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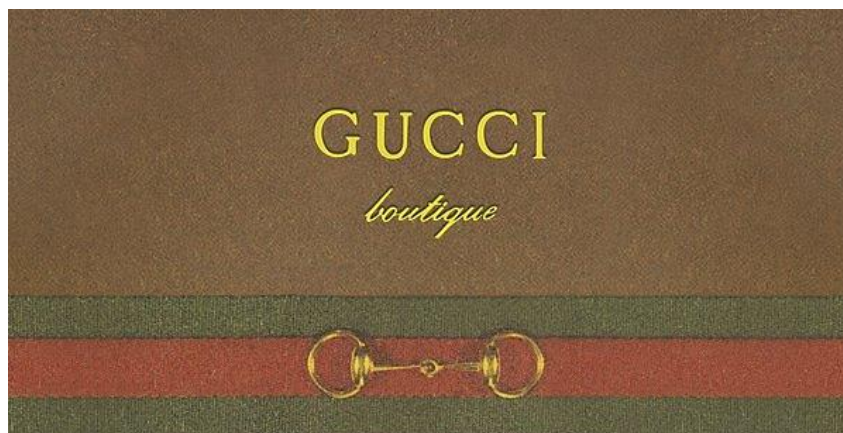
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INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATION AND DIGITAL MARKETING STRATEGY. CASE STUDY: GUCCI

L'aveugle par amour'



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STUDEN ID NUMBER: 2121745

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Acknowledgments.

The project of this dissertation started a few months ago. During this time, interest in the subject grew and focused the focus of the presentation. In this scholarly journey, I have discovered that *marketing* is a gigantic universe that encompasses a myriad of elements, but that at the same time, it is very exciting, attractive, and addictive and that it has a strategic work of great creative force, such as the development of an advertising campaign.

Marketers, strategic consultancies, and advertising agencies have been building a new universe of meanings. They have generated definitions that the population (consumers) link to brand names and their iconography. Brand definitions evolve, just as the meaning of the words in our vocabulary evolves. And fashion and luxury are two of the sectors where brands endure over the years.

Naturally, I want to thank my partner and my family for their support, understanding, and love during this time, for the holidays with the computer and the days in the library.

Last but no least, I want to express my gratitude to Thusara Balendran my work lecturer, for being my guide, support and for dedicating her time to share her knowledge with me. Her support has been essential during this project.

“The choice of the clothes we wear every morning is not banal, nor is it just the previous act of consuming that we have made. It is all part of our desire for presentation and, therefore, of our ideal of social identity. And within this decision to consume, the semiotics of brands will also appear”.

Abstract.

In Chapter I, the background of the research work is presented, and the justification of the study and the aims, objectives, and research questions are specified. In Chapter II, the main concepts to be investigated are defined, a critical analysis of the different areas defined above is made and the different models and theories are presented. In chapter III, the research method is presented and established. In chapter IV, the data analysis and the interpretation of the results are elaborated. Chapter V concludes the research work with conclusions, recommendations, limitations, and further research.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION.

1.1 Background.

In the 21st century, the increase in the number of media from which we receive advertising messages has evolved at unimaginable speeds, from the most traditional ones such as television, radio stations, newspapers, or billboards, to digital channels such as email, social networks, official websites of shops, blogs, podcasts, etc., etc., all these current resources have opened up a range of channels available to marketers, i.e. they have an open catalogue of ways to influence shoppers and therefore it is essential to maximize the impact of as many of these channels as possible.

The result of broad marketing communication and/or creating digital marketing across multiple channels is that the likelihood of the consumer perceiving a fragmented message about the brand on display grows exponentially. This presents a major challenge, as the more channels used, the more challenging it becomes to maintain the message's coherence and complementarity.

In this sense, integrated marketing provides a great opportunity for companies to have the possibility to generate and/or reinforce all their channels so that the message they wish to convey has a coherent narrative about their brand and thus, achieve a greater impact on potential consumers with advertising campaigns.

1.2 Rationale of the study.

Gucci is a luxury brand that was founded in 1920 in the Italian city of Florence. Nowadays, Gucci is one of the most internationally recognised fashion houses.

One of the objectives of this research work is to analyse the different marketing strategies that Gucci develops offline and online to maintain its brand identity and brand value, getting closer to its potential buyers and retaining existing customers, which is known as loyalty. To this end, its integrated marketing communication model will be studied. It will also examine how they have achieved great success with the use of their digital strategy, obtaining new users every day on their platforms, which translates into high profits for the firm by having achieved greater visibility on their digital portals, which consequently has also attracted new users to visit their sales shops.

1.3 Aims, objectives, and research questions.

The objectives of this paper are to examine from an initial and approaching point of view; the Integrated marketing strategy traditionally and digitally, the brand image, the models and techniques that can be applied to consolidate a brand, applying this theory to the case study of the Gucci brand.

The aims and objectives of this study are several. Starting by analysing and understanding what an integrated marketing plan is, we will first explain what integrated communication means in the marketing area. Further expanding our knowledge, we will define some terms and the most important existing communication channels, both digital and traditional (specifying the message to be transmitted in each marketing campaign; choosing the right channel through which the message will be transmitted, and finally, broadcasting the message trying to reach the maximum number of appropriate recipients).

It should be noted that the stages of the integrated marketing plan have no single aspect that defines the success or failure of a marketing campaign throughout the stages of the integrated marketing plan, but integrated marketing offers consistency wherever customers choose to interact with a brand. Without integrated marketing, there is a risk of sending mixed messages or communication with a disjointed tone, which can cause the brand image that is projected to customers to appear disjointed and fragmented.

For instance, whether a customer views marketing material on a desktop computer or a mobile phone, the experience and message should be the same. Likewise, if a customer inquires about a product using an automated online chat service on the Gucci company website, they should receive the same answer as someone who engages in a live call with a member of the Gucci sales team.

Given the complexity of contemporary marketing channels, integrated marketing rarely occurs without careful planning and targeted efforts to make it worthwhile.

For this reason, too, we are going to analyse Gucci's integrated marketing communication development, which is an excellent example of a leader of a long-established company with a powerful international presence and a strong brand reputation.

Gucci, in this line, has designed a marketing and communication plan that is innovative to interact with ¹*millennials*, a younger audience, using new digital channels such as Instagram, being this platform a benchmark of use for this consumer profile. Gucci has effectively taken advantage of the bi-directionality and virilization capacity of messages, creating its hallmarks on digital platforms. The great challenge is to understand digital audiences to create a luxury product that is accepted by a new, younger generation of potential customers.

Research objectives:

- To define integrated marketing communication; the different marketing strategies (offline and online); their models and techniques.
- To describe the current integrated marketing communication techniques and the different marketing strategies of Gucci.
- To analyse Gucci's customer satisfaction as a brand.

Research question:

- Has Gucci improved its brand image through integrated communication and digital marketing strategies,?
- What is the online and offline impact of the Gucci brand on its customers?
- Do customers feel satisfied with the Gucci brand?

¹ Millennials or Generation Y, people born between 1980 - 2000 dates according to HOWE and STRAUSS or 1981 - 1996 dates according to DIMOCK

1.4 Dissertation outline.

- **CHAPTER I: Introduction.**

This main chapter sets the scene for the development of a specific research project by analysing the final operational activities, outlining the main characteristics and background of the company, as well as the objectives set, and aims to guide the reader to the appropriate area.

- **CHAPTER II: Literature Review.**

In this part, the different definitions are presented, as well as material collected from previous researchers on the research topic. All existing information will be analysed.

Relevant theories/ models. This section describes the different models: The Integrated Communication Model, The Honeycomb Model, and Aaker's brand value model.

- **CHAPTER III: Research methodology.**

In this chapter the onion research methodology will be explained, as well as the procedure used to collect the data and the primary evidence.

- **CHAPTER IV: Data analysis.**

In this chapter, the different results of the survey and the different questionnaires applied will be analysed and discussed. In the meantime, the questions asked will be presented and the results obtained from the data obtained and from the existing data will be presented.

- **CHAPTER V: Recommendations and Conclusions.**

This last chapter shows how integrated marketing communication can be strengthened while developing a marketing strategy that does not become obsolete over time. All of this is to maintain Gucci's privileged position in the market for its high brand equity. In addition, the chapter will conclude with a summary of the research findings and a discussion, which will help to clarify the validity of the results.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW.

2.1. Introduction.

This research analyses how Integrated Marketing Communication and Digital Marketing Strategy influence the development of organisations. From the documentary review, it is very clearly outlined that these two tools, when applied effectively, act in a transversal way, correcting some of the problems that companies may have when creating their advertising campaigns, and therefore, how they communicate and transmit messages to the public. They can even achieve results beyond the scope of other business areas.

Integrated marketing communication (IMC) is a concept that became quite important from the 1980s onwards. However, marketing theorists and practitioners alike agree that the tools of IMC have become one of the most critical aspects, as well as a crucial factor in marketing.

From a consumer perspective, Finne and Grönroos (p. 450, 2017) state, *“it seems natural to treat marketing communication as a service”* with this understanding, messages conveyed through traditional and non-traditional media must address customers' needs for knowledge and understanding of a product or brand.

In the same way, the world changed significantly when the internet appeared, being a tool that changed the behaviour of individuals and business organisations. P. Kotler (2016) points out that the explosive growth of Internet users around the world is at the heart of the so-called New Economy (Kotler, 2001). Since its arrival, it has not ceased to surprise us with technological changes and innovation. It now offers us great opportunities on a personal level, but also on a business level. This is due to the digital progress that allows us to exchange information quickly and without the need to be present in a specific place, the simple fact of making a click, and you can perform a search for information on a specific product, a sale or a purchase from the comfort of our homes.

Digital marketing has gained fundamental importance in companies today, being a tool that evolves by leaps and bounds, since the purpose of any business is to generate money, they must adapt to technological changes that are presented, to changes and meet the goals of your company (sell their products or increase the service provided).

Finally, it is essential to first provide a theoretical explanation of the key concepts that we use in the development of the following work to be able to conduct a good analysis while the reader can understand the study of this work.

2.2. Definition of key concepts.

a) Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC).

In 1989, the Association of Advertising Agencies proposed the first definition: IMC represents *“a communications planning concept that recognises the added value of an overall plan that assesses the strategic role of a variety of communications disciplines, e.g., advertising, sales promotion, direct marketing, and public relations; combine them to achieve a clear, coherent and maximum communications impact.”* (Schultz, 1993).

IMC is a process that entails organising all *players* to direct and coordinate the analysis, planning, execution, and control of all marketing communication contacts, media, messages, and promotional tools directed at specific audiences in a way that results in greater economy, efficiency, effectiveness, improvement and coherence of the company's communication efforts in achieving corporate and product-specific marketing communication objectives. (Pickton and Broderick, 2001, p. 67).

McGrath (2010) states that *“IMC is a theoretical perspective that advocates a high level of communication and interaction between brand marketers and their consumers, together with a high degree of message consistency, conveyed throughout the brand's marketing mix, i.e., from the product itself to all marketing communication media.”*

As described by Kotler and Armstrong (p. 50, 2013) is the positioning of a market offering so that it occupies a clear, distinctive, and desirable place relative to competing products in the minds of target consumers. Marketers plan positions that distinguish their products from competing brands and give them the greatest advantage in their target markets.

Based on the ideas discussed above, IMC is the method that a company uses to carefully and effectively integrate all of its communication channels to maximize profitability while strengthening the brand equity of its goods and services.

b) Marketing.

As the origin of marketing, we can cite Arques-Salvador (2006), who explains that its initial function was limited to advertising and promotional aspects, based on a not very dynamic environment with stable prices and little development and innovation of new products. At the time, there were monopolies with captive markets and no competition or consumer protection laws.

To introduce the concept of contemporary marketing, who is better than Kotler (p.13, 2000), who defines it as *“a social and administrative process by which groups and individuals obtain what they need and want through generating, offering and exchanging products of value with their peers.”* In this line, Kotler & Armstrong (2008) indicate today’s services, like products, use marketing to increase their sales, except that there is no physical transfer.

One of the definitions of marketing that best fits current realities is that of Monroy (2014), which states that marketing seeks to understand the market and all the needs and desires that may exist, so that through the development of plans and strategies with a logical sequence, not only is it possible to solve these needs but also to deliver a higher value than expected that allows the creation of profitable relationships with which to obtain in return, sales, profits, and customer value in the long term.

This definition is well complemented by Lovett (2012), who explains that these desires are set by the society in which we live and the environment in which we develop and develop, i.e., they are shaped by the culture of the consumer. We can say that these wants turn into demands once they are within our means economically, and since this is where a company's profits will come from, this is ultimately what determines the income projection of any given company.

c) Digital Marketing.

Digital marketing according to Kotler (2016) is *“that which emerges in today's information age based on information technologies. Informants are well-informed and can buy diverse offers of similar products. For this, the brand must segment the market and develop a product that satisfies the needs of the target audiences.”* Furthermore, he mentions that *“nowadays companies are trying to reach the minds and hearts of consumers”*.

According to Del Olmo & Fondevila Gascón (2014), digital marketing can be defined as *“the use of information technologies to achieve the company's marketing objectives”*. Within what information technologies are, we have everything that webs 2.0 and 3.0 are and their implications. As far as digital marketing is concerned, the use of this can be reflected in actions such as search engine positioning, internet advertising, use of specialised pages, etc.

According to Chaffey & Russell (2002), *“digital marketing is defined as the application of digital technologies to contribute to marketing activities aimed at achieving profitability and customer retention”*. We see that digital marketing is the use of technology or the combination of this with marketing concepts to achieve the objectives of the company, so it would be worth reviewing some definitions of marketing, for a complement of information; Dvoskin (2004) defines marketing as *“a discipline of economic science whose aim is to enhance the capabilities of organisations and individuals offering goods or services who, dissatisfied with a given competitive situation, aspire to move to a more advantageous one”*.

Reviewing the concepts, we can say that digital marketing is the adaptation of conventional marketing concepts (the search and satisfaction of needs and desires), to the different digital platforms provided by information technologies, with their due variations and implications that each of these contains.

d) Brand image.

The brand image involves the subjective value of people's perception, for Upshaw (1995) it is an illusory element, and he avoids naming it as such in his model, while for Biel (1993), it is a set of variables, which becomes a cluster.

The literature to some extent considers the image as brand identity, as described by Aaker (1996), in this regard, Kotler & Pfoertsch (2008, p.91) delineate the difference between these two concepts used and mention that brand image is a *“tactical asset that may change from time to time, whereas identity is an enduring strategic asset that represents the enduring values of the brand”*.

Meanwhile, for Malik, Naeem & Munawar (2012), the brand image variable is sometimes used by researchers as a term interchangeable with brand identity, perceived image, and brand personality. Keller (1993) defines it as the perceptions that are reflected by the brand associations retained by the consumer's memory. Concerning this definition, brand image is not only the construction of a symbol for a marketing strategy, people or consumers are the ones who give it the importance to be studied by going through people's minds and their behaviour. For the above, the models for measuring brand image are also different, as are their definitions, in this way, Biel's (1992) proposal is made by breaking down the image into corporate, who uses it, and the product or service itself; while Keller (1993) includes it in his model as one of the main dimensions and finally Aaker (1996) in his model uses the dimension of brand association.

e) Brand equity.

The first author to explain brand equity was Leutheusser in 1988 (p.89) who defined it as: *“It represents the value of a product over and above that of any other identical product without the brand name”*. In other words, brand equity represents the degree to which the brand name alone adds value to the offer (Leutheusser, 1988). Gradually, experts in the field have been refining this definition (Casanoves, Küster, & Vila, 2018).

Currently, brands perform a wide variety of functions that improve the lives of consumers and increase the financial value of companies (Keller & Kotler, 2016).

Aaker defined the concept as follows: “*A brand is a distinct name and/or symbol (such as a logo, trademark, or package design) intended to identify the products or services of a seller or group of sellers, and to differentiate those products or services from the competition*”. (Aaker, 1991, p.18) In other words, the brand indicates to the customer the origin of the product, protecting both the consumer and the producer from competitors trying to offer identical products (Aaker D., 1991).

2.3 Critical analysis of different areas.

IMC (integrated marketing communication) places a strong emphasis on the advantages of utilizing cross-media synergy to increase the brand equity of goods and services. (Pitta, Weisgal, and Lynagh, 2006, p. 156).

Pickton & Broderick's (2001, p. 67) concept, highlights how the different elements enable both existing and potential customers to be persuaded to maintain long-term relationships. Although its purpose is to influence consumer behaviour through different forms of communication, it also involves employees, partners, and other external and internal audiences with which the company relates, but according to Manocha (p. 150, 2011), the concept of IMC also involves two fundamental aspects. On the one hand, there needs to be consistency in positioning, message, and tone across all media. On the other hand, it must aim at the simultaneous achievement of several specific marketing objectives, such as consumer awareness, increased sales, and brand building.

Finally, to achieve effectiveness in the implementation of these tools, Kotler, Armstrong, Saunders & Wong (1999) state that companies must ensure that the message to be conveyed has the following characteristics:

- **Clarity:** the messages conveyed through the various promotional efforts must use language that is understandable to the segment to be persuaded.

- **Coherence:** the information contained must be related to each other. This means that at the end of each discourse, regardless of the medium used, it must have the same meaning that it is intended to convey.
- **Convincing:** the message must be supported by arguments in line with the characteristics and needs of the target segment.

On the other hand, in the area of marketing, Kotler & Armstrong (2008) defend the idea that a company's environment is made up of forces and actors external to marketing that affect its ability and direction to create and maintain profitable relationships with its target customers, and that is why the more marketing tools the company has at its disposal, the better direction it can achieve in this uncertain and changing environment, hence the importance of digital marketing as a crucial element of success in the substantive work of marketing and the organisation's strategy. Theories of digital marketing, like other areas of research, are attempts to explain or predict the factors that facilitate digital marketing and its influence on the environment in which it is exercised.

In that sense, Sawaf & Cooper (2006) assert that to predict which style of behaviour will be more efficient, it is necessary to know the relevant facets of the situation where digital marketing occurs, even though digital marketing theories evolve at a rapid pace in the field of development, implementation and, evaluation of marketing in organisations.

Authors such as Leigh (2015) or Messing (1990) defend the concept of digital marketing as the set of processes carried out on technological platforms through the use of applications, software and content management and, social networks through digital channels, which complement the functions of traditional marketing and whose scope would be based on understanding the needs of markets and satisfying them through products and services that generate high added value.

Regarding digital marketing, it can be said that authors such as Kotler (2016) identify 4 phases of the concept, in the case of Marketing 4.0 he states *“it is based on the digital economy, and the transactions that we carry out in digital media. For this, companies must understand a very changing user and adapt to them”*.

Some authors argue in favour of it as a collection of techniques for building a brand online. It differs from traditional marketing in that it makes use of techniques and

channels that enable real-time results analysis. There is consensus in using the term, to summarise all marketing efforts in the online environment. In addition, with the proper use of digital marketing, companies will be able to take full advantage of it by generating two-way communication, which will allow direct, effective, and controllable interaction with the customer, which in the end is one of the main activities to be achieved by marketing (Corrales, Paucarr, & Borja, 2017).

Concluding with the area of brand image, the model proposed by Martin & Brown (1990) measures brand image as a dimension within the measurement of brand equity valuation comprising five dimensions: perceived quality, perceived value, brand image, degree of commitment, and level of consumer trust in the brand. To this end, Keller (1993) makes an interesting division in the brand image dimension composed of variables, the measurement for them, and the purpose for doing so. It is then recognised that in the models found (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 1998; Martin & Brown, 1990 and Ponder & Barnes, 2004) brand image and brand perception as important factors. While Keller (1998) gives more importance to brand image as an antecedent to brand valuation, Aaker (1996) considers it as a concept of brand equity. Therefore, brand image is a concept of great relevance in the marketing research line.

As a result, this variable is taken into account as a single variable made up of different indicators, within a complete model of brand value, except for Aaker (1996); Martínez, Montaner & Pina (2004) conceptualise it as a multidimensional model, made up of three dimensions: generic, contemplating attributes or benefits that allow the brand to fulfill its main purpose (*functional*), the more emotive and symbolic aspects (*affective*) and the general perceptions of individuals (*reputation*). Nevertheless, Martínez & Pina (2009), in subsequent studies, conclude in statistical analyses that there are only two dimensions contemplated in brand image, reducing them to functional image and reputation. These authors contrast with Wu & Wang (2014), who measure brand image by dividing the dimensions of the image into functional, symbolic, experiential, and separately to measure the variable of consumer perception, adding specific dimensions to take the point of view of the customer and employee in the use of items other than those used in brand image.

2.4 Implementation of CIM, digital marketing and brand image for Gucci.

Gucci is a brand that was in decline until 2015, and with the emergence of a new creative director, Alessandro Michele, a new vision of identity is brought to it. After almost a hundred years as a leader in the luxury sector, the Italian firm is faced with the need to reshape its identity and project an image in line with this, ceasing to be pigeonholed in the *jet set* and expanding its range of audiences as the market is evolving, new technologies are constantly growing and brands must adapt to all these new technological and digital advances. Therefore, Gucci has updated itself by developing and applying a new communication model and marketing strategy (both traditional and digital) to give freshness and innovation to its image, without leaving aside its sophistication and prestige. Currently, the brand defends that beauty has no limits and no rules. Since Michele (2015-2022) took over as creative director, Gucci's fashion has changed: before it spoke of fashion that no longer existed, now it only speaks of humanity.

Due to this, as the newspaper *LaPublicidad* (2019) points out, the sales of Kering, a group of luxury commercial companies, which includes Gucci, among others, have grown by 41% on average annually since 2013, being more profitable online than in its physical shop. Gucci previously focused on conveying sensations and auras of comfort in its shops rather than selling the product itself. On the other hand, the increase in online purchases is since Gucci has designed a communication and marketing plan that breaks the mould by seeking to interact with a wider public, which in turn is younger, the so-called “millennials”. This has been achieved through the appropriate use of the tools provided by digital platforms, especially Instagram, which is the maximum reference for this consumer profile. In other words, Gucci's current positioning is characterised by the implementation of a strategic plan that works both offline and especially online.

Gucci has achieved this by creating a strategy of interaction and communication with the public, especially with the youngest, through a strategic plan that not only focuses on direct and open dialogue on networks but also through meetings with its youngest employees, asking them for advice and counselling. The bi-directionality and the ability to viralize the message are signs of identity of the networks that are not always used effectively by brands.

Gucci has learned that the internet and social media are a terrain that it must master to perfection to be able to execute good communication, proposals, and promotions. For this reason, the brand communicates through Instagram, having a clean, clear, and simple feed. It has been able to develop a communication strategy that not only emphasises the search for sales but also seeks to establish a climate, an atmosphere, and a culture around the brand. Among others, **#Guccigram** is a strategy created by Alessandro Michele, creative director of the firm, where he tells different stories on the Instagram platform, which, as he indicates in an article for Vogue (2015) *“are all united by a great freedom and whose creativity and voice are born in the digital medium, a vital source of visual culture”* or the **#tfwGucci** campaign, was started by various publications on the firm's social networks boast about the most ridiculous features of the fashion world. A much-criticised strategy that worked for young internet users.

#Guccigram



Image 1. **#Guccigram**

Source by Gucci

#tfwGucci

When you wake up late for work and realize you're actually a clay head



Image 2 **#tfwGucci**

Source by Gucci

2.5 Brand value vs brand equity.

It is crucial to distinguish between brand value and brand equity moving forward to prevent future confusion. Brand equity is understood as the value of a brand in the eyes of consumers, adopting a consumer perspective, while brand value refers to the financial importance of the brand. (Aaker D., 2022).

2.6. Relevant theories/ models

2.6.1 Channels of CIM.

CIM is made up of several channels, and examples of these traditional channels, including direct marketing, sales promotion, public relations, and advertising, can be found in numerous writings. However, this research includes online marketing because it takes into account how, in recent years, social networks, platforms, and applications, among others, have developed into resources that people use to communicate online; as a result, consumers now investigate, discuss, comment on, influence, and massify information related to their consumer products, making their use of this media directly related to both the worth of a brand and their intentions to purchase a specific good. According to Duncan (2002), the main purpose of CIM is to help marketers better manage the expanding number of marketing communications channels at their disposal, such as the internet and sophisticated consumer databases.

a) Direct Marketing.

The term "direct marketing" refers to a group of actions taken by a marketer to transfer a good or service to a customer, targeting a specific audience, and using one or more media to elicit a response from an actual or potential customer, whether phone, mail, advertisements in newspapers, magazines, television, or personal contact. (Vargas, 1989, p. 85).

The purpose of this channel is focused on building relationships with potential customers; once a customer purchases a product, it aims to make the relationship last over time. In this way, purchase frequencies are increased as a result of the delivery of goods or services from the seller to the buyer without the need for intermediaries.

b) Sales Promotion.

This is a set of various tools often used in the short term to stimulate consumers or business units to buy more quickly or buy more goods and services rendered (Rojuee & Rojuee, 2017); by some techniques such as coupons, gifts, bargaining, samples and display points and purchase promotion. There are some situational factors in which it is indicated to implement this channel, for example: when advertising in paid media is no longer effective; also when competitors are gaining market share and managing to displace other participants; finally, when there are changes in consumption patterns by customers. In this sense, the psychological, demographic, geographic and economic characteristics of consumers are important features to consider when developing sales promotion strategies.

c) Public Relations.

This is the managerial function that evaluates public perceptions, identifies the organization's policies and practices that serve the public interest, and puts into practice a plan of action and communication to win the support and understanding of the general public (Martson, 1998, p. 12). It is a tool that supports management, but for this to happen, it is important to realize that it is a long-term process that necessitates constant communication between the parties. It is often made up of activities such as product or brand launches, company positioning, the promotion of corporate social responsibility, and the design of strategies aimed at building organisational identity, strengthening the perception of a favourable image among the different stakeholders. Likewise, public relations, beyond maintaining two-way communication, aims to listen and act on the resolution of problems that arise between the organisation and its public.

d) Advertising.

The role of advertising is not limited to purchasing, but also reminds consumers of how the advertised product meets their needs. Overall, good advertising tries to generate a positive attitude towards the individual offer, the brand, and the organisation. It carries the message associated with the goods, services, and image of the company (Sangeeta, Dahiya and Kumar, 2018, p. 118). One of the characteristics of advertising is that the advertiser pays to convey its messages, mainly through mass media such as radio, television, and print publications. The contribution of advances in information and

communication technologies, together with the internet, should also be considered, as resources that broaden the possibilities of bringing together bidders and buyers. This makes advertisements more interactive and tailored to each of the audiences. Finally, given the widespread use of mobile devices, bringing advertising to them is the next wave of advertising because it allows for personalized consumer targeting wherever they are. (Bauer and Strauss, 2016, p. 161).

e) Online Marketing.

The implementation of marketing technology platforms can significantly change a company's business activity, as well as the way it engages with customers and conducts its business. Through mobile applications, websites, and social networks, companies can quickly identify their potential customers, study their behaviour and then provide them with the content and/or services they need. Its implementation encourages companies to achieve goals such as brand recognition, consumer engagement and maintaining customer relationships. One benefit of online marketing is that customers value the convenience of shopping whenever and wherever they want, getting better information and a wider selection of goods, comparing prices, or getting feedback from other customers. (Pavel, 2013, p. 579). According to Iacovou (2017) states that e-marketing encompasses many invaluable tools that can prove to be lucrative for a company once they are used effectively; among its benefits is the low cost it requires to reach consumers without restrictions 24 hours a day if an internet connection is possible.

Above, each of the highlights of the text will be highlighted, as well as the importance of communication channels for Gucci.

- **Direct marketing**, Gucci offers exclusive communication to its customers by creating new shopping experiences in its shops, the so-called “*Gucci Circolo*”, a multi-sensory experience offering workshops, talks, and other events where customers can soak up the brand's values.
- **Sales promotion**, Gucci offers its clients a wide range of accessories, which is around 55% and 30% in *prêt-à-porter*, the latter is used above all to connect and communicate with young people, the firm's strategy being to capitalise on

trends, adapting its products quickly to current tastes (Fashion Network, 2023).

- **Public relations**, Gucci had an innovative change, leaving behind the Italian firm's past celebrities (such as Jackie Kennedy or Elizabeth Taylor) for the new style icons of the moment that generate an impact on the younger group of consumers, such as Dakota Johnson or Elle Fanning (Vogue, 2022).
- **The advertising**, Gucci, is deployed by all current media in order to communicate and create a rapprochement with people and the problems of today's world, as a clear example we can see that the year 2019 is associated with the World Health Organization to create a solidarity campaign against the COVID-19. Likewise, the brand does not lag and develops communication with the younger generation through influencers such as the Tiktoker Francis Bourgeois (Voxbournier, 2022).



Image 3 Source by Instagram
@francis_bourgeois43

- **Online marketing**, this section will be left for the next point where it will be explained in more depth.

2.6.2 RACE Model.

John Martson created the RACE Model, also referred to as the Spiral Model, in 1963 as a method for strategic planning in the field of public relations. The goal of this model was to develop a framework that aids the business in better structuring its anticipated marketing initiatives, i. e. to specify each of the goals that must be met constantly.

Figure 1. RACE MODEL.



Source by Google.com

- **What is the RACE Model?**

The RACE Model can be characterized as an action and execution plan that outlines how to behave toward the customer based on the stage of the buying process in the customer's life cycle. It's crucial to break down the main goal into more manageable, smaller goals to accomplish the RACE Model's objectives.

This is the meaning behind the acronym:

- **Reach:** this is the first phase and its goal is to spread public awareness of the brand.
- **Act.** Once the brand has gained awareness, it's time to encourage a prospective customer to get in touch with it.
- **Convert.** If the interaction we were aiming for has already been completed, it means that the user is already a lead; as a result, we need to persuade them to convert into a customer.
- **Engage.** This is the last step in the purchasing process. For all of our customers to continue buying from us and return to do so, we must earn their loyalty.

In the following, we will now explain how **Gucci** uses these phases in its digital marketing strategy.

- **Reach:** it should be made clear that the firm is known worldwide, but it is not lagging, wanting to reach all genders, ages, and people. For this reason, Gucci signed for the first time an alliance with the 26-year-old England football player Jack Grealish in 2022 so that he could be an ambassador for the brand, thus reaching the largest number of potential buyers.
- **Act:** following the previous strategy, Gucci and its alliance with the video game platform Roblox, have added to this video game the avatar of Jack Grealish who will wear the "*Gucci Good Game*" collection, a game in which precision and skill are key and which ends with the double "*GG*" salute being the brand's emblem and creating a sporting spirit.
- **Convert:** Having a consolidated product concept that connects with pop culture and unconventional but perfectly executed marketing strategies have made Gucci stand out in the luxury fashion market and ensured its leadership in the industry. At the same time, social media creates a great impact that generates value and engagement in consumers, Gucci cleverly used this tactic

at a precise and appropriate time, giving a positive result, therefore, in the 2021 campaign, the firm had collaborations with celebrities such as Serena Williams, Dakota Johnson or Harris Styles who appeared wearing and showing their clothes and products in a talk show called *The Beloved Show* with James Corden.



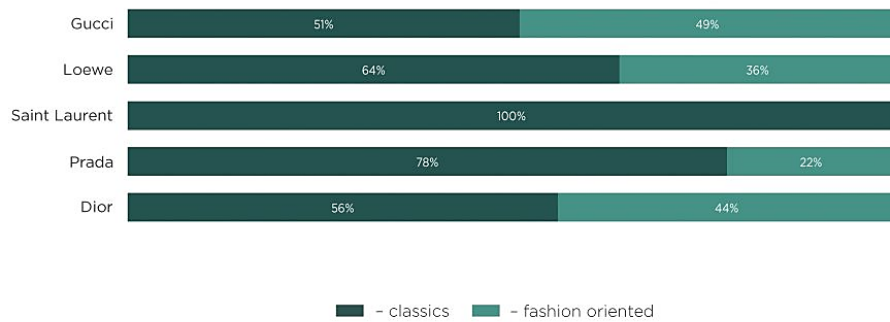
Image 4. *The Beloved Show* with James Corden

Source by JustJared

- **Engage:** Many luxury brands steer clear of social media fanaticism, but not Gucci - the brand knows it's a way to champion inclusivity and support culture. Aside from Gucci's social media loyalty, it has another strategy. The brand currently has 60% of its merchandise in classic styles, while 40% is about modern styles, in this way Gucci also makes sure to retain its older customers, that is, the new era of Gucci does not leave behind the classic styles but balances them with styles that are in trend at the moment, being one more reason why the brand has so much impact on the new generations, without leaving aside its distinctive timeless monograms and its distinctive red and green stripes (Business of Fashion case study).

Classic vs. Fashion Oriented

Retviews 2020, loafers women



RETVIEWS
a LECTRA company

Image 5. Classic vs Fashion Oriented

▪ RACE model: advantages and disadvantages.

Advantages

- It is action-oriented with strategies that can be used in marketing and digital marketing.
- Customer-focused in building relationships, generating brand awareness, attracting potential customers through new products that can be sold offline and online, and encouraging repeat purchases and brand loyalty.
- Improve brand performance by using data to define each stage and set objectives (Google Data Studio).

Disadvantages

- Creating the plan without intelligent objectives (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound).
- Not being able to match each stage of the model with the correct stage of the customer lifecycle.

2.6.3 Keller's conceptual model of brand equity.

Brand equity is defined by Keller (1993) as follows from the standpoint of the consumer: “*the differential effect of brand awareness on consumer response to brand marketing*” (Keller, 1993, p.2). Two important points can be drawn from this conceptualisation. The first has to do with marketing efforts, as the effects they have on brand awareness must be considered, as well as how changes in brand awareness affect a company's traditional performance. Secondly, it's crucial to keep in mind that brand recognition that has already been ingrained in memory affects the long-term future success of marketing initiatives. (Keller K., 1993).

It is worth noting that the author introduces a new concept, brand awareness, which he defines as: “*the set of a brand node in memory to which a variety of associations are linked*” (Keller, 1993, p.3.). That is, they are beliefs, perceptions, and attitudes that are associated with the brand, this network of associations can come from direct or indirect sources (Erdem & Swait, 1998).

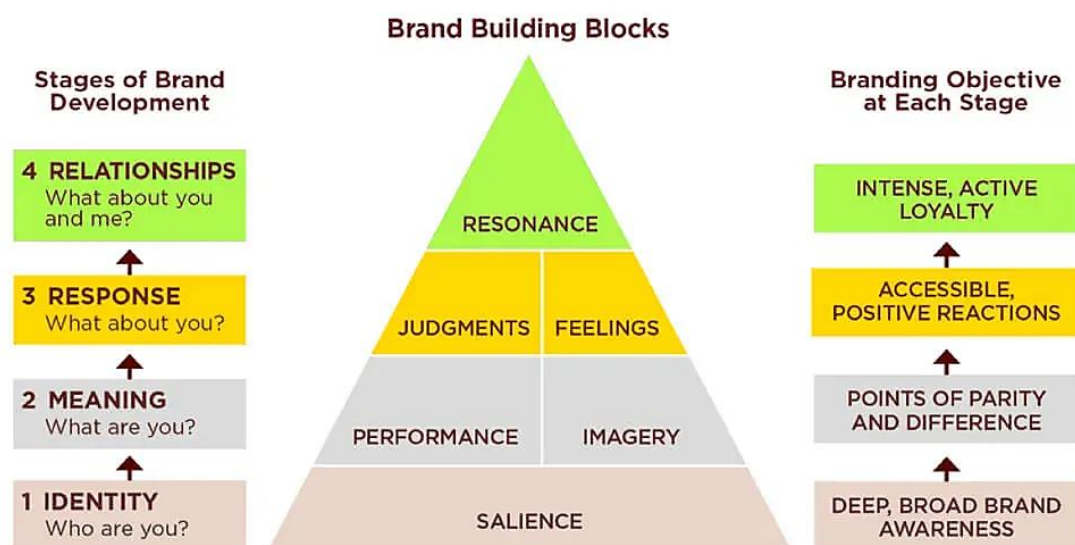
In this way, the brand's essence will be represented by the consumer's knowledge of it, which could give the business a competitive advantage (Saavedra et al., 2022). Brand image and brand awareness are the two elements that makeup brand awareness. The recall or recognition of the brand by consumers is the first component, and the associations they have in their minds that are associated with the brand are the second. (Keller K., 1993).

In summary, this model proposes six variables that make up Brand Equity: prominence, images, performance, judgments, feelings, and resonance (Keller, 2008) and is configured as a hierarchical model represented by a pyramid that ascends from the base to the top (Keller, 1993).

- **Prominence**, the model's underlying concept, refers to the brand's physical and mental presence in the minds of consumers. The objective is to instrumentalise brand awareness through its identity and the way it is displayed to its market (Leone et al., 2006). The result is the degree of recognition not only of the existence of the brand but also of the most relevant aspects that make it up (Keller, 1993).

- **Images** refer to the consumer's expectations regarding their psychological satisfaction. Performance, as a parallel stage, relates the brand to the satisfaction of functional needs. These two stages are configured to generate affinity (Faircloth, Capella, & Alford, 2001). This model proposes to discover the consumer's expectations and adjust the product to align its relationship with the expected value (Keller, 2001).
- **Judgments and feelings** center on how well the brand performed in comparison to expectations. The result frames the level of quality perceived by its consumers and superiority to the competition. It involves feelings and emotions as a response (Keller, 2013).
- **Resonance** as a product of the configuration of the previous stages, creates attachment, connection, loyalty and community, referring to the emotional reactions identified in the consumer (Thompson, Rindfleisch, & Arsel, 2006).

Figure 2. Brand Building Blocks



Source by Geektonight

In the following section, we will examine how this theory of brand value is applied to the Gucci brand.

The resonance that Gucci has is instantaneous just by seeing something as simple as its logo, we will recognise which firm it is, the logo is a symbol of authenticity, luxury, and grandeur, without forgetting that it is also one of the most recognisable fashion logos in the world. To all this, we will add its slogan “*made in Italy*” which the one hand, gives personality to the brand and on the other hand, highlights its Italian heritage that extols the craftsmanship of luxury and perfection.

The firm has created its products based on unique and inimitable designs of high quality, generating the “*Veblen effect*” in the prices of its products (the goods will be more desirable because of the high price), this is because consumers believe in the quality-price ratio (Business Dictionary, 2017).

Gucci with its images wants to convey prestige, tradition and modernity. The combination of these elements generates a dual positioning in the brand, so we can observe, the Italian heritage that evokes feelings of timeless tradition, also, the mix of contemporary design with a touch of innovation, being a successful combination. It is also worth noting that the brand's ambassadors are celebrities, which adds a great deal of prestige, generating a desire in consumers to buy the product worn or dressed by the celebrity. Similarly, a brand endorsement is generated through its code of ethics, which announces that “*Gucci is working to strengthen its ongoing commitment to being a progressive leader. This path involves improving key issues such as respect for human rights and employees, the environment and biodiversity, respect for stakeholders, and supplier engagement*”. (Gucci, 2022)

Definitively, Gucci creates broad consumer feelings, not only by offering a high-quality product but also, by buying a signature product and wearing it or going to one of its shops, the customer feels a psychological empowerment of power and luxury. To resonate, the brand has perfected the strategy of engagement with its community and its customers, for this, we will mention a few examples such as the Gucci Osterias da Massimo Bottura in Florence, Beverly Hills, Tokyo, and Seoul, in its flagship shops (Gucci.com, 2022); the firm is present at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art's Art

and Film Gala (LACMA, 2022) and with Artolution by Gucci that supports young artists to promote inclusion (Equilibrium.gucci.com, 2022).

2.6.4 Aaker vs Keller model.

As shown in the following table 1, we will see how the two theories differ and are similar.

Table 1. Aaker's brand equity model & Keller's brand resonance pyramid.

Aaker's brand equity model.	The similarity of Aaker and Keller's brand equity models.	Keller's brand resonance pyramid.
Loyalty. According to the author, there are several levels in this hierarchy. As a result of brand equity, he also sees brand loyalty as a result.		Resonance. Several sub-dimensions of brand resonance are ranked in order of importance by the author. In Keller's view, brand loyalty and brand equity are distinct concepts.
Perceived quality This section illustrates the benefits of perceived quality.	Perceived quality/ Performance and judgements. Keller includes two dimensions in this section, performance, and judgements, whereas Aaker only includes one dimension, perceived quality.	Performance and judgments. Based on performance and images, these awards will be given.
Brand associations. Aaker's model tells us about eleven different associations that support the positioning strategy.	Brand associations/images and feelings. Aaker only discusses one of his blocks in this section which is a brand	Images and feelings. Keller's pyramid contains five types of personalities and six types of feelings expressing values.

	association, unlike Keller who divides it into two blocks which are images and feelings.	
Consciousness. Hierarchically, different stages of the brand are developed, from the lack of awareness of the brand, recognition, recall and finally the brand becomes part of the consumer's mind, becoming a dominant brand.		Prominence. Specifically, it refers to the fact that a brand must satisfy the needs of consumers.
Other own brand assets. From the perspective of the organization, these include trademarks, channel relationships, and patents.		The value of the brand is developed from the perspective of the consumer and therefore Keller does not develop this section.

Therefore, we conclude that Aaker's model develops brand equity from both a consumer's and an organisation's perspective. It represents the author both brand equity and brand value. While Keller's pyramid models brand equity by focusing on the consumer perspective, in which he makes a clear distinction between brand equity (brand as an asset) and brand value (financial value).

Akker focuses on brand recognition to create brand equity (think of two GG and Gucci quickly comes to mind) and Keller focuses on customer emotions to create brand equity.

Finally, Aaker creates several brand dimensions and indicates the causal interrelationship between them. These dimensions seem to remain on the same plane, giving several ways to increase brand equity. Keller, while clarifying that to construct the upper block it is necessary to have created the lower block before, offers two different routes to developing the brand. Building a strong brand is done by utilizing both routes, whether they are rational or emotional.

Source: Aaker, 1991:xi, 15-18, 39-42, 46-52, 61-76, 85-96, 109-129; Keller, 2008:49-78; Keller, 2001:25; Keller:1993: 2,17; Taylor *et al.*, 2004:220

A visual representation of the comparison presented in **Table 1** is shown in **Figure 3**.

Figure 3. There is a great deal of similarity between the two models Aaker and Keller.

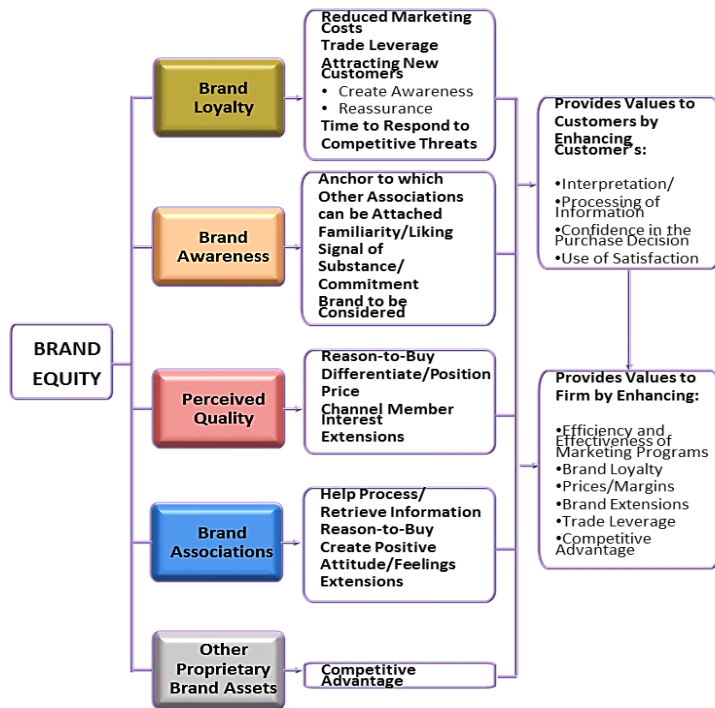


Figure 1: Aaker's brand equity model
Source: Aaker (1991: 270)

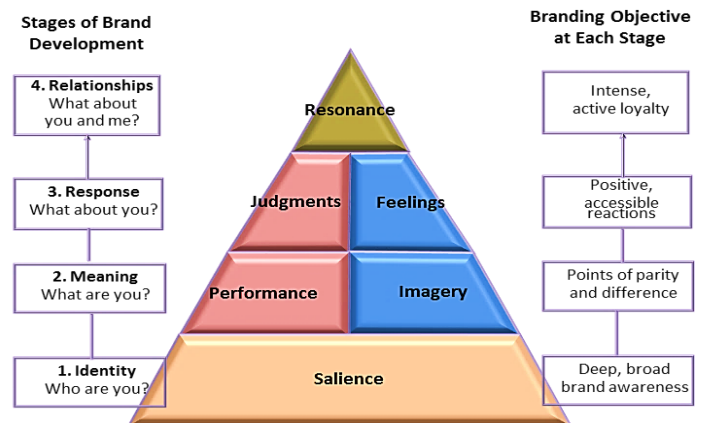
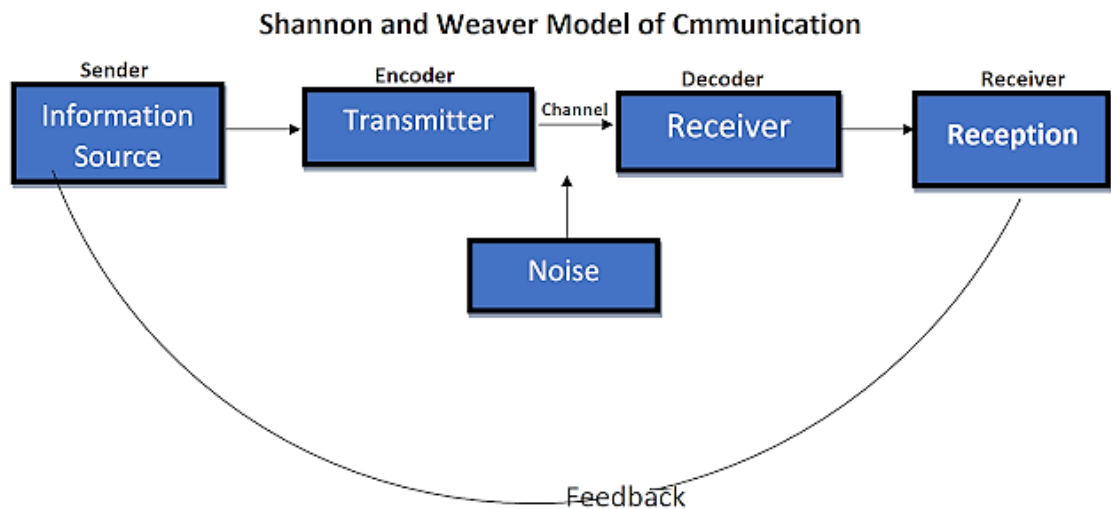


Figure 2: Keller's customer-based brand equity pyramid
Source: Keller (2001: 17)

Figure 3.6: Parity between Aaker and Keller's models
Source: Aaker, 1991: 270; Keller, 2001: 17

2.6.5 Shannon and Weaver model.

Figure 4. Shannon and Weaver's communication model.



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Source by JMC Study Hub

a. Information theory.

Shannon and Weaver introduced their mathematical theory of communication in 1948. It is a communication model or, more precisely, an information theory in the context of cybernetics, which is the study of how machines, particularly electronic machines, work. Information has a completely different meaning when it is used by Shannon than it does when it is used in the context the news that is typically provided to us by the media context of the news that is typically provided to us by media (newspaper, radio, and TV). For him, it is a quantifiable unit that disregards the message's content.

This theory, which can be visualized by a five-part scheme made up of a source, a transmitter, a channel, a receiver, and a destination, allows for the analysis of the amount of information in a message concerning the capacity of the medium. The noise in this model adds a certain level of disturbance.

b. The elements of the Shannon and Weaver model.

1. Source. This is the primary sender component of communication; it generates a predetermined number of words or signs that make up the message to be transmitted.

2. Transmitter. The projected message is converted into a series of signals or codes suitable for the channel responsible for transmitting them by the technical transmitter, or transmitter.

3. Channel/Signal. The technical medium known as a channel or signal is required to transport the signals encoded by the transmitter.

4. Receiver. Technically speaking, the receiver's activity is the opposite of the transmitter's. It entails decoding the transmitted message and sending it through the channel to translate it into a language that the intended recipient—also known as the addressee can understand.

5. Addressee. The actual recipient to whom the message is addressed.

6. Noise. There is non-technical noise, which originates from the psychosocial context, and technical noise, which is a disturbance that modifies the signal to varying degrees during transmission.

c. Advantages and disadvantages of the model.

○ Advantages.

- Because of its flexibility and relative simplicity, the Shannon and Weaver model is very appealing.
- Allows standardisation of the message.
- Storage of messages and thus of communication.
- Faster message transmission speed.

- **Disadvantages.**

- In some cases it is not accurate.
- Interference may occur.
- Inattention of the receiver when receiving the message.

CHAPTER III: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.

3.1 Introduction.

In this chapter, we will focus on developing and explaining the research method on which we will be based. Afterward, the different sections of the research work will be explained, defined, and clarified.

On the one hand, it is acknowledged that *Methodology* is the science that teaches us how to manage specific processes efficiently and effectively to achieve the desired results and seeks to provide a strategy to follow in the process. However, *Research Methodology* is the branch of science that offers the researcher a set of ideas, rules, and laws that enable the researcher to direct their scientific inquiry in an effective and excellence-focused way. the reason for studying *Research Methodology*. consists of several logically organized and connected steps that make up the process of conducting scientific research.

A summary of the research context.

Saunders's **research onion** methodology served as the foundation for this study. (Saunders 2007), which examines the onion's internal process from the outside in. The following six levels or phases are established: research philosophy, research approach, research strategies, research option, research time horizon, and selection of data collection methodology. The research philosophy, which establishes the context for the research process and chooses the method you will use as your research approach for the second step, is the topmost layer. In the third stage, depending on the nature and complexity of the research problem, a single method or a mixed method is chosen. The fourth step involves choosing a research strategy, and the fifth layer specifies the time horizon. The data collection methods are set in the sixth and final layers.

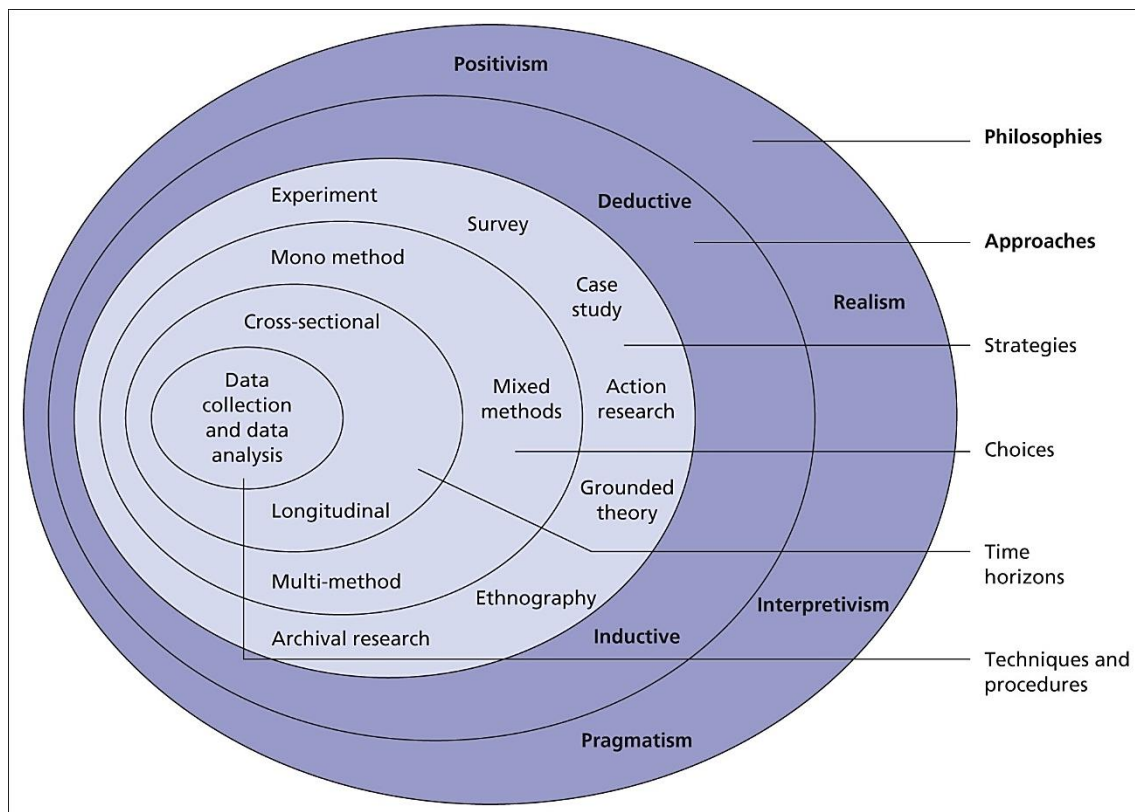
The advantages of the research onion are that it first establishes a series of stages under which various data collection methods can be understood, and then it shows the steps by which a methodological study can be described. (Saunders et al., 2007).

3.2 Research Onion by Saunders.

The term *methodology* refers to both the description of data collection and analysis procedures (Saunders et al., 2007) and the “*analysis of how the research is to be carried out*” (Blaikie, 2007:7). , 2009).

A large number of writers (e. g. From the broadest considerations (epistemology, ontology) to the specific strategies (grounded theory, action research, etc.), Crotty, Blaikie, Creswell, and Gray (2009) have developed and identified various planes that allow characterizing research.) and particular data collection methods (such as interviews, questionnaires, etc.). Saunders’s onion. The most intriguing model created in this section was that of (2007).

Figure 5. Research onion.



Source by 15Writes.com

3.2.1 Definition of Research Onion.

Saunders (2009) proposed the research onion framework (Figure 5) to illustrate the various aspects of research that must be scrutinized and planned to develop a strong research design. The research onion, in other words, directs the researcher through each step required to create a research methodology.

Three decision levels were used by the author to divide the research onion:

1. The research approach and the first two outer rings of the research philosophy.
2. The research design is made up of (a) methodological decisions; (b) research strategy, and (c) time frame.
3. The tactics i.e. the portion of data collection and analysis that makes up the research onion's inner core.

3.2.2 Parts of Research Onion.

The various rings that makeup Sanders's onion research will be examined from his theory's outermost layer inward. Saunders onion research is divided into different rings, which will be analysed from the outermost layer to the innermost layer of his theory.

a) Research philosophy.

The foundation of all research is its philosophy. It outlines the set of worldviews that the research topic is based on (Burrell and Morgan 2016). For Saunders and associates. A "*system of beliefs and assumptions about the development of knowledge*" is what this term refers to (2012).

The research philosophy's hypotheses serve as a justification for how to carry out this kind of study (Flick, 2011). It is a tool that can also be used to accomplish research goals. (Goddard and Melville, 2004).

The following are the main research philosophies (although they are certainly not the only ones):

- **Positivism.** Positivist thinking tells us that reality or knowledge already exists and is independent of the object being studied. Therefore, the researcher is only in the position of an observer and does not include personal opinions. The result has only one reality that is consistent across subjects and is obtained through empirical research based on observation and measurement (Newman, 1998). For the positivist researcher, the result can only be true or false or meaningless (having no basis in fact).

- **Interpretivism.** This philosophical current is focused on the ideas and thoughts of individuals that are influenced by sociocultural factors and each person or social group creates an inherent response (Astlund et al., 2011). The researcher has to establish a holistic view of the researched person, thoughts, or actions in which the researcher must retain an active subject stance during the study.

- **Pragmatism.** Its main objective is to approach research from a practical point of view, in which knowledge must be constantly questioned and interpreted. Here, the researcher adopts a subjective position, especially when drawing conclusions that will be the result of the decisions/responses of the participants.

b) Research aproches.

The inductive approach and the deductive approach are the two main strategies for creating a research paper.

In the 20th century, the inductive method coincided with the development of the social sciences (Saunders et al., 2009) as an alternative to the deductive approach and is based on data collection, exploration, and the development of theories based on the findings from data analysis (e. g. Yin (2003), Glaser and Strauss (1967), Schatzman and Strauss (1973), and Strauss and Corbin (2008) are a few examples. It's a method used in studies where there isn't a well-established theoretical foundation at the outset. Its adaptability makes it

particularly intriguing for studying phenomena where the context in which events take place is of interest (Yin, 2003) or for examining a sample of qualitative data from various points of view (Easterby-Smith et al., 2002).

The **deductive method**, on the other hand, seeks to confirm hypotheses made about a phenomenon by establishing causal relationships between variables. To confirm or reject his or her hypotheses, the researcher, who is an impartial observer of the event, primarily gathers quantitative data. To encourage replication, the methodology of this approach is typically much more rigid and structured than in the inductive approach (Gill and Johnson, 2002).

Deductive components that seek to validate or test the emerging theoretical hypotheses and assess their viability are typically included in inductive approaches. Combining induction and deduction in a single study is not only feasible, but it also strengthens the study's attempt to generalize a theory (Saunders et al., 2009).

c) Research strategies.

As stated by Saunders et al., numerous approaches can be taken to address the research question. (2009), such as questionnaires, participant observation, semi-structured individual and group interviews, or case studies. These are resources that can be used in a variety of ways at various stages of the research process, whether exploratory, descriptive, or explanatory (Yin, 2003).

This work, which is a case study, was developed using the main strategy described in the paragraphs that follow.

- **The case study.** This strategy is based on the construction of theoretical propositions from empirical evidence from one or several case studies (Eisenhardt, 1989a), it is characterised by being rich in empirical descriptions of phenomena that are usually documented through various data sources (Yin, 1994) such as data from literature analysis, interviews, surveys or observations.

The case study focuses on “*understanding the dynamics present in specific locations*” (Eisenhardt, 1989a: 534) and is of particular interest in answering the question “why” about a phenomenon (Saunders et al., 2009). Siggelkow (2007) considers that this type of strategy usually offers theoretical constructs very close to the empirical experience and Eisenhardt (1989b: 548) adds that it is a methodology “*very relevant both for exploring a novel field of knowledge and for offering a fresh perspective on fields of knowledge already investigated*”.

d) Choices.

The researcher will be guided by Saunders' research options as they learn about the different kinds of data that will be used in the study. The nature of the research and the goals the researcher wants to accomplish are taken into consideration when choosing a method.

There are three categories for these choices: mono-method, mixed-method, and multi-method.

- Mono-method only uses one specific type of data, i.e. e. data, either qualitative or quantitative.
- The mixed method uses quantitative data as well as qualitative data and produces one result from a single set of data (Flick, 2011).
- Multi-method uses a wider range of data collection and approaches, i.e. with more than one qualitative approach and more than one quantitative approach (Bryman, 2012). This approach produces separate results, as research studies are pre-categorised and then analysed using quantitative and/or qualitative techniques (Feilzer, 2010).

e) Time horizon.

The length of time it took the researcher to finish the project is known as the time horizon. There are two: the longitudinal horizon and the cross-sectional horizon.

- When there is a predetermined period for data collection and an investigation of a particular phenomenon is being conducted, the cross-sectional horizon is used. (Flick, 2011)
- The longitudinal horizon is used in studies where the researcher needs to examine whether the data collected change over a longer period of period and Melville, 2004).

Comparison of longitudinal and cross-sectional designs.

Longitudinal studies have the advantage over cross-sectional studies in that they provide information on how variables and the relationships between them evolve, but this involves higher costs.

f) Data collection methods.

The research onion is finally at its final layer. The methodological approach that was initially selected will again be reflected in this phase's explanation of the research data collection and analysis processes. According to Saunders et al., this procedure will give the study reliability and validity. , 2007). More detail on this section will be provided below.

g) Conclusion.

In these sections, the Saunders' onion method has allowed for a description of the various research phases. It has been determined that, as long as the techniques and procedures are coordinated with one another (one layer with another), this method can be easily adapted to various types of research and yields productive results. Consequently, a research model's reliability and efficiency will always depend on the researchers who use it.

3.2.3 Data collection considerations: quantitative and qualitative data

- **The qualitative approach.**

The qualitative approach is a method of research that excludes numerical measurements and instead uses descriptions, interviews, surveys, points of view from the researchers, and reconstructions of the facts without typically requiring hypothesis testing. They are referred to as holistic because they value things in their entirety, as a *whole*, as opposed to breaking them down into their parts. The research questions are being improved using qualitative tools. This strategy allows for the development of research questions, before, and after the process. By interpreting the facts, the process becomes more dynamic; its focus is on understanding the process's variables rather than measuring and reducing them. In social processes, this methodology is more prevalent.

- **The quantitative approach.**

The quantitative approach centres its research on numerical measurements, collects data to observe the process, and then analyses it to find answers to its research questions. The previously established *hypotheses* are put to the test using data collection, parameter measurement, frequency data, and statistical analysis of the research population. In this method, statistical analysis is unavoidably used as the research idea, the research questions, and the objectives are developed, the hypotheses are derived, the process variables are chosen, and through a process of calculation, the hypotheses are contrasted. This method works best for processes that can be measured or quantified by their very nature.

- **Advantages and disadvantages.**

Both approaches have their advantages and disadvantages, they are more useful in some or other processes, and their application if it is truly applied and deepened can give the expected results to the research process. There are detractors of both and criticisms of their applicability, the quantitative approach is described as much more impersonal, cold, and limited, while the qualitative approach is criticised for its subjectivity and for being very speculative. Both approaches,

when well applied, can lead the researcher to obtain the desired results, but nowadays there is a tendency towards research with mixed approaches where the benefits of each approach can be obtained separately.

3.2.4 Type of research.

There are many research methods, but a common way to classify them is *who collected them?* Thus, types of research can be divided into two: primary data and secondary data.

a) Primary research.

Primary research is information gathered straight from the source, i.e. e. using a variety of tools, including historical sources, interview data, questionnaires, etc., obtained directly from respondents.

Bounocore (1980, 229 p) defines primary sources are described as “*those containing original, unabridged and untranslated information: theses, books, nomographs, journal articles, manuscripts. They are also called first-hand sources of information...*”. They include quality electronic documentary production.

As a result, they offer explicit testimony or supporting data regarding the subject of the study. They are either written in progress or by a participant who was present at the event. They give readers an insider's perspective on the specific event or period under study.

Table 2. Benefits and limitations of primary research.

<i>Benefits</i>	<i>Limitations</i>
• Exact data. A quick and simple formulation of effective solutions is possible. • Exclusivity of information ensures that the researcher has access to all the information regarding the survey, interview, or observation findings. assisting the research in developing tactics to outperform rivals • Efficiency in terms of costs a researcher can budget only for specific details rather than spending money on information that might be unnecessary. • Greater control since the person or organization is in charge of organizing and funding the research, they can exercise greater control over the subject matter. They decide on the timelines and the areas of interest.	• High costs in data collection (in some research). • Longer data collection periods because a researcher must plan the study, gather information, and then organize the data into results that make sense. • Inaccurate data when the number of respondents is large and varied.

Table of the author's elaboration, the source is taken from Google Scholar and USC Libraries.

b) Secondary research.

The use of documentary sources is necessary for secondary research. It entails utilizing statistics or measurements gathered by other writers, as well as data from other research projects (Newman, 1998).

They are described as those that “*contain reworked or synthesized data or information*” by Bounocore (1980, 229p). Consequently, they interpret and evaluate primary sources. Texts that generalize, analyse, synthesize, interpret, or evaluate primary sources are considered secondary sources.

Table 3. Benefits and limitations of secondary sources.

<i>Benefits</i>	<i>Limitations</i>
• Less time is required to collect information. • Lower cost due to the use of fewer data collection resources. • Easy access to more data and not just the data we generate with our research. • Assistance with research design (makes recommendations for methods, techniques, and data sources) • Some information can only be obtained from secondary data. • Allows for comparative studies (analysis of the issue in various locations or at various times). • Does not provoke reactivity in the object of research.	• Multiple interpretations: they might not be very accurate, and a variety of researchers might offer various readings of the same document. • Inadequacy of the objectives. The objectives of the secondary source frequently do not line up with the goals of our research. • Lack of information. There is occasionally a gap in knowledge regarding how to acquire information. • It is necessary to make assumptions or there is no control over data collection, so there may be problems of the reliability and validity of the data found.

Table of the author's elaboration, source taken from Google Scholar and USC Libraries.

3.2.5 Data collection.

This is an important part of the study, in which the researcher will determine the techniques to be used in collecting and measuring data that will answer and/or test previously stated hypotheses and evaluate the results (Whitney, Lind, Wahl, 1998). The aim is to obtain effective evidence that can then be interpreted into solid and plausible answers to the questions posed. Finally, it should be made clear that the researcher must also ensure that all tools used are in line with the previously chosen philosophy.

a) Data collection methods.

Primary data collection techniques are based on the researcher's collection using qualitative and/or quantitative methods. The data collected will be unique to the research conducted up to the time of publication of the research.

The main methods are as follows:

- Questionnaires
- Interviews
- Focus group interviews
- Observation
- Surveys
- Case studies
- Diaries
- Activity sampling technique
- Memo movement study
- Process analysis
- Link analysis
- Time and motion study
- Experimental method
- Statistical method, etc.

Table 4. Advantages and disadvantages of using primary data.

Advantages	Disadvantages
• Data gathering is specific to the object to be studied by the researcher. • The researcher gives validity to the data collected. • The possibility to extend the data collected during the study.	• Problems in data collection must be solved by the researcher. • The researcher is responsible for ensuring the accuracy of the data gathered • Depending on the data collection tool, the researcher must weigh this cost

Table of the author's own elaboration.

Source taken from Google Scholar and Research-net

▪ **The survey method** is based on the analysis and assessment of people's behaviours such as feelings, thoughts, or opinions. Safeguarding the identity of the respondent is an ethical first step that must be taken into account. A positive side of surveys is that data collection can be done in different ways such as by email, telephone, text message or online, but the downside is the low response probability of the respondent, limiting data collection. The type of questions in

surveys can be open-ended (the answer is up to the respondent), closed-ended (yes or no answers; true/false), or multiple choice.

Secondary data collection techniques, on the other hand, rely on the gathering of information that has already been published, such as that found in a literature review, where the author originally gathered the information for a purpose other than that of the researcher.

The main methods are the following:

- Books
- Archives
- Biographies
- Newspapers
- Published census or other statistical data
- Data archives
- Internet articles
- Research articles such as journals.
- Databases.

Table 5. Advantages and disadvantages of using secondary data.

Advantages	Disadvantages
• Lower cost compared to primary data collection. • The responsibility of the researcher is reduced in obtaining previously researched data. • It is easier to find data on the subject to be investigated.	• Reliability of data collected by a third party may be low. • Data may be outdated by the time of the new research. • Secondary data may be misinterpreted by the researcher. • Copyright of the principal investigator.

Table of the author's own elaboration.

Source taken from Google Scholar and Research-net

b) Data sampling.

In academic research, sampling is frequently used as a technique to gather relevant data about a population (Thompson, 1992). According to Hajek (1981), a population is a group of individuals who share certain traits, such as being homosexual or metrosexual. Zikmund, Ward, Lowe, and Winzar (2007) assert that the sampling procedure uses a small number of people or subsets of the population in an effort to produce results that are representative of the population as a whole. Thus, a sample can be thought of as a subset of a specific population (Raj, 1968), and the sampling process enables the researcher to evaluate some as-yet-unknown specificities of the target population (Lohr, 1999). According to Black, Asafu-Adjaye, Khan, Perera, Edwards, and Harris (2009), samples frequently provide researchers with a rational resource for gathering such information that is useful for making decisions.

Types of sampling: we have probability sampling and non-probability sampling.

- **Probability sampling** 
 - 1. Simple random sampling.
 - 2. Systematic sampling.
 - 3. Stratified sampling.
 - 4. Cluster sampling.
- **Non-probability sampling** 
 - 1. Convenience sampling.
 - 2. Quota sampling.
 - 3. Judgement (or purposive) sampling.
 - 4. Snowball sampling.

– SIMPLE RANDOM SAMPLE.

Any random variable can be used to create a simple random sample, as long as each component has the same chance of being picked at any given time (Yates, Moore, and Starnes, 2008).

All other random sampling techniques can be thought of as having their roots in this type of sampling (Black, 2007).

Table 6. Advantages and disadvantages of simple random sampling.

Advantages	Disadvantages
• Has the propensity to generate representative samples and permits the analysis of data gathered using inferential statistics. • Each possible set of sampling units has an equal chance of being selected. • Comparison to other probability sampling techniques, it is simpler to comprehend and explain to others. • Compared to other probability sampling techniques, the statistical procedures needed to analyse the data and determine errors are simpler.	• A sampling frame composed of target population constituents is necessary, There might not be a suitable sampling frame for the target population, and making one might not be feasible or practical. In this instance, sampling from the target population's constituent parts is not necessary for cluster sampling. • Compared to a stratified sampling of the same sample size, it typically has larger sampling errors and less precision. • Data collection costs for dispersed surveys may be higher than for other designs. • It is unable to produce elements from small subgroups. Because of this, simple random sampling would not be a wise choice for studies that call for the comparison of small categories with much larger population categories.

Table of the author's own elaboration.

Source taken from Google Scholar and Research-net

c) Research ethics.

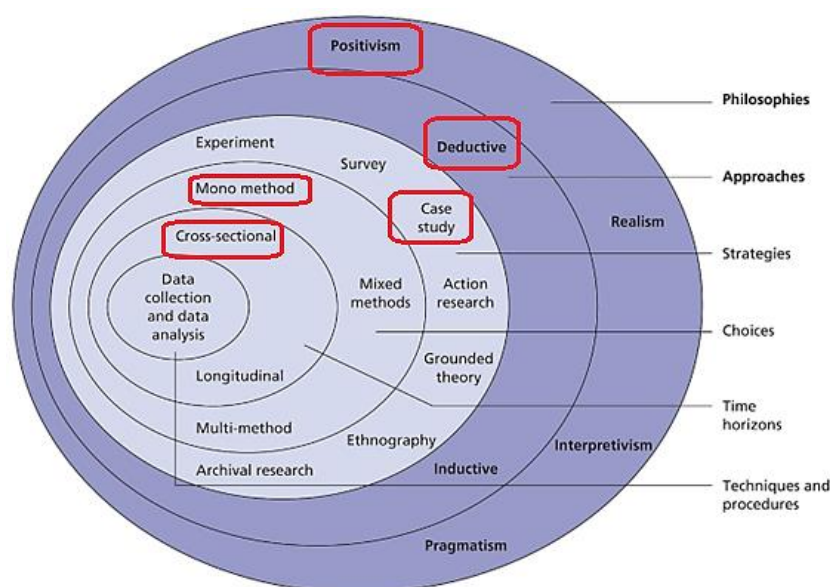
Since research on living things, including both animals and humans, can be done, Shrader-Frechette, K. (1994) The Swedish Council for Humanities and Social Science Research (1982), which Shrader-Frechette cites, states that there are four ethical principles, namely:

1. The research subject must freely consent to participate;
2. The terms of their participation in the study are entirely up to the research participants;
3. An ethically sound study procedure can raise the researcher's ethical standards. (Thomas, H., & Piccolo, 2012.)

Hypotheses must be plausible, appropriate for honest development, highly likely to be verified, able to produce results, and low risk for scientific research to be regarded as ethical. (O'Brien & Broughton, 2007)

3.3 Research methodology: choice for the Gucci case study.

Figure 6.



In the context of the research described above, a **positivist philosophical stance** has been adopted for the first and second stages of Gucci's research work, posing research questions and hypotheses that can be assessed and analysed (Tonuchi, 2019). This resulted in a deductive approach to research methodology, which develops hypotheses based on an existing theory before formulating the research strategy to test it (Silverman, 2013). This methodology can be seen as particularly well-suited to the positivist approach. (Snieder and Larner, 2009)

As for the third stage of the research strategy, a **case study** is going to be developed and applied to the firm Gucci. This strategy is particularly interesting to generate a broad understanding of issues that are usually influenced by certain contexts to which they relate (events and conditions), given that Integrated Marketing Communication and Digital Marketing Strategy are strongly influenced by external environmental and/or market conditions.

Subsequently, the fourth layer of the research, the **quantitative method** was used, *“using data collection to test hypotheses based on the numerical measurement and statistical analysis, in to establish patterns of behaviour and test theories”* (Fernandez Collado et al., 2014, p. 4). In this phase, we will be able to analyse whether Gucci's digital marketing and communication strategies have improved its brand image. In the same way, we will know the impact of the firm on online platforms and in its physical shops. Finally, we will check whether customers are satisfied with the Gucci brand.

The fifth stage then establishes the research time horizon for this study. This is the cross-sectional time horizon used when the research involves the examination of a specific phenomenon at a particular point in time, such as when a study is conducted to ascertain the perceptions of the population being examined about current and/or potential Gucci brand customers.

The choice of data collection and analysis methodology represents the sixth stage, which will be covered in more detail in the sections that follow.

- **Data collection.**

In this study on the Gucci brand and taking into account the benefits and limitations of the theoretical framework (the data sources of the research study and the time

component) we will use together primary data and secondary data. Therefore, for the collection of the secondary data for the Gucci case study, different sources such as existing literature, journals, articles, and papers from previous research and websites were consulted. Similarly, an **online survey** consisting of 18 questions of different types was used to collect the primary data. These questions include demographic questions, closed questions and open questions, multiple choice questions, and rating scales. This survey was sent via different platforms (WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, Email, Instagram, etc.) by creating a link and QR code for the respondents.

- **The sample.** Participants will be regular customers, new customers, or people interested in taking the survey about the Gucci brand.
- **Data sampling.** In our work, we have opted for the simple method, as it is appropriate and will provide us with data on both purchasing behaviour and knowledge of the Gucci brand.
- **Sample size:** 100 respondents.
- **Data collection method:** the online platform survey monkey was used, the data collected provided us with different results and graphs which were then analysed by Microsoft Excel and other systems for creating results.
- **Sample ethics.** Due to ethical considerations in this study the principles of voluntariness of the respondents, confidentiality, their consent to carry out the survey and, if they require it, the communication of the results will be maintained at all times.

CHAPTER IV: DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction.

The results of the survey questions asked of the respondents will be analysed in this chapter. Finding enough data to address the research objectives and questions outlined in Chapter I is the goal of data collection and analysis.

– Technical datasheet.

The objective of the technical datasheet is the compilation of a table for the objective of providing the reader with a minimum amount of information that allows for an adequate interpretation of the results presented (aedemo8, 2009). The basic contents of this document are the scope and universe, the sample size, the sampling error, the confidence level, the sampling method and the technique.

4.2 Technical datasheet.

Table 7. Technical datasheet

<i>Technical datasheet.</i>	
<i>SCOPE/ UNIVERSE</i>	UK, Spain, and Mexico
<i>SAMPLE SIZE</i>	80 participants out of 100 people sent the survey.
<i>SAMPLE ERROR</i>	$\pm 10\%$ ($p = q = 0.5$)
<i>CONFIDENCE LEVEL</i>	95.5% ($k=2$)
<i>SAMPLING</i>	Simple random sampling
<i>TECHNIQUE</i>	An online survey from the Survey monkey platform.

Prepared by the authors

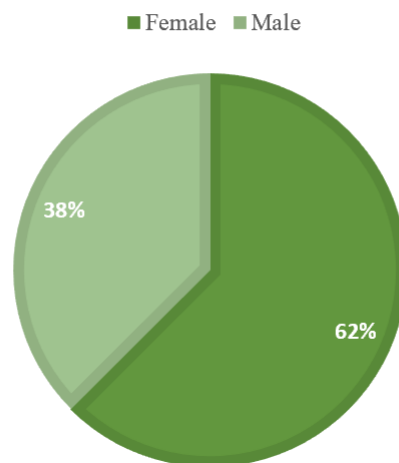
4.3 Data analysis.

Q1: What is your first name?

This first question was asked to make communication with the respondent easier (if there is any interest in communication from the researcher or the respondent after the survey). Therefore, the purpose of knowing certain personal data is that the answers can later be related to a specific person. Especially in this type of survey, which is an internal survey. Such information will be processed anonymously and for academic purposes.

Q2: What is your gender?

Q2: WHAT IS YOUR GENDER?



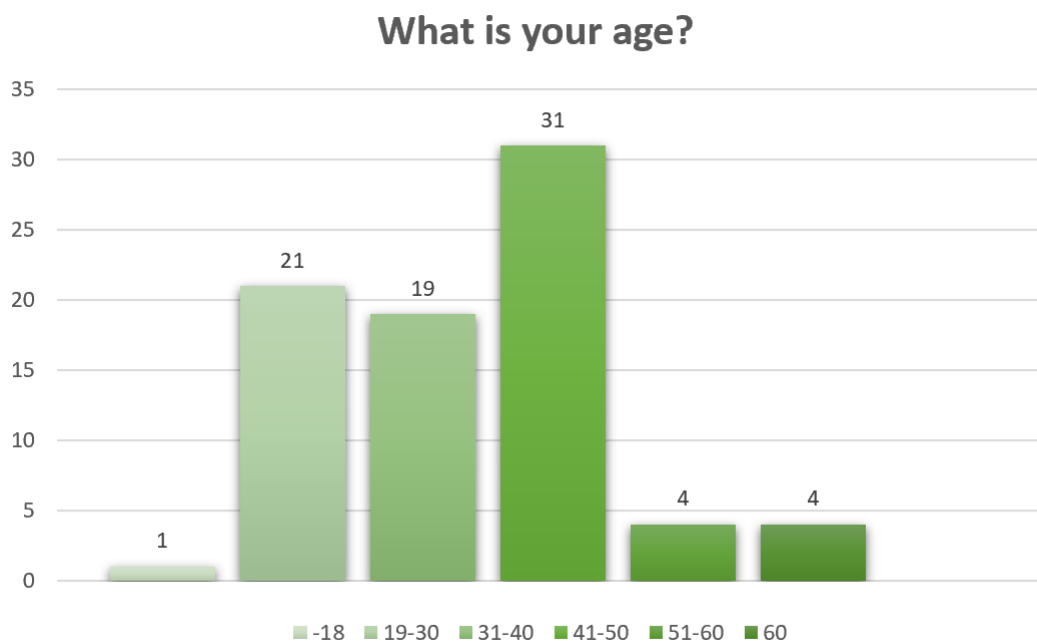
Graph 1. Results Q2

Table 8. Results Q2

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Female	50	62%
Male	30	38%
TOTAL	80	100%

The results of the second question are that 50 respondents were female and 30 respondents were male. The purpose of this question is to find out the marketing impact (offline and online) that the Gucci brand has on both genders, this is crucial when developing a strategic marketing plan that can achieve brand recognition to the maximum number of new and potential consumers. The result of the question is that we could have more information about the female point of view (62%).

Q3. What is your age?



Graph 2. Results Q3

Table 9. Results Q3

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
-18	1	1%
19-30	21	26%
31-40	19	24%
41-50	31	39%
51-60	4	5%
61+	4	5%
TOTAL	80	100%

The results obtained from the respondents to question three are reflected below from highest to lowest percentages (%):

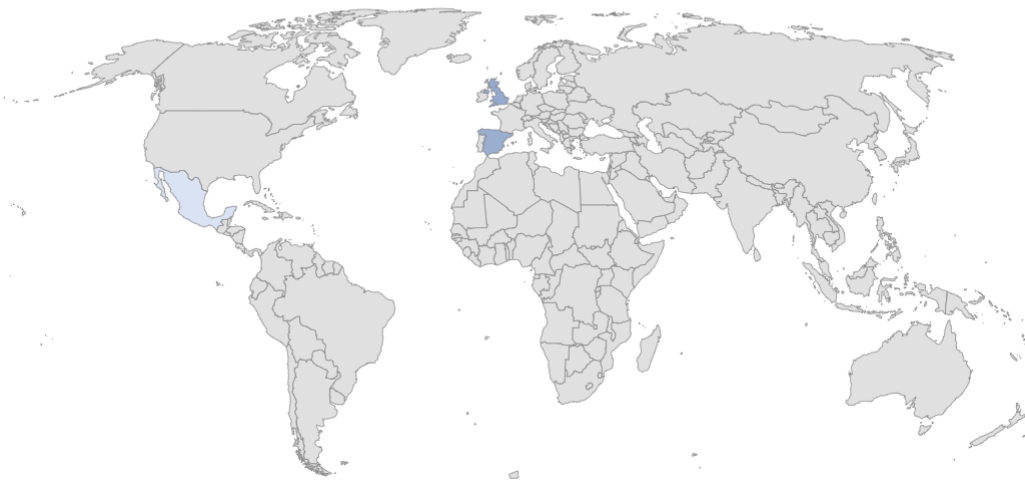
- 39% are between 41-50 years old.
- 26% are between 19-30 years old.
- 24% are between 31-40 years old.
- 10% are aged 51+.
- 1% are under 18 years of age.

These results are extremely important for the firm, as segmentation by age groups will give the brand certain guidelines on the different behaviours of buyers, their preferences, their needs, and the brand's claim to contribute value to society. For all this, Gucci will show a reorientation of the communication and marketing strategy towards a new target.

Likewise, *millennials*² reflect a high percentage of interest in the Gucci brand, this generation notices a scenario in social networks that very markedly affects the management of fashion brands. In addition, the figure of the *influencer*³ in the digital environment has managed to replace the traditional mass media, revolutionising commercial communications. As for the importance of Marketing Chunque (2021), claims that giving a company a digital presence is a strategy to increase visibility to users or consumers because digital marketing aims to optimize the performance and position of businesses within markets.

Q4. What country do you live in?

What country do you live in?



Graph 3. Results Q4

² Millennials: are persons born between 1981 and 1996.

³ Influencer: a person who has the capacity to influence and/or modify the behaviour of a community that observes them. In marketing, they become promoters of different products on social networks (Cepeda & Gómez 2021).

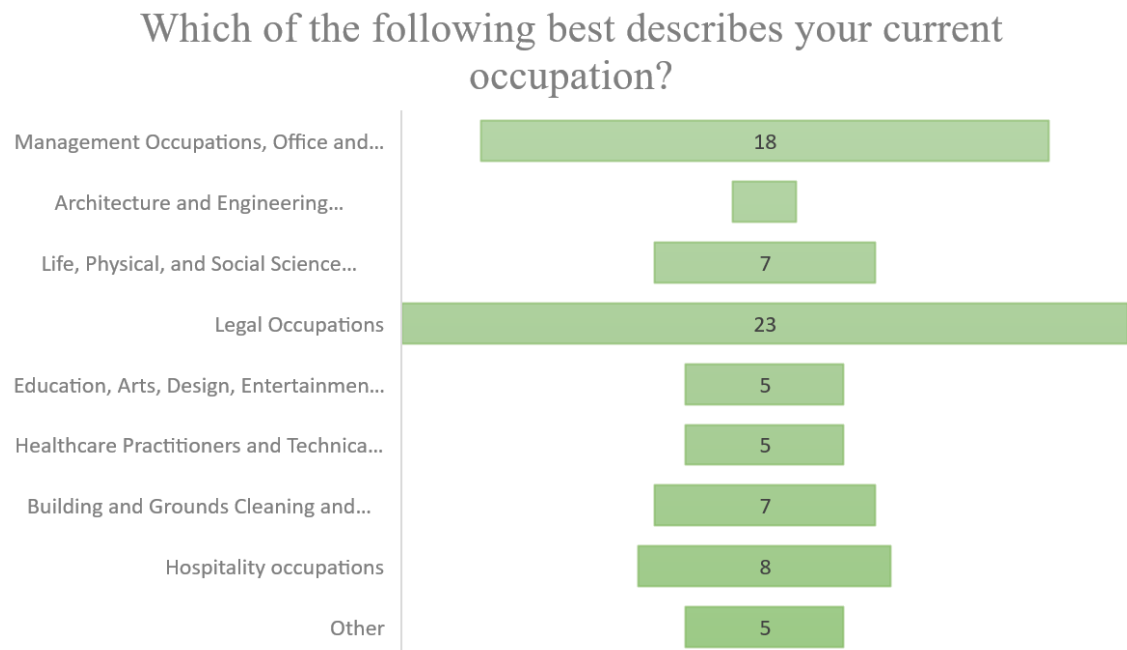
Table 10. Results Q4

COUNTRY	ANSWER	PERCENTAGE
SPAIN	35	44%
MEXICO	8	10%
THE UNITED KINGDOM	37	46%
TOTAL	80	100%

The third question refers to the place where the respondent took the survey. According to the graph obtained, it can be seen that there are three different countries, in which the United Kingdom comprises 46%, followed by Spain with 44% and finally Mexico with 10%.

This response provides a wider perspective on the scope of Gucci's communication, dissemination, and offline and online marketing efforts. Additionally, respondents from various nations have a more positive perception of the brand than they did a few years ago. According to data gathered in a study by Interbrand, Gucci is among the most valuable luxury brands in the world and is one of the only ones to have maintained this status since 2000 by Interbrand (2021a).

Q5. Which of the following best describes your current occupation?



Graph 4. Results Q5

Table 11. Results Q5.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Management Occupations, Office and Administrative Support Occupations	18	23%
Architecture and Engineering Occupations	2	3%
Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations, Community and Social Service Occupation	7	9%
Legal Occupations	23	29%

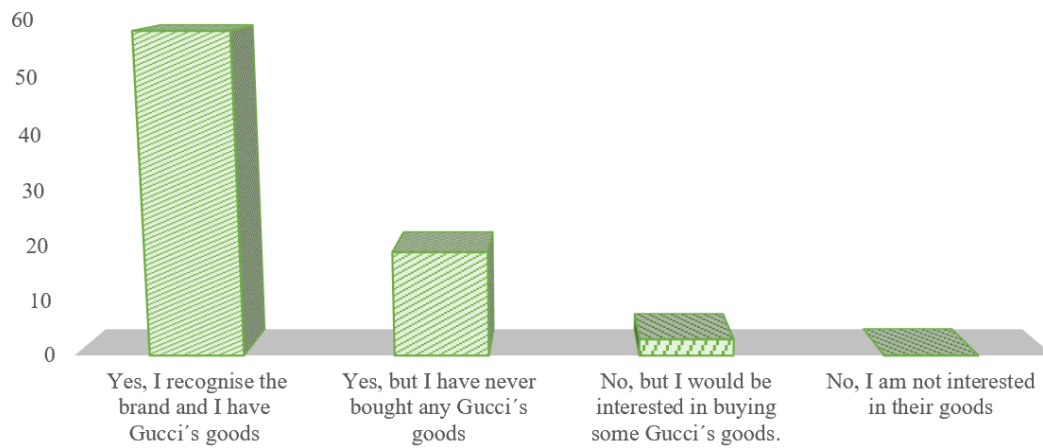
Education, Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations	5	6%
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations Healthcare Support Occupations, Protective Service Occupations	5	6%
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	7	9%
Hospitality occupations	8	10%
Other	5	6%
TOTAL	80	100%

Corresponding to the results in Table 11, the majority of respondents are in the upper-middle income bracket, which reflects the fact that Gucci has not only been strengthening its brand in the upper social classes but is also adapting to new consumer profiles. Therefore, the middle classes are increasingly willing to consume luxury because the focus of attention has shifted from the tangible level of the characteristics of the product itself to the intangible level of the experience it entails and what it represents (Cabigiosu A, 2020).

Following the ranking compiled by Interbrand Best Global Brands, Gucci ranks as the third highest-rated luxury brand in 2018 across all sectors (Interbrand, 2018). This is due to the firm's rapid action in its periods of crisis that projects reinventions of the brand based on the change of target audience, the biased and habitual presence in social networks, and the internal modification of the personnel that makes up the company.

Q6. Do you recognise the Gucci brand and its products?

DO YOU RECOGNISE THE GUCCI BRAND AND ITS PRODUCTS?



Graph 4. Results Q6

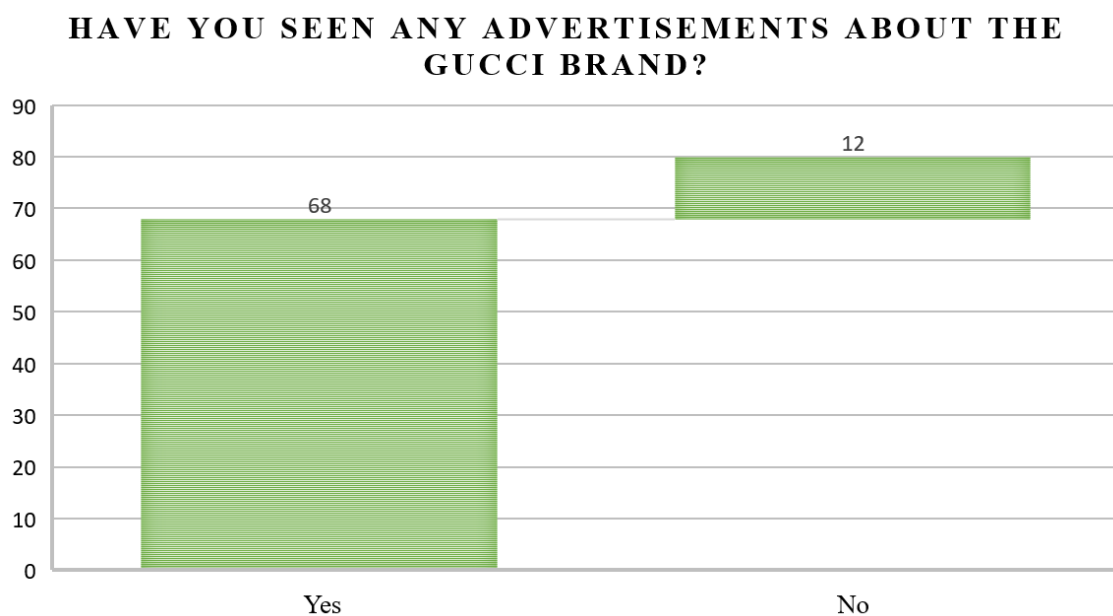
Table 12. Results Q6.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Yes, I recognise the brand and I have Gucci goods	58	73%
Yes, but I have never bought any Gucci goods	19	24%
No, but I would be interested in buying some Gucci goods.	3	4%
No, I am not interested in their goods	0	0%
TOTAL	80	100%

The graph reveals that 73% (58 respondents) recognise the brand and own Gucci products; 24% (19 respondents) of the respondents, even if they do not own Gucci products, can and know how to recognise the brand.

The Gucci brand ends up defining the “shopping self” which represents a form of self-expression (Gabarre A, 2015). Because brands communicate outwards. This makes consumers select those brands that are going to transmit an identity that is coherent with their own. Nowadays, branding is close to anthropology and we talk about *cultural branding*. This is reflected in the Gucci Equilibrium website, where the firm advocates inclusion, equality, and diversity for the entire global community so that they are unique, authentic and fun (Gucci Equilibrium: a Culture of purpose, 2023).

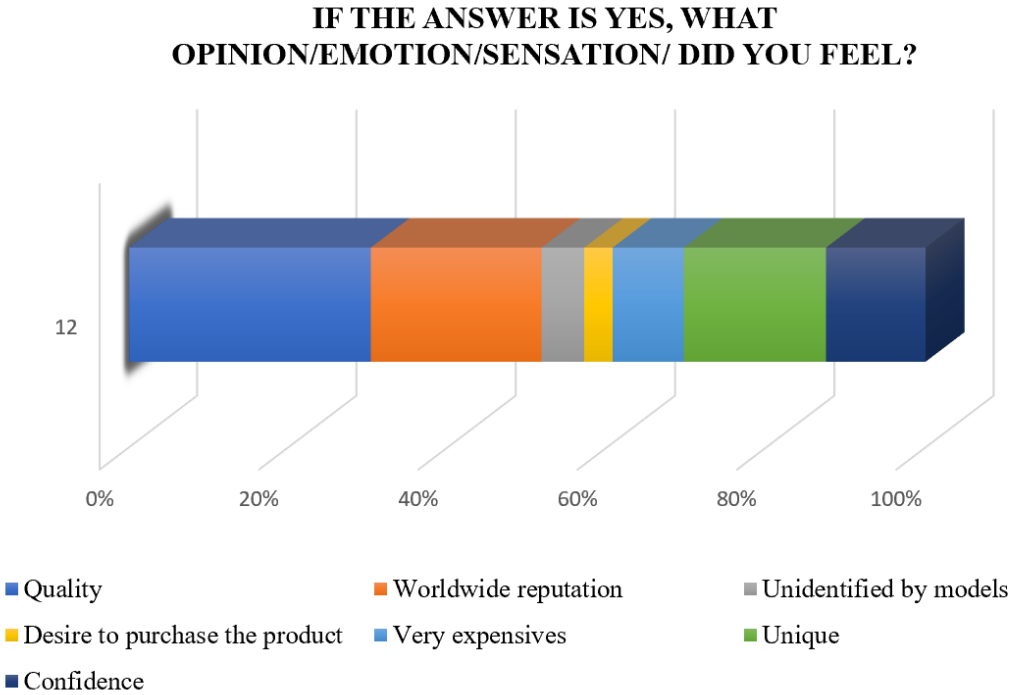
Q7: Have you seen any advertisements about the Gucci brand?



Graph 5a. Results Q7

Table 13a. Results Q7.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Yes	68	85%
No	12	15%
TOTAL	80	100%



Graph 5b. Results Q7

Table 13b. Results Q7.

GENERAL ANSWERS	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Luxury	12	18%
Quality	17	25%
Worldwide reputation	12	18%
Unidentified by models	3	4%
Desire to purchase the product	2	3%
Very expensive	5	7%
Unique	10	15%
Confidence	7	10%
TOTAL	68	100%

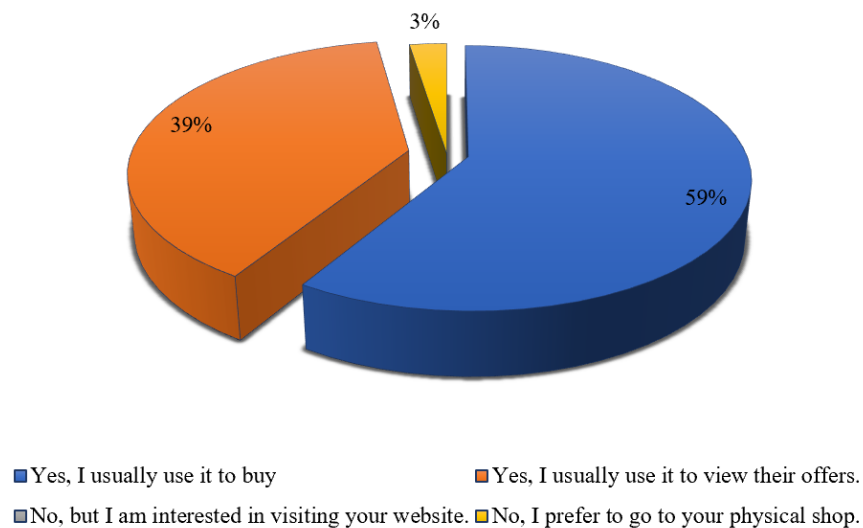
Question 7 demonstrates two important aspects. On the one hand, the impact that Gucci's ads have on the respondents, and the other hand, depending on the answer (yes or no), the second section reflects the opinion of those respondents who have seen the brand's ads. Thus, in the first part, 68 people answered that they have seen a Gucci advert, while 12 people have not seen any Gucci advert.

As mentioned in question 1 above, being able to have certain personal details of the respondents facilitates communication between the researcher and the specific person answering the questions. Therefore, it was possible to have contact with the 12 people who have not seen a Gucci advert, and it was concluded that they do know and have seen the brand, but have not stopped to see (pay attention to) the message that Gucci wants to convey.

The second part is a general grouping of the responses that represent the opinions, emotions, and sensations that the Gucci ads have produced in the respondents. From this, we obtain that 25% of the respondents think that Gucci has quality products; luxury and worldwide recognition each account for 18%; 15% think that the firm's products are unique; 10% feel confident in the brand; 7% think that Gucci has expensive products; 4% do not identify with the models that the firm hires for its campaigns; and 3% reflect a desire to buy a Gucci product.

Q8. Have you ever used Gucci's website?

Have you ever used Gucci's website?



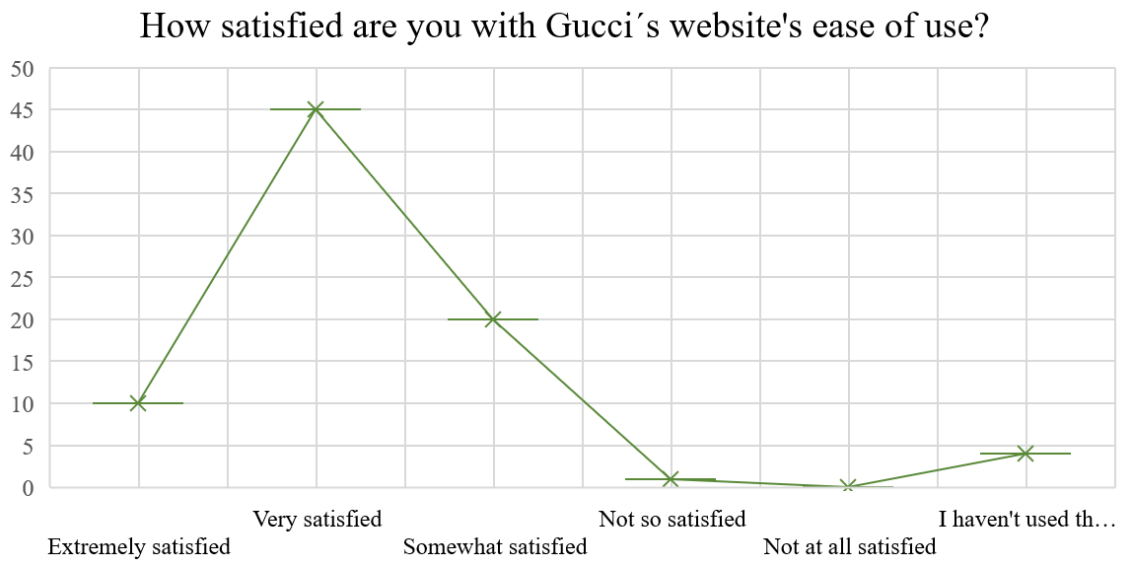
Graph 6. Results Q8

Table 14. Results Q8

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Yes, I usually use it to buy	47	59%
Yes, I usually use it to view their offers	31	39%
No, but I am interested in visiting your website.	0	0%
No, I prefer to go to your physical shop.	2	3%
TOTAL	80	100%

As reflected in the results, 59% of customers use the Gucci website and 39% also use it to look at their offers. This is positive for the firm, which has been able to optimally implement a method of communication and sales that is accessible to the vast majority of people in this digital age, benefiting the brand not only in economic terms with a higher sales margin but also as a marketing tool to publicise its products and services, such as the Gucci Osteria da Massimo Bottura.

Q9. How satisfied are you with Gucci's website's ease of use?



Graph 7. Results Q9

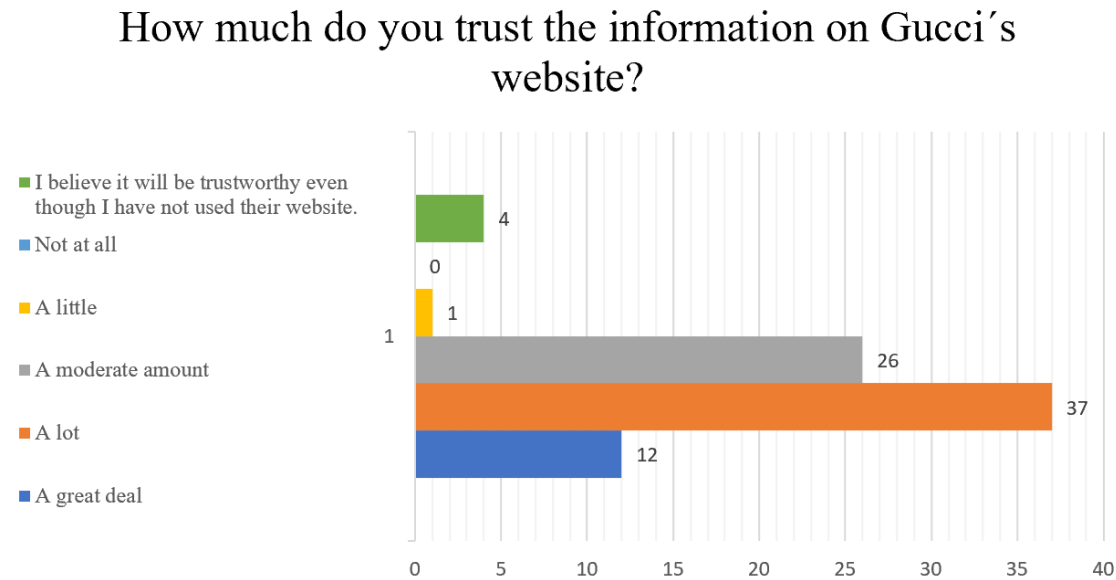
Table 15. Results Q9.

ANSWERS CHOICES	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Extremely satisfied	10	13%
Very satisfied	45	56%
Somewhat satisfied	20	25%
Not so satisfied	1	1%
Not at all satisfied	0	0%
I haven't used the Gucci website	4	5%
TOTAL	80	100%

A large percentage of Gucci customers (56%) express high levels of satisfaction with the website's usability. Nevertheless, the second highest rating is “somewhat satisfied”

(25%). These results give a generally positive view of Gucci's website, but it is necessary to find out what negative points the company needs to improve so that the 25% can be minimised as negative feelings towards the brand can turn into bad publicity for Gucci (Bernal, et al., 2020). On the contrary, customer satisfaction is a fundamental component because it encompasses customer perception and reflects the opinion of other users, experiences, and moods. These are relevant aspects for consumers to purchase a Gucci product (Mora-Contreras, 2011).

Q10: How much do you trust the information on Gucci's website?



Graph 8. Results Q10.

Table 16. Results Q10.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
A great deal	12	15%
A lot	37	46%
A moderate amount	26	33%
A little	1	1%
Not at all	0	0%
I believe it will be trustworthy even though I have not used their website.	4	5%
TOTAL	80	100%

The purpose of this question is to find out how much trust Gucci's users have when they access its website. When analysing the results, it can be seen that 46% have a lot of confidence and 15% consider it to be 100% trustworthy. These two results are favourable for Gucci, as there is currently a commercial saturation, leading consumers to look for the official institution which they can genuinely trust to make their purchasing decisions (Capriotti, 2007), Gucci has understood this perfectly, so its message of confidence in its products effectively reaches its consumers.

Q11: Overall, how well does Gucci's website meet your needs?



Graph 9. Results Q11.

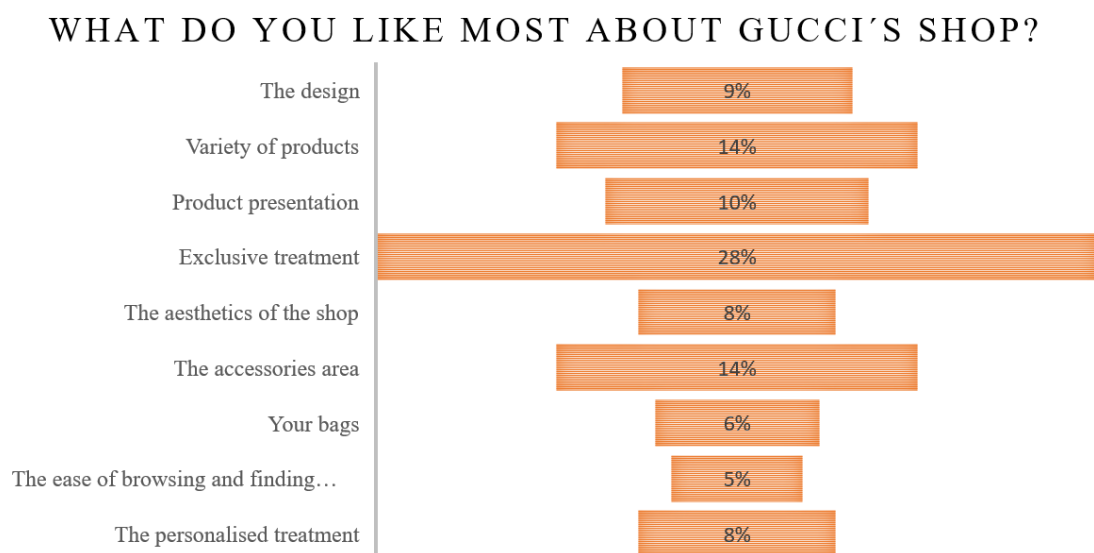
Table 17. Results Q11.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Extremely well	18	24%
Very well	44	58%
Somewhat well	11	14%
Not so well	3	4%
Not at all well	0	0%
TOTAL	76	100%

This question is aimed at finding out the level of satisfaction of Gucci's customers' needs through its website. The results obtained are quite satisfactory as 58% and 24% are the highest levels in the table.

For Gucci, being able to meet the needs of its customers is extremely important. This is achieved thanks to its marketing strategies, which are concerned with identifying its customers' needs in advance to be able to offer them what they need when they need it. and die (Casala, 2015) This will make the Gucci brand last over time because it adapts to time and people's needs. This circle must be maintained otherwise the brand will become obsolete.

Q12 What do you like most about Gucci's shop?



Graph 10. Results Q12.

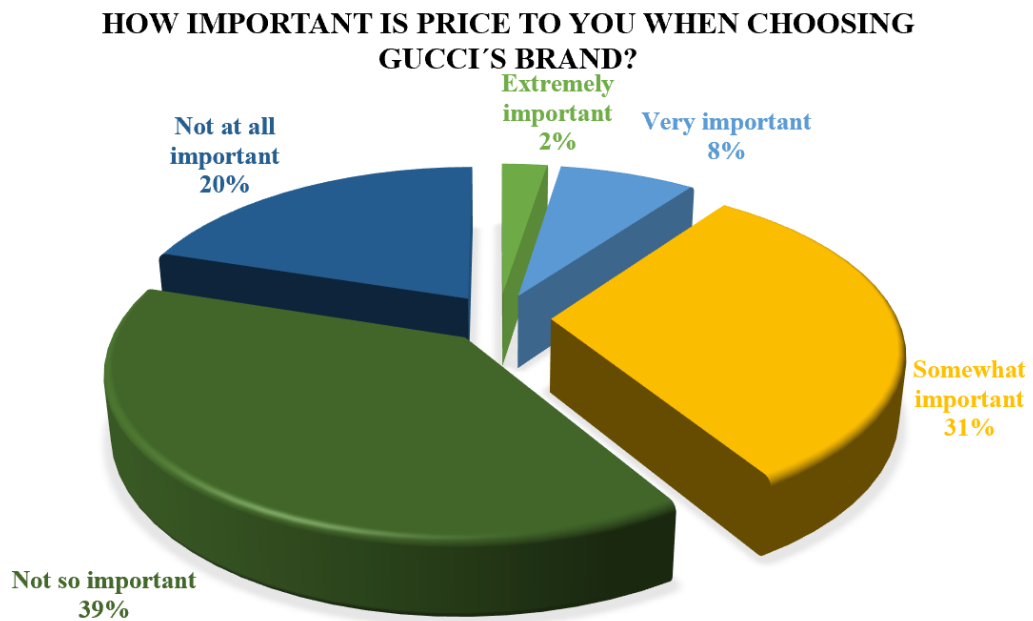
Table 18. Results Q12.

GENERAL ANSWERS	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
The design	7	9%
Variety of products	11	14%
Product presentation	8	10%
Exclusive treatment	22	28%
The aesthetics of the shop	6	8%
The accessories area	11	14%
Your bags	5	6%
The ease of browsing and finding everything I need	4	5%
The personalised treatment	6	8%
TOTAL	80	100%

Question twelve of the survey is an open-ended and therefore collects respondents' opinion responses. This question aims to find out what consumers like/interest them most about Gucci shops.

The results obtained are that the majority of the responses talk about the exclusive and personalised treatment received in their shops. This reveals that the shops are perceived as having a creative atmosphere capable of evoking exclusivity, a well-known brand identity, and an unquestionable quality perceived by consumers (Phau and Prendergast 2000). Customers also highlight the design of the shop, the variety of products, the presentation of their products, the ease of finding the product they want, etc.

Q13: How important is a price to you when choosing Gucci's brand?



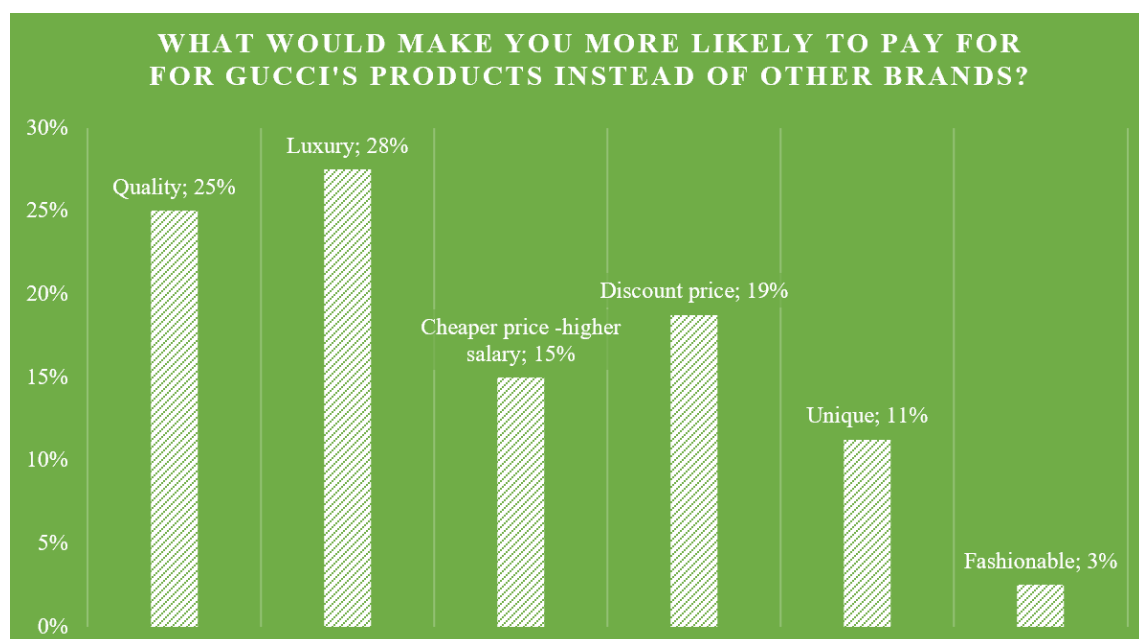
Graph 11. Results Q13

Table 19. Results Q13.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Extremely important	2	3%
Very important	6	8%
Somewhat important	25	31%
Not so important	31	39%
Not at all important	16	20%
TOTAL	80	100%

For Gucci's consumers, the price of its products is not relevant. This is a logical consequence of the exclusive and luxury universe that Gucci projects as a brand, its strategy of pricing above the market price, make buyers expect a more personalised and careful treatment. Likewise, the focus is not on price, but on the quality and exclusivity of the luxury products offered by Gucci.

Q14. What would make you more likely to pay for Gucci's products instead of other brands?



Graph 12. Results Q14

Table 20. Results Q14.

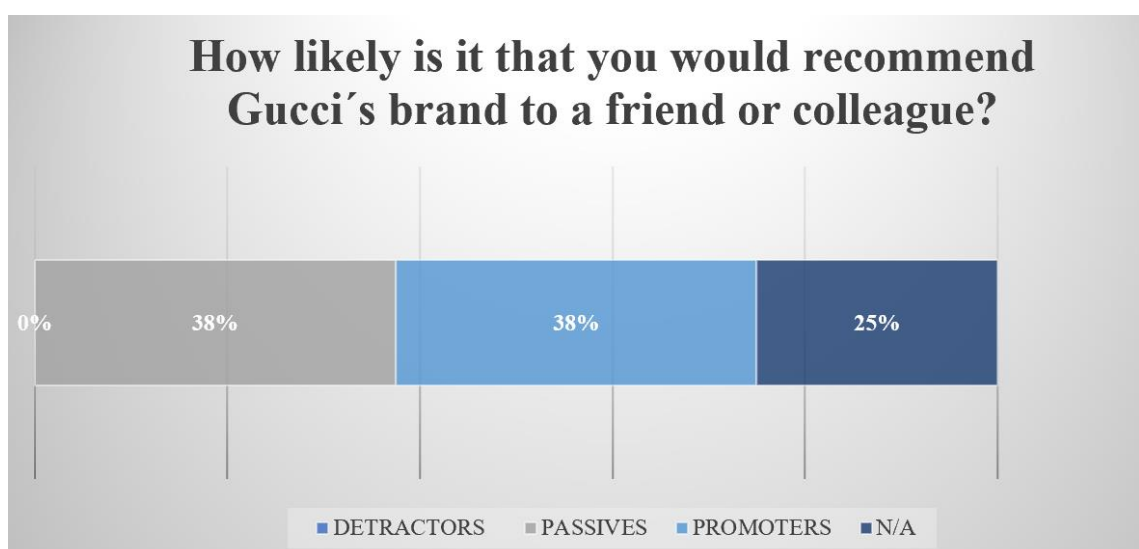
GENERAL ANSWERS	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Quality	20	25%
Luxury	22	28%
Cheaper price -higher salary	12	15%

Discount price	15	19%
Unique	9	11%
Fashionable	2	3%
TOTAL	80	100%

The data obtained in this question reveals the main reason why shoppers will choose Gucci products over other brands. The responses indicate that quality and luxury are the main reasons why consumers purchase their goods, followed by price discounts, and exclusivity and that their products are fashionable.

To clarify the issue of price discounts on Gucci products, this is a technique that the firm has been implementing for several years with its ready-to-wear line (*prêt-à-porter*), i.e. an intermediate luxury in which there is a balance between supply and demand (Bates, 1995).

Q15. How likely is it that you would recommend Gucci's brand to a friend or colleague?



Graph 13. Results Q15

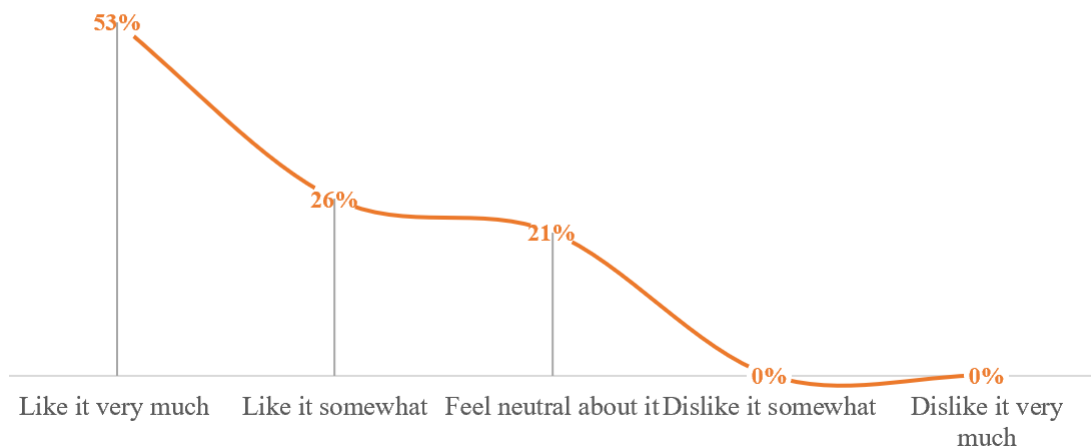
Table 21. Results Q15.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
DETRACTORS	0	0%
PASSIVES	30	38%
PROMOTERS	30	38%
N/A	20	25%
TOTAL	80	100%

The responses to question 15 were not very varied. There is a balance between promoters and passives with 38% each and 25% staying away from answering. People who recommend Gucci have had a positive, authentic, and satisfactory experience with the brand and if this experience is reflected in other individuals who take into account the excellent experience, it will exert a prescriptive power, configuring a source of information and become a more reliable and effective recommendation channel between consumers and buyers (**Del Pino Romero and Castelló Martínez**, 2015).

Q16: Thinking about Gucci's brand overall, which of the following best describes your feelings about it?

THINKING ABOUT GUCCI'S BRAND OVERALL, WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING BEST DESCRIBES YOUR FEELINGS ABOUT IT?



Graph 13. Results Q16

Table 22. Results Q16.

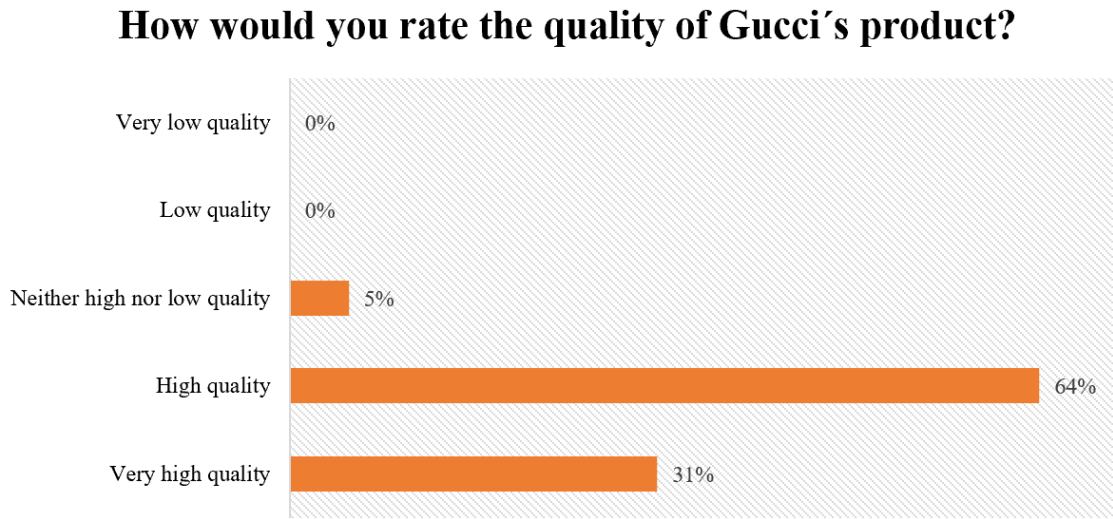
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Like it very much	42	53%
Like it somewhat	21	26%
Feel neutral about it	17	21%
Dislike it somewhat	0	0%
Dislike it very much	0	0%
TOTAL	80	100%

By analysing and adding up the percentages of the responses to the description of feelings towards the Gucci brand, it is observed that 79% (53% and 26%) of the

respondents gave favourable and effective results, as opposed to 21% of the respondents who have neutral feelings, this does not mean that they are negative or against the brand.

Gucci attempts to reinforce the intimate relationship between its brand products and consumers, this is achieved through marketing strategies that not only enhance the brand image or its products but also highlight the positive aspects of the consumer when using or buying a product from its firm (Casala, 2015) and by highlighting those aspects of consumers results in creating a feeling towards the Gucci brand and its products.

Q17: How would you rate the quality of Gucci’s products?



Graph 15. Results Q17

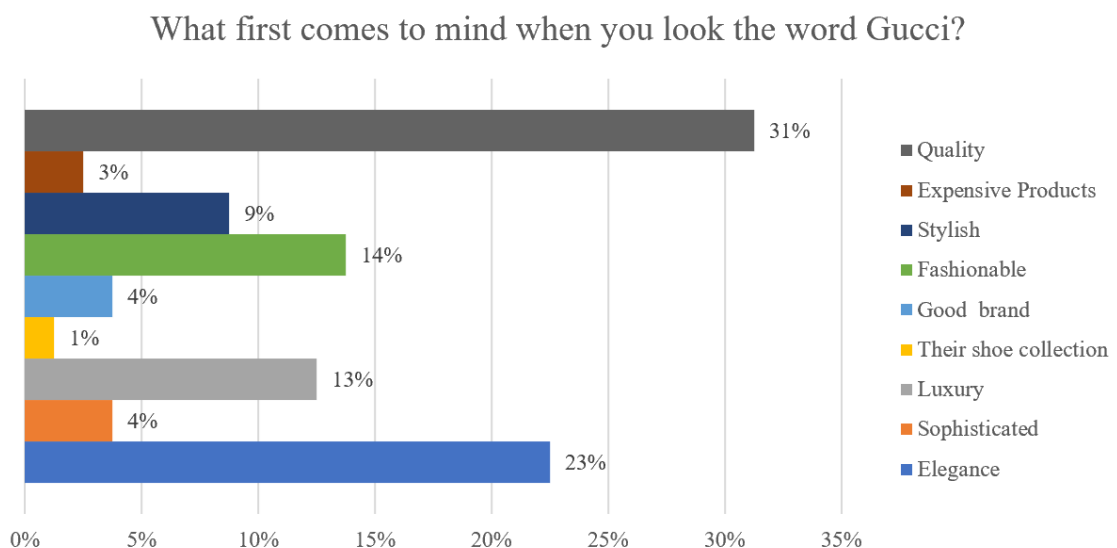
Table 23. Results Q17.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Very high quality	25	31%
High quality	51	64%
Neither high nor low quality	4	5%

Low quality	0	0%
Very low quality	0	0%
TOTAL	80	100%

At a glance, it can be seen from the graph that 64% of respondents agree that the firm's products are of high quality, and 31% rate them as very high-quality products. Gucci as a fashion brand is synonymous with status, quality, and prestige. The quality of its materials, the excellent workmanship, the technique implemented, the beauty of its designs and the innovation of its collections have allowed people to be willing to pay for exclusive products of excellent quality.

Q18 What first comes to mind when you look at the word Gucci?



Graph 16. Results Q18

Table 24. Results Q18.

GENERAL ANSWERS	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Elegance	18	23%
Sophisticated	3	4%
Luxury	10	13%
Their shoe collection	1	1%
Good brand	3	4%
Fashionable	11	14%
Stylish	7	9%
Expensive Products	2	3%
Quality	25	31%
TOTAL	80	100%

To conclude the survey, we opted for an open-ended question for the respondents. In this way, it was possible to gather as many opinions as possible about everything that the Gucci brand encompasses for its customers. The characteristic of this question is that the answer is based on the first idea or thought of the respondents when they see the word Gucci.

The graph and table were compiled from the responses obtained from the respondents. It can be seen that for the firm's customers, the word Gucci is synonymous with elegance; sophistication; luxury; shoe collection; expensive products; a good brand; fashionable; stylish, and quality. Each of the responses is a personal opinion and it is how the brand image has been internalised by the customer and created for Gucci's brand identity.

4.4. Findings and discussion of the data analysis.

4.4.1 Introduction.

In this section, the results of the survey are presented and discussed, highlighting several key points related to marketing and communication, branding, and other findings that have been revealed by respondents' answers about the Gucci brand.

4.4.2 Data Analysis Findings.

One of the most interesting findings was found in the demographic questions where the results have shown that a large majority of Gucci's customers are made up of *millennials* and *generation Z*⁴. The latter generation is described as a socially conscious consumer group⁵. A socially conscious consumer group, the latter generation is described as such. Another interesting fact is the location of where the survey has been answered, this broadens the view to analyse if the brand image is the same or different depending on the country where it is located.

This last question is interesting because 10% of the respondents were from Mexico, a Central American country where the Gucci brand had not officially arrived until a few months ago. In September 2022, the firm inaugurated the opening of the *new Gucci e-Commerce* in the Mexican country, the luxury brand presented the format for online shopping, where customers can access a catalogue that will include the new collections of the brand. This sales channel aims to connect customers with the brand, offering them unique products through an intelligent and immersive shopping process.

⁴ Generation Z, are persons born between 1997 and 2012.

⁵ By definition, a socially conscious consumer is someone “*who takes into account the public consequences of his private consumption or who attempts to use his purchasing power to bring about social change*”. (Webster, 1975, p.188).

It is worth noting that the new Gucci e-Commerce in Mexico is the first of the brand in Latin America, however, the Italian firm has more than 15 physical shops



Image 5. Gucci Valigeria Collection

throughout the country, through an alliance with *Palacio de Hierro*⁶. In e-commerce, Gucci products could be found in other marketplaces such as Liverpool, Fartech, or Mercado Libre, and even in the online shop of El Palacio de Hierro, but in the new Gucci e-Commerce in Mexico, there is a wide range of products for sale. Among them is the new Gucci Valigeria collection, which includes the participation of actor Ryan Gosling. This product line is luxury luggage for men (Gucci, 2023).

Analysing the following responses, it was interesting to learn that Gucci's advertisements do not capture the full attention of many respondents, especially if they are broadcast on traditional media such as television. In contrast, we discovered that a significant portion of respondents used digital media to shop and browse the brand's various offers. In this, case it is its website, being a point in favour of the brand that has been able to adapt to the different adversities and take advantage of the situation as it was in the pandemic making people can interact with the brand, for this, Gucci created strong digital marketing and communication strategies.

4.4.3 Discussion of the Data Analysis.

The results of the data offer an insight into aspects that had not been raised at the outset, but which are interesting points to more accurately specify the hypotheses put forward in this research work.

To begin with, we will briefly define some concepts.

- **Marketing** seeks to satisfy the needs of the public. That is why Philip Kotler (2005) mentions that “*Marketing is the art and science of knowing, delivering*

⁶ El Palacio de Hierro is one of the department stores with e-Commerce in Mexico. Its online shop offers a wide variety of well-known brands in fashion, footwear, accessories, beauty, technology, sports and children's products.

and understanding values to satisfy the needs of the people who need them. It also often identifies unrealised wants and needs”.

- **Digital Marketing.** According to Calero (2020), digital marketing is the use of digital technologies to support marketing activities to achieve profitability and customer retention through the recognition of the strategic importance of digital technologies and the development of a planned approach to improve customer insight, the delivery of targeted integrated communication and online services that match their specific needs.

- **Integrated Marketing Communications.** To attract the attention of the target audience, Integrated Marketing Communications, which is based on brand communication, is in charge of promoting a product and/or service using a variety of media, including social networks, direct marketing, social networks, advertising, and more (Hubspot, 2020). With the development of digital technology, fashion brands are now promoting themselves differently, and social media has changed communication as a platform (Garca-Medina, Miquel-Segarra, and Navarro-Beltra, 2018, p. 56).

- **Millennials.** Births occurred between 1891 and 1996 (Dimock, 2019). The sometimes stereotypical characteristics that characterize this audience are covered in a substantial body of scientific literature (Smith, 2012). Among these traits, we find high exposure to technology and information (Prensky, 2001); excessive use of social networks (Statista, 2016); the need for socialisation and connection (Tuten & Solomon, 2014); or empowerment and decision-making power (Barton, Koslow & Beauchamp, 2014).

- **Generation Z.** People born between 1997 and 2012 (Dimock, 2019). Seemiller and Grace (2019, p. 61) describe them as a generation with a strong desire to change the world. It is also important to mention the diversity that exists in this generation, perhaps more than in any other generation. Topics considered taboo by other generations are easily accepted by Generation Z, who are the most racially diverse generation.

- **Influencers**, refers to those social media influencers who can shape audience attitudes through numerous social networks (Freberg et al., 2011, p. 90). Nowadays, these prescribers materialise in what are known as *influencers* and currently enjoy popularity and effectiveness among leading brands in the fashion and luxury sector (González-Romo and Plaza-Romero, 2017, p. 25). The importance of this figure has been considered by some authors as a ***new branch of marketing*** (Díaz, 2017, p. 17). These influencers represent a commercial revolution that has been affecting the world of fashion and luxury as they can generate content of interest to a defined audience segmented by lifestyle.

MILLENNIALS, GENERATION Z, AND GUCCI.

As we can see, marketing techniques have undergone radical changes in recent years. If marketing seeks to build brand loyalty, its techniques must understand the current context and how consumers relate to brands and their products, so these relationships also include social media and digital communication.

As the results of the survey show, Gucci's challenge has been to develop new marketing strategies to connect with the tastes and preferences of its potential consumers, who are generation Z and millennials. Something that Gucci CEO Marco Bizarri noted when he said that the brand's fastest-growing segment was Generation Z, followed by millennials. Given the high prices of these brands' products, it is an interesting fact about this generation that it is typically a harder demographic for them to target (Segran, 2019).

To start a conversation about the brand and its values with artists, influencers, and customers, Gucci has implemented several novel initiatives as part of its marketing and communication strategy. (Robert Triefus⁷, 2017). Since 2018, Gucci supports Irregular Labs, a community of more than 30,000 young people from all over the world exploring ideas on different macro-trend topics, to generate relevance among younger and more creative consumers. This new brand strategy and approach is also evident in the advertising campaigns, which present an influential, innovative, progressive, eclectic, contemporary, and romantic Gucci. (Gucci, n.d.)

⁷ Robert Triefus is the new CEO of Gucci Vault and Metaverse.

By 2025, the main buyers of luxury brands, representing 70% of their purchases, will be generation Z and millennials, according to a study by Bain & Company. As mentioned above, this is one of the main reasons why the Gucci brand has opted for a change of strategy more focused on capturing the sector of young people who are beginning to have an age in which they generate higher income, so the firm already places 55% of its sales in buyers under 35 years old.

Gucci stands out from the competition by adapting its products to the specific interests of these generations, 63% of **Generation Z**, according to the *Consumer Trends 2022* report, are inclined to buy **sustainable brands**. Gucci has been implementing this sustainability strategy since 2015, both socially and environmentally, which in turn reinforces the brand's mission and values in different areas:

- People: supporting diversity and gender parity; artisanal traditions; supportive and sustainable working environment.
- The planet: Reduce the environmental footprint to 40% and greenhouse gases to 50% by 2025 and develop new forms of environmentally friendly raw materials; use 100% renewable energy (Gucci Equilibrium).

Another fact that stands out, moreover, is that 60% of these consumers will prefer to make purchases on social networks by 2026, coinciding with the TBS Education-Barcelona business school, which has revealed that the Internet is already the most used shopping channel for luxury goods. We are facing the first generations to completely change their consumption habits and lifestyle compared to the previous one.

In this context, the **millennial public** is positioning itself as a benchmark online user and consumer. According to González-Romo and Plaza-Romero (2017, p. 25), these consumers can be influenced more strongly by the opinions of their friends than by those of professionals. Likewise, they are the new consumers of the luxury sector, and with them, the concept of luxury that existed at the time changed significantly (Fernández, 2019). *Price is no longer a fundamental variable* for the young people of this generation, who give greater importance to the shopping experience and lifestyle; what they are mainly looking for is to feel identified with the values of the brand, which they inform through the internet and social media, the so-called social networks. 46% of millennial

generation consumers say that they look at products according to the values conveyed by brands if they feel recognised they will buy otherwise they will look for a brand that is connected to their values and that is a representation of their personality (EAE Bussiness School, 2019).

One of the social networks most used by users to exchange opinions is *Instagram*. Gucci uses this means of communication so that its customers can feel part of the brand by sharing the company's news with them. Through this platform, users can connect with the company in a more visual way and for free, and at the same time, the firm can reach many more individuals. One of the main reasons why Gucci stands out in the digital world is because of the connection it establishes with its consumers and the importance it gives to their needs and opinions, showing that they are its top priority. Another reason why Gucci has chosen Instagram as its primary communication channel is that it now has more than **50 million followers**.

Adding to the above, the success of a digital campaign lies not only in the product that is being shown to the public but also in the experiences that consumers live through those campaigns. One of the digital strategies most used by Gucci to connect emotionally with users and create experiences is the principle of *storytelling*. The Gucci brand sells lifestyles and transports the consumer into the brand's world. It constantly innovates in communication strategies seeking the satisfaction and enjoyment of the millennial audience, to improve its *engagement* with its followers.

In summary, millennials need to feel identified with the values with which luxury brands are defined, and in this case, the impact of Gucci's digital strategies has achieved the acceptance and loyalty of the young audience.

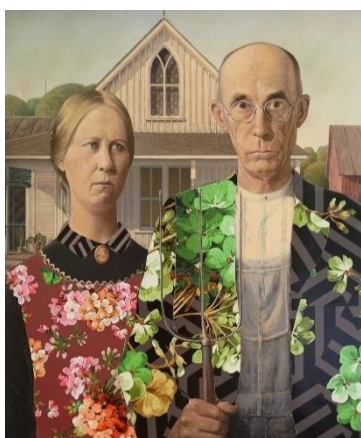
COMMUNICATION CHANNELS, INFLUENCERS, AND GUCCI.

Offline communication, digital communication, and social networks provide tools to reinforce and improve marketing strategies. As Villena (2014, p. 18) points out: “*we are therefore witnessing a new reconversion of fashion advertising where content is fundamental and where it is necessary both to understand the audience and to create a community to share them*”. Similarly to this, the rise of social networks as alternative

communication tools that support user relationships and activities has made them suitable platforms for building brands and influencing consumer behaviour.

Currently, one of the fundamental elements of Gucci's success is the coherence between the channels the brand uses to communicate with its consumers, both online and offline. All of its communication channels and the social networks on which it works follow the same line, adapting the content to each of them, but always being excessively creative and coherent. The cohesion between traditional channels and social media platforms, according to Triefus, is achieved by having a single creative director. Gucci is present on 5 social networks Instagram, Facebook, WeChat, Twitter, and Snapchat. Although Instagram is the most used, Gucci generates unique content for each of them.

The project through which Gucci has managed to grow on social networks, particularly Instagram, is called **#Guccigram**. Through this initiative, the brand uses the aforementioned storytelling, relying on artists such as Ignasi Monreal, a great Spanish illustrator, who enjoys complete freedom to represent three iconic Gucci motifs. This project aimed to show the creativity and the feeling of freedom that the brand wants to transmit. As Alessandro Michele⁸ said, *“creativity is often born and finds its voice in digital media, and digital media are already a source of visual culture”*.



Images 6. #GucciGram campaign



Source by Gucci

⁸ Alessandro Michele, Gucci Creative Director until the end of 2022

The role of influencers in the communication of users and fashion today is important. The radiography of the fashion and luxury sector shows an optimal showcase for influencer dynamics. Considering that 84% of brands run campaigns involving influencers and that 81% of professionals consider influencer relations to be effective or very effective (Augure, 2017), it seems that this discipline is already established within the range of tactics used by communication and marketing.

Influence combined with the viralising effect of networks leads to a hitherto unknown involvement of users, whether or not they are consumers of the product. Influencer marketing is based precisely on the incorporation of these prescribers into companies' promotional campaigns, a strategy that, if used intelligently, can lead not only to an increase in sales but also to an increase in online reputation and positioning (Augure, 2017). We are therefore witnessing an unprecedented communication approach in which the roles of consumer and brand are simultaneously exchanged.

Influencer branding is becoming the basic strategy of the new digital marketing and communication model. The studies analysed showed that, ahead of brands and influencers, online users, fans and consumers decide. Therefore, the theory of reception and listening is the trend that turns Gucci as a brand into a reference icon for an audience that, previously consulted, sees itself represented in the branded product. The aforementioned can be seen reflected in the following **images 7 and 8**, in which Gucci made a collaboration with the *influencer Chiara Ferragni*, who has 28.8 million followers on Instagram. The main objective of what the firm is not that the influencer generates a sale, but rather an inspiration that motivates desire. Thus, highlighting that the expected result of strategies with influencers is not so much the prescription in the purchase, but the suggestion and creation of an evocative universe that is linked to the brand.



Imagen 7. Official Gucci Instagram

Source by Gucci



Imagen 8. Chiara's Instagram

Source by @chiaraferragni

Finally, Gucci, with its audiences, discovers that it also has the potential as a company in its role as an influencer, without the need to rely on the determining presence of external agents to control the communication, marketing, and sales processes (Díaz, 2017, p. 19). Along these lines, the brand's account postulates the figure of Alessandro Michele as a strategist and legitimate opinion leader to expand the fan community. In short, the potential and influence of the creative designer have occupied a preferential place in the design of strategies, increasing the results on sales portals and turning Gucci into a prescriber and reference point for online audiences, realising that young people and the general public are no longer at the service of brands, as mere consumers. They are now part of the industry and seek to alter it according to their preferences and needs.

CHAPTER V: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

5. 1 Introduction.

In this section, we return to the hypotheses with which we began our research. Throughout the whole process, we have been unpacking in each of the chapters those theories that have helped us to understand the processes of integrated communication and marketing; the offline and online impact that Gucci has, and the satisfaction of the brand's customers.

Furthermore, a thorough analysis of brand models and strategies has been carried out, to identify the activity and its character, and to try to clarify how this influences the brand image.

Let us remind the research questions that have been the guiding thread of this investigation:

- *Has Gucci, improved its brand image through integrated communication and digital marketing strategies?*
- *What is the online and offline impact of the Gucci brand on its customers?*
- *Do customers feel satisfied with the Gucci brand?*

5.2 Conclusions.

This research project succeeds, through an important bibliographical and media review, in exposing the various elements or factors that have led to the success, for some inexplicable, of the legendary Italian firm.

After observing the results of the research carried out, it was possible to obtain answers to the questions posed:

- ***Has Gucci, through integrated communication and digital marketing strategies, improved its brand image?***

Marçal Moliner recovers a definition of brand image by Dobni and Zinkha. According to these authors, “*it is the concept that is usually used to express consumer interpretations (cognitions, feelings) of the authentic intrinsic and extrinsic characteristics of the product*”.

Therefore, according to Marçal Moliner, perceived quality is above all



Image 9

Source by Gucci

communication, but not only advertising communication, since the product is also communication (Moliner, 1996, p. 164). This is relevant for Gucci, which has iconic products that also shape the creation of the brand image, such as the *Jackie 1961 bag*⁹. Alessandro Michele

managed to keep the essence of the Florentine house intact by updating the Jackie 1961. After eliminating its gender, it became a bag suitable for all audiences, and its new format was presented in 2020 this year 2023 it will be renewed and adapted for the public.

The brand, through the power of communication and the media coverage of media plans, has built a homogeneous message. The brand is a symbol that has the same meaning for a certain segment of the population, strategically chosen for the interests of the marketing departments. Gucci has imposed new words with coherent meanings for the population; it has enriched, by dint of investment, the social discourse. If objects are an extension of the individual, the brand is an extension of the individual's identity. The intangible content of fashion brands reinforces people's need for self-concept and social identity. What we consume,

⁹ Jacqueline Kennedy, former First Lady of the United States, is the namesake of this bag, which was first launched in 1961.

as well as what we do, is a reaffirmation of our personality. The decision to consume one brand or another is a form of personal reaffirmation.

Gucci, therefore, creates a communication and marketing strategy that deviates from the norm and aims to engage a younger audience through the effective application of the resources provided by digital platforms. The bi-directionality and capacity for viralisation of the message are signs of identity of the networks that are not always used effectively by the brands. Unlike other brands in the market, Gucci, under the leadership of Alessandro Michele and Marco Bizarri, the CEO of the company, has successfully implemented a policy of public interaction through a strategic plan that not only prioritizes direct and open communication on social media but also through meetings with its increasingly younger workforce, asking them for guidance and advice.

Ivoskes (2009) claims that digital marketing enables the integration of various media, utilizing the opportunities provided by the new techniques in addition to the traditional ones, increasing interaction and luring users.

Gucci has managed to create a marketing strategy that generates a connection between its brand, its products, and its customers. This is due to the implementation of new tactics such as:

- **Audience reorientation:** Gucci is in charge of a process of luxury revival and resurgence as the global market for high fashion draws in and grows among a generation that had previously shown little interest in its goods (Williams 2017).

- **New products:** aimed especially at the younger generation. For the Italian brand, Alessandro Michele, who has brought freshness and renewal since his arrival in January 2015, has designed a universe whose aesthetics appeal to everyone, but especially to the youngest. A representative example is the Gucci double G buckle belt. Its price varies, from the thinnest and cheapest version for 250 euros to the most expensive at 1200 euros. According to the Vigue Devil Wears Zara blog, *“This belt is the symbol of luxury in an accessory accessible to*

more pockets than the Italian house's target audience. It is worn by all the celebrities and Instagrammers¹⁰”.

- **New faces as brand image.** Gucci at the end of 2022 presented its new campaign *HA HA HA*, and its ambassador was the British Harry Styles. It was a smart strategy to choose Styles as the new image of the brand, because the singer, has been a member of the *boyband One Direction*, recently best known and followed on social networks so it influences and moves a large number of people. Harry has almost 48.1 million followers on the virtual platform Instagram. Michele knows what generations he aims to reach with his creations because he knows them and offers them what appeals to them.

- **From the democratisation of luxury to Gucci DIY.** Alessandro Michele called for an end to the separation of the sexes at the Florentine house's fashion shows. In 2016, he launched a new service that allowed customers to customise a range of products, including the famous *Dionysus bag*. The service allows for embroidery, embellishments, and the house logo in different formats, colours, and materials. Gucci has developed initiatives or services aimed at offering exclusive and personalised products to its customers.

- **Adoption of fur-free policies.** Gucci announced the abandonment of the use of animal fur in its products and collections in 2017. According to the Fur Free Alliance, Gucci's commitment comes after a long dialogue with The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) and LAV, an animal welfare group based in Italy.

- **Relationship between online opinion leaders and the brand.** Gucci achieved a higher digital media presence than any other luxury label, thanks to a collaboration with a famous beauty influencer. His name is Jeffree Star, and the Italian brand gave him a set of customised suitcases in exchange for his posting about his experience with the brand.

¹⁰ Instagrammers is the person who earns money for producing and posting photos on the Instagram application.

Based on the above, it is confirmed that most of the communication of the fashion and luxury brand Gucci in the mainstream media is based on branding, giving a positive boost to its brand image. In the same way, the introduction of new marketing strategies has been a fundamental key for the firm to have achieved an improvement in its image, reaffirming its position in the market, and for consumers to feel confident when buying its products.

○ *What is the online and offline impact of the Gucci brand on its customers?*

The current market favours a scenario in which the brand is configured as a fundamental strategic value (cfr. Fernández Gómez, 2013, p. 1). Features such as the distinction of a name, a logo, or a certain packaging are functions that characterise the brand centered on conceptualisation as a constantly evolving element (Semprini, 1995). The brand is transitioning to a more advanced model in which the digitalization of sales channels creates a challenging environment for brand management from a wholly product-driven approach (Ollé and Riu, 2009).

The traditional brand strategy cannot simply be translated to the digital space. Implementing management based on bidirectionality and active listening to users is necessary to reach the new consumer. The approach of conversations and consumer participation is key to the path to the success of brands in social networks (Roca, 2015, p. 74). The passive consumer exposed to thousands of advertising impacts has been the classic format. Today, this approach is obsolete in an environment in which social networks favour the approach of an active consumer who is part of the brand's community (Del Pino, Galán, Castelló, and Ramos, 2014, p. 24). Consumers begin to have more power than brands (Alonso, 2015, p. 78). An aspect of special interest in the fashion and luxury industry, a sector in which communication has its maximum exponent in the exchange and viralisation of the message among consumers.

At a time of network invasion, Instagram is emerging as a microclimate for brands, influencers, and audiences, carving out an important niche for itself among other platforms. Through this network, Gucci uses the application to give its followers a sense of belonging to the same digital space. It allows a more visual and rapid development to establish communication between the brand and its followers, free of charge, and to link clients, designers, and celebrities mentioned by the brand in its digital profile.

Gucci's current positioning is characterised by the implementation of a strategic plan that works offline, but especially online. Gucci is driving the renaissance and revival of luxury by developing fresh, customized products, collaborating with celebrities and musicians, and focusing on creating an exclusive, one-of-a-kind product that is challenging to imitate or copy, contrary to other companies business models. The firm understands that its survival is necessarily linked to young people: it must rejuvenate its target audience.

Technology and the shopping experience are important factors in the current environment, but what matters most is how the younger generations view their financial situation and way of life. Establishing a climate, atmosphere, and culture around the brand is the goal in addition to increasing sales. The way to engage the public, how the product is altered, how much it costs, and the interactive brand-consumer response are all factors in addition to an active presence on social media.

What Gucci has achieved is to integrate the digital connection and the in-store shopping experience, generating a shopping experience that is present in all its channels. Moreover, as Pamela N. Danziger¹¹ and L2 Inc¹² point out, Gucci holds the number one ranking for fashion brands.

In conclusion, for all of the above, Gucci, a traditional luxury brand, has been able to make a 360-degree turn to enter the digital world, becoming the benchmark luxury brand in terms of social media marketing, which has generated a profound

¹¹ Pamela N. Danzanger is a market researcher focused on the mindset of affluent consumers.

¹² L2 Inc. is a research and business intelligence company with a subscription model that assesses the digital proficiency of consumer brands.

and positive impact on today's society. Adapting to the new life cycles, tastes, preferences, forms of communication, and behaviours of new consumers. All these tools are the key to Gucci's success, whose differential value also lies in the networked listening of a new public, without neglecting its traditional values that give customers confidence in its products.

- ***Do customers feel satisfied with the Gucci brand?***

It is appropriate to begin by clarifying that people no longer acquire a product for the satisfaction or value that the use of it gives them, or that is linked to the value of the work it has taken to produce it, but that they are taking on the product as a means for socialisation or to offer themselves immaterial satisfaction, which does not have to be linked to the purchased object itself, but to the imaginary that surrounds it and that is given by the brand that represents it. When a purchase is made, the imaginary, abstract, or sentimental surrounding it is also acquired, and these feelings are linked to the person.

Flauterio quotes Schiffman and Kanuk when they state that, “*brands establish a personality defined and communicated by themselves, through different aspects that seek to generate **satisfaction in the consumer**, at the moment of wearing their garments. The personality can be given by the type of garments offered by the brand and can be related to a functional characteristic, according to the utility of the product, and by a symbolic characteristic, which is given by the aspirational level or the expectation offered by the brand*”. (Flauterio, 2011, p. 154).

Brand awareness and the subject's perception of the brand combine to form the value of the brand in the consumer's mind. Brand awareness and brand image both affect how well-known a product or service is. Brand awareness is a measure of how easily a brand is remembered (spontaneous recall) and mentioned (suggested recall). The sum of a consumer's mental representations of a brand that are connected to it is called the brand image. The brand will be more valuable if these associations are *strong* and *positive*. If it achieves strong associations these

will come from marketing efforts and if they are positive they will come from the **consumer's satisfaction** with using that brand.

Gucci, through different strategies, has managed to make the consumer feel a sense of connection with its products, such as:

- **Personalised sales**, covering the individual needs of each customer, creating satisfaction by acquiring unique products. On their website, you can find a wide variety of products that customers can give their unique and differentiating touch such as belts, luggage items, bags, etc., and if you request this service in their shops you can personalise jewellery, tableware, or ready-to-wear designs. What is most appealing is that it is a free monogramming service.

- **Specialised customer service** with its **Gucci 9 Hudson office**, Bizzarri explains to The Wall Street Journal, *“if people are surrounded by beauty and immersed in the world of Gucci, the message that callers will get is exactly what we want to achieve”*.

- *The exclusive niche for its clientele.* The firm makes it clear that its products are a concept of quality, luxury, tradition, and innovation satisfying the desire of those who seek to differentiate themselves by using its products created with materials of supreme quality or limited existence, such as its *Angelica Hicks T-shirt*¹³, which only 100 pieces of each design were produced (there were 4 designs).

Finally, all these characteristics make its customers feel identified and satisfied with Gucci, which translates into brand loyalty and the guarantee that new buyers will visit its shops, use its website and consume its products. According to Chan et al. (2015), the more related consumers are to brands, the more likely they are to receive greater satisfaction after purchasing a product from this brand.

¹³ Angelica Hicks is a British painter whose watercolour and ink drawings satirically depict fashion and pop culture. #GucciGeeks

In conclusion, and after answering the questions posed in Chapter I, we conclude that Gucci carries out an *omnichannel strategy*, giving top priority to its customers and the needs they carry with them. Therefore, the firm interacts and communicates with its customers through various channels to find out what their priorities are and what they want to receive from the firm, because of this Gucci receives large amounts of information used to innovate and improve products and user experiences. This omnichannel communication with its consumers is largely through social media.

The firm publishes creative content daily, through which it can interact with users who follow it on social media, it is an interactive digital marketing strategy so that the public, especially millennials and generation Z, feel comfortable throughout the purchasing process, but Gucci's objective in generating online content is not to grow the number of sales through its website, but rather to attract more customers and interact with those users who already are, so that they feel part of the brand, and want to be aware of the brand's news.

Another of its principles to make consumers feel identified, and thus achieve brand loyalty, is that Gucci defends *free expression*, with garments that break down binary roles through *gender-neutral clothing*. Finally, it continues to sell its products in its physical shops, as this is part of the consumer's shopping experience, and is the direction in which its consumers can truly perceive the quality of its products.

Gucci strengthens the theory of the significance of digital platforms and the tools they incorporate to increase the levels of dissemination, viralization, and positioning of messages on the network, linked to a two-way communication model that values the user population's and potential customers' opinions as evidence of the product's acceptance on the network. The theory of listening and reception becomes a main category to guarantee a production that responds to demand and, above all, that the customer feels satisfied.

5.3 Recommendations.

To expand its customer base, Gucci must create marketing strategies both in the short term and over the long term, so it is advised that:

- **100% transparency.** the new generations will look for the brand to be transparent in the products and services it offers. Furthermore, because the

information is so readily available to the younger generations, they will research a product thoroughly before making a purchase.

- **Mobile-friendly.** Customers in this era are *digital natives*, mobile devices are part of their lives. That is why the firm must have its website well optimised to offer customers a positive experience, without forgetting that the user's attention span is 8 seconds (Harbin, 2020). Therefore, a non-optimised website that is slow to load will result in the loss of interest of this generation and consequent abandonment.

- **Do not stop selling experiences.** The new generations of consumers are immune to marketing campaigns, and that is why we must always try to reach them through storytelling, offering them new experiences with which they identify (Work Stream, 2019). Social media is the key to this strategy as it influences 80% of their purchases (Estrella, 2021). This is mainly due to what was said about how important influencers are to them.

It is also recommended that Gucci, in addition to focusing on the digital platform **Instagram**, mostly used by an audience between 18 and 35 years old (Statista.com, 2023), should also opt for direct marketing, but focus on its other digital platforms such as **Facebook**, where its users are between 35 and +55 years old (Statista.com, 2023), including a group of consumers of a higher range, thus expanding the visualisation of its products or advertising campaigns. In short, information and content flow through the networks at high speed, and with a well-planned communication strategy it is much easier to viralise content than it was years ago, and even more so if it is quality and interesting content.

Finally, Gucci must continue to delve into a new market niche where it can launch its advertising campaigns, transgressive and innovative, to an audience that is at least different but still very critical: the so-called *gamer*¹⁴. The Italian firm is timidly entering this *new gamer target market*, but it still needs to stop being pigeonholed in the *jet set*, and widen its range of the public even more, as the market is evolving. New technologies

¹⁴ Gamer, used specifically for people who play video games.

are constantly growing and the brand must adapt. If it does so, Gucci would be facing a brand diversification strategy that would broaden its market horizon by penetrating a new sector, a market niche that has hardly been exploited by luxury fashion brands.

Diversification by clustering is a growth strategy that entails the addition of new products or services that are significantly different from the organization's current products or services, according to EAE Business School's (2018) definition of the strategy. When a company diversifies into a sector that has nothing whatsoever to do with its core competencies, it is deemed to have adopted this strategy. Gucci is a luxury fashion company that has diversified into the video game industry in this instance. Expansion into unrelated industries has a very appealing potential, especially when one considers Thompson and Strickland's (2012) maxim that *“the basic premise of unrelated diversification is that any company that can be acquired on favourable financial terms represents a good business to diversify into.”*

5.4 Limitations.

Concerning the limitations of this study, the following should be mentioned. The sample size was not sufficient to identify significant relationships between the various variables analysed. The survey was initially sent to 100 people, but responses were received from 80 people in total. An increase in the sample size may provide different results with greater reliability.

Another limitation is the geographical location of the results, although it was possible to collect data from respondents residing in three different countries, this is not enough, as Gucci is a globally recognised brand, so the data obtained may be limited.

5.5 Further research.

As a future study, it would be interesting to carry out research that combines both quantitative and qualitative methods, as well as a methodological triangulation that allows us to investigate the subject in greater depth and obtain data from different points of view with a larger geographical area that allows us to obtain more samples of the population to give greater reliability to the research study.

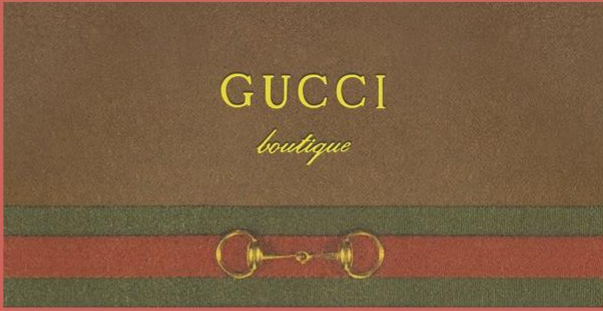
APPENDIX.

1. Questionnaire.

Information message for those interested in responding to the survey: *“The purpose of this research is to analyse the impact of integrated marketing communication and digital marketing strategy applied to a case study on the luxury brand Gucci. The aim of this questionnaire is to collect data from people who are familiar with the Gucci brand (whether they are regular customers or not). The survey consists of 18 questions of different types. The collected data will be treated with strict confidentiality and will be deleted when the research work is finished”.*

Thank you for giving me your time!





Gucci

Gucci's survey

1. What is your first name?  0

2. What is your gender?  0

☐ Female

☐ Male

☐ Other (specify)

3. What is your age?  0

☐ -18

☐ 19-30

☐ 31-40

☐ 41-50

☐ 51-60

☐ 61+



4. What country do you live in? 

5. Which of the following best describes your current occupation? 

6. Do you recognise the Gucci brand and its products? 

☐ Yes, I recognise the brand and I have Gucci's goods

☐ Yes, but I have never bought any Gucci's goods

☐ No, but I would be interested in buying some Gucci's goods.

☐ No, I am not interested in their goods

Other (please specify)

7. Have you seen any advertisements about the Gucci brand? 

☐ Yes

☐ No

If the answer is yes, what opinion/emotion/sensation/ did you feel?

8. Have you ever used Gucci's website? 

☐ Yes, I usually use it to buy

☐ Yes, I usually use it to view their offers.

☐ No, but I am interested in visiting your website.

☐ No, I prefer to go to your physical shop.



9. How satisfied are you with Gucci's website's ease of use?

0

- ☐ Extremely satisfied
- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Somewhat satisfied
- ☐ Not so satisfied
- ☐ Not at all satisfied
- ☐ I haven't used the Gucci website

10. How much do you trust the information on Gucci's website?

0

- ☐ A great deal
- ☐ A lot
- ☐ A moderate amount
- ☐ A little
- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ I believe it will be trustworthy even though I have not used their website.

11. Overall, how well does Gucci's website meet your needs?

0

- ☐ Extremely well
- ☐ Very well
- ☐ Somewhat well
- ☐ Not so well
- ☐ Not at all well

Leave a comment to learn more about your customer needs.



12. What do you like most about Gucci's shop?  0

13. How important is price to you when choosing Gucci's brand?  0

- ☐ Extremely important
- ☐ Very important
- ☐ Somewhat important
- ☐ Not so important
- ☐ Not at all important

14. What would make you more likely to pay for for Gucci's products instead of other brands?  0

15. How likely is it that you would recommend Gucci's brand to a friend or colleague?  0

NOT AT ALL LIKELY						EXTREMELY LIKELY				
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

16. Thinking about Gucci's brand overall, which of the following best describes your feelings about it?  0

- ☐ Like it very much
- ☐ Like it somewhat
- ☐ Feel neutral about it
- ☐ Dislike it somewhat
- ☐ Dislike it very much



17. How would you rate the quality of Gucci's product?  0

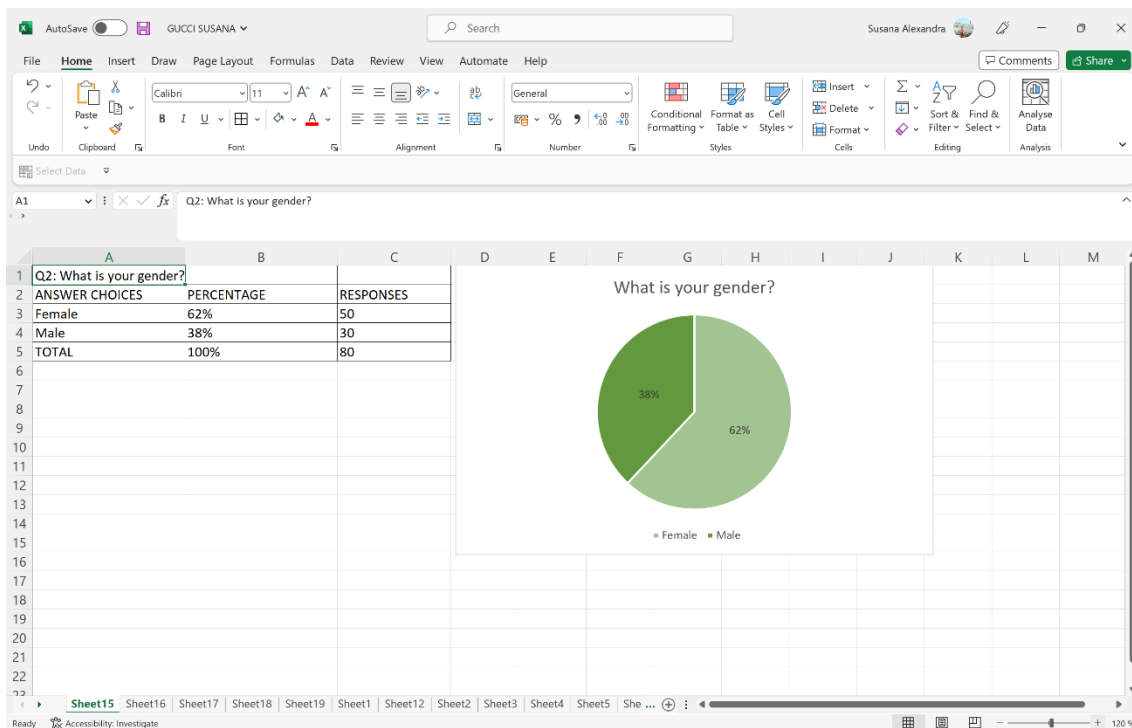
- ☐ Very high quality
- ☐ High quality
- ☐ Neither high nor low quality
- ☐ Low quality
- ☐ Very low quality

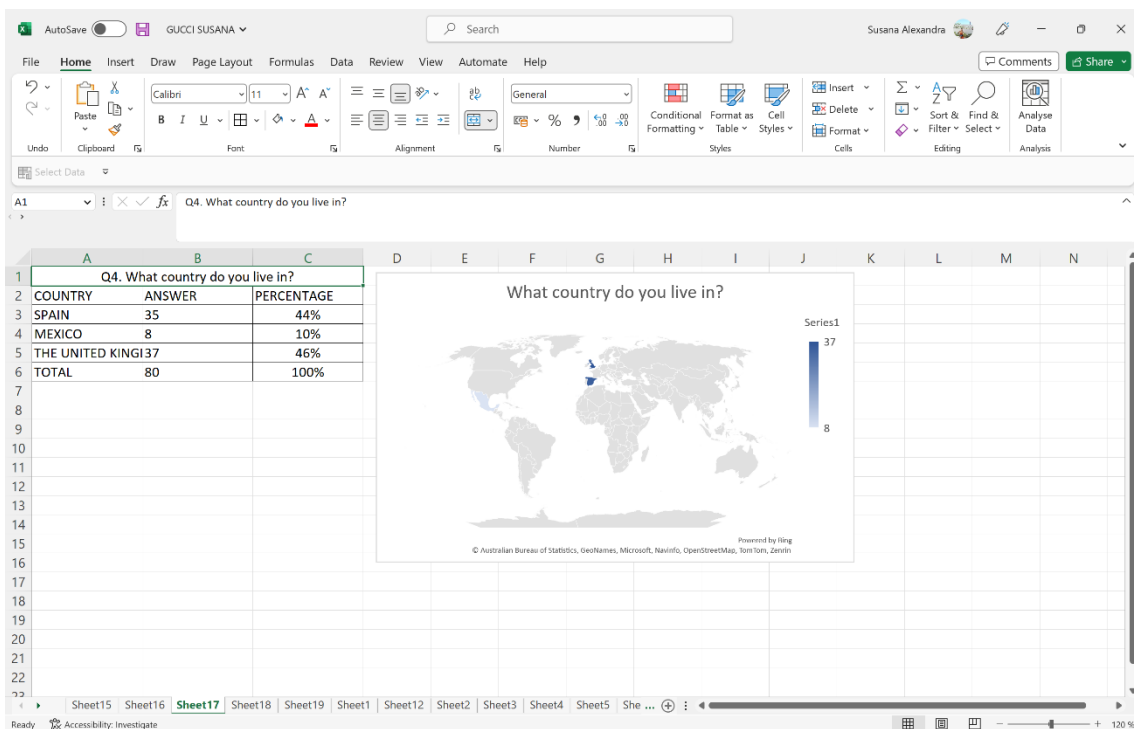
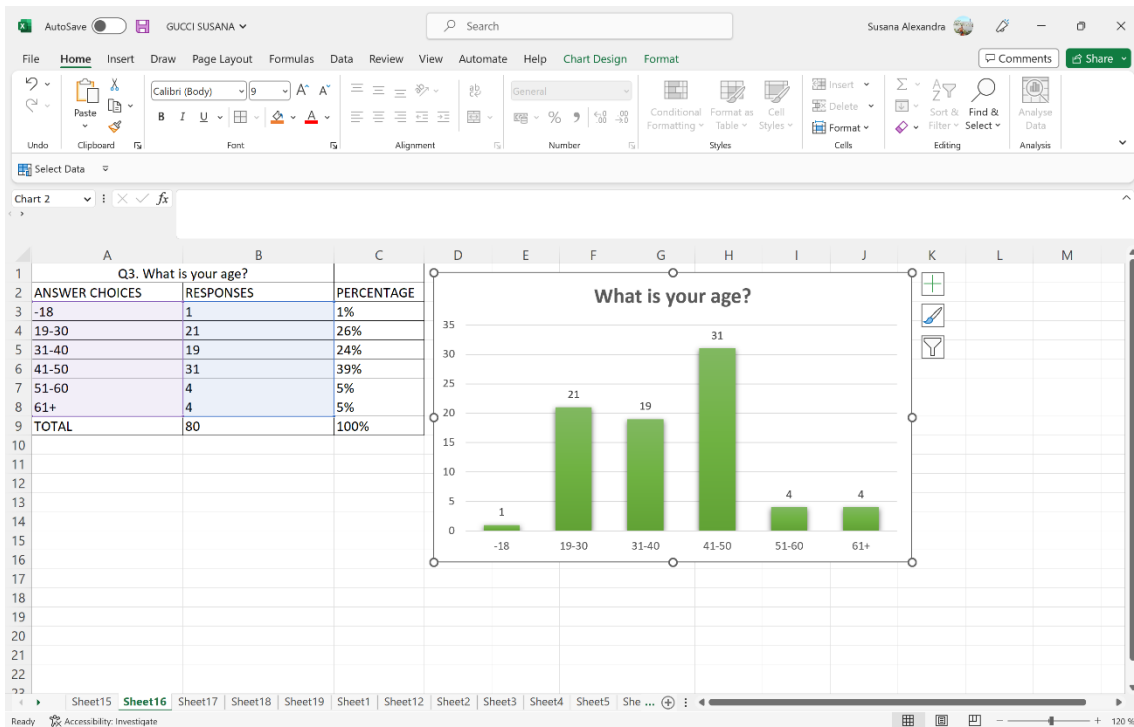
Other (please specify)

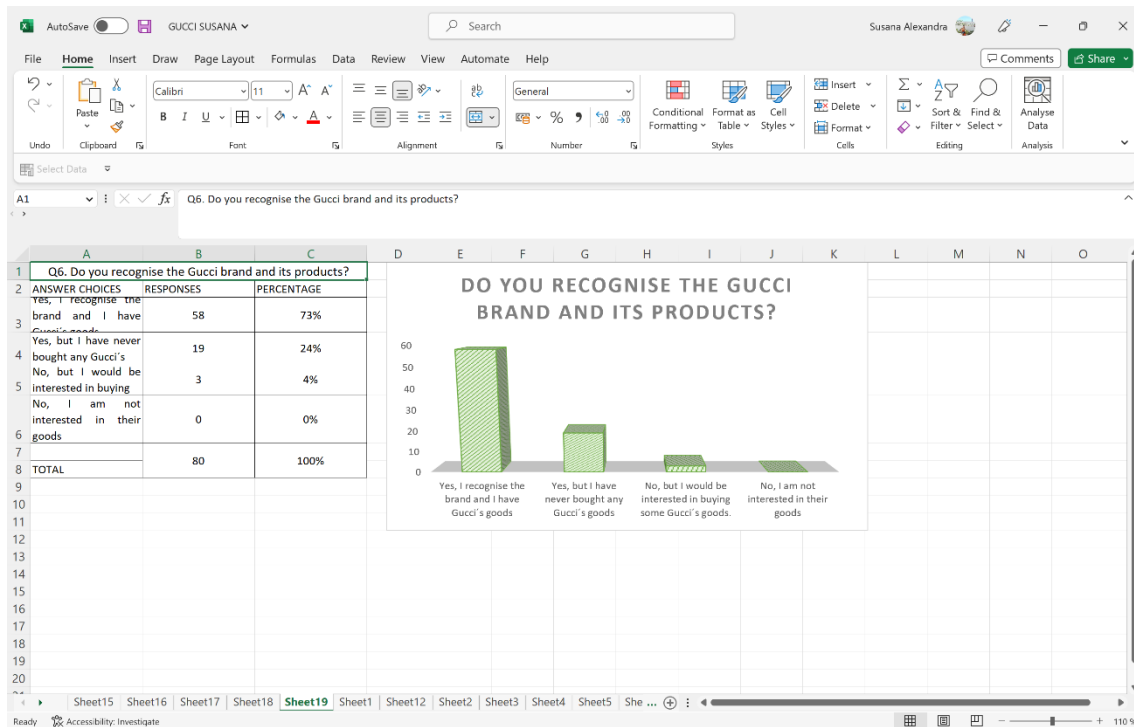
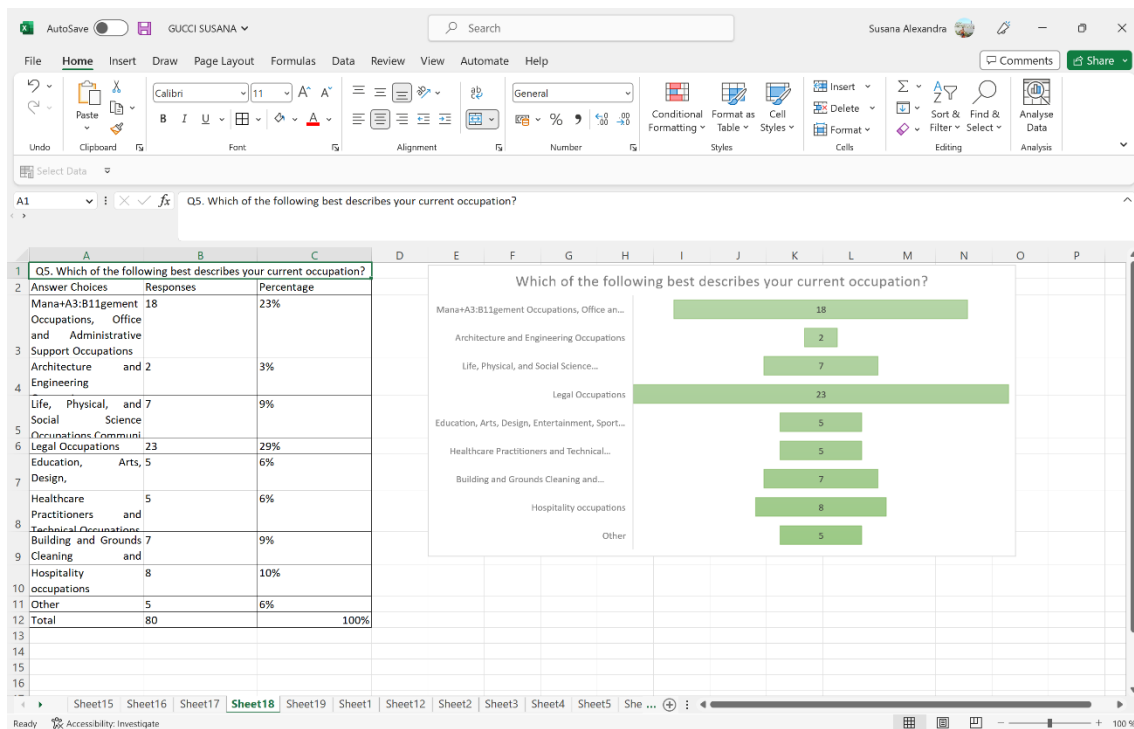
18. What first comes to mind when you look the word Gucci?  0

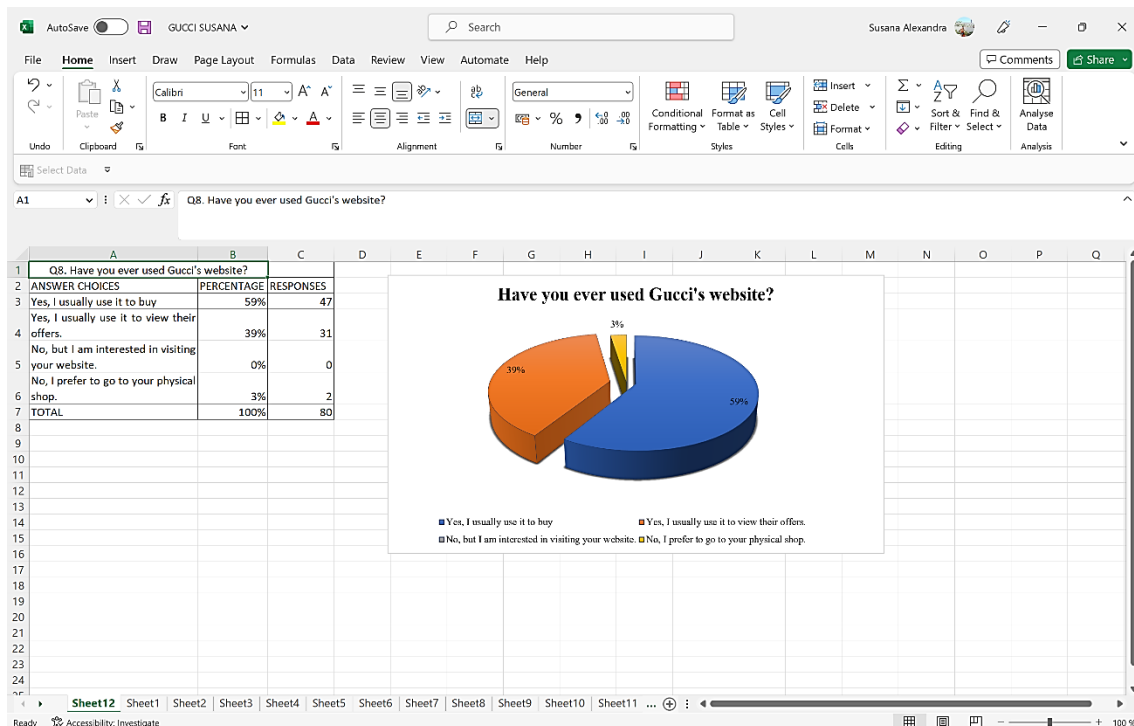
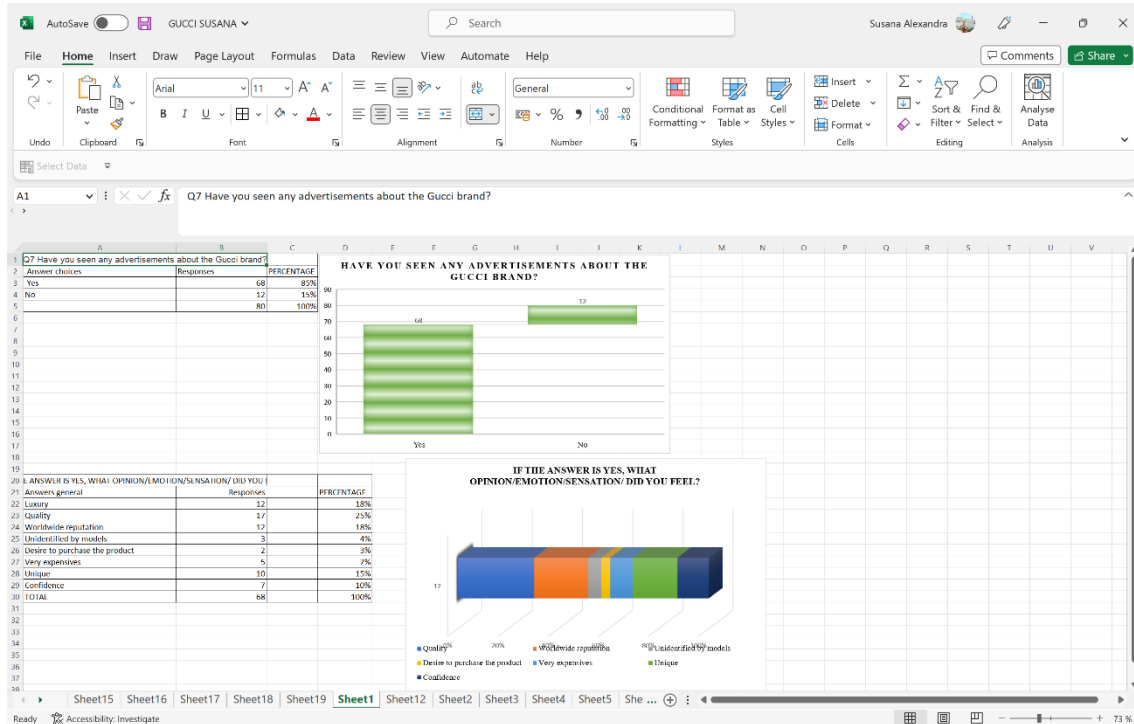
2. Microsoft Excel graphs and tables.

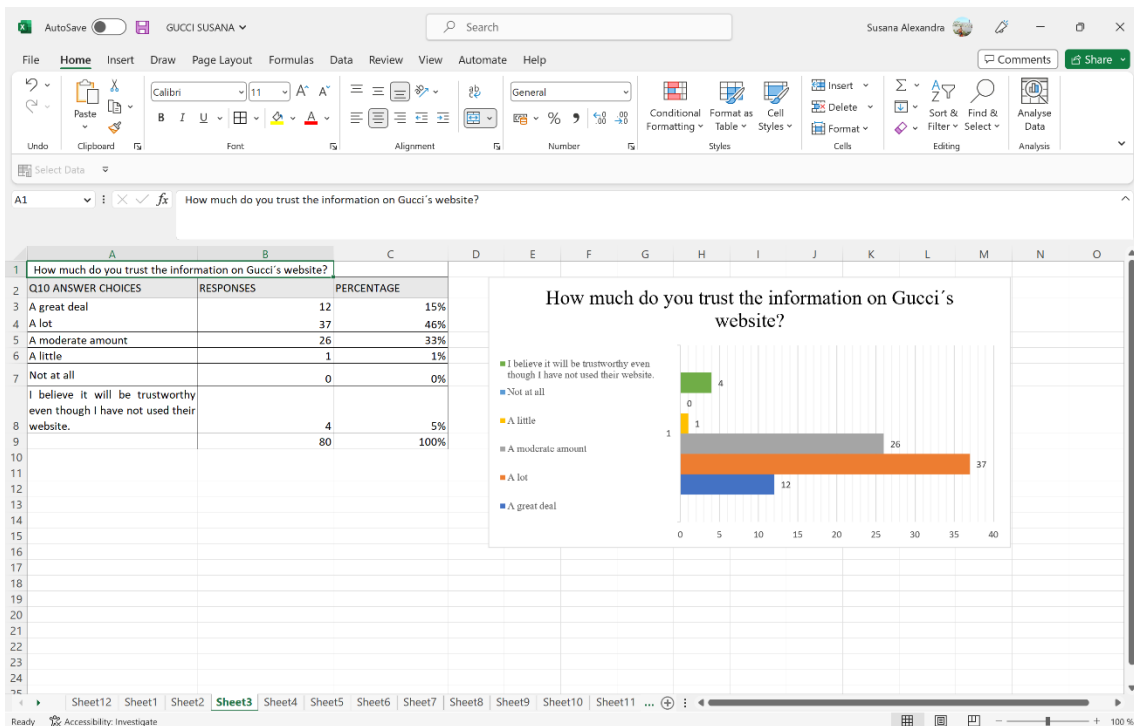
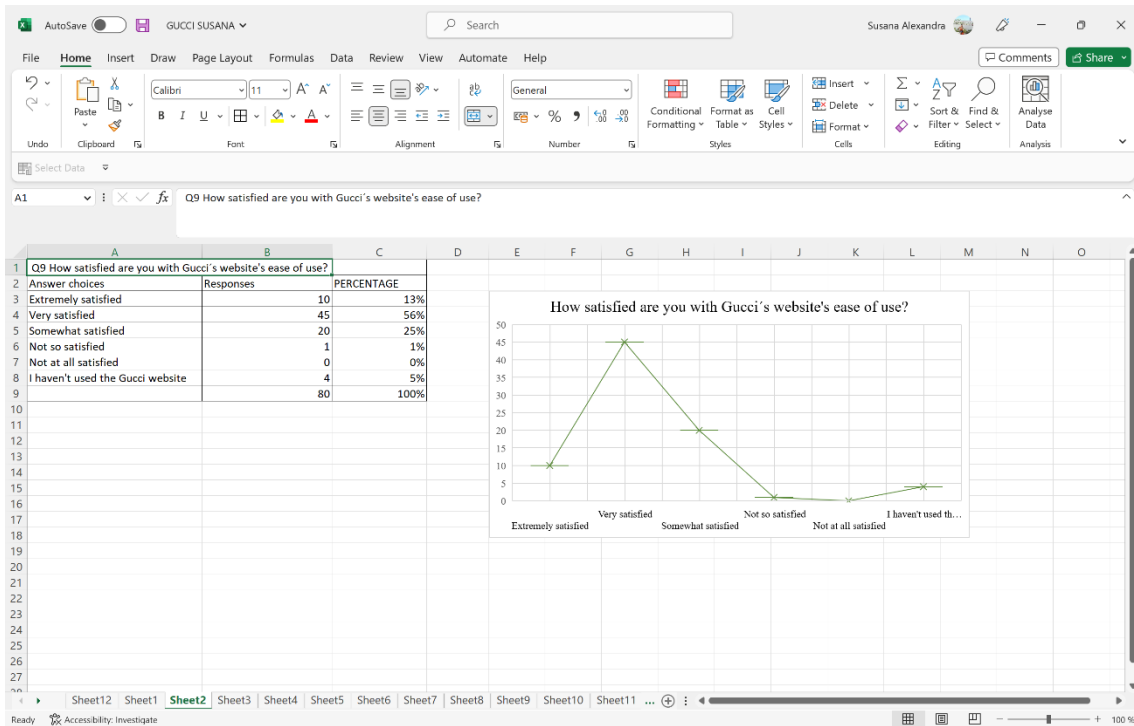
Question 1 is confidential, therefore it is not attached to the rest of the tables.

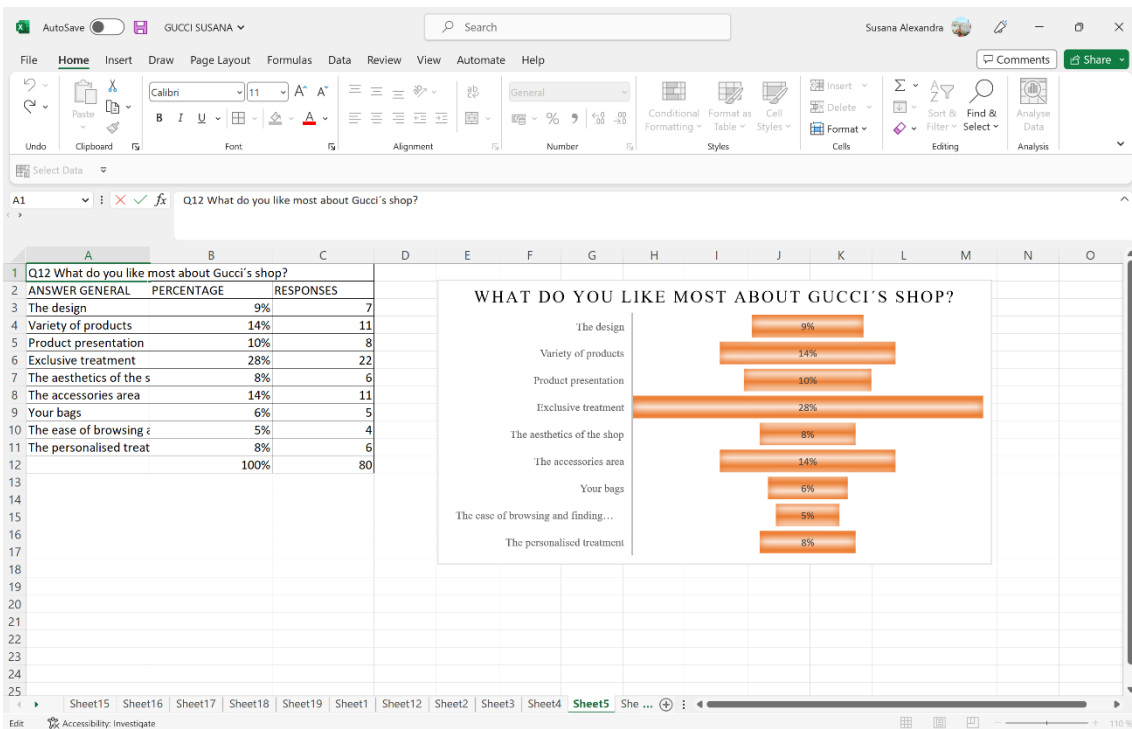
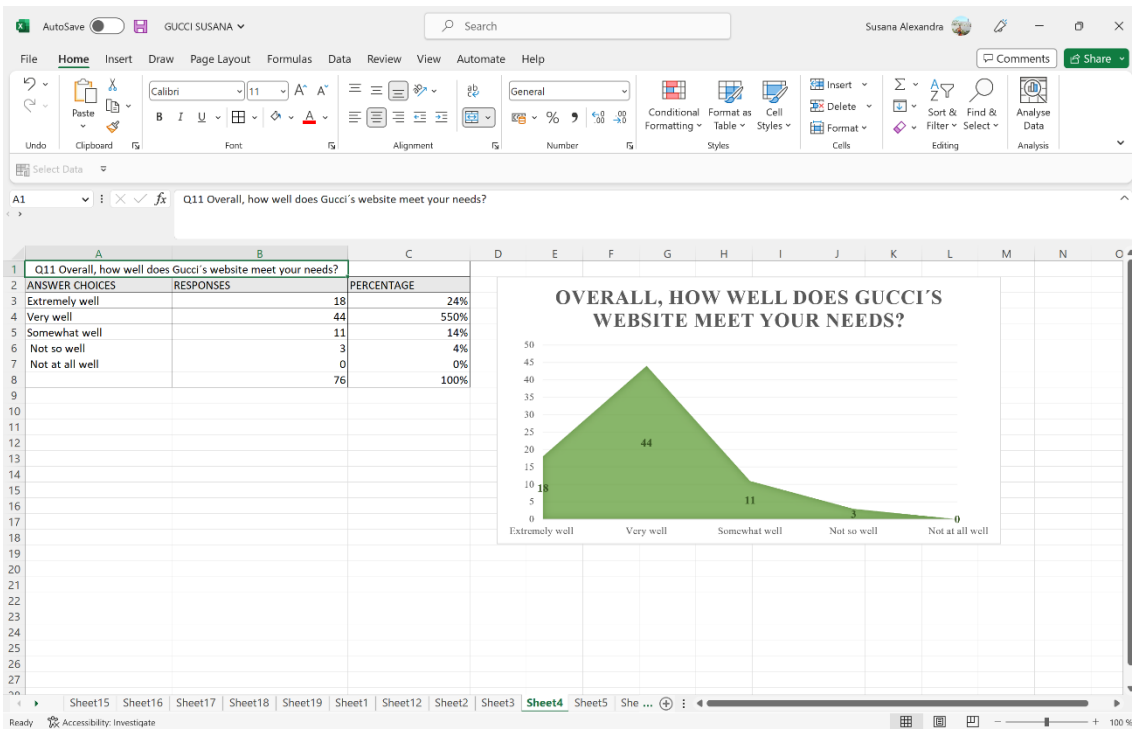


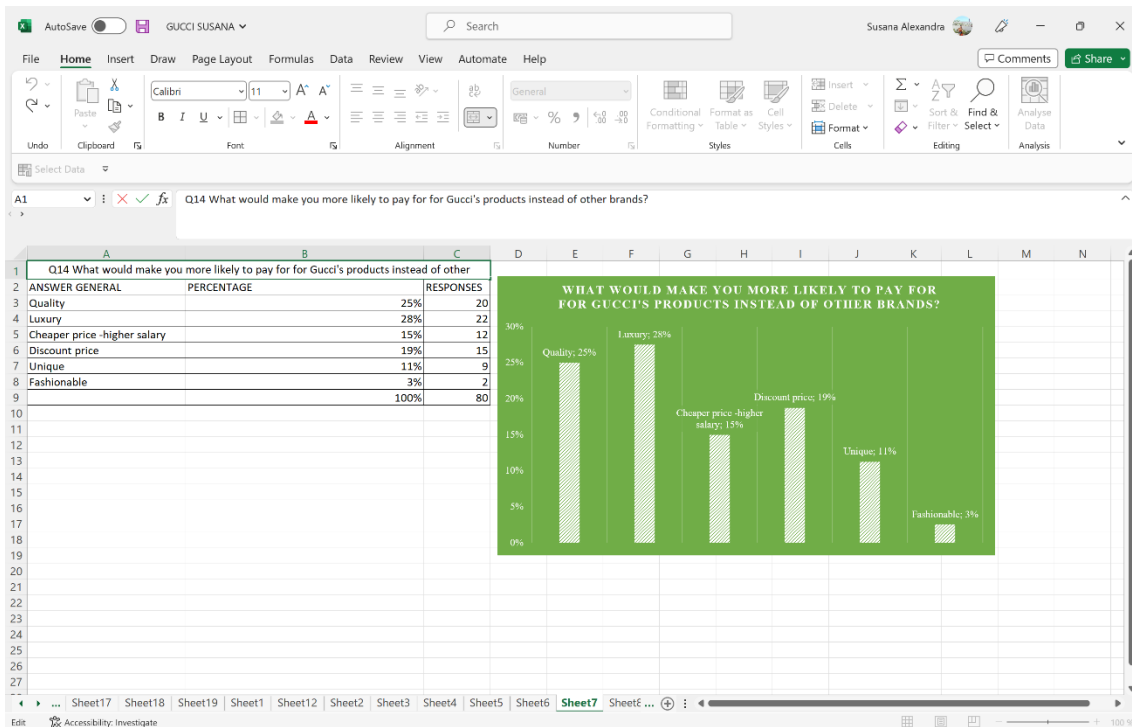
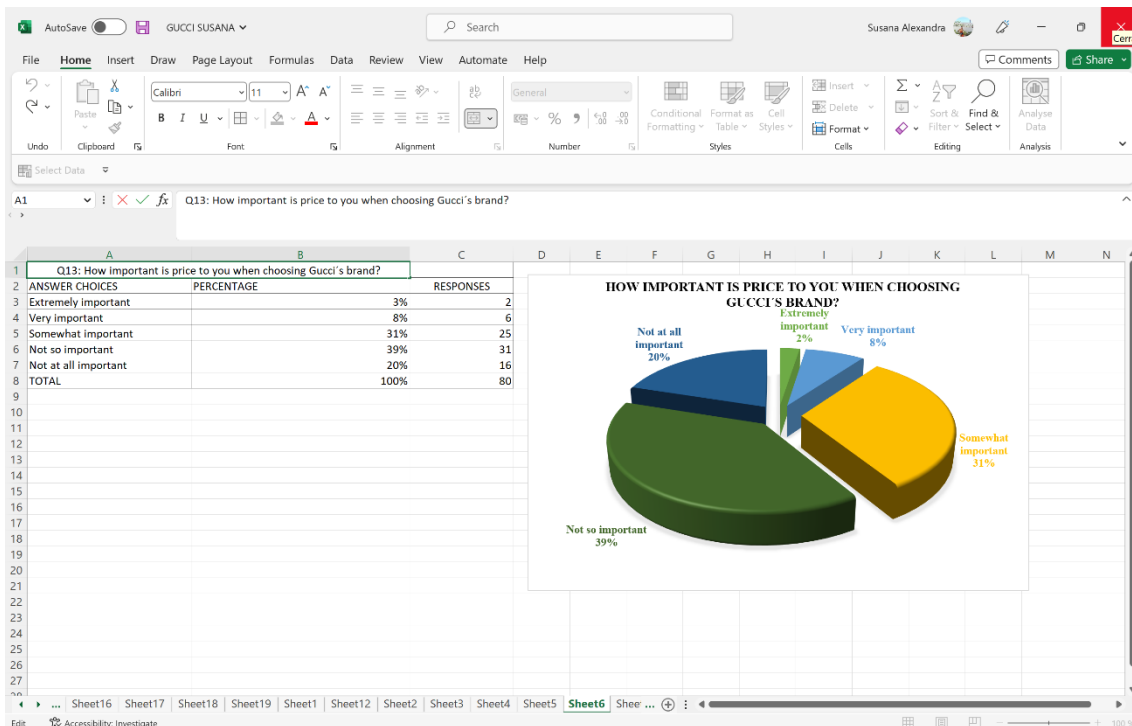


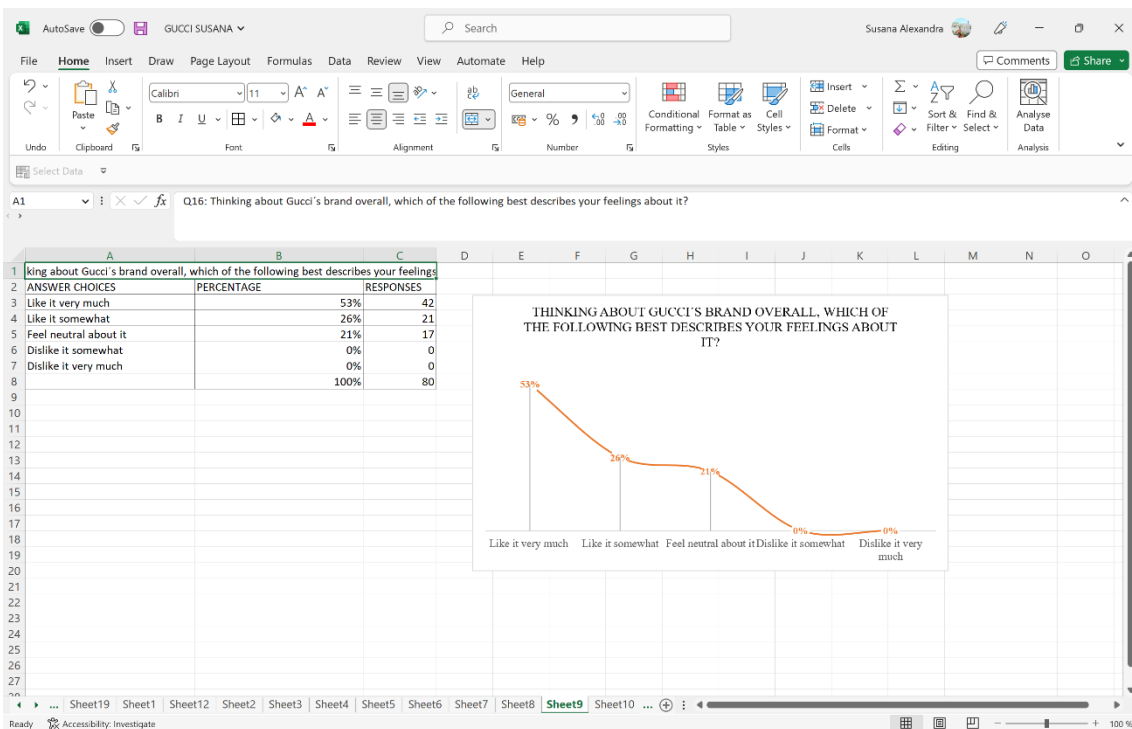
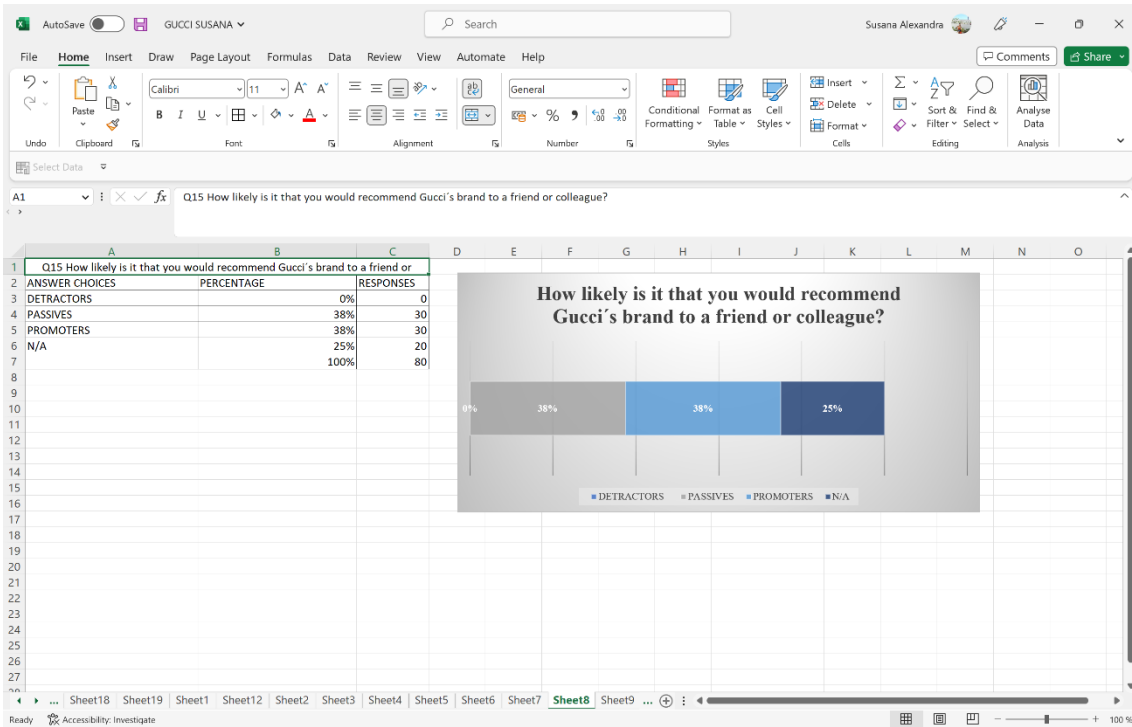


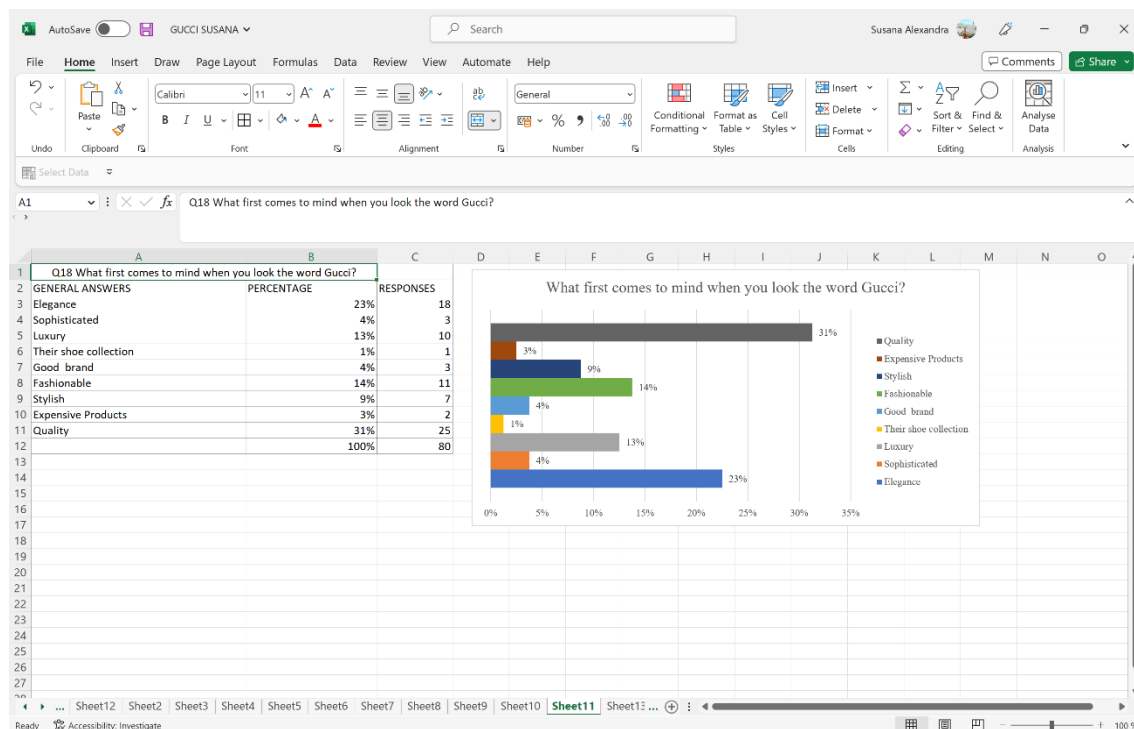
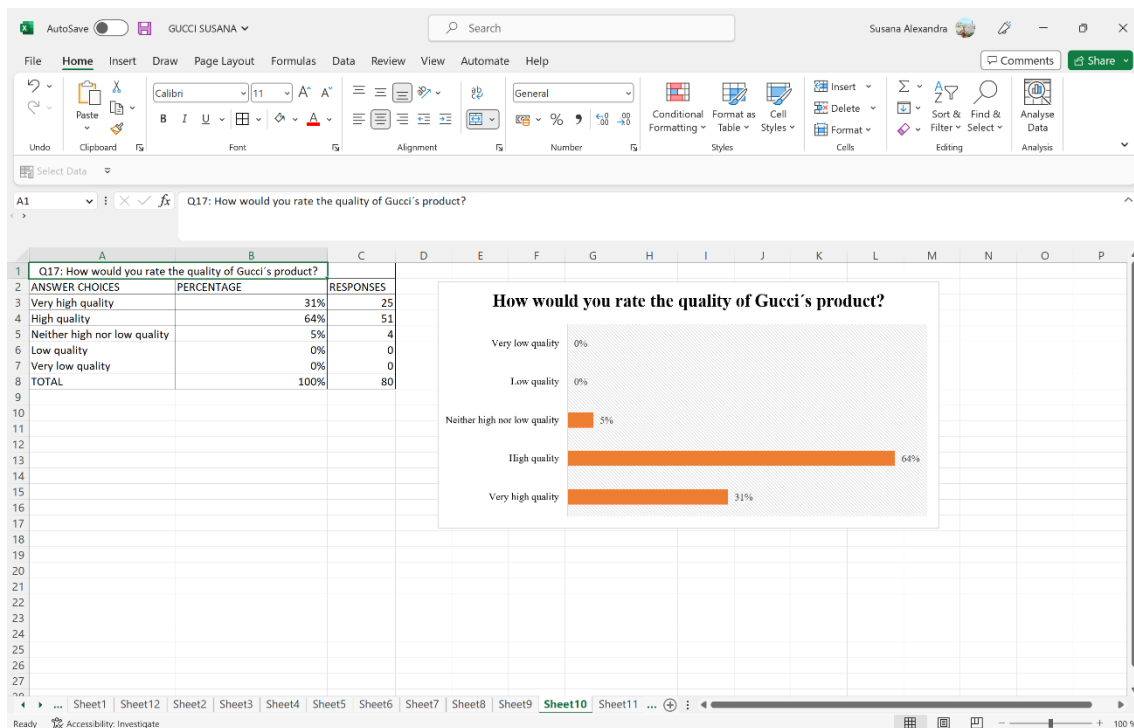












3. Time horizontal table.

Gantt chart is a graphical and visual aid, useful in aspects of planning and scheduling of workload and operations that are manifested in any type of organisation, whether productive or social. Its name derives from Henry Gantt, who developed this technique at the end of the 19th century.

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9	Week 10	Week 11	Week 12	Week 13	Week 14	Week 15	Week 16
Introduction																
Literature review																
Research methodology																
Creating the questionnaire																
Collection of data																
Analysis of data																
Discussion/ Interpretation of data																
Conclusion and recommendations																

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