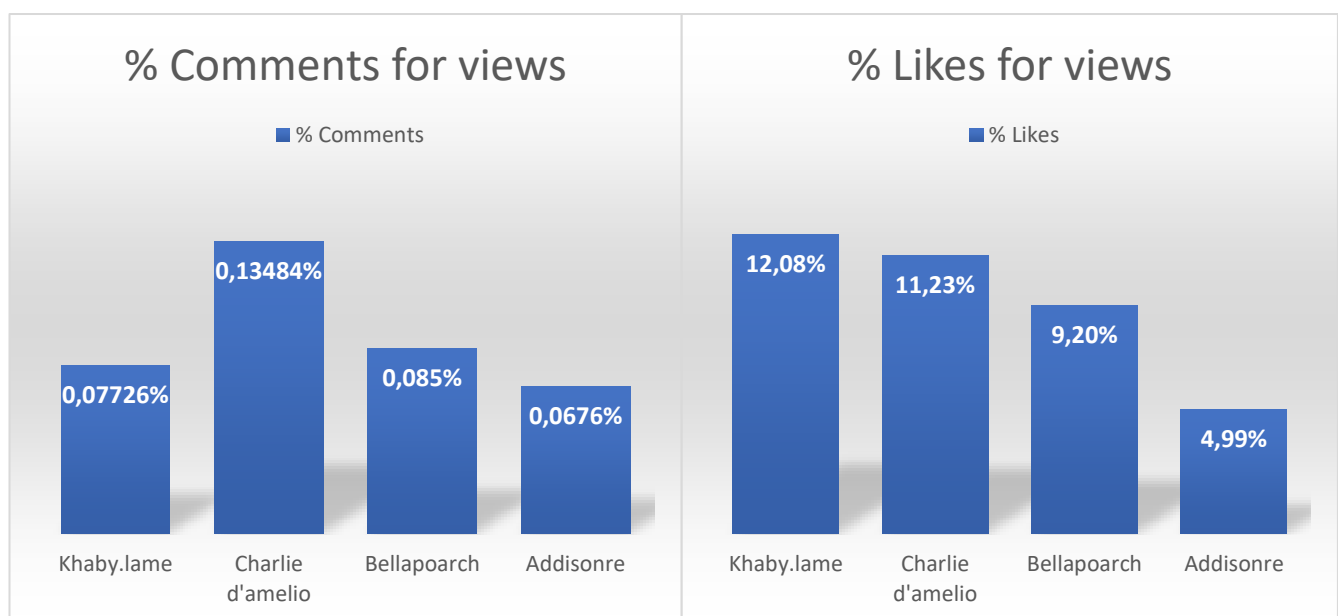
The graphics express the percentages of the total comments and of the total likes respect the total views of each tiktokers. We must be careful about these percentages because they are related to the total views that are different for each tiktokers. Indeed, these percentages reveal the efficiency of each streamers related to his/her total views. Obviously a tiktokers can have periods where they have more views and other ones with less views. This is demonstrated from Bellapoarch and Addisonre that had on the last 15 posts a big gap on terms of views despite having almost the same followers. Indeed, we saw before Addisonre registered number of views on the last 15 post that is more than the double of Bellapoarch views. So important are the total views made on the long period like a year. Tiktokers with similar followers probably on long term will similarly numbers of views. For this reason, is essential to understand their efficiency rate. This is a parameter that can help us and the firms to understand better the potential of tiktokers. More views should mean more likes and comments. This would be logical. However, people are not machines. People are different so not always this happens. For sure more views mean more people reached. Consequently, delighting more people sometimes could be more complicated. Not everyone can like the contents so more of these people are reached and more the efficiency rate drops. Nevertheless, often the viewers are the followers and rarely reach disinterested people. So, the efficiency rate gives information mainly about the tiktokers' followers. It tells us how the followers act, their relationship with the tiktokers and their reactions. On our case studio the last 15 posts for the four tiktokers covers a period between one and two months. We have considered Khaby Lame and Charlie D'Amelio on one side and on the other Bellapoarch and Addisonre because of their similar numbers of followers.

For what concern likes the percentages are not too many different between Khaby Lame (12,08%) and Charlie D'Amelio (11,23%). Khaby has an efficiency rate 7,56% higher than Charlie D'Amelio efficiency rate. Not a big difference. For the other pair Bellapoarch has an efficiency rate of 9,20% while Addisonre has only 4,99%. Therefore, Bellapoarch has an efficiency rate 84,31% higher than Addisonre efficiency. So, this makes us question about the quality of her last contents and the responsiveness of her followers. Bellapoarch with views that were approximately the half had an efficiency rate that is almost the double. This means that for whatever reason Bellapoarch had less views her followers are more active and loyal than Addisonre 's followers on term of likes.

About the percentages of comments, we can see that Charlie D'Amelio (0,13484%) has better efficiency rate than Khaby Lame (0,07726%). Charlie D'Amelio has an efficiency rate that is 74,5% higher of Khaby Lame efficiency rate. Instead for the second couple Bellapoarch with 0,085% has an efficiency rate that is 26,25% higher than Addisonre efficiency rate of 0,0676%. Efficiency rate is more important with comments. The motivations when we talked about the comments. The case tells us that Charlie D'Amelio followers are those ones that interact more with comments on the other hand Khaby lame fans are more likely to put likes and enjoy the contents bring by him. This also tell us that followers of Bellapoarch are probably more loyal

and active than Addisonre 's ones because her efficiency rate on both likes and comments is higher on the last period.

Now it's time to analyse the Twitch streamers.
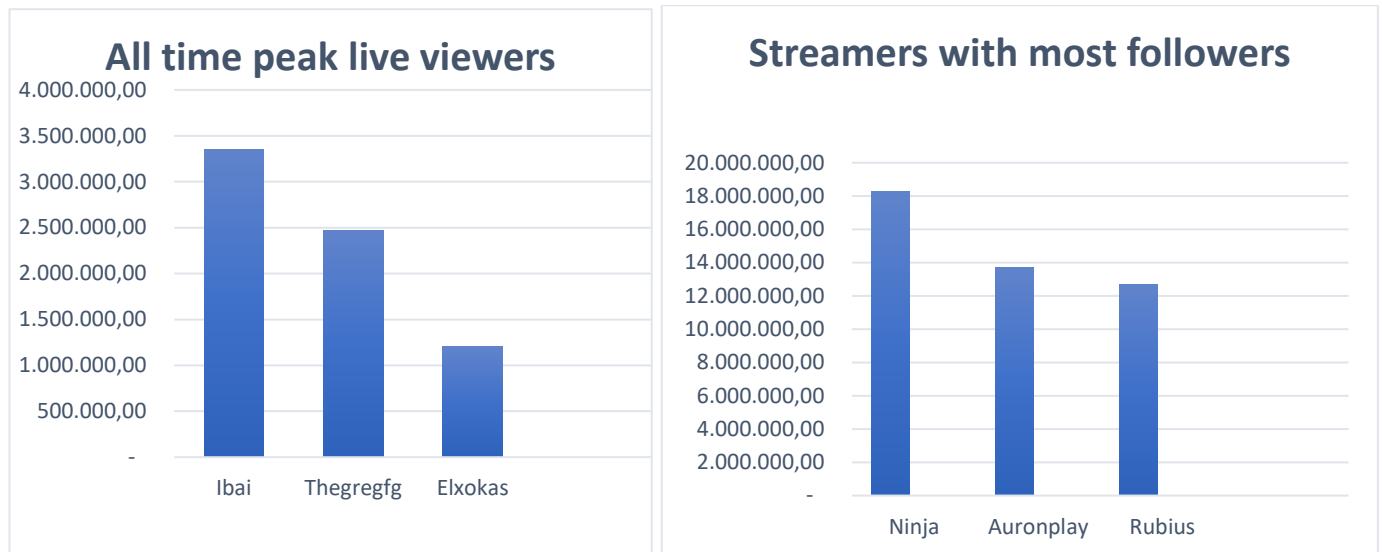
We took consideration the best Twitch streamers. To find how powerful streamers could be for service marketing we must talk about more than just one aspect. To begin the graphics are created thanks the data of Statista, Twitch itself and Twitchtracker a website where can be found all the statistics of Twitch. For the graphics we considered only real people and not channels that streams events. Among them we took the top 3 for each category analysed. To start we can see the streamers with the most followers on the platform. The first one is Ninja with 18.3 million of followers and after him come after Auronplay and Rubius respectively with 13,7 million and 12,7 million. For the highest numbers of live viewers that a streamer has ever reached we have the graphic above on the left. On the he first place there is Ibai that reached an audience of 3.356.074,00 people. Just outstanding. This perfectly explains the power of the virtual. If you think about that Stadio Giuseppe Meazza, the biggest football stadium of Italy, has a capacity of just 75.925 seats. So, it can at its best have number of viewers approximately 44 times lower than Ibai's peak live. On the real world it would be impossible that millions of people assist together an event. There would be not enough physical space for all these persons. However, millions of live viewers are exceptions. It's rare to achieve such numbers frequently. Thousands of viewers instead are more frequent. So, for a better view we analysed the streamers with most average live viewers on august 2022.

Average live viewers august 2022

■ Streamer

| Auronplay	ElSpreen	Ibai
117.673,00	87.857,00	66.094,00
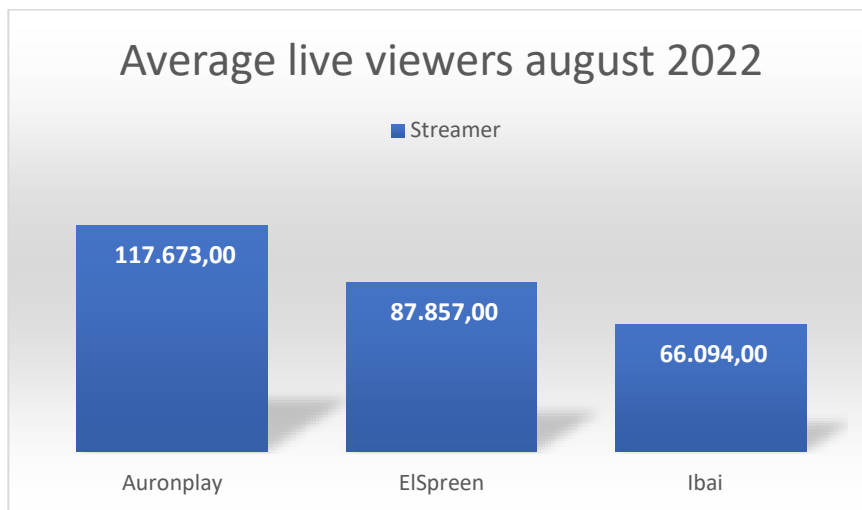
From the graphic can be seen how the numbers compared to the peaks drop. Indeed, the streamer with the best average of live viewers on august is Auronplay with 117673,00 viewers followed by ElSpreen with 87857,00 and Ibai with 66094,00. This numbers say how streamers can be powerful. Another lesson is that more followers doesn't mean always more viewers like we saw with tiktokers. Even if these streamers have all a lot of followers is their activity and theirs streams that determine the number of the viewers. So, a streamer can have tons of followers but if he/she offers average or bad contents the viewers will abandon the stream. Every time these streamers are live, they are in contact with all these people, this is mind blowing. They have on their hands a lot of power. So, it's not just how many people are reached but also for how long people watch a stream.

hours streamed august 2022

■ Streamer

hours watched august 2022
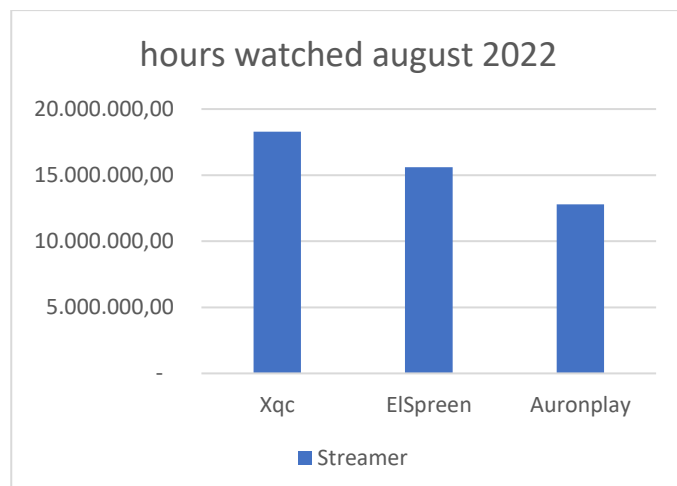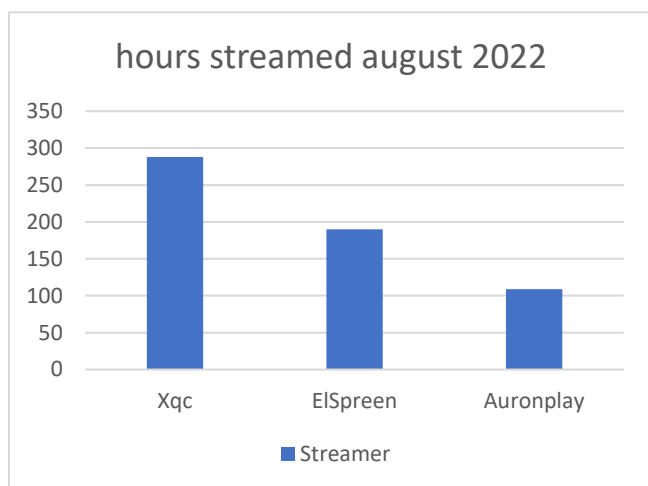
■ Streamer

We took the crème of the crème for the case studio, but successful streamers are also those ones that have an average of 5000 live viewers. Successful streamers stream almost every day. This is demonstrated by the hours that they streamed on the month of august. Indeed, ElSpreen and Auronplay that were on the top 3 of the streamers with the best average of live viewers on the month of august streamed respectively 190,1 and 108,7 hours. This means respectively an average of 6,13 and 3,5 hours per day. However, there is no connection on saying that if streamers stream more, they will have more viewers. Xqc for example had more hours streamed of ElSpreen and Auronplay but it's not on top 3 of the streamers with most live viewers.

Another big factor is that other than the live viewers the hours watched are more important. Indeed, these are important because tell us how many time users pass on watching contents of the streamers. Contents of streamers can be watched also when they are not live. A lot of people for whatever reason can't always follow the live streams. The graphic shows that the followers of Xqc have watched 18,3 million hours of his contents on august 2002, while the followers of ElSpreen and Auronplay respectively 15,6 million hours and 12,8 million hours. If we divide 18,3 million hours for 24, we have 762500 days. So, 2089 years. This is the time spent on one month by the viewers of one of the most successful streamer. The confront of the graphics above can confuse. Indeed, the fact that streamers with more hours streamed more have more hours watched is just a case because of the restricted streamers considered. In fact, if the two graphics will continue to confront the top 30 streamers or more, we would find out that some streamers with less streamed hours have more hours watched than streamers with higher streamed hours. Hours watched of streamers like the views can't tell us how many users has really reached the streamer. Only the numbers of the live viewers so their average can tell us something about it. We could take these numbers as data, but they are incorrect because probably the people reached by a streamers are higher. Unfortunately, the number of viewers that watch the streams offline was not found for the case studio and probably still there aren't tools to identify it. Furthermore, of these offline viewers we should also remove the viewers that already watched the stream live. From now we will consider only this three streamers: Xqc, ElSpreen and Auronplay.

VIEWS ON AUGUST 2022

■ Steamer

	Xqc	ElSpreen	Auronplay
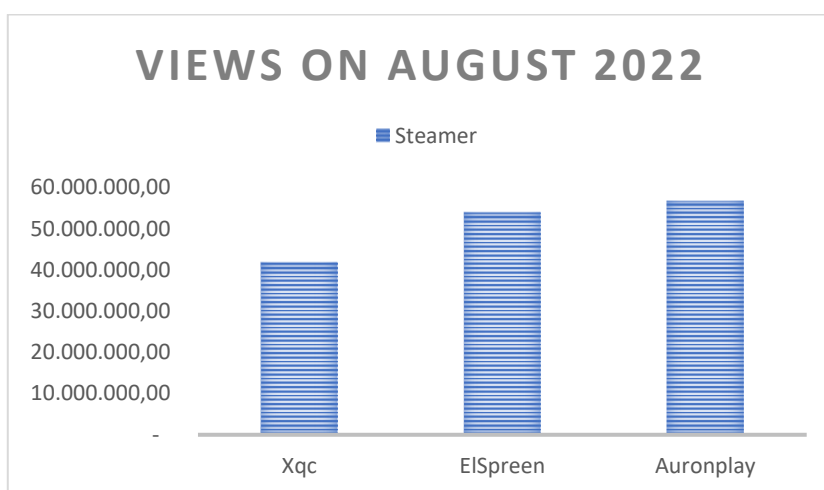
This graphics above is made with the numbers of views of every stream on august of each streamer taken on consideration. The data of the views are taken directly from the channels of the streamers on Twitch. Adding the views of every singular stream we noticed that Auronplay had the most views on august 2022 with 56,7 million followed by ElSpreen with 53,9 million and by Xqc with 41,8 million. These statistics are the opposite of the hours watched. Indeed, on august 2022 between the three Auronplay had most views but at the same had the lowest hours watched by the viewers. The opposite is for Xqc. This means that Xqc had less views, but his viewers spent more time on watching his contents than Autoplay's and ElSpreen 's viewers. So, the streamers with most views are not always the better ones for the service marketing. It's

useless if viewers watch the stream only for few minutes and then they leave. These viewers could probably miss the marketing activity inside the stream. Indeed, like for YouTube a view is counted when a person clicks the video or stream and watch for at least a certain time that on YouTube is 30 seconds. Therefore, the same viewers can produce views every time they rewatch the stream for a certain time. Often streams are long so to watch them entirely users need to see them many times. This factor also raises the number of the views.

The case studio demonstrates that the better parameters to look for the tiktokers are the likes, the comments, and their efficiency rate. Instead for the streamers the average of live viewers and the hours watched by the community. Both have impressive numbers on terms of people reached. These are thousands or millions. Furthermore, the number of tiktokers and streamers is extremely high. Even the top 100 streamers of Twitch at least have one million of followers. However, we just said before content creators with 100 thousands of followers can be used by firms for marketing activities too. Firms has a wide choose on picking the right content creators. We explained before that basing on only followers could be tricky. For example, a content creator with just half millions of followers can have better followers on terms of loyalty and activity than one with millions. So, firms should study content creators and maybe even dedicate them a marketing unit. Firms should collect data about the content creators, the followers, and their relationships too. Firms should be carefully on the type of content creators chosen. Streamers are different from tiktokers for their relationship, interaction with followers and their way of offering contents. So, with them can be used same marketing methods but sometimes one side could apply methods impossible for the other side. The marketing activities should be not the simple advertising but should merge with their contents. For example, reviews of services like restaurants, spa, Luna parks could be done without the advertising part. These experience should be just shared and reviewed. So, the firms could invite content creators to experience the services showing also how they are made possible, so all the works behind them. The process could be also the opposite, firms could enter on the virtual environment of the content creators. Content creators are like the gold in the Gold Rush. Firms instead play the role of seekers. These must find the right content creators and the way of exploit them for their goal.

This thesis helps to prove wrong that the evolution of services marketing is in a stationary point. Our analysis shows that service marketing is changing drastically. The services sector through years evolved and nowadays it is in a phase where its future is unknow. The most relevant game changers have been the two industrial revolutions and then the Internet. They changed the way of living and everything that existed before them. Internet have brought marketing in a new phase: services entered the virtual world, another dimension where everyone has the tools to create them. This is helped by the fact that technologies and Internet bring every year new inventions. As we clarified many times, we are still discovering the virtual world and all its effects, so the future of services marketing is unknow. One of its effects is that inside of this, people search emotions, interactions and more specifically something that maintains their minds and

bodies active. This consequentially led us to the main topic of the thesis that is the online services marketing. The goal is to point out the importance of creating virtual relationships with the customers and that traditional marketing methods are not anymore so effective, and they represent the past. Virtual relationships are seen as different and less important than the real ones, but this is a false myth. Content creators are the main example that explains this supposition clearly. Sometimes virtual relationships are stronger than those that are present in real world. Furthermore, these give people the possibility of interacting with persons that in real world they would never meet and know. Digital platforms are the instruments that allow all this mechanism. With the case studio of tiktokers and streamers we see the number that these ones register with their fans: the interactions and the time spent together. The data collected confirm the power of the virtual relationships. These findings invite the firms so service providers to start creating relationships with their customers. Firms don't create direct relationship with customers. They offer most of the times only the products or the services through marketing activities. Only their employees sometimes create some bonds with customers. However, this not sufficient. Firms create bond especially with their brands. But brands are not human beings, so these bonds are consequentially weaker. Although the virtual world allows firms to create relationships with their customers. They can use their employees to entertain and interact with fans as content creators do with their communities. Meanwhile they learn how, they can directly use the content creators too. Traditional marketing methods like advertising and sponsorship could be used but they are not the most effective. Interactions with entertainment and involvement of the customers are better. Firms especially the most famous have so many topics that people find interesting and have pleasure to talk about it. This is demonstrated by the fact that often people do themselves blog, podcasts, and community about these interests. Firms with their employees could do this too. So, firms finally can communicate directly with customers and not only indirectly through marketing. For example, using content creators they can offer freely podcast, simple reviews, events to participate or tier lists of their services and products. Examples could be the ranking of McDonald 's food, or their favourite pair of shoes of Nike making these activities fun and involving people trough surveys or the chat. Firms communicating directly with customers or potential customers can awake needs, create loyalty relationships, easily collect their tastes, perceptions, or judgements, and use techniques of psychology like the reciprocity or the coherence. Firms nowadays are distant from the people they are just a figure that provide them products and services. In a world where these two elements are becoming always more standardized people search something of more valuable like involvement, appreciation, recognition, emotions, and entertainment. So, in world that is always connected to the virtual world they must increase the supply. Firms can't have interactions with customers not only when they offer their service or their advertising. Internet give the possibility to firm to offer contents that differ than their services and products. The goal is to make people on their free time search the firms not only for their services and products but for the contents offered on the virtual world too.

CONCLUSION

We arrived at the end of our journey. We came a long way analysing the services sector during history. We have observed that man is incredible and extremely powerful. The man's achievements and creations are astonishing. Machines, Internet, planes, phones, lightning… are things that people of 200 years ago couldn't even think about. Although we have done big steps, for the future generations of the next hundreds years, we will be considered just as not evolved as we do with the ones before us. This means that even if we think that we are an evolved species and reached great milestones we instead still at the start. It's enough to think about how many problems still haven't solutions or answers. Just to do some examples we can think about racism, diseases as cancer, starvation, and unequal opportunity. Internet is the tool that is bringing us to the evolution. Internet give us the possibility of sharing everything and connect with everybody. These two possibilities are essential. The history seems to repeat itself. Like in the prehistory man needed to be together and share food, ideas, and goods to survive and discover new things he does the same nowadays. The only differences that nowadays man has the knowledge and the tools to do these actions immediately and efficiently. So, staying together and sharing are needs of the man that always existed. These two elements lead to the process of discovering new things. The teamwork and the sharing of the knowledge are necessary to make new discoveries. Therefore, as the past made us discover all the inventions that nowadays are known, our present is in the phase of discovering the future innovations. To create innovations is needed the imagination. As Joseph Conrad said: "Only in men's imagination does every truth find an effective and undeniable existence. Imagination, not invention, is the supreme master of art as of life.". However, these days there is the idea that innovate is impossible because we evolved too much so we can only make just some enhancements, This thought puts limitations on people's minds and limitations kill the imagination. Consequently, this is a big menace because it would baffle the Internet as the environment where the fantasy of people can be expressed freely and appreciated. If we think about the new services, these are born thanks the imagination of the people. Some people imagined that they could build digital platforms, they could entertain people with streams, they could create programs and algorithms. So, the protagonist is always the man. He created products, services and will continue doing this. Also, the marketing methods have been created by man. So even these will be innovated by people. The issue for marketing is that always more people are used less on jobs. Other instruments are preferred. However, the virtual world erases most of these and make at the centre the people. The innovators could be the people inside the firms but also the customers. However, customers are seen still only as buyers. This is a limit. Firms should use their imagination and create better opportunities. Since the virtual environment breaks the barriers between customers and firm of the real world they can interact and communicate directly. Doing these both parts learn about each other, create a relationship, spend time, and have fun together. This lead to trust each other, appreciate and be grateful to the other part. Marketing on the virtual world could be more than simple marketing. Firms through their "online content creators employees" can become people's virtual friends and

virtual family. It seems a difficult concept to realize. However, man has the need of sharing and relating with others. In addition, without imagination there isn't progress. So, we must have the courage of trying. If it can be imagined, it is possible.

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